

Dear 7th Graders,

I hope this finds you enjoying your summer yet yearning for some intellectual stimulation. In order to prepare you for a thought filled, stimulating year, we would like you read a book about an extraordinary man. In the book, *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Jean Giono you will learn of a selfless human being who found true happiness by planting trees. There is much here about being a silent hero, not being acknowledged by others, but actions coming from within. We may have read this book aloud to you in class but now we would like you to really read it and annotate what seems important or stands out to you in the book.

In the book the main character, a shepherd by trade, sets about restoring a desolate area by planting 100 trees each day for over 30 years. By this single act of unparalleled generosity and respect for the Earth, he leaves, with no thought of recompense, a world made better. He truly finds happiness, which in this day and age can be elusive.

Some of the key passages that stand out to us are as follows...

- *Creation seemed to come about in some sort of chain reaction. He did not worry about it; he was determinedly pursuing his task in all its simplicity; but as we went back to the village I saw water flowing in brooks that had been dry since the memory of man. This was the most impressive result of chain reaction that I had seen.*
- *I remember how the land had looked in 1913: a desert...Peaceful, regular toil, the vigorous mountain air, frugality and, above all, serenity of spirit had endowed this old man with awe-inspiring health. He was one of God's athletes.*
- *Vergons bore evidence of labor at the sort of undertaking for which hope is required. Hope, then, had returned. Ruins had been cleared away, dilapidated walls torn down and five houses restored...flowers grew in orderly confusion.*

After you have read the book read about and watch the following video about what happened to Yellowstone Park when wolves were reintroduced.

[Wolf Reintroduction Changes Ecosystem](#)

Now think about how humans and wolves can be seen as killers and destroyers yet can also bring beauty and stability to a community.

In seventh grade we studied water issues. Construction run-off, plastics in the great lakes, trash and vandalism following local festivals and the drought in California became real as we understood what is happening to our beloved Earth.

Your assignment is to think about the power of small actions. The land you are currently standing on was loved and respected by the Odawa, later it was thoroughly logged and is now currently being developed at a rapid rate. What will the future hold? Your challenge is to **create your vision of the future** from the perspective of the Old Man's, or a tree's heart and soul, or a wolf's. The most important thing you can do when undertaking this endeavor is to keep in mind the values and traits of the man who planted trees, his patience and perseverance. As you read annotate those phrases that speak to these values and ideas.

Every community, tree forest or wolf pack must somehow embrace a sense of space. When doing so it must find a way to

- generate or obtain energy
- deal with waste / recycling.
- have a source of clean water
- feed itself
- achieve a sense of stability / balance – be adaptable
- house itself or find suitable habitat

You have a choice as to how you want to depict this future vision. You must **create a piece of art** such as a diorama, a very detailed drawing or painting of at least 18 by 24 inches, a sculpture or collage.

After completing your visual project write a 300-word essay describing how you have incorporated the values and traits of the organism (the Old Man, a tree or a wolf) you have modeled for your vision of the future. What do you hope for? How will man find balance between greed and happiness? What small actions can you take to make a difference? **This must be typed, 12 point font, double spaced and proofread and shared with me and Spratt through Google Docs.** Horizon books or Amazon can order the book for you. It is a quick read but take your time when reading as it truly is a beautiful book. This will be due on September 10, Thursday. Please call or write if you have any questions.

Enjoy these last days of summer!  
Shane