



He has Wings

Once Anthony Dixon started working with kids in the WINGS program, he gave up law school plans and made education his calling. Seeing the difference he could make in kids' lives transformed him. Now he finds himself back at Memminger Elementary School – as principal.

“It feels really good being back on my old stomping grounds!” said Anthony. “I am excited for the opportunity to take Memminger to new heights, and make positive changes for each student who walks through the door.”

Back in 1999, when Anthony signed on as a WINGSLeader at Memminger as a College of Charleston student who needed part-time work, he found it

difficult to get the hang of the skills that WINGS was teaching.

“I will admit to being a tough nut to crack,” he said frankly.

He was unfamiliar with the precepts of social and emotional intelligence, and unconvinced that they held the key to students' success. “I was a bit leery about talking out emotions.”

But as the year wore on, he saw for himself how much more “open and expressive” the kids became as they acquired and practiced their skills.

“There were 2 kids in particular who got upset... they would scream, run out of the room, cry, hide,” he said. “By the end of the year, they were empowered to express themselves and not be embarrassed that their feelings were hurt.”

He emphasizes that WINGS especially improved his listening skills. “WINGS really impacted the way I taught when I got into the classroom,” Anthony says.

“I began to learn to listen, understand and communicate better. Now it's second nature. I can sit down with any child and communicate with them. Sometimes it can be so hard to get

through – with African-American males especially, how do we reach them?

But now I know how to make kids comfortable.”

This year Anthony has returned to Memminger Elementary School, where his WINGS training began, to assume the job of principal. Formerly assistant principal at The Daniel Island School, Anthony is married to another former WINGSLeader, Zenovia Daniels Dixon, director of the after school program at Charles Pinckney Elementary in Mount Pleasant.

He loves the phone calls he is still getting from WINGS kids reporting on their progress. That connection is what motivated Dixon to make educating kids his focus.

“I felt compelled to be part of their lives. I could see I was making a difference. It wasn't instant. But it was in areas of such critical need. To see how the kids responded, and to have an impact and make them feel safe and motivated – I found something that I loved doing!” he said.

He has WINGS.

Hot Wings

Introduction How-to's

What seems obvious to adults often needs to be explained to kids to make their social interactions run smoothly. At the start of school, set the expectation that they should introduce themselves to students they don't know already – and show them how.

Give examples using different scenarios. In a classroom, they should look at the student and say, "Hi, my name is Annie. What's yours?" On the playground, they

should approach a student who is all alone and say something similar.

Help them come up with some followup questions. Encourage your child to try them out in advance and choose what makes them comfortable. Examples: "Did you go to Pinckney Elementary School last year?" or "Do you have a dog or a cat?" or "Do you know many people who go to this school?"

- [Read more Beyond the Bookbag tips.](#)



Vote With Their Feet

How do you define success? Yale research shows WINGS works, but when kids are banging down the door to get into our program, we know we're succeeding. Both Memminger and Chicora Elementary Schools already are fully booked!

"All learning has an emotional base."

- Plato
Greek Philosopher

News Updates Have Fun, Do Good

Lenny Blevins does it again! His 3rd annual summertime funfest on Gold Bug Island known as the Flip Flop ball raised more than \$5,000 to benefit WINGS.



[Click here for some pictures...](#)

Charleston
MAGAZINE

Offbeat feature spotlights the whimsical side of WINGS CEO Ginny Deerin this month. [Click here...](#)



Hugged your kid – or your lion - today?





The Wings Creed

I soar with WINGS. Let me tell you why. I learn lots of skills that help me reach the sky.

I love and accept who I am on the inside and know my emotions are nothing to hide.

Life's full of surprises that make me feel different ways. If I can control myself, I will have much better days.

I understand the choices I make should be what I want to do, and what happens is on me and not any of you.

I understand others are unique. I want to learn more about everyone I meet. I want to step into their shoe and see what they are going through.

I am a friend. I support and trust. Working together is a must.

Kind and caring I will be. I listen to you. You listen to me.

I soar with WINGS. I just told you why. All of these things are why I fly high.

wingsforkids.org



Meet Justice

Fun-loving first-grader Justice Benjamin is such a confident WINGS kid. She frequently wins our award for self awareness because, as The Creed states, she truly “loves and accepts who she is on the inside and knows her emotions are nothing to hide.”

A member of the Doves Nest who will move on to the Robins Nest this year, she was remarkably quick to take responsibility for her mistakes and make amends. WINGS Leaders found that they could always count on Justice to speak up and tell the truth, and try to do the right thing for herself and her friends. She constantly looked for ways to help others.



Give the gift of time and make a big difference. WINGS needs tutors to help some of our kids with their homework. You can volunteer for as little as 2 hours a month – or as much as you want. Email nicole@wingsforkids.org to let us know your availability.

