

# KELVIN PAPERCLIP

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## THE CUSTODIANS OF KELVIN HIGH

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TEACHER SUPERVISORS: MR. GREGORY AND MRS. OSBORNE

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**Want to join  
*The Paperclip* team?**

**Come by to one of our  
meetings, Fridays, 12:30pm  
at room 63.**

**We are always looking for  
new writers, journalists, art-  
ists and photographers!  
Right now our team consists  
of students from all grades,  
we welcome all to come  
check it out!**

**No experience is  
required!**

**The perfect school should always maintain a standard for respect.** The very important but often underestimated custodians of Kelvin High School work from the early hours of 5AM to the late hours past 9PM to keep our school going. A small group of people for the divisions second largest high school.

These hard working custodians not only mop and polish our floors every night, they control and maintain the electricity, the plumbing and anything that needs to be fixed or repaired. These custodians are the real reason as to why our school continues to live on, year after year.

**I am glad to see how creating this issue has made me feel much closer to the custodians.** Our custodians come from very diverse backgrounds and journeys to make it to where they are today. It reminds us that everybody is dealing with their own stress and problems, and we need to always be looking for more understanding in the lives of others, instead of judging them.

Tough questions were asked and because of this the responses quickly became very personal. Everybody interviewed really opened up not only to us here at *The Kelvin Paperclip*, but since this publication to every single one of our readers.

**Please read, appreciate and enjoy. Until next time Kelvin.**

**DJ Vaquilar**

# LETTER FROM THE WRITER

Inspired by Brandon Stanton, known for his very popular photo blog, *Humans of New York*, I decided to embark on a journey of finding the most appropriate subject for my interviews. My criterion was that it had to be a distinct group of students or staff members who we normally exclude from our daily social life. In a way, I wanted to raise awareness about a group of people who help us in more ways than we can imagine. And what better group to interview than the hard working employees who provide us with a wide range of services, from a shoveled driveway during the harsh days of winter to cleaning our cafeteria tables to repairing damaged infrastructure in our school; the custodians.

To begin, the right way of calling those in the interviews is custodians rather than janitors. The term custodian is preferred as it describes the custodian's job better. They have custody over the school; they are the school's guardians as they are entrusted with maintaining the school. Putting myself in my interviewee's shoes, I recognized that it's pretty hard to open up to a student who comes up to you and asks for an interview. So I had to first make my interviewee more comfortable with answering deeper questions about their life. During my interview, I asked simple questions such as "What they think working at Kelvin is like" or "How long they have been working at Kelvin", etc. Most of the answers to these questions had been similar to each other from one custodian to another. However, as the

interview evolved, the questions became much more personal and harder to answer. Such questions include the way in which they dealt with the loss of a loved one, etc.

By asking each custodian a handful of different questions, which branched out depending on the custodian's responses, I realized that everyone has their own unique way of dealing with times of stress or coping with misfortunes that are bound to occur in our lives. I realized that experience or life lessons don't necessarily have to be from your parents, teachers or Greek philosophers. Experience is what's happening to us all the time; it's our personal connection with our daily lives. It is attained by making life choices, good or bad, and pursuing goals. All the custodians interviewed reveal only a small portion of their trip through life. It is our job to learn from their experience and the lessons which they sought to teach us and apply it to our lives.

Having glimpsed a small part into the lives of several different people who work hard into making your high school a clean and representable place, make sure you show your respect and appreciation by simply greeting them with a "Hello!" or a smile. Or, more importantly, by picking up your trash and putting them into the garbage bins they provide.

Omar Elgazzar

**"I REALIZED THAT EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN  
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# ALICE

**I worked at Kelvin for one year. My shift is from 6:30am to 3:30pm.** I used to work for Winnipeg Regional Health, it was good. The best thing about working at Kelvin is how the students are really nice and the staff is also really nice. There may have been a few times when they weren't nice but I don't really pay attention to that because when I do my work and somebody might be passing, it doesn't necessarily mean I have to pay attention to them because I'm doing what I'm doing. But if they say 'hi' then I turn to them and say 'hi'.

I wasn't from here growing up, I was from Africa. The difference is that all the family is back home and here it's different. But it's good because it makes you eager to meet good people, good neighbours so it's all family too. Sometimes when you go to a different part of the world it doesn't necessarily mean you're going to get what you want. And if you were a parent, I think, you have to do what you can to be able to make their lives as good as possible. I finished school in Ghana, but when you come to Canada, it seems like you have to start everything all over. And it's not easy to go back in school and finish everything all over because you have kids. The challenge I didn't really expect was the winter. It was so cold and like I'm from where? The weather can get like 45 degrees. So coming to 45 minus is like, oh my God! But with time, no matter what you get used to it and you kind of embrace it and move on.

It's good, it's good; growing up in Ghana, there were challenges everywhere but to me where you come from, even if there's a challenge, you don't see it because you have families surrounding you. You have people, you were born there, you were grown there, and you know how to get around. So even if there's a challenge, at the end of the day, you still don't feel it too much. But coming to somewhere new with no body, no family members, sometimes it's hard, it's really hard!

**“SOMETIMES WHEN YOU GO TO A DIFFERENT PART OF THE WORLD IT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO GET WHAT YOU WANT.”**

Last summer, I lost my brother here, he was 42 and I was here with him alone. If I call him to pick my kids, he does. But here I am, he's not. I felt crushed, I felt really crushed. But with life you have to go on. I believe in God and God didn't say life will be guaranteed. He let us know that one day, he will call us. So we get to accept that. I always give advice that from my opinion, in life we have to treat each other very nice, with respect no matter what because one day, or a second, or a minute or an hour, you might not see the person again, so to me sometimes, I ask, what is the point? So you have to smile no matter how. I never wake up and think I have a bad day, No. When my brother died, the community supported me; even some members of the church supported me because I couldn't do that by myself. I'm the last one in the family, I'm next to him. And days like this, in Ghana, the grownups will be there to take care of me, but here I am with him alone so I have to be tough and stand up and do what I'm supposed to do with the help of the community.

# DEREK

**I grew up in Thunder Bay and moved to Winnipeg in 1999.** When I first came here, it was March, and if you look back in weather Canada and you check the records, it'll show that it rained on March 1st and it was warm. So I said, "Oh, it's not a bad place to live, it's warm in March!" So I stayed here!

I started working at Kelvin during the exam time of 2009. I used to work in Champlain school and Greenway. Because Kelvin is such a big school, the odds are you're going to get [bad] people, and for whatever reason, you can't really get angry with them because they may be going through a hard time in their own life, who are probably going to act out a little bit. I mean, they might do something silly, like pee their pants or something, but some kids will draw a line across the wall, those kinds of things aren't always very nice.

I'm happy where I am, you make the best out of where you are, you make choices and these choices make up who you are. I remember in grade 9, my dog passed away. The dog was closer to me because my mom had cancer at the time, so the dog was like a friend. To handle his death, I cut a piece of hair off of him; I guess in a way I was symbolizing that I can still remember him, that I can move on and still have good experiences. Bad things happen in life, so you're probably going to get angry happy, sad or depressed. But at some point you have to realize that just because you didn't get a job or something, you could still always get another or get another skill or make myself better. Also, always make sure you come to a point in your life where you don't have to wait till somebody passes away; always say what you want to say before that happens. Like if you really like somebody, tell them that. If you want to say sorry, say sorry today. Don't say you'll do it next year or tomorrow, because you never know. Always try to tie up loose ends just in case something does happen, you don't have to live with regret.

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# PATRICIA

I've been working at Kelvin since 2004, I like it here, other than a few students that need some training, but they don't really provide a struggle. They're kids, kids will always be kids. I still like it here because I get to meet all the students, teachers, and staff.

A challenge I had growing up was being the second youngest. But it wasn't too bad, I had my older brothers and sisters and we hung out with each other. My older siblings were supportive; they took care of my younger sister and I. We went skating, to picnics, tobogganing, and stuff like that. But after my sister died, my older siblings kind of moved away. My younger sister died from a heart attack because she suffered from Lupus for many years. She was very close in age to me; we were only eleven months apart. I miss her, we used to do everything together, go camping, spend time at each other's houses, and we shopped together, like when I say everything I mean everything. If you lost someone you love you just have to be strong, stick with your family and get closer to each other.

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# LEWILLE

**So far this is my second week and three days, I'm a student in the Winnipeg School Division and I'm doing my practicum here for my boiler hours.** I begin my practicum at 8am and end at 1pm. I do five hours every day to prepare for my exam. The biggest challenge for me is to get boiler hours which is getting experience, which is hard because I have to deal with the machines because it's risky so you have to have knowledge and an idea to work and to process everything for your and for everyone's safety.

**I love the students here, they're very polite and the place is also very nice.** But sometimes, I've seen graffiti on the walls, that's all I can think of. But they're just kids. I'd advice those students to keep the place neat and clean. Since I was 16 or 17, in high school way back home, I've become more mature to my surroundings and more aware of what's going on. I really learned how to be more organized, for example, when I was 16 I used to mess up, I used to draw and do bad stuff. But it was also just a kid's thing.

I grew up in the Philippines, so I've been in Canada for almost six years. I was 18 years old when I moved to Canada. When I was in the Philippines and I moved here in Canada, they didn't recognize my credentials in school because the standard of studies is different in the Philippines than in Canada. So I was so upset when I came here, **I still had to get my grade 12 courses to go into university.** It was okay, I went to grade 12 in St James Collegiate. So I took my power engineering class under Winnipeg School Division.

The biggest challenge when I came to Canada was, first of all, the weather. When I came here in December 24th 2006 it was around -40oC. And when I came out of the airport, I was freezing cold and I was like this is the real deal in Canada.

The saddest thing that happened to me was because I was alone. Back home in the Philippines we had tropical weather, so I can go with my friends and hang out anytime. **So when I came here, I needed to be more flexible about the weather and at the same time I needed to find friends.** But when I got into school, everything changed and I got used to it. I also had a great challenge in my language because English is my second language so it was so hard to communicate with the people. When the days went by I learned a lot and practiced by communicating with people and I dealt with it. The saddest thing in my life was the loss of my grandma, she moved here in 1998 and died after two years, and so that was the saddest part in my life. To handle this, I talked with my mom, spent time with my mom and I think it made me more comfortable. An advice to those who have also suffered the loss of someone is to stand up and stay strong. And I think it's important to keep in mind that this always happens. A parent is the first person to talk with and deal with saddest mo-

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# MELVIN

**I work nine hours a day. I start at quarter to six in the morning to a quarter to three.** I've been working here since 1994. Working in the school is ok. I find the kids difficult to deal with because they leave mess behind them all the time. SOME of them don't care. I'd advise the students to pick up after themselves. A change in perception that I see has changed since my teenage years is that I'm now hoping for retirement, that's all. Nothing really stands out in my job other than the staff getting along.

When I lost my father, when he died, is one of the saddest things I've had to go through so far. He died of cancer. I felt really sad. I had to deal with it myself and accept that it's just a part of life, it happens. I'd advise people to just work through it because it's going to happen to anyone, later in life when they get older.

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# DAN

**I've been working here for about almost ten years.** I start work at seven and end at four. A challenge with the job is with the kids, they make a mess. Ya those kids, just some of them, are just too lazy. Even when the garbage can is beside them, they don't even bother to put the garbage in the garbage can. But to be honest with you this school is not bad, a lot of kids are good, not everyone makes a mess, but some of them are a real pain. When I grew up, I was in China at that time. China was a good place because it was under the communism. But they're still under the communism but it's different. The times were bad, so the only thing I was thinking, when I was young, was to just get out of the country. Growing up in China is Okay, but during that time, China was still very poor. So people just dreamed of having a better life. I came here as a student. I had a student visa at that time when I landed here. I was supposed to go to Concordia University but tuition was too expensive so I didn't go there, so I applied for permanent immigrant and I got accepted, that's it.

I felt really sad when I lost my mom last year and especially when you lose your loved one... She came to visit me once a couple of years ago but she passed away in China. To cope with it, I just thought about my mom having a good long life. So I think everybody will go that way, right? I would tell people that this is the life, and you have to handle it.

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# RICHARD

“LIKE WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER YOU COULD GO TO WHERE THE PORTAGE PLACE IS NOW, IT USED TO BE ALL RECORD SHOPS PINBALL ARCADES, AND YOU COULD GO AND HANG OUT NOT WORRIED ABOUT BEING ATTACKED OR ROBBED. SO IT’S REALLY DISTURBING.”

**I worked for the school board for 28 years. Our biggest challenge is to get the building to run efficiently.** They’re trying a lot of new technologies sometimes things work, sometimes they don’t and especially adapting new technologies to an old building can be very challenging.

One of the biggest challenges is for the students to be more respectful of the building and of the jobs we do too. Some kids still have the attitude that the custodians are here to clean up after them, yes we’re here to clean the school, but for example, there’s a garbage can in the hallway and after they finish their lunch they just leave all their garbage right by the can, it’s almost insulting that we put extra cans out so that they don’t have to go far and they leave the garbage right beside the garbage can. Like I said, it’s almost insulting. So an advice I’d give for students is to just treat the school and the building like you do at home. I mean you won’t leave garbage by the garbage can at home, you’d pick it up. Or even when they’re laying in the hallway with their feet up against the wall, you know, just act the way you do at home, have respect for the building. A lot of the time they damage the building and it costs money to repair it

and we’re getting short staffed, money is tight and a lot of times it takes a while to get things repaired.

Throughout my years, I’ve seen that the world has definitely become a more violent place, way more violent. Like when I was a teenager you could go to where the portage place is now, it used to be all record shops pinball arcades, and you could go and hang out not worried about being attacked or robbed. So it’s really disturbing.

The thing I struggled most with was the loss of my father three years ago and we were very close. It was hard, what I did was work a lot of extra hours just to keep my mind off of it and it was tough because he was my best friend, other than my wife, and it was a very difficult time; still I have moments where it’s hard. So an advice I’d give is that you shouldn’t fall deep into depression, don’t use drugs or alcohol as a wedge because it will only make things worse. You have to find inner strength and move ahead and always think about what would they (meaning the person lost) want you to do if they were here? They would want you to move forward and move ahead.







A HUGE THANK YOU TO  
THE CUSTODIANS.

NOT ONLY FOR BEING  
SO OPEN AND HONEST  
WITH *THE KELVIN*  
*PAPERCLIP*, BUT FOR  
ALWAYS KEEPING OUR  
SCHOOL GOING.



A collage of various student photos, including a girl in a hoodie, a boy in a polo shirt, and a boy in a hoodie making a peace sign, all overlaid with a red tint.

**STAY UPDATED  
TWITTER/INSTA:  
@KELVINPAPERCLIP**

**THANKS FOR READING  
PASS THIS ISSUE ON**