



Teambuilding Breakthrough Strategic Planning Speaking

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## Making a Difference in the Schools

CMI Teambuilding Associates, the leaders in Teambuilding Education, has traditionally provided their extraordinary teambuilding services to corporate groups, small businesses and non-profit organizations. The Experiential Education Instructors are very pleased to be re-introduced to the education sector and back working within the local schools. CMI has been able to transform groups into high performance teams at several schools including Rotolo Middle School, Heritage School, and most recently, Elm Middle School in Elmwood Park, Illinois.

It is the responsibility of the Elmwood Park Schools and Community to promote the highest level of development for every student to be productive and to foster a life-long process of learning by creating a safe, caring, and challenging educational environment. The faculty, staff, students, parents and community of Elm Middle School are devoted to academic excellence. In addition, they feel it is important for students to develop a sense of self-esteem and confidences in order to further ensure success in high school and to enable them to make the correct decisions that will guide them later in life. They believe in individual differences, responsible behavior, and an obligation of students to serve their community.



Before approaching CMI, Kassie Patton, Principal and Daniel Schuth, Assistant Principal at Elm Middle School were in the process of developing the Response to Intervention (RtI) program, a state-wide program that utilizes a structured intervention to diagnose student's learning disabilities and addresses common reasons for school failure. They felt that their ability to capitalize on the tenets of teamwork were crucial as they begin to roll out this process to their faculty. To get this accomplished among other goals, they called on CMI Teambuilding Associates.

Patton and Schuth also hoped CMI's teambuilding program could help generate a lot of energy about how the staff works with one another, create a problem-solving mindset that focuses on goals, and create a sense of consistency and unity among the adults in the school. CMI went into the schools with these goals in mind and worked with the entire staff, including the Principal and Assistant Principal. They used a variety on hands-on activities and games to get everyone working together in a loose environment, thinking about how they communicate with one another and their students, and highlighting strengths and opportunities as well as areas to improve. "Not only can the games be used between adults, but are great activities for



student success,” says Daniel Schuth, Asst. Principal. “We spend so much time relegated to the wall of our classrooms and offices by force of the job. It is important that we make the most of opportunities we have to come together and develop a strong sense of community in problem-solving situations. Too often it is expected that the “leadership” imparts and the “fellowship” enacts. It is time to swing that pendulum to a common, shared leadership of the goals we have.”

When asked how other schools can benefit from this kind of work, Schuth comments, that “they need to have an openness to the possibilities that teambuilding can present in their schools. This program has altered the sense of how we progress during this time of transition through opening more lines of communication.”



CMI is very proud of the staff at Elm Middle School. They are an outstanding group of educators that are affecting the lives of today’s youth in a very positive way. After their teambuilding experience, it is evident that Elm Middle School staff will continue to devote themselves to one another as well as their students. Teambuilding can have a long-lasting impact on anyone who chooses to accept it. CMI is looking forward to continuing their work in local school and making a difference in the lives of teachers and students.

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