

Episode 8: Life In The Middle @ NHMS

[00:00:05] Hi, everyone, and welcome to our Life in the Middle podcast. I'm your host, David Simpson, and I'm the principal here at Northern Hills Middle School. Every episode I'll be sharing updates and happenings from NHMS. Along with bringing guests to share advice and tips on how to help us all navigate these middle years. Thanks for tuning in.

[00:00:28] And welcome to another exciting podcast of Life in the Middle. At an NHMS, we have a record number of participants in the recording studio today. I thought last time was a record. We had a total of four of us on the podcast. But today, listeners, we have five of us in the podcast. I even had to get a new Y splitter for the microphones just to accommodate everyone in the studio. But it's exciting because we have four of our students from our Lead the way/ GLI class. Here to talk about their plans for how our school is going to celebrate Martin Luther King Day in January. It is a tradition here at Northern Hills that our students take the lead in this celebration and honoring Dr. King's legacy. And I am so proud to present these students from GLI/lead the way class as they represent their entire class who has been working hard on this experience for our students. Now, when I first met these students, they came to me with a proposal. And I'm going to introduce Jose first. But in our studio today, we have Luke, Katie, Jose and Ryan. But the first question, Jose, we met in a conference room not too far away from the recording studio. Can you tell me about what you were thinking about going into that meeting?

[00:01:47] Well, we were first thinking about how we were going to go about this, because what the basic things that we need to learn is how are how are the kids that we're presenting to you? How are they going to go about and how are they going to remember the Martin Luther King and the rights? So we thought that we would do a video that the kids could watch and with a little sheet that they have to fill out. And later they will do a cahoots to make sure they were like listening. And then they have a better understanding and then they will do a reflection.

[00:02:19] After that, we are gonna go to a little more detail later about that. But that was a great overview. So, Katie, if I could ask a question of Katie. You said just a little bit ago that you're a little nervous about being on the podcast. That's normal. Were you nervous when you had to create that presentation to share to me?

[00:02:37] I was also nervous through that presentation because I feel like any student, when they're talking to the principal, if I'm I nervous.

[00:02:44] I was so impressed, Katie, with what you talked about that day. Ryan, can you share a little bit more about the preparation for that initial presentation? Because that had to go well in order for you to tell the story of what your class was planning on. So what did you do to prepare for that day?

[00:03:02] Yes. So pretty much we just had like a week of preparation of in class time. So just the four of us sat in the middle of the class and we just kind of brainstormed each other. And then we asked if we had any questions we'd ask the rest of the class around us. So then we just like perfected it and then mastered our speech. So we had the best information for you.

[00:03:20] So, Luke, in thinking about that presentation, we talk a lot about Northern Hills. We learn a lot of academic content in our classrooms, but we learn so much more than

that. Things like problem solving, critical thinking, communication. You had to be a communicator that day when you first initially presented what did you do to practice?

[00:03:39] I talk a lot and generally just so I could talk to other people being more prepared to talk to someone who's a little more intimidating, I guess. And the practice was worth it. And I personally think it went very smooth and it was worth it all.

[00:03:53] I would agree with you that day. I walked away and I went to Sra. Groce, who is the teacher of the lead the way/GLI class. And I remember sharing with her how impressed I was with your professionalism. That was a quote that I used. So, Jose, after our initial meeting, then the next step was to share your classes vision with the staff at a staff meeting. See you at 30, 35 teachers. It was I think was like 7, 20 in the morning was early. What do you think about that experience?

[00:04:25] I thought it was very scary because, I mean, I do talk a lot, but I really don't talk to grown ups that much, I guess. But I did feel like I was very confident and I was confident and my mom and my fellow classmates that we would all do really good.

[00:04:40] And I know our staff was impressed with what you were doing that day and your presentation. Ryan, if I could have you think about this question for a little bit. Not only was your presentation very professional, well thought out from your class, but why is this so important? Why does our lead the way class? Take this on. What what do you hope to get out of it? Why? Why are we doing this?

[00:05:05] Yeah, we just pretty much think it's important to see how much Dr. King inspired us and how much of an impact he has today. So we're showing how he doesn't only contribute well, how African-Americans are treated nowadays, but how it affects everybody.

[00:05:23] Katie? When you're thinking about Martin Luther King and his legacy and why is he so important? What message would you want to give to our listeners on why you put so much time and effort into this day to benefit the five hundred and seventy two students here at Northern Hills?

[00:05:41] I think it's really important that students here know the impact that he made on human rights and civil rights.

[00:05:48] So Luke Jose told us a little bit about the day and overview. Can you give our listeners more detail? Can you kind of go in depth with what they're going to experience on that day?

[00:06:00] Oh, yeah. So what kind of start of the day introducing all of the 30 human rights. And so the students will already be a little bit prepared by seeing the rights around the school. And so we're kind of just going to see how much they know. After that, we'll show them a 10 minute long video about their human rights and then so they can take notes during that for the guy who later in the winners of the case who compete. And like I mean, like the other winners get a prize.

[00:06:26] So when talking about the class, can Jose, can you share a little bit? You're a seventh grader here at Northern Hills. So your first semester on Friday is officially over. Congratulations, by the way, but lead the way. So you're a sixth grader. You're looking at

class descriptions, course descriptions, and you see lead the way. July, why'd you sign up for that class?

[00:06:47] I signed up originally because I feel like I can make a difference and I feel like other people can if they just give them give themselves a chance to make a bigger impact on the world.

[00:07:00] And from this class. And now as you end. Where do you think you've seen the most personal growth?

[00:07:07] I've seen the most personal growth in my able to be speaking to like larger groups than just my friends, and I feel like people need to be more open to new opportunities than just what they're comfortable with.

[00:07:21] And Ryan, kind of the same question to you. What do you see as personal growth areas from taking July lead the way or even through leading this project? Uh, with your classmates?

[00:07:33] Uh, yeah. Similar experience with Jose. I just noticed that I've been significantly better at presenting. So if I have an idea, I can share it formally. To get the message on board, but also looking professional at the same time.

[00:07:47] Katie, now that the semester's ending. What would you say to students? Because we actually start thinking about the scheduling process for next year already in February. Believe it or not. What would you say to some of our listeners maybe who are at northern trails, sixth grade families or seventh graders about this class? And what can they expect day to day from the GLI lead the way class?

[00:08:13] I really like this class. I'm taking it both semesters because I like it so much. I think it's a really great class to take because it teaches you how to be a better leader and how to be not so single minded.

[00:08:27] Same question to you. You said it started before this podcast. When we're in preproduction meeting that you were nervous and you mentioned being nervous when you presented before. How do you think this classes helped you with that be able to speak, be able to meet in an environment in front of 35 teachers in front of your classmates? How do you feel about that?

[00:08:47] Yeah, I think it has helped me. I've always been nervous presenting because I'm just so scared I'm gonna mess up. But I think it has helped.

[00:08:55] And what would Mrs. Telzerow say about making mistakes or failing through something? Do you know? Do you know she talks about kind of mindset. Do we talk about a lot?

[00:09:04] Having a growth mindset? Yeah.

[00:09:06] We learn from mistakes. We fail forward. And so I know our staff has done a lot with that. And so I know that she'll be proud of that courage that you have right now because it's not easy to get on a podcast and be able to speak about that. And it's definitely not easy to be a seventh or eighth grader standing in front of 30, 35 teachers, basically convincing them or sharing your ideas and getting them on board with that. So,

Luke, Luke, as a seventh grader, again, you signed up. You saw this back when you were a sixth grader, probably long time ago. You don't know my name. You remember. Has this class given you what you've wanted, what you hoped for it and those experiences, everything and more?

[00:09:44] It's been really good. So tell me about the more I was expecting to be. It's a very diverse class and we learn about many different cultures. And that, I think is really nice and helps me. It helps open my mind to other different like different people see the world.

[00:09:58] That's a theme that I've that I've heard from from you all today, just about that diverse piece, that collaboration piece, working with others, sharing your ideas. Ryan, what would you say your classmates are thinking about? Martin Luther King and their role in that? Are they excited about it? And could you kind of represent the voice of your classmates right now at this point?

[00:10:21] Right now we are very stressed because we're not going to be able to take the lead any further beyond December. So we're just we kind of got to wrap it all together and tie the bow on it right now. So we're kind of losing because our semester ends a little bit earlier this year, because last year they had almost a whole other month, which would would have helped us a lot. So we're a little kind of a madhouse right now, but we're getting it all together.

[00:10:47] So knowing it's a madhouse. But the four of you are sitting right here. Must be a lot of trust. So, Jose, a lot of trust in your classmates who are working really hard right now. But I think about what you just said, Ryan, and I think about the skills we talked about that earlier, things like collaboration, problem solving, but project management. As adults, we have deadlines. We have things that we need to get done. So sounds like you're getting a feel of what it's like to have a real deadline and then making sure things are set. Jose, how do you feel about that?

[00:11:18] I do feel stressed like what Ryan said. I do really feel stressed that we I do have faith that we can get this all done on time. But part of me also thinks that we. Might be putting not too much thought into it, but probably like we're stressing out too much.

[00:11:36] So, yeah, but that's what life is about. Sometimes projects with things needed to get done. So I just want to say, on behalf of our entire husky crew community, I just want to say thank you so much for your leadership, for having the courage to think about Dr. King's legacy and work so hard to create an experience for our students, our husky crew that they'll take with them. And they'll learn at deeper levels about the impact of Dr. King, not only in the past, but their lives today. And lastly, I just want to say thank you for all four of you just being you. As I said earlier on the podcast, be in our preproduction meeting. One of my favorites lines is be yourself. Everyone else is already taken. And I think that kind of is the deal I can convince in that theme of the lead the way is that be your own unique self. Don't try to be somebody else. And so on behalf of all of our listeners and in our husky crew community. Thank you for your efforts. Thank you for your leadership. And we cannot wait to experience the Martin Luther King Day experience that your class and all four of you had worked so hard on. Thank you.

[00:12:47] Thanks again for listening to Life in the Middle podcast. I'd like to thank Kevin MacLeod for composing the music featured on this show. Have a great day.