

5-22-2009

A Response

Jacob Jurss

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Recommended Citation

Jurss, Jacob, "A Response" (2009). *West Bend Community Memorial Library (Wisconsin)*, 2009. 424.
https://dc.uwm.edu/west_bend_library_challenge/424

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Friday, May 22, 2009

A Response

So I thought that I would add this exchange to the blog. I think that it sums up the argument pretty well in West Bend. This comes from the "I Support Intellectual Freedom and the West Bend (WI) Public Library facebook page. Thus far it is my best response to the comment. I have erased the commenters name because I did not ask permission to use their words, but they can be found at the facebook page. What follows are his remarks-

"Do most of you supporters even live in West Bend? Probably not. Well me & my wife do & we do not want our 10 year old child to be able to read a book that describes explicit sexual acts. This is not a gay issue. This is not a book banning issue. It is a moral issue. We do not want the books banned. We just want them moved from the young adult section to the adult section. Why is that such a problem? A person under 18 would not be able to buy a playboy from the corner gas station. Why should they be able to check out a book that describes in explicit detail oral sexual acts? Who has even read any of these books? I can tell you some of them are bad because i have read one just to see for myself. Reality check here - What parent out there thinks it is morally right for a child to be able to see or read pornography? Would you want your child too? These are not books just discussing gay feelings. These are books describing pornographic material. Wake up!!!!!"

This is my response. While it is a response to the commenter is a greater response to the whole of West Bend. It reads as follows.- Ya there are a few spelling errors but I was pretty tired writing it, no excuse but I'm a history major, I read a lot more books then I write.

Thanks for writing in. You bring up some valid points. You are right this is not a gay issue or a book banning. Moral issue though, interesting point. Is this a moral issue and if so who morals. You seem like a level headed parent trying your best for your child. This is commendable especially during times like we live were the divorce rates are skyrocketing and more children then ever grow up fatherless. What we need right now are parents who care for their children's well being and are engaging with their children, this is a good thing. The one issue in your argument that I would disagree with is the pornography. Comparing these books in question to playboys is quite right. A playboy or other pornographic material is use to create artificial arousal. Now I'm sure which book in particular you read but after viewing most of them I found nothing I would call pornographic. Yes there was one book that showed the male and female genatilia however that was a book dealing with puberty. I believe when teaching children about puberty it is helpful to show pictures in order for them to see how their bodies are changing. This is a natural occurrence that happens to everyone between the ages of 10 to 14. I believe this is why the books were placed in the young adult section, because it directly deals with issues that young adults are going through. They

are going through some scary changes and sometimes it can be awkward for young adults to speak to even a trusted adult about these issues. Sometimes at least knowing other people have gone through these issues can help them. Reading a book with a character that deals with this issues at school can help them relate and not feel like they are "bad" because they are thinking about the opposite sex more. Now does reading about sex mean they are going to act on those thoughts? No of coarse not. West Bend raises some smart kids and they listen to their parents. I think the Daily News just came outwith an article stating less children are experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Schools should take some credit for that but a lot of that must go to parents as well. Keep talking parents, your kids will listen, but remember to give the whole story. Abstinence is a great option and one I think should be encouraged, but safe sex is important to teach about too. Tell your children about condoms, where babies come from, and homosexuality. You will be surprised how much they can handle and understand, and how it really is not a big deal. You are right to be concerned for your child's safety and I think that it is great that you went out and did your own research on these books. I may disagree with you that the book is pornographic but I can see we have common ground. What this group is about is about parents stepping up. If you don't want your child checking out books, go with them to the library. Engage them in discussion about what they are reading and what they think about it. Question why would an author who was writing a book geared towards young adults write about a sexual encounter or fantasy. Is it moving the story line along, does it add to a life experience, is it something the character wonders about, does it present a moral dilemma for the character? Author don't put anything into their stories that don't do one of these things. The act must lead to something, look for the deeper meaning. I believe that we do not give the children of West Bend enough credit at times. They are good kids who know right from wrong. They have strong moral backgrounds and stand up for what they believe in. They have strong parents who teach them moral behavior. I can say these things for certain because I am a product of West Bend. I was born and raised here in her elementary, middle and high schools I was taught great life lessons. From my parents and my Church I have learned right from wrong. But most importantly I have learn to stand up for what I believe. I believe in West Bend. I believe in her people. I believe in her library and that it is a proud institution striving to present all sides of an argument tastefully and gracefully. Homosexually issues, First Amendment Rights, Morals issues these are important things, but this group is not only about them, it is about all of them and more. The people in this group do not support porn they support the freedom for parents to do their jobs. They support the freedom for the library to give access to books of all ideas to all people. And so I want to thank you for taking time to read these books and care for your child. Because it is the parents of West Bend who raise the children of West Bend. And I believe in the children of West Bend. They continue to become smarter then the previous generation and continue to strive for excellence.

They are the future and deserve to know what happens in this world because they are the ones who will change it for the well being of all.