Editor’s Letter-Spring 2013

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Stop the Violence Now

Many people would agree that children are the world’s most precious natural resource. Without them, there is no tomorrow and humanity heads to certain extinction. Those are the thoughts that played through my head at the end of 2012, when the year closed hard on the heels of a heinous massacre that still defies all understanding.

The shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, is not the first school shooting in this country. But because the children lost their lives to a gunman who was just a few years out of his own childhood, the crime seems particularly disturbing and dark.

Before the Sandy Hook incident, the likelihood of a massacre was probably the last thing on the minds of parents as they sent their kids to school. Not anymore. Incidents like this can fill even the most optimistic among us with fear and doubt. Nonetheless, as we make our way into another year, we struggle to see a time that’s filled with hope and promise.

And it can be a struggle. There are those who say the way to prevent these massacres is to put armed guards in our schools. When I first heard that suggestion, I must say it left me feeling totally cold. I imagined that school life now included the possibility that gunplay could erupt at any moment, with two sides firing away and kids caught helplessly in the middle.

What the solution to the problem is, I cannot say. Each time I hear about crimes like these, I wonder if somehow the act could have been routed years into the past. Not just through tougher gun control laws, but through better health care across the nation, a system that would help people such as the shooter.

Mental health is an important part of everyone’s life. Today, the stress of living has robbed even young and innocent children of what are supposed to be the most carefree days of their lives. I’ve seen youngsters who struggle in their harsh environments. I’ve seen the aging faces of children forced to deal with adult problems before they are of age. It’s a sad thing to see.

A report made shortly after the Newtown school massacre concluded that schools are the safest places where students spend time during the day. By and large I’d like to think that this assessment is true. Still, I can’t help but feel there is something that we can do to help stop the madness from happening again.

In the home, parents are the first line of defense to keep our children safe. But what are we doing to make sure our kids don’t do harm to others? Often, the safety of people in our communities depends on how much attention we pay at home to what’s going on with our children.

To me, this—not hiring armed gunmen to patrol the schools—seems a much more reasonable approach to resolving the problem.

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