

Letter of Commitment and Challenge

To: All Faculty and Staff who will touch the lives of our children

In a handful of days, our children will be starting school at your school. We have been trying to alleviate their anxiety by saying, "It's normal to be a little afraid. . . ." But it's not their anxiety we're concerned about. It's ours!

As we approach the beginning of school, we are feeling the mixed emotions that all parents must feel just before their children begin school for the first time:

- Will they do well academically?
- Will they be leaders or followers?
- Will they respect their teachers?
- Will their spiritual perspective be strengthened?
- Will their character be improved?

And then we wonder what kind of parents we will be. Will we support the work of the teachers? Having both been teachers, we remember many times that the biggest problem some of the students had was their parents! So we think we know exactly how to be model parents in support of the teachers. Will our emotions let us fulfill that role?

It dramatically impresses us that

you will have a direct influence over the two human beings that God has entrusted to us. For nearly 2,000 hours this first year alone, you will have the opportunity to guide their young minds toward eternal choices.

Although the majority of the curriculum will be academic, of much more importance to us is their character development. We want them to approach all aspects of school with energy. To stretch themselves far beyond what is expected. To go the extra mile. To be honest. To be a cheerful influence on both students and teachers. To develop a positive mental attitude. To learn that it is OK to try new things. And if you don't reach the desired objective, that learning still took place. To be the kind of students that teachers love to be around—and we remember the pleasure of having those kind of students. Sometimes they are like an oasis in a very dry desert. May our children be that refreshing to you.

In our opinion, school is an experience, not a place. It should equip children with life-long habits and a perspective that they can always

learn new things that will give balance to our lives. During their first few years, we have tried to influence our girls in this direction. Lots of progress has been made with much more to go. We need your help.

We therefore commit ourselves to be model parents. To communicate with you as often as possible. To reinforce your school lessons at home. To somehow be open minded when you share with us areas of needed change and improvement. It is not a question that flaws exist, but whether or not we will be mature enough to see them as clearly as you can.

We challenge you to commit yourselves to the eternal future of our children. To not let character flaws slip by. To be firm and loving as your own character is exhibited. Please keep us informed of things we can do to support your efforts. Don't be hesitant to point out the negatives. We promise to take them constructively. Please don't feel as though you have to limit your reports to the scheduled times.

We entrust you with our children because we trust you. It is your commitment to these goals that makes the tuition costs an unparalleled good investment. We are so fortunate to have such a school for our girls. Teaching is such hard work. We know a little about that. But we also know that the hard work is made a little lighter when you consider the positive impact you have on so many lives.

And now, two more little girls will enter into your lives, your classrooms, and your playground. Our prayer is that they will bring you early joy and reward for your commitment and hard work and that you will be an influence toward eternal life. □

This letter was written by Steve and Martha Jean Divnick to the faculty and staff at Spring Valley Academy in Ohio. As a parent and former academy teacher, Mr. Divnick has experienced both sides of the parent-teacher relationship. His company, Divnick International, Inc. of Spring Valley, Ohio, manufactures fund-raising devices used by Christian Record Braille Foundation and other church institutions. Mrs. Divnick is the secretary and treasurer of the corporation.