

## Conference Be Kind Work Hard

Hello, my name is Ole van der Vorm, I am 15 years old and i'm in the third class of secondary school. I am following a bilingual course on the Scala College in Alphen aan de Rijn. This means that all my subjects i have are being taught in English which is special in the Netherlands. I do not like school. But i always say that if you compare my school with other schools then in comparison it is quite nice but school is still stupid. What i really do like is sailing. I do this a lot in my free time and my weekends are fully booked with trainings or competitions, sometimes even abroad. Something else i really love to do is traveling, on my own.

I did the last year of my primary school for the second time. The reason for this is that my parents and school both felt I was too young to go to secondary school. But when I did group 8 for the second time, i had time left at the end of the year so i wanted to do something special. Via Rikie, one of the organisers of this conference, we got in contact with Caroline, one of the teachers of the Francis Parker school in Boston. Parker is an Essential School. She will be speaking after me. She embraced the idea of me coming over for a period of time and organised my whole stay. She arranged a lovely host family for me, we became friends with the whole family and last summer they came over to the Netherlands to visit us. Caroline was also my mentor or advisor when i was at Parker. My parents brought me to Boston and after a weekend they left while i stayed for 6 weeks at the school. Afterwards i flew home alone.

So this is why i am standing here telling this story to you to open this conference, i tasted a tiny bit of the feeling and atmosphere at an essential school. I think it is very difficult to explain the feeling and atmosphere an essential school has but you will really notice a different feeling when you are following lessons at the school for 6 weeks. I think children get lots more responsibility but also freedom then at schools in the Netherlands, i will compare it to schools in the Netherlands because that are my only sources. Children work very hard at parker but i think with less rules and restrictions. So i think that is a main difference learning wise but something else that i really recognised is the relation between students. People let other people just be who they are and just act like they are without judging them. When i just returned from the Netherlands i really recognised that difference. People here immediately were in need of saying something not nice which wasn't necessary at all to say.

I happily accepted Rikie's invitation to open this day, because how cool would it be if only a very small part of the Parker way would come to The Netherlands!

So I would like to ask you to pay special attention to my mentor, someone who can probably explain a lot more about this Parker way, Caroline.....