

**A Note from Mr. Krause (Nenana Principal)
March – 2008**

Developing those relationships that you forge inside a community is a necessary prerequisite to engaging young people.

They need to have trusting relationships and apprentice themselves to adults. Academic learning can best happen if the relationships that are foundational to building communities are in place.

I was sitting with a friend the other day who he was telling me how bummed out he was that he missed so many opportunities to spend time with his son. His boy is older now, but he still has a younger one who he's trying to do the right things for. While he can do the right things for his youngest son, it doesn't diminish the regret he feels for missing relationship-building opportunities with his oldest.

As a parent, I have about thirteen years to develop a decent relationship with my kids. After that, if the relationship isn't already built they're probably not likely to listen to me (as teenagers I'll be lucky if they listen to my anyway! ☺). Thirteen years of spending "quantity time" and not just "quality time". The "quality time" is not likely to occur if the "quantity time" never happens. Thirteen years of building a foundation of trust. It sounds like a long time but it sure goes quick!

One of the reasons I decided to become an elementary teacher, about 20 years ago, was because I could remember (and still can) every elementary teacher I ever had. They made a difference in my life. They made a difference because of relationships. They cared about me, I knew it, and wanted to learn because of it. I even felt guilty if I disappointed them! Elementary teachers are fortunate to have so much time to spend with their students.

High school teachers have a more difficult task. Even if they are fortunate enough to have students for four years, they usually only teach them for 50 minutes a day. 50 minutes a day to build trusting relationships with one hundred students is a huge challenge. I'm proud of the efforts Nenana City School's staff makes to build trusting relationships with their students. Without those relationships they know that student engagement in what's being taught is unlikely to occur.

Nenana City School's next step is to become a more welcoming place for parents and the community. More on that topic in an upcoming newsletter!