

Junior Ambassadors Create Good Mornings For Fellow Students

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As the first car in a line of vehicles dropping students off pulls to a stop in front of Corbett Hall at Independent Day School-Corbett, Casey Bauer is right there waiting—standing straight and tall and ready with a bright smile. He pulls open the car’s door and greets the primary student inside with an energetic, “Good morning!” As she jumps out the door, Casey cheerfully wishes her a nice day, carefully closes the van door, steps back, and waits for the next car.

Casey is one of 21 fifth graders who volunteered to become “junior ambassadors” – students who gladly come to school early to assist teachers with morning drop-off. It’s an important job because in addition to keeping traffic flowing smoothly, their efforts can make a big difference in helping other students start their days off on a positive note.

For the past 10 years, IDS-CC middle school students have been able to serve the school community as volunteer “ambassadors.” Traditionally, these students have conducted tours during open houses, assisted during special events, and acted as mentors for student visitors on campus. Art teacher Debbie Kerr developed the idea of junior ambassadors to extend the ambassador concept to fifth graders as a solution to a genuine need for added assistance during drop-off.

In addition to serving the school, becoming a junior ambassador gives these “senior” students on the east side of the campus the opportunity to exercise leadership abilities. They begin by participating in a training session that reviews safety procedures and reinforces interpersonal skills emphasizing courtesy and sensitivity to the needs of the youngest IDS-CC students who may still be adjusting to school routines.

“The focus we place on character, integrity, respect, service and the development of other positive values throughout the early grades becomes much more natural by fifth grade,” said Kerr. “Presented with an option to go above and beyond what is expected, these students are eager to jump in. It’s very gratifying to see their enthusiasm to serve the community and the wonderful connections between children in different grade levels.”

“They needed help and I like to get involved in a lot of school activities,” said Carina Grand, “so I volunteered.”

“I’m a morning person,” said Kayla Lloyd. “I like to get up early and get fresh air, and this way I can do that and help other people.”

The increased confidence, self-assurance and poise that junior ambassadors experience as a result of their service and leadership in fifth grade provides a firm stepping stone to middle school and rising to new and higher expectations.

Besides, according to Alena Joyiens and Joshua Kartheiser working together one morning, “It’s fun to help out!”

Founded in 1968, Independent Day School-Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, independent school located on Orange Grove Drive in northwest Hillsborough County with 550 students from PreK3 through 8th grade. At IDS, all children experience learning in a nurturing and highly academic environment focused on excellence and developing a positive self-concept. IDS-CC has become recognized as an exemplary school with over 3,000 visitors observing and learning from and with IDS-CC teachers. For more information about IDS visit www.idsy.es.com.

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