

Miss Grantsville 2023 Tylee Hancock Talent Presentation

It's late on Christmas Eve, 1914. It's dark on Western Front of World War I. British and German soldiers are huddled tightly in their trenches. Troops are weary, muddy and cold. Suddenly, a sound breaks the silence. It's a familiar sound. It sounded more like home, not the awful explosions and cries of war they were used to. It was the Germans. They were singing Christmas songs, of course in their own language, but it was familiar and warm. Then more Christmas carols filled the air, this time from both sides of the war.

Finally, an invitation: "Come over here!"

"Yeah, right. Just hours ago you were shooting at me and now you want me to leave my trench?"

"Just come halfway."

Both sides met in the middle. They shook hands and agreed on a Christmas truce. They laughed, exchanged gifts, and shared what little food they had.

This true story, about rivals putting down their weapons to come together, represents the highest form of civility: caring for others, especially in the midst of conflict. They didn't give up their national loyalties. They just had enough courage to step out of their safe trenches long enough to care for someone else.

We all have our own trenches, places we feel safest. They're made of strong moral, political or religious viewpoints. It's where we can lob opinions and judgements like grenades from a safe distance. We can do better. And I completely disagree with the recent New York Times columnist who, after scanning the American landscape, wrote "Civility is officially dead."

It's not dead, despite deep divides and polarization. I refuse to give up on it.

Sportsmanship: I'm so passionate about civility that when I was challenged to compete with other schools this last year on a video project, instead of competing with them head-on, I rallied students from 4 surrounding high schools to join the project. What shows civility and sportsmanship better than pulling rivals together for a common cause? It was not easy. I had to build up the courage to reach out. I created a PSA showing that rivalries can be friendly and civil. That video went on to win 1st place, but more importantly we made new connections. Since then, we've attended one another's dance recitals, school assemblies, and maybe even had a few love connections.

Election video: That went so well, I decided to push civility to its outer limits. Could I get the entire student body of our fiercest region rivals to collaborate with me on a personal project? Was that even possible? I wasn't thinking of just any rivals, I was thinking of our epic contenders that we fight each year for various championships: Morgan High School. Two small-town communities, both deeply invested in their high school. I sat in their students section and started gathering phone numbers. I made calls. I made visits. Soon, every Morgan high SBO was onboard. They all joined me to collaborate on a new project. We've become friends, but more importantly their school leaders have a better relationship with our community. Our relationship will translate into more civility during every competition this next year.

Civility is not capitulating to those with whom you disagree. It's not giving in. It's the art and dedication to kindness, especially in the light of our differences.

Civility is not dead. I refuse to accept that depressing declaration. Civility lives in all of us. We keep it alive when we have the courage to climb out of our own proverbial trenches and meet others on common ground. Thank you.

Grantsville City's Localscape Classes are Back

Free Waterwise Landscape Classes

Are you installing a new landscape or want to improve an existing one and save water, too? These courses can help you get off to a good start.

Localscapes University (2 hours) Wednesday, September 27th @ 6:30 pm — Justice Center

Localscapes University (2 hours) Wednesday, October 11th @ 6:30 pm — Justice Center

Localscapes University (2 hours) Wednesday, October 25th @ 6:30 pm — Justice Center

Localscapes Design Workshop (3 hours) Saturday, November 4th, 9am — Justice Center

Sign-Ups at <https://forms.gle/mnDjX3YhfA3kEdsW7>