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## Classic manners being taught in the classroom

By Cathy Dausman



One student works on a thank you card. Photos  
Cathy Dausman

After 20 years in corporate management Hayes realized that if she was intimidated about making manners missteps in business settings, it made sense to train others to avoid making similar mistakes. After all, she reminds her charges, each student represents his or her family to the outside world.

The class begins with hats (and one Halloween mustache) doffed, students sitting upright, making proper eye contact and responding with a pleasant "good afternoon, Miss Hayes!"

The art of the handshake is broken into six steps (use your right hand, lock thumbs, make eye contact, smile, pump hands three times and include a verbal greeting) and table manners are dissected, from napkin selection (better restaurants will offer black or white, to minimize lint on clothing) to its proper placement during and after a meal (never on the chair seat!), and how to set a proper place.

The speed-setting contest near the end of the fifth-grade class was a challenge - not because the students hadn't mastered where each knife, fork and spoon was placed, but because they also needed to be well mannered throughout the event itself.

Hayes also explains, humorously, why burping, using a toothpick at the table or using your napkin as a bib won't do.

"She (Hayes) is doing a fantastic job. It is a charming class," said Anne Reardon, Husky House executive director. Reardon says it helps create all around citizens "the old school way."

And for that, a thank you note is due.

Can behavioral rules established 400 years ago in France's Louis XIV court possibly be relevant today? Just ask the kindergarteners and fifth-graders taking Tina Hayes's etiquette classes.

Those students might not expect to be addressed as "beautiful young ladies and gents" (in fact, the sobriquet elicited a round of giggling from the fifth-grade girls) but they have learned how their manners, both good and bad, reflect on their family.

In a world of instant gratification and self-importance, teaching classic etiquette may be a hard sell, but Hayes believes starting at a young age is the key to doing things right.

Hayes was at Husky House, a year-round school held on the Happy Valley Elementary School campus, to develop another group of good citizens. She has been at this location for four years and in business as founder and owner of The School of Etiquette and Decorum in Northern California for the last 10.



Tina Hayes discusses proper utensil use.

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