

Cold Winter, Warm Hearts

By Peter Gilbert

WBAL TV in Baltimore

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I wrote recently about an act of kindness from our trip to Pittsburgh to cover the AFC Championship. St. Edmund's Academy Athletics Director Chris "Coach" Gathagan, out of the goodness of his heart bought, breakfast for our crew.

Given the challenges of the frigid weekend, covering a team and fans that just had its collective heart ripped out, Coach Gathagan delivered an out of the blue (I guess I should say out of the black and gold) offering of decency that warmed all of our hearts.

I wanted to share with Coach and his school what I had written about the random act of kindness. Here is the response from St. Edmund's Head of School William Kindler:

Good morning Peter Gilbert,

I wanted to reply earlier to your January 21, 2009 "A Shining Moment" article, but the message I am now sending was pushed back due to two weather related school delays on recent Thursday mornings when the St. Edmund's Academy's student body assembles for its weekly Chapel service. Chapel focuses on the main anchors by which we live our lives—our core values. There are six core values that serve as our School's anchors. The umbrella of all six can simply be summarized as "acts of kindness." I have just returned from Chapel where I read "A Shining Moment" with appropriate attribution to your authorship. As I read every eye and ear from 6 year olds to the scores of parents and teachers present were fully glued on the words you gave me to deliver (you write very well). When Chris "Coach" Gathagan's name flowed from my lips, a spontaneous cheer and applause filled the sanctuary. So, the "story I can't stop telling" continued today in Pittsburgh and will continue on our website. We are proud of Coach's ongoing acts of kindness as well as all those who practice daily random and planned "acts of Kindness."

Enjoy a great day and when future travels bring you to Pittsburgh, please plan to visit us at 5705 Darlington Road.

Sincerely,

William Kindler

Head of School

It's funny how one simple, but generous act may spiral upwards. When I wrote the entry, I thought of people in Baltimore and wanted them to know how even the most ardent of Steelers fans may prove not just friendly, but downright inspirational. And I've received feedback to indicate as such. But the shared moment from Mr. Kindler at the Chapel Service makes me smile the broadest.

Coach's students of course know his kindness, but for them to see the example he delivered, in a setting in which he could expect no public praise or recognition, that's the most important kind of education. We need more teachers like that. And yes, I'll definitely stop by for Chapel.