

Everyone is *NOT* a Star

Posted At : May 28, 2008 12:11AM | Posted By : Matt Quackenbush

Related Categories: Rants

Okay, so it's the end of the school year and most schools either have hosted or are about to host their End-of-the-Year Awards Ceremony. This is a great opportunity to recognize the outstanding achievements of their students for the school year. Tonight was the Junior High Awards Ceremony for our school district.

When I was a kid these awards ceremonies were pretty cool, and truly focused on students that went above and beyond the call of duty and really did special things. But apparently here in the 21st century things are different; so different, in fact, that if you showed up to school at least once during the year and were breathing, you're a "Star"! WTF?!?!?!?

Every time I turn around I hear some school teacher or principal or parent telling kids "of course you're a star, *everybody* is a star!". What a total crock of shit! I thought that schools and parents were supposed to prepare children for adulthood. Since effen when is every adult a star? Effing never, that's when!

I don't know about you, but it really chaps my ass that people are knowingly and willingly ruining kids by teaching this bullshit. It's no wonder that when kids get a job in their late teens or early 20s these days they don't last very long. Why? Because they have never learned how to cope in a world where they don't get special "star" treatment. They have no clue how to just be themselves and contribute their part to the common cause of the team.

Here's what set me off on this little tirade...

A couple of years back we attended the Jr. High awards ceremony and were appalled at the way things were done. We pretty much said "nope, not gonna do this again". Well, the other day at school the kids were having a rehearsal for this ceremony. They were handed cards with their name on it, and were told to go to a particular table if they were not going to be attending and let them know. My son went to that table and turned his card in. He was asked why he wasn't going to be in attendance, and he replied very honestly.

"I just don't want to," he stated, and the teacher thanked him for his honesty. A few minutes later the principal approaches him and says:

"You need to talk to your parents about being here, because you're receiving a *very special* award. I really think you should be here for it."

As you can imagine, he was intrigued by this, as were we as parents. After all, it must be very special if the principal himself makes it a point to mention it, right?

Fast forward back to this evening. There was no special award. Nothing. His name was read as he walked across stage - as did every other kid, in alphabetical order - and they mentioned 3 "awards" that he was being recognized for:

1. Overall Band Student of the Year (which he had previously received during a band awards ceremony)
2. Piano Award (we have no idea wtf that is), and
3. Outstanding Achievement Award for high scores on all four of the year-end TAKS tests (kinda like the old SATs)

Mind you, two of those three are pretty cool, but they're hardly "exceptional" or "special". Hundreds of kids got those (or similar) awards. I mean, kids are being recognized for "football" or "twirling" or "math club" or "chess club". In other words, anything the school can think of to "award" the kids with *something, anything* ; to be able to call their name out and have them walk across the stage; to put parent's asses in the seats.

This kind of bullshit is a major disservice in two ways:

1. As already mentioned, it falsely teaches kids to believe that they are stars, and
2. It completely devalues the *truly* special awards, and their recipients.

Oh, and the **really** stupid thing about tonight's activities? They didn't even bother recognizing his biggest accomplishment of the year: 2008 Academic All-American. But hey, why should they mention that? It might make all of the bullshit "awards" actually seem, I don't know, bullshit?