

Title: Only Children Tell the Truth

Dr. Francisco Reveles, Ed.D.

“You don’t vote,” came the school board president’s condescending retort to Eric’s public pleading during the board meeting. As student body president, Eric was imploring the board president to consider the voice of students he represented on a contentious issue. But all he got was her stoned-faced look.

‘You’ll understand when you get older,’ was the trustee’s final dismissive comment.

The trustee’s response left no doubt. The only thing that mattered to the board member was whether he was of voting age. Never mind the credibility of his case.

As his high school principal, I approached Eric after the board meeting. He was clearly hurt and disappointed. I attempted to explain that adults don’t always do what’s necessarily right but may be guided by self-interest and calculation. Clearly, his cold exchange with the trustee had popped his bubble concerning adulthood and the wisdom it supposedly confers.

The crushed look in his eyes reminded me of how children react when they first learn the hard truth surrounding the existence of Santa Claus.

Children can be astute truth detectors. They seem to have the uncanny ability to detect inconsistencies and hypocritical positions adults may take.

With today’s unrelenting debates among adults surrounding who’s view of reality is right, a conversation with our youth may serve to remind us of what’s worth fighting for – and it will humble us. Indeed, as Frederick Douglass noted: It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.