

Collaboratively Speaking

January 2011

Tree Planters

Recently I received a copy of a story entitled “The Man who Grew Trees” by Jean Giono. Giono was one of the more famous and gifted French writers of the 20th century. The story describes the efforts of a shepherd in Provence early in the 20th century who transformed a barren, deserted and colorless region into a sylvan, vibrant and living place. He did so by planting 100 acorns on a daily basis one nut at a time for more than thirty years across the lands he traversed with his sheep. The moral of the story speaks to the importance of environmental stewardship and the impact one person can make. Today, many similar initiatives exist whose purpose it is to reforest areas of the world that have been denuded of vegetation. As I reflected on the simple eloquence of the author’s language and the significance of the message, its parallel to your work struck me. Metaphorically, you are also tree planters. You build our educational environment daily one tree, seedling and in your case child at a time.

As we begin the New Year, I want you to reflect back on your work and celebrate the critical role you and your staff play in building the skills and emotional well being of our most fragile children. Your work often goes unnoticed except to those directly affected. You should take pride in those programs and services that you provide so effectively and successfully. Best wishes for a healthy and productive New Year and thank you on behalf of all those whom you serve and like those oaks whose footing is so much stronger because of your nurturance.

Best wishes, Steve

MOEC Reminder Strategic Planning Session 2 January 10 9:30 am at EDCO