**The Inspirational Story of Patrick Hughes**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xwCG0Ey2Mg>

This story was chosen because it is a great example that every one of us should always look at each obstacle we face in life as a challenge that is only meant to make us discover more of the amazing abilities that we possess and that will make us grow stronger and more powerful to face the next one regardless of what gets thrown our way.

One of the things that we need to learn is to ***“Always appreciate what we have”***. So many of us keep focusing on what we don’t have, and forget the important things that we do have and take for granted.

We went around the school one day, and asked some students about what they are thankful for, and the responses ranged from being thankful to having cellphones with 3G connections, having food at their table every day, to having warm clothes while others might not. But no one said that they were thankful for having eyes that they can see with, the ability to hear, having “fully functional” arms and legs. Not mentioning it doesn’t mean that they are not thankful for what is quite obvious, but rather because these amazing blessings are taken for granted, and often thought about as “must have standards”. We should always be thankful for what we have, and we need to learn to give back to those less fortunate that are missing a lot of those “standards”.

A way of showing appreciation would be by lending a helping hand to those who need it, whether inside the school or out. If we notice a student that is having a problem making friends, while we have plenty of close friends, it is a good thing to try and help that student either by having them in our group, or helping them make friends through us. We could lend a helping hand to the poor and unfortunate people in our community (through the SLO Social Responsibility Department for example) by selflessly dedicating some of our free hours on the weekends or after a school day to visit an elderly home, or give out some food donations or winter clothes.

Over 60 Social Responsibility prefects did an amazing job during the ISC Amman’s Fun Fair (Orphans’ Day), the school hosted over 150 orphan kids from some city orphanages for a whole day of fun activities and games, and all the prefects believed in the fact that they should give back to the society and did their best to give those children one of the happiest and most unforgettable days. So they spent hours after school and weekends before the event shopping for gifts and then preparing the gift packs (color coded by age and gender), and arranging the school cafeteria tables and chairs, and labeling the shirts that were later sent to the orphanages, then they spent more hours on the day of the event, selflessly devoting their time to serve this noble cause of helping others, because to many, it seemed the right way to show their appreciation to the hundreds or thousands of blessings that they enjoy every day.

Another lesson that we can learn is that ***“We should never give up”***. There will be so many times that we might not have the “perfect” tools to achieve our goals, but there will always be alternatives. And sometimes, those alternatives might prove to be a better and more powerful choice. Who knows? Had Patrick Hughes been born a normal boy, without his “disabilities”, he might’ve grown into a regular young man that would go on in life like all the regular people around him. He might have not been able to discover his outstanding musical “abilities”, or become this inspiring icon in his community.

When it seems to be a lack of ability to understand a Physics lesson in class, might actually open the doors to discover the ability to depend a little more on ourselves and go research in the library and find the right solutions to overcome that obstacle. We might make new friends when we pay the effort to go ask for their help in explaining a concept or a whole chapter either directly or through the SLO Academics Department. But the wrong choice would surely be giving up, and saying that “Physics is not my thing, and I will never be good at it”.

The last mentioned example is actually another lesson that we need to learn from this video, and that is ***“It is okay to go and ask others for help, we must not always face life’s challenges alone”***.
His parents played a huge role in helping him discover what he was really capable of, and we must focus on another hero that the video honors: “Patrick’s father”. He chose to live his life for his son, and it was not easy at all, but he chose to appreciate it and even enjoy it. We must all find those people in our lives who are truly willing to help us through the hard times, whether it is our own parents, a friend, a teacher, or an uncle… It so important to realize that we shouldn’t face difficulties alone, and more importantly, we shouldn’t be ashamed of saying that we are facing difficulties, whether academically, socially or any other.
And another way to look at this is: we can make the amazing choice of being the helping hand for others. We can step forward and volunteer through the SLO to help our friends who need help, like helping new students during the first weeks of schools, or students who are struggling academically, or students who are being mistreated. We can be their *“Patrick’s father”*.

Last summer, one of ISC Amman’s students (who happened to be an SLO Deputy Head Prefect) had a life threatening incident when he was hit by a car. He suffered from severe injuries and fractions all over his body, and doctors said that, if he survived, it would take him some long time (several months) to go back to normal. All his friends were around him every day, staying at the hospital (even during the days when he was unconscious) to support his family and relatives. And then they were always around him when he started being awake more frequently. They were always around him through his pain and agony, to show support and keep him company, and later when he checked out of the hospital, they all made sure that they would help him in any possible way to gain confidence and do his best in the physiotherapy to be able to walk by himself and move around. They were simply amazing in how they were around him to support and raise his morale when he needed it a boost. According to his parents, they believe that thank to all that support, their son was able to recover at a much faster pace and his doctors were amazed by this. This is largely attributed to the great support and help of his friend day in and day out, they actually were his “Patrick’s Father” through this, and thanks to that, he’s now been coming to school since day one, and living almost a normal life as if nothing had happened at all.

**Challenge:**

* Patrick overcame many hurdles to achieve what he set his mind to do despite his obvious disabilities.

Can you think of something you want to achieve but feel that it is extremely difficult to attain? What can you do to bring you closer to your goal?

* Can you put a plan to make it happen? When will you make it happen?
* Is there someone you can ask help from? Patrick relied on his family network. What about you? Who can you rely on to help you reach your goal?