

Stanger in the village

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



Stanger in the village The First Day of School First walking into my new school of Terrace Park Elementary during the middle of 6th grade, I must have been the most awkward person on the planet. Moving schools because of my acceptance into a more challenging school curriculum, I had been told this group of students would help me learn much faster than the ones at my old schools. The material would have been learned at a much faster paced and higher level of difficulty. It was as if my old elementary school had kicked me out, placing me with kids who these similar " problems" as me. It had never occurred to me that the new environment I was in was so different than what I was used to. Going to this new school required a fifteen minute drive commute to and from home daily. This inconvenience made it hard for me stay connect with my classmates in the afterschool extracurricular activities. Changing schools meant meeting a new group of people I did not know. Joining the school mid-year I was the stranger that came in knowing nothing about how the school worked. Most people had already formed their little friend groups and created their own schedules. On the other hand, the large amount of people at this school meant that some students still had time expand their friend group. It was a whole new experience and it was a case I had never handled in my life before. The two school environments were just too different. My new school was two stories high and had twice the amount of students. It was harder to get around the school and find my new classes. It had recently been renovated, so the whole appearance of the school was much more modern. Upon arriving, I noticed many remarkable building features. A five foot circular stained glass window started at me with its amiable eyes. The wolf drawn seemed to represent the school mascot.

Compared to my old school, this school had much more classrooms and facilities. The six groupings of classrooms, the football and track field outside, the gym and cafeteria were all spread out. The colorful colors that were painted on school did nothing but spur my curiosity. Right outside the cafeteria was the playground of all children's dreams. It was spacious and had two different playgrounds. There seemed to be a caterpillar toy that the underclassmen were fighting over. The real attraction, however, was the large football field beyond the playground. I watched the daily lifestyle of this school as I wandered about. Some students hung out by the cafeteria eating their breakfast, some were conversing in the halls and some had already sat down in their classrooms. Twenty minutes before school had even started the amount of activity was surprising, when compared to my previous school. Yet people seemed to not notice me, whenever I passed by, none seemed to fully acknowledge my presence. Back home, I had friends who rushed to greet me as I walked through the doors of the classroom. The staff all were familiar with me and were willing to help me out in any situation. As the first bell rung, I knew it was time to start my "first day" of school.

Walking into Mr. Hagen's room, I noticed a row of computers in the back right corner of the room. Their placement against the wall made it seem like they had never been used for a long time. I walked in, only to be greeted by a young aged man who I assumed to be the teacher for this 6th grade class. As I was introduced to the class, my experience as a stranger had officially began. I stood at the front of the room and slowly walked toward the seat I had been assigned. After a little bit of adjusting, the final bell rung and class had started. The first day was the day that would decide everything — from

what type of friends I made to the spot I would sit during lunch. Knowing this, I tried my best to make myself look as normal as possible, attempting to discard my own shy character. Scanning the room, I knew absolutely no one. Making friends was also never one of my assets. Each person looked the same. I sat down next to a boy who had unkempt hair and had a Hawaiian shirt loosely thrown over a white t-shirt. Everyone knew my name, because it was different than the typical American name. The name "Jonah" was sure to stick in their minds, at least for next week or two. The faster paces of the classes were too much for me to handle for I never been used to such a speed in my previous school. I sat there, lost, wondering what to do. The faces of all the other students around me were intent and focus on their given task. I was left out of the atmosphere of the classroom. When lunch finally came, I was finally relieved of the pressure of the classroom. As a stranger, I remembered that didn't know anyone well enough to sit with. For all I knew, I didn't even know how to buy lunch. I frantically asked myself, "Is it the same way as my old school? Will I have the same PIN number? Where will I sit?" Luckily, on the way out of the room, I was invited to eat with the boy with unkempt hair. I later learned that his name was Randy and that he was one year younger than me. As I sat down at the lunch table, many other kids sat down with me. All of them stared at me because they had never seen me there before. I was unable to come up with courage to talk to them, therefore awkwardly sitting at the table eating my lunch. I knew that they did not mean to be unkind, but just wanted to understand more about who I was. To my delight, I ran out onto the field and felt freer to finally act as myself again. The size of the field was much larger than I had

expected from first look. The only color I could notice around me was the shade of green. Looking around, I had no one to kick my soccer ball with. Throughout the day, I received countless glares from many people I didn't know. Many others from different classes had asked me many times for my name, asking me how I was and where I had come from. They had asked me so many types of questions that sparked one after another, triggering a large chain of questions that I did not know the answer to. Many of the others just called " hey new kid! " I will admit that my feeling of fear was more than I could handle. There was so much nervousness that I would start sweating and my nerves would spark all over my body. Walking in for the first time through those doors of Terrace Park Elementary made me feel so small in this large school. I was not used to such a large community, I like it when my classrooms were all close together, the student were allowed more changes to interact and the staff would be able to more easily connect with us. The few smiles I had received when entering felt forced- the ends of their lips raised for a quarter of a second. I had thought that I was different than all the rest of the kids — Was it my looks? My clothes? My awkward trot? Some might have thought that I was just another one of those Asian nerds. I felt that I would have trouble fitting in. that I should have probably stayed at my old school. Why would I just make my life harder for myself when I could just be chill with my old group? I knew that the ambivalent glances I received were not meant to be malicious. I know that even I would have done the same to a new student. My initial fears had changed the way how every face in the school had looked. Even a perfectly joyful person could seem to have cruel intents. Trying to along with the other students was just a nightmare. I

have always heard that the best thing to do on a first day of school was to make a good impression. However, I was never the type who was easy to get along with or outgoing. I tried leaving all those traits behind me as I spoke up, but it was no use. My true nature showed one way or another. My shyness only helped distance me from the other students around me, as if no one had wanted to become my friend. All the small things happening around me were, I was tuned into the world or small details. As I felt time go in in slow motion, I watched as the 1st graders dragged the lunch basket to their grade table, gave each other a high five for a job well done and then walked to the lunch line. I saw the fly buzzing around the air above me, before stopping on the table next to me. I had nothing else to pay attention but these fine details, no one would spare a second on the new kid at the table. I almost wanted to cry to show how I felt, but I realized that would probably ruin what first impressions I had left. Looking back, I realize that this experience was not that bad. It was own expectations of a new school that had caused me to sense so many different feelings. The feeling of a stranger was only because I was a new face in town. It was natural that the other students were curious of who I really was. It is even possible that, just as how I was too scared to talk to my new classmates, they had also been hesitant to approach me. Being a stranger was only temporary; I would eventually have assimilated into the daily lifestyle of Terrace Park. While that first day was particularly bad, I quickly was able to adapt to the situation in the coming weeks. I had become acquainted with the few students at my table in just a week, the rest of class in a month. This group of students who had all seemed so large at first was not as scary as they had originally

seemed. They were actually very friendly; each of them had qualities that made them attractive. I had become very good friends with some of them, influencing my friends I my future schooling years. One could say that this school year affected my future directly. I would never have chosen the friends if it had not been for my experience at Terrace Park. The people that I had grown to enjoy were those who were smart and were willing to help me with any problems I had. I learned that other people are generally kind in nature, but just have trouble expressing their feelings. I have realized that I would never have attended Edmonds-Woodway High School without the experiences I had. I wanted to follow where my friends had gone to school, so I had chosen Edmonds-Woodway instead of my home school of Lynnwood. Today, I have absolutely no regrets for changing schools mid-year during the 6th grade. I know I am a stranger, but I also know that being a stranger does not last for an eternity — there will be a point where you will be a part of the village. We all know that every student had at least a couple first days of school. The moment where we walk into a classroom is always the worst part. We have no idea what could happen next. We see and meet people that we have never been familiar with. The sea of new faces would only help overwhelm the normal person. Shaky legs, sweat rolling down foreheads and that feeling of being a stranger will always be the initial feeling of the average person. Especially when we walk into the classroom midyear, these feeling are only amplified. Having no idea how to fit, we tend together take two actions. In my case, I tend to try to change my personality to make a good first impression, only to realize that I am unable to keep it up for days or weeks. Rather than to mess around with our true personalities to make

that first impression, acting as yourself will allow others to truly know us better. People are much friendlier than we originally think; they are that frightening once we get to know them. Even more so, a bad impression does not mean that the rest of their life is ruined. Their identity can be redeemed through their actions. The important thing is not to worry and things will usually work themselves out. It is human nature to adapt to situations as the conditions change. Whenever a new student joins a classroom, the environment will change slightly. As time goes on, you will become a part of the environment that the rest of the students are used to. Working and communicating with others are a main part of changing from being a stranger to becoming an acquaintance and possibly to becoming a friend. This situation can apply to almost everyone. All new students will feel like a stranger at one point or another. The time has come to realize that the overstated fears of the first day have only created discomfort in those who are new. No matter what, we cannot avoid the way that people look on us as strangers. But really, we are not entirely strangers. The only difference between you and them is the time spent attending that school.