



“Celebrating 100+ years of quality education”
Est. 1919

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Casa Grande Union High School

Casa Grande Union High School District #82

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"A glooming peace this morning with it brings;
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head:
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things..."

-William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet

I could not help but think of this line from the play "Romeo and Juliet" this morning as I drove into work. This is a part of the speech given to the townspeople in the play after the loss of 6 young characters in the course of a week to senseless violence. As a former English teacher, literature has always been a place of solace for me. With the tragedy of last weekend's loss, the sun fighting to come out from behind the clouds, rain intermittently falling, the timelessness of the sentiment, and a chill in the air this quote seemed to fit. It reminds me that the grief that we all feel at this loss is universal and timeless.

Superintendent Lavender told me earlier this week that I would see, in the coming days, just what kind of special community Casa Grande is. He was so right. James Allen, in his book *As A Man Thinketh*, wrote something to the effect of circumstances to not determine our character, but rather reveal our character to ourselves. I have seen the character of our students, staff and community this week. I have witnessed grieving students embraced by staff. I have witnessed grieving staff embraced by students. I have witnessed parents embracing one another, their own children, and friends. Our character here is strong, kind, and compassionate. Our character is also defined by our resilience. There is a time to grieve, that time is now. There is a time to heal, that time is beginning. There will be a time, in the not so far future, where things will begin to return to some semblance of normal. For those closest to Hailey, her family and friends, any normalcy will be a new normal and the pain of their loss will be forever present. The grief process consists of five components: denial, bargaining, anger, depression, and acceptance. We all experience this process differently it is not necessarily linear. I ask that everyone of us extend the olive branch of grace, tolerance, and acceptance to all of our fellow Cougars who are emotionally wounded by this tragedy.

As I have processed the past few days, the picture below came to mind.





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This boat is grounded in the sand, which is not what it is designed for. This boat is designed to dance on the waves, to cut through the water, with speed and grace. It can be sad to see a vessel, designed for speed and beauty, grounded and unable to do what it was made for. I see this a bit differently though. If I were to title the photo, I would title it “Faith”; referring to having faith that the tide will come again. I see us as this boat; we are faithfully awaiting the tide of smiles, joy, happiness, and laughter to return to us and to lift us up out of the sands of grief and sorrow. Make no mistake, the tide will return, it always has and always will.

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I encourage each of you to be true to yourselves, to show your authentic you as you grieve this tragic loss of such a beautiful life. Some of us will move through this process more quickly or more slowly than others, and that is okay. Please remember that grieving is a process, feeling sad and angry are normal. I try to remember that anger is the bodyguard of sadness, it helps me to more clearly identify what it really is that I am feeling and to address that deeper emotion. I ask that we all afford everyone the opportunity to experience this process in their own way and to respect the time that it will take for each individual impacted by this to be lifted by the tide in their own time. There is only one thing worse than being this sad and that is being this sad and being alone. Please know, you are not alone; resources are available, friends and family are available, and professionals are available to help us through this. WE ALL need to be available to help our fellow Cougars maintain hope and not ever feel alone. The tide will return Cougars.... never lose faith. If you or someone that you love is struggling with mental health, please reach out to 988. They will help. You are not alone.

With a broken, but faith-filled heart,

Christopher Lineberry, Ed.D
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