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# Parents join the club : inviting parents and children to participate in a family book club

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## Parents join the club : inviting parents and children to participate in a family book club

### **Abstract**

A fifth grade elementary teacher who regularly uses book clubs as a part of her reading program offers the parents of her students the opportunity to learn about and participate in a book club with their children. The parents of the teacher's 24 students were invited to attend an informational meeting to learn how book clubs function in their child's classroom and to discover the value of discussion in developing and promoting reading comprehension. Eight parents and their children joined the Family Book Club. They all read *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Betty Bao Lord and attended three consecutive Sunday discussions. The teacher wanted to learn whether being involved in a book club would change the way the parents felt about reading to or with their pre-adolescent child, whether they would feel more informed about their child's reading performance and instruction, and whether they would they feel this was an effective activity. On questionnaires, parental feedback regarding the experience was consistently positive.

Parents Join the Club:

Inviting Parents and Children to Participate in a Family Book Club

A Graduate Journal Article

Submitted to the

Division of Literacy Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Kimberly Gansen

August, 2004

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Titled: Parents Join the Club: Inviting Parents and Children to Participate in a  
Family Book Club

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the Degree of Master  
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**Penny L. Beed**

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Graduate Faculty Reader

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**Jean Schneider**

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Graduate Faculty Reader

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Date Approved

**Greg P. Stefanich**

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Head, Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction

August 25, 2004

Cheri Howman, Publications Assistant  
National Middle School Association  
4151 Executive Parkway, Suite 300  
Westerville, OH 43081

Dear Dr. Howman:

I am enclosing a submission to the *Middle School Journal* entitled, "Parents Join the Club: Inviting Parents and Their Children to Participate in a Family Book Club." The manuscript is 23 pages long and is the culminating product for completion of a master's degree from the University of Northern Iowa.

I wish for the manuscript to be read and evaluated independently. I am the sole author of this paper and do not have any interests that could be interpreted as influencing the research. APA ethical standards were followed in the conduct of the project. I understand that should this paper be accepted for publication, a certification of authorship form will be required for me to sign.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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Parents Join the Club:  
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Abstract

A fifth grade elementary teacher who regularly uses book clubs as a part of her reading program offers the parents of her students the opportunity to learn about and participate in a book club with their children. The parents of the teacher's 24 students were invited to attend an informational meeting to learn how book clubs function in their child's classroom and to discover the value of discussion in developing and promoting reading comprehension. Eight parents and their children joined the Family Book Club. They all read *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Betty Bao Lord and attended three consecutive Sunday discussions. The teacher wanted to learn whether being involved in a book club would change the way the parents felt about reading to or with their pre-adolescent child, whether they would feel more informed about their child's reading performance and instruction, and whether they would they feel this was an effective activity. On questionnaires, parental feedback regarding the experience was consistently positive

## Parents Join the Club:

## Inviting Parents and Children to Participate in a Family Book Club

Their four chairs form a circle; each student is perched on his or her spot. As she participates in this casual, yet business-like affair, one student has her feet wrapped like a grapevine around her chair's front two silver legs. Another, a boy, is at the edge of his deep blue chair with his feet stretched straight out. A freckle-faced girl sits upright, back to her chair with her legs crossed at her ankles. Susan, sporting her new eye glasses, flips through the book to find the place on which she would like to comment. With books, abundant with brief messages on self-sticking notes, open and ready for engagement, a Book Club discussion begins about *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges.

*"First, I'd like to start on page 25," begins Annie. "There is this picture by Norman Rockwell. What do you think the problem is?"*

*"Oh, yeah," adds Susan. "I tabbed that, too. I think the girl is Ruby."*

*"And she's being escorted to school by the U.S. Marshals," chimes in Aaron.*

*"What are marshals?" asks Lori. "Are they like the police? I see they have bands around their arms and one says 'deputy'."*

*"Yeah, they were like the police. Wouldn't it be scary to have to have the police walk you to school?" Aaron questions the group.*

*"Just look how someone wrote 'n \_\_\_\_' on the wall, and you can see the smashed tomatoes there on the ground," says Annie.*

*"She's just a little girl," Susan responds. "How can people be so cruel and judge you just because of your skin color?"*

Seeing and hearing my fifth grade students embroiled in a conversation of thought-provoking comments and questions over a book they were all reading was a sign for me that book clubs had an exciting and meaningful role to play in reading instruction. Enthusiastic about what I saw as my students participated in book clubs, I began to think about how powerful it would be if parents also engaged in such conversations with their children. I became curious about the kinds of results that would occur if I were to involve parents in a book club.

I regard book clubs as an effective way to develop and assess my students' comprehension and how they perform as readers. My questions about parent participation were the following: Would being involved in a book club with their children change the way they felt about reading to or with their child? After participating in a book club would they feel more informed about their child's reading performance and instruction? Finally, would they also feel this was an effective activity overall? I decided to pursue the answers to these questions.

### **A Journey Begins**

This paper chronicles the journey I took with some willing parents and their children--a journey to learn about each other as readers, and a journey for parents to learn more about what reading instruction *can* look like and new roles they can assume as partners with the school.

The family literacy movement has recently come of age (Auerbach, 1995, Benjamin & Lord, 1996; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Increased awareness and interest in the "family as educator" has sparked a generation of programs, publications, and public policies, all designed to expand access to education and to

enhance family skills in reading, writing, and communication (Neuman, Caperelli, Kee, 1998). Though a variety of definitions exist (Morrow, 1995; Nickse, 1990), most family literacy programs are based on the view that improving the parenting and basic literacy skills of adults will foster learning and literacy among their children. I, however, was not as concerned about improving parent literacy skills as I was about encouraging them to *use their skills* with their fifth graders, about keeping them informed of strategies their child uses, and about promoting another means for them to communicate with their preadolescent child.

Parent involvement appears to be especially important to students during the middle school years (Aix, 1996). These years are often difficult and turbulent for young adolescents. Not only do children of early adolescence experience erratic and highly variable physical change (Eichorn, 1966), there is also a period of vast brain growth that occurs between ages 10-12, and a plateau period is reached between ages 12-14. Eichorn contends that during these years, the influence of parents, teachers, and other adults becomes less significant, allowing for the more persuasive impact of peers. Students going through adolescence need to develop values and to accept themselves and like themselves. They also need to learn to understand adults and the adult world, and to develop meaningful relationships with adults.

Ultimately, the goal of literature is to provide purpose in our lives (Trelease, 2001). In his book *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, child psychologist, Bruno Bettelheim, writes that the two most vital factors responsible for giving children the belief that they can make a meaningful contribution to life are parents or teachers and literature. Book clubs can act as a

vessel to bridge life experiences between generations and literature about life experiences. I thought inviting parents to join a Family Book Club would promote the multi-faceted notion of open communication between everyone involved.

### **Meeting the Parents**

In the middle of January, I sent a letter home inviting parents to learn what book clubs looked like in their child's classroom and possibly to join a Family Book Club. I offered "How To" meetings at two different times for interested parents to attend, and was pleased to have ten parents respond. During these thirty-minute meetings, my agenda was to develop an understanding of what the parents knew about book clubs, to share my philosophy for using them, and to explain how the students conducted them in my classroom.

The parents and I sat around a table in my classroom. I wanted the atmosphere to be low-keyed and welcoming. Although I had information to share, I did not want to be the one doing *all* the talking. I began by asking parents to share what they knew about book clubs or literature circles, since some of their children had participated in literature circles in previous grades. Some parents were familiar with the "roles" (e.g., discussion leader, vocabulary wizard) their child had used in literature circles from earlier grades (Daniels, 1994), although I told them the roles would not be necessary for this book club. Many of the parents did have some knowledge of book clubs from sources like Oprah, (an ABC talk show host who has sponsored a national book club for women), yet none had ever been involved in one. I shared my philosophy with parents for using them as a part of a balanced reading program. Through their participation in book clubs, students have an opportunity to just read, just react, and

to behave like normal, real world readers. It is believed that book clubs, also known as literature circles, offer a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss, and respond to books (Noe & Johnson, 1999). At the heart of book clubs is collaboration. Students change and add to their understanding as they construct meaning with other readers (Noe & Johnson, 1999).

Drawing from their own experiences, the parents agreed among themselves that they could relate to teacher directed instruction and to the teacher being in control of a lesson and determining what was talked about. We even recalled various names of reading groups we experienced as students ourselves. In contrast to the parents' memories of direct instruction, I shared how book clubs really allow for the student to control the conversations and their own learning. I explained that there is evidence that children who participate in a discussion which is less teacher directed may engage in more problem-solving talk and in talk that leads to more in-depth understanding of the literature (Eeds & Wells, 1989). Because we are social beings, book clubs offer an ideal setting to be social and to learn from one another. Vygotsky's (1978) work placed a spotlight on the role of talk in sharing knowledge and constructing understandings. The conversations evolve around the students' responses to what they have read. Discussions may encompass talk about events and characters in the book, the author's craft, interesting vocabulary, and personal experiences related to the story.

As our meeting progressed, I shared why and how their children "tab" their texts as they read them. I explained to the parents that tabbing is a way to keep track of thoughts while reading. Students jot down their responses on a self-stick note and

place it on the corresponding text page or in their journals. For example, I want students to be aware of any connections they may have to the book on a personal level, with other books they have read, or to the world around them. I want students to read critically and question the author, and make predictions and inferences. Using text coding ideas from Harvey and Goudvis' *Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding* (2002), I modeled for the parents the text coding information and provided them with a handout for their use at home. Some of the symbols my students and I use for tabbing ideas are the following: PC – personal connection (making a connection between their own life experiences and the events in the text), TT – text to text connection (making a connection between two or more texts), TW – text to world connection (making a connection between the text and something they have learned or read about in the world).

I let them know that, in their upcoming book club discussions, they were welcome to use tabs or record their thoughts on another paper, but it was their choice. Students are not limited to using symbols on self-stick notes, and I did not want the parents to feel it was an absolute requirement for them either. As I would later discover, some parents chose to tab, while the majority did not tab or record their thoughts. This, however, did not appear to have a negative effect on the discussions.

I also wanted the adult participants to be aware of my role when I hold book clubs during regular class time. I discussed my role as a facilitator--one who moves from group to group, listening in, perhaps asking a probing question, or offering a comment occasionally. I explained that my presence at each group was to also let them know I cared about them as a reader. I sincerely wanted to know their reactions

to the text. With the parents' participation in the Family Book Club, I wanted them to realize they, too, were doing the same for their child. Not only was it their role to show support by choosing to participate in the club, but also to participate like any other member. They were encouraged to avoid dominating the conversation or asking too many probing questions that would make them appear to take an authoritative rather than a participatory role in the upcoming discussions.

Overall, the "How To" meeting was brief but informative. I wanted the parents to be aware that the book discussion is one of a variety of approaches for teaching reading that I use with my students. Preparing students to be successful with book clubs may take several weeks and sometimes months in order to have students who are understanding and implementing the reading strategies I want them to use. I reminded the parents of my goal for them, to enjoy reading the same book as their children and to chat about it with them. I did not want them to get bogged down with the tabbing, but to enlist the help of their fifth grader should they need some pointers. I think I accomplished my goal. The parents left the room chuckling over their new "assignment!"

### **And We're Off!**

During the last recess on a Monday in February before the first Sunday meeting, I introduced the eight students whose parents were going to participate in the Family Book Club to the book I had selected. With a mix of 6 boys and 2 girls, I had needed to choose a book that was appealing to both boys and girls. Having already used many of my own personal library sets, I considered books in the school's fifth grade library collection because of the wide selection it had to offer. A colleague who is a

veteran teacher in my school highly recommended *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Betty Boa Lord (1984). After reading it myself, I concurred that it was an excellent choice. It is a book about discovering a new life for oneself in America during the 1940's. In the book, conflicts arise between the main character, Shirley, and her parents and new friends.

I liked the content, but I also considered the theme and the readability of the book in my selection. The idea of a young Asian immigrant needing to overcome many obstacles, including racism, and Jackie Robinson, an African American baseball player, being subjected to racism, too, would be a window for my students into the reality of how society was. They would be able to compare and contrast the positive changes society has made, and discuss the progress to be made.

Although I felt most of the students would not find the book too difficult, I assured all of them, as I always did, that book club books could be read with their parents. As the students and I brainstormed what we knew about Jackie Robinson, baseball, and the Chinese culture, I sensed their enthusiasm and eagerness to start reading. The boys were excited about having a book about a famous baseball player, while the girls were pleased the main character was a girl. Knowing that we would be meeting three consecutive Sundays, the students divided the book into thirds and made sure everyone knew how far to read before the first meeting. Each student was given two copies of the book.

On the day of our first meeting, the eight parents and the eight students were greeted with the scent of hot cocoa and ginger snap cookies. I had arranged desks in the classroom to accommodate two groups of six within the classroom and a third

group directly outside my room in a multi-purpose area. On the overhead cart, a boxed set of Shirley Temple movies was propped, along with an encyclopedia opened to "China." I wanted students to see what the young actress Shirley Temple looked like, because the main character gives herself the name "Shirley Temple Wong" once she learns she is moving to America. From the encyclopedia, I read an excerpt about the Chinese calendar and as a group we discussed the significance to the title of *In the Year of the Boar*.

In the early chapters of the book, we had read about the comparisons and contrasts Shirley makes between China and her new home, thousands of ocean miles away, in Brooklyn. In America, Shirley learns from her father that they do not have to go to market every day because food can be refrigerated. As a result, Shirley observes how fish do not appear as colorful or fresh. I used this fact to create an activity for determining the make-up of book club discussion groups that first day. By drawing a large yellow, green or red gummy fish, students determined the group each child and parent would join together. With a matching yellow, green or red table tent, students and parents found their tables. The parents and students were told that groups would remain the same in future sessions.

Once everyone was settled, I shared some questions I had about the text on the white board. I offered them as a guide if they needed something to start their conversations. The conversations varied in how they were initiated. From my observations, I noticed a combination of parents and students beginning the conversations. I listened in at each group, and occasionally added to the discussion, as I do with book clubs in my classroom. The book conversations lasted approximately

20 minutes. When their discussions were coming to an end, I visited each group and asked one student to write a brief summary of what had been discussed. Each table was set with lined paper and a pen. The summaries varied in length from a couple of sentences to a paragraph, but each student highlighted important ideas their group had discussed. For example, after the first meeting, the yellow group commented:

*So far the story is about a Chinese girl who moved to America. The connection between Shirley and Jackie Robinson might be they both feel left out. -All the changes between the changes from America and China. We think it would be hard to learn all of the subjects, letters and words.*

On the following Sunday, members of the red group shared:

*She's [Shirley] brave because she's in a new school and not giving up. She's making friends with bullies. Jackie Robinson is going through a hard time and so is she.*

I found these interesting to read on a personal level. Because I was not able to sit in on every conversation, the summaries were a way of keeping me informed of issues the members felt were important to bring up. Through their summaries, and from sitting in on the conversations, I noticed discussion about Shirley's loyalty to her family and her quiet determination to assimilate into her new culture. This highlighting of the main points discussed in any student-centered book club is also a practice I occasionally use in the classroom to give students practice with synthesizing their group's reactions to the text.

For three consecutive Sundays, our meetings progressed in this manner. Throughout the Family Book Club, I observed nurturing and dynamic conversations.

I also observed the students acting as role models! For example, during one discussion, Jerry's dad and Tim's dad were sharing what it would be like to give up family traditions, as Shirley had to do when she moved to America. Both Jerry and Tim were watching their dads, their eyes shifting from speaker to speaker, respectfully listening, yet not entering the conversation. Finally Jerry spoke up with, "Well Tim, how 'bout you?" as he proceeded to give his dad a knowing look.

The two fathers paused and looked at each other, as though acknowledging the tangent they had been on and how it had restricted the conversation. With grins from ear to ear, the foursome gave a timely chuckle and looked in Tim's direction for his response.

### **Parent Reaction**

All eight parents and their children attended the first two Family Book Club sessions. Six parents and their children were able to attend the final meeting. I had created a post book club questionnaire for the parents, in order to get their perspectives and gather answers to my original questions. I asked them to complete the questionnaire at the last meeting. All six parents in attendance completed the questionnaire. Two of those six parents also sent additional information later via e-mail. The parents answered my questions regarding the effectiveness of their Family Book Club experience. The following responses reflect their perspectives:

*1) Did the experience change the way they felt about reading to or with their child?*

Five parents indicated that the experience changed the way they think about reading to or with their child. For example, "I enjoyed it. I like the fact of reading the same book as my child and discussing it. To share insights was fun and made the

experience an exciting one.” Another parent’s response was, “Yes. I definitely need to read more with all my kids. [I] always [have] good intentions but the actual follow through is not always there. This was a great opportunity.” One of the six parents commented that the experience did not change his perspective on reading because, “We already discuss our thoughts on the books we read.”

2) *After participating in Family Book Club, did parents feel more informed about their child’s reading instruction?*

Five parents responded with definite “yes.” A comment from one parent offered, “Yes. I liked knowing that my son’s comprehension was similar to mine.” The sixth parent was very positive about the experience, but did not specifically address the idea of being more informed.

3) *Did the parents feel this was an effective activity?*

All six parents completing questionnaires indicated this was an effective use of time. One parent commented:

[the school] seems to create programs which allow the parents to be involved – the book club being one of the many where the parent can be part of what the kids are learning. It was different from most of the other programs in that the adults were given a larger role directly in the learning experience.

A mother participating in the group with her daughter responded that the experience was positive

...because I was spending more time with my child’s teacher. I was getting to know her better and I was seeing her interact with

my daughter. It's fun to truly get to know your child's teacher and this book club was a means to do this when I wasn't able to do it during the day due to my job.

Another parent commented, "The discussions went well and I think everyone enjoyed the book and sharing with others. [This was] very interesting. I think it's a great way to get the children to share and learn."

One final response stated:

It gave us something more to talk about. It was fun for both of us to be reading the same book and discussing it. When we met as a group, we seemed to talk about a broad range of issues – from friendships and bullies to the treatment of minorities. I think Shirley was a role model. We liked talking about the choices she had to make, and the things she had to overcome. I also think it's good for the kids to see their parents reading.

### **Discussion**

From their responses on the questionnaire, it was clear that the parents valued the opportunity to be involved in the Family Book Club. The participating parents agreed on the importance of reading to or with their child and felt this was a positive way to do so. Most, however, indicated this was not something they did on a routine basis, but something they looked forward to doing more often. One participant, however, said it was common in their household to read similar material, such as the newspaper, and talk about it.

Feedback also indicated that parents felt more informed about their child as a reader and what reading instruction *can* look like. Prior to beginning book clubs with my students in the fall of the year, I send home a note to parents explaining how book clubs work. My goal is to keep parents informed of another method I use for reading instruction. I also want them to be aware that their child may be reading a challenging book, so their support in reading the book to or with their child is encouraged.

Offering a Family Book Club takes the communication aspect many steps forward. First, parents participating in a book club have the opportunity to see what meaningful reading instruction for their child looks like by being involved first hand. They are able to witness the questions, the dialogue, and the overall understanding of the text their child has. They are also able to be a part of the scaffolding--the building of understanding that transpires through discourse. Parents who join the club are able to see the cooperative aspects of book clubs--the give and take that naturally occurs throughout the dialogue. Parents who participate in a book club with their child are able to surmise from the conversations which issues are most important to their child regarding both the book and personal life experiences. For example, from the discussions, I observed students talking about the quiet determination of Shirley and how she was able to overcome being bullied.

Although the Family Book Club project went well, possible changes may improve attendance by parents and their children. First, I would need to consider the time commitment more closely. When I was first deciding when to host the event, a brief survey of my students indicated Sunday was the most available day for the majority of families. However, I discovered that it was difficult for parents to attend the three

consecutive Sunday meetings. Being a mother of four, I had wondered if this would be an issue to contend with, but until I actually hosted the Family Book Club I was not completely aware of the impact. One family, for example, was able to only attend the first and second sessions due to a prior family commitment. During the second meeting, a mother and her son rushed in, knowing they were running late, having just come from a previous activity. Perhaps had I held only one Sunday session for a longer period of time, more family members would have been able to participate and under less stressful circumstances. Parent feedback, however, did not indicate negativity toward the three consecutive meetings.

I feel more parents and their children may have participated had there been two sessions, rather than three. I think decreasing the number of times to meet could increase participation without hindering my goals. For example, two parents who attended the "How To" meeting realized they would not be able to attend all three consecutive meetings, so they chose to not participate. They did, however, appreciate the chance to learn more about the book clubs in which their children participate. I would also need to consider those students who wanted to participate, but whose parents were unable to come. Would I make accommodations for them to join us even if a parent or other adult family member could not attend? I think the experience would still be beneficial because of the influence of other positive adults, and exceptions could be made to include interested students who had parental permission. Choosing to host the meetings on Sunday afternoon was not an issue in my particular community, but it may not be an option in other communities. Teachers need to be aware of cultural differences in their communities and the days on which families

may and may not be available. Selling the opportunity to be involved in a Family Book Club that meets outside of school hours is important--especially for pre-adolescent students. When I first discussed the idea with my students, I wanted them to realize they were being given the opportunity *to teach* their parents how book clubs operate in our classroom. I assured them they were up for the challenge of being role models for their parents. I also wanted them to realize that this was a "cool way" to spend some quality time with Dad or Mom. As an added bonus, I assured them there would be less reading homework because of the extra reading they would be doing for Family Book Club. As their faces started to light up, a hand darted up with a question, "Will there be snacks?" Typically, while regular book clubs meet, students munch on their mid-morning snack, so this question was expected. "Yes, there certainly will be!" I responded. "O.K., then, sounds like fun." Others chuckled and nodded in agreement. Clearly, the idea of being *the teacher* to their parents, having less reading homework, and the promise of snacks seemed to be enticing to the fifth grade students.

I expected the Family Book Club novel to inspire the members to talk about making choices and the universal difficulties associated with growing up. I thought that perhaps using literature that has a hero reflecting the moral or ethical perspectives of a culture would be a way to expand the possible discussion topics. During the 1990s, there was a renewal of concern in American classrooms for teaching and learning about values--standards that everyone should have about what is good or bad (Sanchez, 1998). Indeed my colleagues and I were already incorporating read-aloud novels that supported the teaching of values such as being

honest, taking responsibility for ones actions, and making positive choices. I thought *In the Year of the Boar* would complement the themes of those read-alouds.

Dramatic stories with female and males heroes are likely to attract the attention of adolescent readers, to pique their interest, and to raise questions among them that lead to talk about values. Furthermore, stories about heroes provide examples of values that students can recognize and emulate (Vitz, 1990; Wynne and Ryan, 1993).

Although some of the students said they were not very interested at the beginning of the book, they said they became more engrossed as time went on. *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* is not an action packed book, but one that requires reflection and interpretation. Jackie Robinson is considered by many to be a hero, and the main character, Shirley, acts obediently towards her parents and her family's Chinese traditions. Although she is not famous, Shirley acts as a heroine in the book. According to Sanchez (1998), a hero is defined not as a mere celebrity or famous person. "The heroic person expresses values through self-sacrificing acts that benefit others and the community. And others are inspired and united in recognition of the hero's selfless contributions to the common good" (pg. 1). From the comments of the parents in this project, it was evident that they felt positive about the chance to discuss the moral conflicts in the book and the ways they were overcome through Shirley's optimism and resolve.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers understand that when meaningful opportunities to contribute to a child's education arise, parents have the potential for making a difference (Come & Fredericks, 1995).

The parents' contributions to the Book Club discussions--their insights, questions, and sharing of personal experiences--made a difference. As one parent commented via email:

I saw my participation in the book club as a way to support my son in his interest. He expressed interest in doing it, and needed my support to do so, and it was also an opportunity to spend some one-on-one quality time with him... you know, a project we worked on together.

Another parent commented:

It was interesting to see my daughter interact with her peers and sort through the friendship issues in the book. They [the students] would talk about what they would do in Shirley's situation, and ask the adults what they would do.

Through this experience, the children were able to interact with their parents as readers and to explore complex issues about growing up in our society, making good choices, staying true to oneself, and respecting themselves and others. These discussions were spurred by the content of one book. I would like to imagine the communication that might occur if parents were inspired to continue reading books and talking about them with their pre-adolescent students. It would be great if such experiences as the Family Book Club would prompt parents to express more interest in the books their children are reading--if they would more frequently ask, "Hey, Son! What good book are you reading now? Why don't you tell me about it?"

Perhaps, too, when “Johnny” comes to school asking his teacher for another copy of the book his book club is reading, the teacher’s first thought will not be, “Oh, no. What are these parents concerned about?” but rather, “Sure! I bet your parents will enjoy it. Be sure to let them know when we’ll be meeting in case they’d like to stop by!”

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