

Measurement (Webcast #4) Balloon Rocket Lesson

(links for viewing and download at end of transcript)

Jarma Wrihten: So excited to have you here today -- Ed just shared something really cute with me so I'm kind of giggly -- but we're happy to have you. Ed Patee: I'm happy to be here.

Jarma: [Laughs] And we want you to really feel comfortable in sharing your story about being involved in Head Start, how your interest was spurred in becoming involved as a father, and take it from here.

Ed: Okay. My interest in Head Start, actually to be real honest with you, was economic to begin with. There is a Head Start site a few miles from my house. I've got like three children, a son that's 15; I've got two daughters age six and -- and four, right now. At the time my six-year-old daughter needed to go to a preschool, I felt -- 'cause I felt that was important -- couldn't afford it, decided to check Head Start out. I've been on the Policy Council since 2007 for the county and -- as well as numerous committees. What spurred me to go ahead and do that was -- was basically two things.

One, I think as a responsible parent, as a father, I believe it's important for me to be involved with all aspects of my kid's life, especially the early education and all the way through. The second thing was, to be quite honest, and this is something that I've encountered over the last couple of years, is nobody else wanted to do it -- okay -- which is unfortunate. I got involved, was told initially, "Here's what you need to do."

"You need to drive down to San Bernardino from where you live once a month, go to a two-hour meeting, come back, and fill me in on what went on." And -- and that was it. And for the bare minimum that was true, but I was fortunate enough to meet a couple of people who had -- had been on the Policy Council for two -- two years at the time I started, and they reminded me what volunteerism was all about.

It was picking a cause or a choice that you believed in and that you felt strongly about and -- and giving of whatever you could of yourself, you know, your time, your efforts, your thoughts, your abilities or lack thereof sometimes, and -- and -- and just showing up and -- and doing it. And -- and these people traveled much farther -- I traveled like 45 miles one way to go to a meeting; these people were traveling like two hours one direction.

And I thought if they could do it I certainly can. And once I started getting involved in one committee, it just led to more and more and more until it's -- every time somebody said we could use somebody to -- to do this or do that, you know -- I started -- I started becoming Mr. Volunteerism, as well. And it's -- it's really been very worthwhile. I -- I was telling a young lady sitting outside earlier, I end up over the last couple of years -- and I -- I'm really going to miss this after this, my third and final year, 'cause they do have term limits here that they stick to.

But as much as I try to go ahead and -- and be a part of and -- and volunteer for and give as much as I can, I still walk away from everything I've been involved in and I end up feeling as though I'm somehow kind of cheating Head Start because I feel I walk away with more than I've been able to give, to be real honest with you.

Jarma: Wow, and you've given so much, and I'm sure that the -- that the Head Start staffers love you, enjoy your participation. How do you see yourself as being able to take all that you've gained then -- 'cause you said that they've given much -- so all that you've gained and sharing it with other people in the community?

Ed: Well, I've been doing that not only at -- at the site that I represent, you know, trying to generate more interest in parents in general and fathers in particular, but also for people... When -- when my oldest daughter, she went for one year then started kindergarten, and I started having what I call "soccer mom talks" with -- with other moms and dads at the bus stop. I've even gone so far as to pick up information and enrollment packages for people who I thought, "Well, okay you've got a child that's going to be starting preschool, have you considered this?" You know?

And I'll -- I'll stop at the -- at the site and pick stuff up and bring it to them. Whoever I encounter that I think might even remotely be interested in any kind of preschool services, I always talk highly about my involvement with -- with Head Start, what it's done for my children. I know my -- my oldest daughter, first trimester meeting with the teacher when she was in kindergarten, she already aced everything she needed to know to go to first grade at that point.

Jarma: She was prepared. Ed: Yeah, I mean, she was prepared before she got to kindergarten, you know. So -- and it's just -- just been -- it's been great. I can't say enough good things about it, to be honest with you. Jarma: So what advice would you give to other fathers in terms of getting involved in Head Start, and just what would be your final key message to send to the Head Start community?

Ed: First off, this is -- I mean, you know, occasionally I'll be asked by people, you know, why are you doing this? And -- and -- and it -- that's just always been a very baffling question to me. God sakes, it's my -- my children I'm talking about, you know, and the children of others. And -- and, I think, you know, it's -- it's -- it's an opportunity to actually have a say-so in -- in what goes on. I've found that Head Start has been very receptive to listening to any questions or concerns I might have had, and I've had them from -- you know, I've had questions about a lot of things all my life.

I've had questions about Head Start and -- and it's functioning since the beginning, and I've always been fortunate enough to have somebody there to -- to go ahead and address whatever issues I might have brought up and to make me feel a part of the process. There are so many things that -- that can be offered, not just... I mean, there -- there's the obvious that -- that it does give your child or your children who attend an advantage when they do start in -- in compulsory education. I found that out personally.

But there are also -- they can, you know... Part of -- part of the -- the enrollment process that I think a lot of people overlook is -- is, you know, they -- okay, they ask you just what it is that you have in terms of family goals, what you might need assistance with, and whatever it is, whether it's returning to the work force, furthering your education, getting training, getting help with utility payments assistance, you know, getting just all kinds of things...

...and -- and they can hook you up with that either directly or -- or they know the people to send you to have it done. And -- and -- there's -- it's just -- it's foolish not go ahead and avail yourself to -- to things that are -- that are offered to you and then sit around and complain.

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-- Premalink for viewing (requires Flash and javascript)

<http://videos.sorensonmedia.com/HEAD+START/000095-Ed+Paree+Parent+Interview-2009-SD360p/d619e6dbwb413m4138Wac50918218117dd0a>