



Crossroads 20th Anniversary

Remarks delivered by Jean Behnke

September 24, 2011

The future is not the result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created — created first in the mind and will, next in activity. The future is not someplace we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.

This quote by Wayne Dyer reflects the way that this institution grew through the intentions, wills, and actions of the Crossroads community.

As individuals and as a group, we have immersed ourselves in educational research, teaching, learning, sharing, debating, and planning strategically. We have taken calculated risks, stretched and grown — intellectually, morally, and emotionally. Through this endeavor we have become a community — a community of learners bound together by an abiding respect for the power of an elementary education focused on building an academic and moral core.

Through careful planning we charted our way toward our destination. Like Odysseus, we experienced some unexpected adventures and travails along the way. We built the road ourselves, usually while we were driving on it. Sometimes this involved the blending of knowledge and virtue into songs to sing as we traveled; sometimes this involved the use of dynamite to blow up boulders that were in our way. Like Odysseus, we practiced the virtues along the way, calling upon courage, perseverance, faith, joy, stewardship, compassion, respect, and perhaps most of all, joy and wonder, as we built and traveled this road. While Odysseus was offered (and turned away) the chance for immortality, we continue to work together, knowing that through our efforts we are creating a certain kind of immortality. Our work will carry forward long after we are gone in the minds and hearts of Crossroads children and their descendants.

Landlocked in Lyme, we did not set sail on our journey. Some might say we started in a borrowed car, moved up to a rental, and finally purchased a comfortable car — big enough for our family. We carried with us and consulted with regularity, our compass — our mission.

At this point in our journey, I am so very pleased to say that in the midst of general financial uncertainty, our small school continues to grow and mature. Through careful planning, enrollment remains stable and our program continues to improve.

As we begin our 21st year of operation, with a strong foundation, exceptional standardized test scores, excellent high school and college placement, and with our mission as our guide, the essential question is no longer, “Through our mission, what must we do to survive?” Rather, now

the question is, "How do we further develop and refine our program so that the educational experience at Crossroads becomes **so** compelling and **so** exemplary, that we fill every seat with mission appropriate students and become a model for what an elementary education can and should be?"

I know that in seeking answers to these questions we will strengthen our relationships, learn from one another, change the lives of our students, help this institution to grow, and become a model of what an educational experience can and should be. **We** will grow and change and so will Crossroads. *We will stay on the road, building as we go, for in schools there is never, truly, a destination.*

And so I lift my glass to you. I thank each and every one of you for the roles that you have played and continue to play in the creation and future of Crossroads. Here's to the past, present, and future of Crossroads, and most of all, here's to you.

Cheers.