



EAGLE RIDGE ACADEMY

Feb. 22, 2018

Dear Eagle Ridge Academy Community,

The flags at Eagle Ridge Academy have flown at half-staff since Feb. 14. First by order of Governor Dayton in honor of Walnut Grove native, Air Force fighter pilot, and Medal of Honor recipient, Leo Thorsness. Then on Feb. 15, they were at half-staff by order of President Trump in remembrance of the shooting victims in Parkland, FL. This week, Eagle Ridge Academy will fly our flags at half-staff in remembrance of Isha Kambil, our 3rd grade student who passed away unexpectedly on Feb. 17. As the Executive Director of Eagle Ridge Academy I proclaim:

Now, Therefore, I, Jason Allen Ulbrich, Executive Director of Eagle Ridge Academy in Minnesota, do hereby, order all flags at Eagle Ridge Academy to be flown at half-staff, from sunrise until sunset, on the week of February 17 of each year, in remembrance of Isha Kambil. A beloved and virtuous student of Eagle Ridge Academy.

Flying our flags at half-staff is a symbolic sign for grief or mourning. Isha and her family are members of the Eagle Ridge Academy family and we mourn for their loss as Isha's passing was a loss for all of us.

I want to thank Eagle Ridge Academy families for all the kind words and your support on the Isha's [Go Fund Me Page](#). All week we have also been supporting the students and teachers in 3rd grade with our grief counselors. Together teachers and students are processing this difficult situation. Too often in life we are unable to explain why to ourselves or our children, but at Eagle Ridge Academy we care most about what makes us human. According to Socrates, to be fully human, the human soul must be nurtured properly through knowledge, wisdom, and virtue. Plato, Socrates's student, goes on to explain that a human is naturally a social being, and that we are not self-sufficient. We need and benefit from others. These social interactions and friendships allow us to rise above animal existence in order to become fully human (Carido and Salanga). Eagle Ridge Academy believes that nurturing the human soul and cultivating the wisdom of our children are our foremost goals.

After Expansion Review

Over the past few years, so much has changed at Eagle Ridge Academy because of significant enrollment expansion. This year marks the last year for significant expansion. In 2016-17, we added about 400 students and in 2017-18, we added about 200. Beginning next year, the increases in enrollment will come primarily from natural vertical growth as our students advance in grades.

Now is the perfect time to conduct an After Expansion Review (AER). The AER is a comprehensive look at our success, weaknesses, and possible next steps. The AER process will use data reviews, surveys, and small group interviews of all stakeholder groups to better understand where we have been and where we are going. My goal is to present the community and the Eagle Ridge Academy Board of Directors with a comprehensive report in July 2018.

Present Parenting

Over the past two generations, the percentage of families with two parents working at least part-time outside of the house has doubled from 31% to 60% in 2016 (Office of Finance). The reasons for more parents working outside the home are numerous and complex. The fact is parents are busier than ever before. The Ulbrich family falls in the category of two fulltime working parents. My wife and I often feel the strain and stress of balancing work and family. There is a constant push and pull from all sides.

The time constraint and technological advances during the same time period have actually changed the way many of us parent. As parents we are less available to our children and that void has been filled by smartphones, Netflix, and iPads. Walk through Costco or take a car ride, and you will observe toddlers engaged with a device instead of singing a song or looking through a picture book. Why? Because it is easier.

The consequences of this new parenting style can now be seen in our children. In my 20 years of educating and coaching children, I have never seen students become bored or lose their patience so easy in school. Our children too often feel the need to be entertained or kept occupied, all because we have used technology as free babysitting.

I recently have read a blog by Occupational Therapist Victoria Prooday titled [Reasons Today's Kids are Bored at School, Feel Entitled, Have Little Patience, and Few Real Friends](#). Victoria writes in [her blog](#) about modern day parenting and its impact on a child's nervous system providing some practical parenting advice.

We are getting close to our Spring Break here at Eagle Ridge Academy. I know we are all looking forward to the needed rest and hopefully warm weather. Let's make a commitment as parents to practice present parenting during that week.

Sincerely,

Jason Ulbrich
Executive Director