



Anything is Possible

NICK NISSLEY
Executive Dir., The Banff Centre's
Leadership Development Programs,
MHS Class of 1984

Tacked to a refrigerator door in the Nissley home, amongst pictures of family and reminders of daily activities, is a 4x4 index card with the Nissley family's guiding principles. "The card is now frayed, and we no longer read the card daily, rather everything we do is a process through those values. The most important value on our card is respect – respect to others, our bodies and people less fortunate. And we use our values to talk through conflicts, and challenges."

If Milton Hershey had a refrigerator door at MHS, a similar card might have been tacked there.

Nick Nissley is a self proclaimed "possibilitarian." He sees life as an infinite set of possibilities and attributes this philosophy to his experience at MHS.

From a childhood spent in and out of emergency foster care, Nick spends his days as Executive Director of the Banff Centre's Leadership Development Programs in Banff, Canada, a leader in arts and culture with a mission to inspire creativity. Under Nick's direction, the center helps more than 2000 students each year achieve their full potential. He attributes his ability to help others realize their possibilities because of the early possibilities that were revealed to him at MHS.

Nick knows that all of his achievements in life can be traced back to staff, houseparents, teachers, coaches, and friends at MHS. "MHS does not view children as people at risk. Instead, every student is a

child with promise, and every employee at MHS has a role to play in helping each child attain his or her promise," says Nick.

College wasn't something that was really on Nick's radar, but in his senior year, one individual at MHS took it upon himself to help Nick see the possibilities. His football coach, Mr. Snyder took the time to talk with him about his future and three days after one such conversation, handed Nick a gift that would change his life.

"Three days after I spoke to him, he handed me a bus ticket to Northfield, Vermont and three steel canisters with my football footage. Mr. Snyder sent me to meet his former coach who was then a coach at Norwich University. I ended up attending Norwich on a football scholarship. Mr. Snyder exemplified the type of person who taught at MHS, someone who went out of his way to help an individual."

From foster homes to football to a doctorate from the George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nick grabbed the possibilities and focused his career on human resource development, executive leadership and organizational learning. Milton Hershey's personal generosity and caring have been the inspiration to Nick to serve his community. Over the past 15 years, he has participated on more than 10 Boards of Directors for arts, educational and social service organizations. He currently sits on the boards of several organizations, including the Banff Mineral Springs Hospital, the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, and the local public school.

And at home, Nick and his wife refer to a frayed refrigerator card, and the values that began so long ago at MHS to help their two daughters see their possibilities.