

Pleased

By Suzy Hopkins

At Place Bridge Academy there are 60 languages spoken by the students.

Last year during the month of February I was working two days a week as usual. The day after Valentine's Day when I got to the classroom I was pleasantly surprised when Ms. Scott presented me with a large stack of handmade Valentine cards from her 4th graders, colorfully decorated and designed individually. I had helped them with their reading, coached their creative writing, listened to their stories of mean kids saying things about their hijab or unwashed school uniforms or being ridiculed for having a free lunch and breakfast, been shamed because of their lack of knowledge of English and of course their illegible hand writing. Listening is so important for kids. Teachers and parents are often too busy to affectively listen.

At the end of that day I showed the Academy's volunteer coordinator this fabulous pile of cards. She took pictures of them and put the photos in the weekly online school newsletter that week indicating what they were and how I had volunteered two days a week for years.

The personal messages from these mostly sweet kids made all the bad days when the kids didn't behave worth it.