

VOICES



The Newsletter of the Touchstones' Discussion Project

www.touchstones.org

Touchstones builds critical thinking, communication, leadership, and community through discussion-based programs for all people.

A Touchstones Testimonial

by Garreth Heidt
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I started using Touchstones in the late 1990s, immediately after I was introduced to it in a district workshop. From the first, I knew that this project would be a permanent part of my curriculum, no matter what I taught.



I spent the next 15 years honing my skills in the project with middle-school students and the past four years learning through Touchstones with my high-school English students. No matter what grade, no matter what level the student, the benefits of the program are borne out by the end of the year when the students and I discuss their growth through the program. To a one they note that one of the greatest skills they've developed is to truly listen to another person rather than nod and bide their time until they can offer their own opinion.

Of course, this is a skill we all must work on throughout our lives. That Touchstones offers students the weekly opportunity to practice it is invaluable. Such a keen attention to human habits and tendencies and to how the Touchstones process can improve communication and understanding is why I have sworn by the project for over two decades.

Now, as a member of the board, I hope to strengthen the reach of the program by bringing Touchstones to the awareness of many more teachers. In all my years of teaching I've been driven by two key questions: "Why are things the way they are?" and "How can we make them better?" Touchstones empowers teachers to bring these questions to bear on the act of civil discussion and to improve the world, one discussion at a time.



We thank the many volunteers and teachers who bring Touchstones programs to life for hundreds of thousands of students of all ages, every day.

STAY CONNECTED

