

These past few weeks, we have had the privilege of putting the youth of the AZMC in the forefront. Personally, I feel that is exactly where our children and youth belong – in the forefront. We have seen them sweat as they did physical



work in preparing the ground where the Mesa Labyrinth Project will be and we have shared in their enthusiasm as they assisted in preparing and



serving the traditional Youth Luncheon at Winter Reunion. We joined in laughter and conversation as we have been blessed to spend time with each precious young person. We have



also begun the planning and carrying out the classes for all of the adults to be current in the Youth Worker Registration Process, knowing the significant importance of providing protection to all children and youth.



How timely this has been, when we have once again heard about the tragedy that has occurred to the precious young people in yet another school shooting. That kind of news tugs at our hearts and emphasizes how special

each young person is.

An article was shared on Facebook shortly after the tragedy in Florida. I was very touched by the thoughtfulness of the teacher this article was written about. The article is titled “Stop Future School Shootings---And It’s Not About Guns, by Glennon Doyle Melton. <https://www.rd.com/advice/parenting/stop-bullying-strategy/#.WoYL0a3lXkQ.facebook>. This information taken word for word from the article (because it speaks so distinctly and with love, that if I attempt to summarize it, I will lose some of the importance of what was written).

The teacher that was described in this article is a miracle worker in my eyes. Ever since Columbine, she has taken time out each week to look for the lonely students. She looks for the children struggling to connect with other children, falling through the cracks of the class’s social life. In the article it describes how all violence begins with disconnection and all outward violence begins as inner loneliness. She identifies that students who are not being noticed may eventually resort to being noticed by any means necessary. She gets the lonely students the help that they need, breaking the pattern of disconnectedness. She looks for patterns of love and loneliness.

Matthew 18:2-5 New International Version (NIV)

²He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. ³And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.