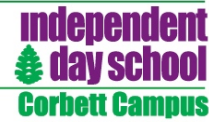


# NEWS RELEASE



## Learning About Happiness, Gratitude Inspires IDS-CC Students

*During the annual middle school retreat at Independent Day School-Corbett Campus, students reflected on how to achieve success by applying scientific research on happiness to their own lives and learning.*

**Sept. 15, 2011 (TAMPA, Fla.)** – It was the perfect way to begin a retreat for middle schoolers – with a YouTube video. Within seconds, an 8-month-old baby laughing hysterically over ripping paper had 181 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders smiling and laughing.

On that morning, the video – which had been available online for less than 7 months – had already been viewed more than 26 million times.

"Clearly, the popularity of this video indicates that laughter is contagious," said Independent Day School-Corbett Campus Headmaster Dr. Joyce Burick Swarzman. "Laughter spreads joy; and now scientific research proves that when we're happy, we're more successful."



*Throughout the retreat, students reflected on the impact of happiness and a positive attitude on success.*

And that premise, Dr. Swarzman reminded students, was the fundamental principle on which Independent Day School-Corbett Campus was founded.

"In 1968, two wise women started IDS on the ideal that happy children who are respected as unique individuals will be excited about school and eager to learn," said Dr. Swarzman. "We focus on developing a positive approach to life and learning because we have always believed that being positive and joyful is key to success. And now research supports that philosophy."

That scientific research on happiness, conducted by

internationally renowned positive psychology expert Shawn Achor and explained in his motivational management video, "The Happiness Advantage," was the theme for the 2011 Middle School Retreat. The retreat is a yearly middle school tradition that takes place over two mornings inside the school's Farish Center and is led by Dr. Swarzman, a training expert.

"Dr. Swarzman conducts these retreats exactly the way she does training for adults," said Middle School Division Leader Betty George. "Doing so sets a high level of expectation for the students. Treating them with dignity and respect also means we will receive it in return."

*Please turn over for the rest of the article.*

**Learning About Happiness, Gratitude Inspires IDS-CC Students**

*The story is continued here.*

Students were organized into small groups at long tables, intermingling all grade levels. The goal was to give everyone an opportunity to learn together with classmates in other grades and encourage community building.

The retreat format integrated guided viewing of Achor's video with time for individual reflection and journaling that was interspersed with small-team discussion facilitated by teachers.

This year's focus on Achor's research about the science of happiness showed students that the brain when primed to be positive and happy, outperforms the brain that is primed to be negative or even neutral.

"And that correlates so well to what we have always strived to do at IDS, which is to create a positive environment for kids," said Mrs. George. "Shawn Achor's research shows that being happy and positive fuels success."

It was a message that clearly resonated with IDS-CC middle schoolers.

Eighth grader Daniela Torres, for example, was eager to share the advantages of being a happy person with her family.



*Students showed gratitude for classmates entering the Farish Center for the retreat. Middle schoolers also practiced gratitude by doing the popular "Gratitude Dance."*

"Although I am usually positive, Shawn Achor's video triggered a certain consciousness and ever since then I have been watching my attitude and trying to truly make the best of everything," said Daniela. "I also began to ask myself, 'How can I make sure that I can spread the happiness to those who surround me?'"

"A grateful person is a happy person. And a person who has a positive outlook on life and is happy is more successful," said classmate Sam Goetz.

Eighth-grade student Jonah Kornberg said having the opportunity to watch the video and reflect on its message taught him about how the brain works, in addition to the ways that he can make himself a better, more well-rounded person. "This video taught me that life is limitless," said Jonah. "And it inspired me to be better in every way possible."

"It made me think of all the things I am grateful for and to show gratitude," said seventh grader Acacia Madrone.

"Growing up at IDS and being raised and taught to be positive, it comes as second nature now," said Lumiere Rostick, an eighth grader. "But Shawn Achor has shown me the importance of being positive and how it can and will help me be more successful in the future."

*Founded in 1968, Independent Day School: Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, nonsectarian private school located on Orange Grove Drive in northwest Hillsborough County with over 500 students from PreK3 through 8th grade. At IDS, all children experience the International Baccalaureate Programme in a highly academic and nurturing environment focused on excellence and excitement in learning. IDS-CC has become recognized as an exemplary school with over 7,000 visitors observing and learning from IDS-CC teachers. For more information, visit [www.idsyas.com](http://www.idsyas.com) or contact the Admissions Office at 813-961-3087 for a personal tour.*