

Doing Well and Doing Good

Goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble; yet
knowledge without goodness is dangerous.

~ Samuel Phillips, circa 1780

Samuel Phillips had it right. The founder of the famous school bearing his name in Andover, Massachusetts, recognized that the development of character in young people should not be based solely on good values or academic prowess. It should be based on uniting goodness and knowledge in equal measure to produce citizens who will be both successful and humane ~ people who will become effective but compassionate leaders in business, the professions, academia, science, and the arts.

Phillips's statement is just as salient today. At Moorestown Friends School, we ask ourselves regularly how we can best prepare young people to lead purposeful lives. We ask how we can foster our students' ability to compete successfully, as adults, in the marketplace for goods, services, and ideas, while simultaneously asking how we can be sure they are developing the values that will make them a force for good in the world.

In short, we seek to produce graduates who will do well and do good.

The academic program in all grades at Moorestown Friends is rigorous. Our graduates head off well-prepared to some of the nation's most selective colleges and universities. But many strong schools, public and private, do a good job of preparing students academically for college. Only a few, however, place equal emphasis on the development of each student's spiritual and ethical capacity.

Drawing on the wisdom of Socrates who said "the unexamined life is not worth living," at MFS we have made "The

Examined Life" central to our program. Our goal is to help students at every grade level evaluate problems critically, understand the ethical component of knowledge and action, respond with resilience to challenges, and remain open to the spiritual dimension of their lives.

The "Examined Life" works effectively at all grade levels through a well-articulated ethics curriculum. Being "good" is not the goal so much as understanding what "good" is and then acting on that understanding. Personal ethics spring from the ability to empathize with others and to take responsibility for one's actions.

Students at Moorestown Friends come from all faith traditions. The Quaker understanding of universal access to spiritual support and guidance (Quakers call it the "inner light") allows the school to nurture the inner lives of our students. We encourage students to be self-disciplined ~ to act in response to their conscience because that is the right thing to do rather than because they will receive some sort of punishment or reward.

Genuinely successful people are those who can use their intellectual tools to solve complex problems of all sorts - moral as well as practical or theoretical - and whose hearts are part of the equation. For our graduates, compassion and empathy live side by side with clear thinking and hard work. These graduates bring to their professional and personal lives "tough minds and tender hearts" ~ qualities that produce meaningful accomplishment and lives dedicated to the greater good.

MFS | 1785

Moorestown Friends School
Celebrating 225 years