Rural Schools Participate in Youth Civic Engagement Initiative

By Elaina Loveland

This academic year, 100,000 students’ voices from urban, suburban and rural high schools in 15 states will be heard as they join in a new youth civic engagement program funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

“Project 540: Students Turn for a Change” is a one-year student-led and student-centered program that aims to expand civic engagement opportunities for young people across the United States, and establish a national network for youth civic engagement. The initiative is housed and supported by Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island.

The name Project 540 stands for a turn of 540 degrees—a revolution and a half. During the course of a year, students will identify the issues they care about and examine the current landscape for student civic engagement in their high school. This first phase represents one revolution. Then, students will take an additional half-turn to create recommendations that will enhance their opportunities for community involvement—a 540 degree turn for civic change.

Rural schools in six states are among the many high schools participating in the "Project 540" program.
“Standards-Based Reform: A Civic Imperative” is the theme of the Public Education Network’s 11th annual conference. Conference discussion topics include how standards-based reform impacts public education, what the future holds for the standards-based reform movement and how education advocates use standards to build public involvement in their work. More detailed information about the conference is available on the Internet at http://www.publiceducation.org/events/conference/index.htm#. Contact Mary Anne Hickey at (202) 628-7460 ext. 219 or e-mail mahickey@PublicEducation.org with questions.

November 14–16, 2002

Fall Forum 2002: What School Should Be
Coalition of Essential Schools
Marriot Wardman Park,
Washington, DC

The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) fall forum is an annual event bringing together a diverse group of more than 2,000 educators to share ideas and practices in the areas of school design, classroom practice, leadership and community connections. For specific questions, please call (510) 433-1451 or e-mail vcoleman@essentialschools.org.

To list your upcoming events in the December 2002 newsletter, please contact Rural Roots at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177, ext. 14.

Rural Trust Announces Affiliate Campaign

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to the bimonthly Rural Roots newsletter, public recognition of your affiliation, information packets and invitations to various Rural Trust conferences, workshops and special events. In addition, affiliates receive up-to-date news of rural education issues to stay well informed about work in the field, as well as the satisfaction of being part of a nationwide effort to improve rural schools and communities.

While there is no fee for affiliation with the Rural Trust, some services such as on-site training or conference and workshop registrations may require fees. In return, affiliates will have the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with others in the network through workshop presentations, cross-site visits, online discussion forums and published reports. There are three levels of affiliation, with benefits that increase at each level:

Level 1: Exploratory, for those new to place-based education and previously unassociated with the Rural Trust;

Level 2: Intermediate, for those who have varying levels of experience and/or commitment to place-based education, with several teachers and community members involved; and

Level 3: Leadership, for those committed to Rural Trust principles, experienced in place-based education with integration into teaching and learning processes, experienced in using the portfolio-based assessment rubric, and willing to mentor others.

The time has never been better for educators, community members and organizations to reaffirm their commitment to rural schools and communities and to be part of a growing national network. The Rural Trust believes that, united in the cause, we can help rural schools and communities get better together.

Affiliate with the Rural Trust by visiting our Web site and filling out the form found at http://www.ruraledu.org/affiliate.html. Affiliate applications are also available by mail. To request an application, or if you have questions about affiliation and its benefits, call the Rural Trust’s Capacity Building program office at (252) 433-8844. Please note: Even if you have already been receiving Rural Trust publications, we encourage you to fill out an affiliate application so that we can acknowledge and communicate with everyone connected to the organization.
GreaterNET Combats Missouri Teacher Shortage with Technology

By Elaina Loveland

In rural areas of Missouri, many schools have difficulty attracting teachers for specific subjects, yet students at these schools must still take courses in these subjects that are required by the state for graduation. An organization called GreaterNET has found a solution to the problem: offering courses to school systems via Interactive Television (I-TV). Located in Blue Springs, Missouri, GreaterNET is an independent, not-for-profit, member-based organization whose mission is to broker I-TV courses across Missouri and provide support services for K–12 schools involved in two-way interactive television. GreaterNET offers support services such as I-TV project management, training, grant writing, and technical consulting to its school and higher education institution members.

Ellen Ervin, executive director of GreaterNET, describes I-TV as similar to videoconferencing. “We use the same technology as corporations use when they have video conference calls. This technology allows students and teachers to interact live through television the same way,” she said.

The idea to start GreaterNET began when three I-TV cluster coordinators in different regions in Missouri realized that schools’ increasing course needs could not be fully met within their clusters—they needed to collaborate in order to maximize course offerings to schools. The Rural School and Community Trust provided initial funds to get the organization “off the ground” in January 2001. The Rural Trust’s support of GreaterNET is part of an innovative program of rural Education Renewal Zones (ERZs) in Missouri. The goal of the ERZ initiative is to improve rural education and teacher preparation through the use of technology. Besides GreaterNET, the ERZ collaboration includes two teacher training institutions, a technical college, the state education agency, and a variety of technical support organizations.

“What’s unique about GreaterNET is that we don’t just have a catalog of courses for schools to choose from,” said Vicki Hobbs, treasurer and member of the board of directors. “Instead, we attempt to match every course need that each school has. If a school needs a course in geometry, we find a way to make it happen.”

GreaterNET’s most requested I-TV courses are in the foreign languages, particularly Spanish. This fall, GreaterNET has contracts to offer 13 Spanish I classes, nine Spanish II classes, two photography classes, one physics class and one college algebra class. Twenty schools are participating in GreaterNET’s I-TV course offerings and several more schools are interested, but are looking for funds to purchase the technology needed to provide I-TV.

Gary Cutts, principal of Eminence High School in south central Missouri, said that he has been using I-TV courses for five years and has been working with GreaterNET since its beginning. This year, Eminence High, which serves 160 students in grades 7–12, will offer Spanish I, Spanish II and medical terminology courses through Greater Net. “In a school of our size, we only need about two hours of foreign language instruction per day and cannot afford to hire a full-time teacher when the need is low,” he said. “I-TV courses are a great alternative.”
Youth Council

The 2002 Youth Directing Change Institute

Learning Together: Youth-Adult Partnerships for Change

From the Rural School and Community Trust National Youth Council

In June 2002, 50 young people and 25 adults from 23 states gathered for “Youth Directing Change,” an intensive three-day institute to discuss the challenges and possibilities of revitalizing rural schools and communities. The institute, held in Nebraska City, Nebraska was designed by the Rural School and Community Trust’s 18-member National Youth Council. The meeting emphasized the group’s belief that social change is most powerful when youth and adults collaborate. Five focus areas explored the role of youth in environmental sustainability, economic development, local and state policy, media and technology, and the arts and cultural heritage. Activities at the institute reflected the goals of the Youth Council; youth-adult teams led all formal activities. Representatives from Youth on Board, the Food Project, and Community Partnerships with Youth led various training exercises that demonstrated youth-adult partnerships with clear success at local, regional, and national levels.

Participants spent numerous hours together, sharing strategies and outlining action steps in the five focus areas. For example, issues discussed in the local and state policy focus group included:

- Taking action on air quality issues in inadequate school facilities
- Discussing personal, racial, and economic preferences with school boards
- Addressing teacher union opposition to student-evaluated courses
- Changing state accountability practices to include place-based education and local standards of education
- Finding remedies for high teacher turnover and lack of appropriate certification

The environmental sustainability focus group built a “road map” that charted the steps of discovery, implementation, and completion of successful environmental projects.

“I’ve learned a great deal about environmental issues from this focus group. I also gained great ideas for my classroom from fellow teachers who attended this institute,” said Lisa Carder, a journalism teacher from Albion, Nebraska.

The arts and cultural heritage focus group dealt with the perceived devaluation of art and cultural heritage in rural America. When asked why the arts appear to be “expendable subjects instead of life skills,” answers dealt with a lack of empirical testing, little exposure about the value of art, and problems the arts have with stereotypically defined sex and gender roles. The group brainstormed possible ways to eliminate the social barriers the arts and cultural heritage face.

The National Youth Council will continue to review the findings of the focus groups as it develops a strategy on how to support young people in their community building and activist efforts.

Each participant left the institute with practical “next steps” to address the issues discussed in the various focus groups. “Listening to the stories of others, their approach to problems, and progress made in their communities has empowered me to be a more involved activist in my own community,” commented one participant.

Sarabeth Perez, from Greenfield, California, said: “I was refreshed with the many techniques and ideas that I could apply when I get back to my community. I have a better understanding what steps I need to take to be successful. This truly was a great experience.”

Colt Kraus of Taylor, Nebraska summed up the participants’ reactions: “Probably the most important thing that I’ve learned is that kids and adults can—and need to—work together to get things accomplished.”

Photos: The “Youth Directing Change” institute brought together youth and adults to explore the role of students in social change. Credit: Barbara Cervone, What Kids Can Do
An Interview with Wendy Wheeler

Leader Sees Growing Trend in Youth Civic Engagement

Wendy Wheeler is president of the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, a nonprofit organization based in Chevy Chase, Maryland, that is striving to increase and improve youth involvement in local communities. She was interviewed by Rural Roots editor Elaina Loveland.

What is your background? How did you get involved in youth development?
I was involved in youth development as a young person, with the Girl Scouts, among other organizations. I have always had a strong belief in volunteerism, which sprang from my experiences with youth development when I was young. My educational background is in organizational and human development as well as environmental sciences. Professionally, I have served as the director of training for the Girl Scouts of the USA, where I reorganized the national training program, and I was also senior vice president at the National 4-H Council. I have also been involved with the YMCA and YWCA and other local community organizations.

What does the Innovation Center do?
The Innovation Center is an international organization that works to unleash the potential of individuals, organizations, and communities to engage together in creating a just and equitable society. We provide a variety of services. We seek out innovative new practices in youth development and promote them; we provide training and technical assistance to communities and organizations; we sponsor peer-learning and peer-exchanges; we provide guidance on youth governance and development of youth-adult partnerships; assist with evaluation and research; and we give funds directly to community groups.

How was the Innovation Center founded?
The Innovation Center was established three years ago. Originally, the Center was a division of the National 4-H Council, but now we are a separate organization affiliated with the Tides Center, which serves as our fiscal agent.

What are the trends in youth development?
The greatest trend in youth development right now is that we are seeing an increasing interest in engaging young people in meaningful civic engagement activities that really make a difference. We are also seeing more youth-directed work rather than adults just facilitating work for youth.

Who are the gurus in the field?
The gurus in the youth development really are the young people in the community. The real knowledge rests with them.

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Youth Resources

Publications
CYD Journal, (617) 522-3435 (General Information), (866) 293-4636 (Subscriptions), http://www.cydjournal.org
Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations
The research was published in partnership with the National 4-H Council, University of Wisconsin Extension, and the Youth in Governance task force of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents. Available in electronic format only as a free download at http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/images/products/01240215104234_YouthinDecisionMakingReportRevised9-01.pdf

Organizations
International Youth Forum, (410 347-1500), http://www.iyfnet.org
YouthBuild USA, (617) 623-9900, http://www.youthbuild.org
Youth on Board, (617) 623-9900 ext. 1242, http://www.youthonboard.org
YouthNOISE, http://www.youthnoise.com
Youth Venture, (703) 527-8300 ext. 324, http://www.youthventure.org
Rural Schools Participate in Youth Civic Engagement Initiative

Profiles of the Rural School and Community Trust clusters participating in Project 540 follow.

**Alabama**

- **Bibb Graves High School**, Millerville, AL. Enrollment: 145
- **Edward Bell High School**, Camp Hill, AL. Enrollment: 270
- **John Essex High School**, Demopolis, AL. Enrollment: 100
- **Loachapoka High School**, Loachapoka, AL. Enrollment: 200

These four small schools represent the racial diversity of rural Alabama: Bibb Graves school is a racially integrated school and Edward Bell High School, John Essex High School and Loachapoka High School are traditionally African American schools. Students in several of these schools have sponsored and run community newspapers, have done community history and photography projects, and have participated in community music and theater programs. Students are actively involved in strengthening and preserving their small schools in an environment where many small schools have been closed or consolidated in the name of cutting costs (without evidence that it is truly cost-effective) and despite the community value of the school. With the support of community members and teachers, students at Bibb Graves High School recently helped to reverse a court decision to consolidate their school.

**North Carolina**

- **Fairmont High School**, Fairmont, NC. Enrollment: 784
- **South Robeson High School**, Robeson, NC. Enrollment: 587
- **St. Pauls High School**, St. Pauls, NC. Enrollment: 845
- **Purnell Swett High School**, Pembroke, NC. Enrollment: 1486

The five high schools in this cluster are located in Robeson County, the most ethnically diverse rural county in the U.S., according to the 1990 census. The County’s population is approximately one-third Native American (Lumbee), one-third European American, and one-third African American and Hispanic.

These high schools have classes and clubs that are involved in short-term community-service projects, including tutoring assistance, working with food pantries and clothing drives, Special Olympics and “Big Sweep”—the annual river cleanup day. The schools hope to expand their “Green Maps” project as part of their civic engagement work, in which middle and
high school students from across the county locate historical, cultural, civic and recreational sites along with geographical and environmental features, and then publish community maps identifying these landmarks and resources. Green Maps have been used in various parts of the world to help groups educate the public about their communities’ assets and increase local participation in protecting these precious local resources. The original Green Map model was expanded in these schools to include cultural, historical, and political resources, earning them recognition from Green Map International. The expansion of the mapping model has helped bring Robeson County’s diverse communities together around a shared history.

Ohio

Trimble High School, Glouster, OH. Enrollment: 307
Federal Hocking High School, Stewart, OH. Enrollment: 420
Miller High School, Hemlock, OH. Enrollment: 300
Warren High School, Vincent, OH. Enrollment: 941

All four of these rural high schools are in the Appalachian region of Ohio. Even with substantial environmental degradation, the area continues to possess incredible biodiversity. The region has a rich culture and history, with strong traditions in music, arts and crafts. With the support of Rural Action, a grassroots community organization that organizes citizens to strengthen local communities, students in several of these schools are involved in the long-running DeRolph school funding case. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of more than 500 school districts in Ohio, has lasted a decade. In order to effectively involve students in some of the important education policy issues in Ohio, Rural Action produced a curriculum guide on the DeRolph case to be used in civics, social studies and government classes. Last May, approximately 900 students from 13 different schools attended a rally at the Ohio Statehouse on the school funding issue.

Students in these schools are also working a project to increase local involvement in school facilities design in several school districts in the area. Students are doing an action research project that involves photographing their existing buildings as a way of documenting design and structural strengths and weaknesses. The students will share these images with community and civic organizations to get them involved in the process of designing new facilities for the districts.

South Dakota and Nebraska

Bell Fourche High School, Bell Fourche, SD. Enrollment: 67
Boone Central High School, Albion, NE. Enrollment: 287
Burwell High School, Burwell, NE. Enrollment: 135
Elgin High School, Elgin, NE. Enrollment: 108
Howard High School, Howard, SD. Enrollment: 280
Loup County High School, Taylor, NE. Enrollment: 68
Ord High School, Ord, NE. Enrollment: 287

Several of these schools have been working together over the past four years in their affiliation with the Rural Trust. The South Dakota schools were part of the Program for Rural School and Community Renewal, a statewide 15-school network coordinated by South Dakota State University; and the Nebraska schools partnered with School at the Center, a statewide 26-school network coordinated by the University of Nebraska. All these schools have strong commitments to their communities and actively involve students in the issues and challenges of community life. Students help communities celebrate cultural heritage and renew cultural traditions, practice environmental preservation, conduct research and launch entrepreneurial ventures that are expanding their communities’ limited economic opportunities, and contribute valuable input to local government committees. For example, students at Ord High School in Nebraska have worked with the Valley Economic Development Group to recruit a business, which has created over 100 new jobs in their community of 2,500.

Vermont

Cabot K–12 School, Cabot, VT. High school enrollment: 90
People’s Academy, Morrisville, VT. Enrollment: 364
Thetford Academy, Thetford, VT. Enrollment: 360 (grades 7–12)

These three high schools are part of a coalition of 18 rural schools in northern Vermont called the Vermont Rural Partnership (VRP). Formed in 1996, the schools have these goals in common: building adult/youth partnerships; fostering school/community partnerships; developing place-based curriculum; and promoting citizenship skills in youth by service to the community. VRP schools are all small, ranging in size from 32 students to 400. The VRP is a nonprofit organization with proven experience in coordinating multi-school projects. The VRP
FirstPerson

Saying Goodbye to Lily School

By Sandra Gallagher and Elizabeth Thuestad

Editor’s Note: The closing of small rural schools has become more common in recent decades. This article is about the closing of one particular school, the Lily School. This school, located in Lily, Wisconsin, population 100, served 24 students in grades K–6 and was closed in June 2002. Authors Sandra Gallagher and Elizabeth Thuestad were teachers at Lily School before its closing. Here, they tell their story.

According to Paula DeHart, professor at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, “Everyone is at home at Lily.” Dr. DeHart was part of a three-year research project to find evidence of best practices being used in schools that embodied the “whole schooling” philosophy. We were proud to be selected as one of eight schools in Wisconsin that exemplified the five principles of whole schooling: empowering citizens in a democracy, including all, teaching and adapting for diversity, building community, and supporting learning and partnering.

We were pleased to receive this recognition and hoped that the elevated status would allow the school board to visualize Lily School as a positive model rather than a financial burden. The community had been fighting closure of our tiny two-room school for the past few decades. Unfortunately, the very year the research study was completed and submitted to the federal government, the school board made the decision to permanently close our school.

We began teaching at Lily School in 1984 and every few years since, the board considered closing the school. Our closest call came when the subject of handicapped accessibility was added to the usual financial concerns. Our school and community rallied, researching the legislative history of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The school board listened attentively as one mom recounted her conversation with the author of the bill. We were saved once again through the determination and support of our families and community.

Financial woes of the state and our district motivated us to become a charter school in the fall of 2000. We knew our multi-age program and innovative teaching techniques merited charter status and anticipated that the additional funding available to charters would ensure our survival.

This past year, our district embarked on a path toward widespread consolidation. Prior to Lily’s closure we had 10 elementary schools. The district’s plan is to pare down the number of buildings it needs to maintain. The board voted in March to close Lily as well as another charter school in the district. Our low enrollment made fighting the decision seem hopeless. The families of the students reluctantly accepted the decision and focused on making a smooth transition into neighboring schools.

We believed we could maintain the integrity of our multi-age program in another building, but unfortunately, that wasn’t possible. Most of Lily’s students are attending the closest rural elementary school, which is about 15 miles away. The additional students strain some classroom numbers, which will be remedied the following year through district re-alignment. Lily students were taken to meet their new classmates and teachers on a visit day this past spring.

The staff hasn’t been as fortunate. We have always worked so well as a team. Our dream was to recreate our program at another site. The hurried time frame of the whole situation didn’t allow for meaningful discussion regarding this issue. Meetings with the administration were frustrating. At times, we were given hope and at other times we were expected not to question the district’s unarticulated vision for the future. Thus, we find ourselves in a position where the entire staff has been dismantled and reassigned to placements that were the most convenient for the district’s human resource department. We feel we are floundering in our new positions, searching for others in our buildings who share a common philosophy of teaching.

What does the closure of Lily School mean to the community? As with so many small towns, the school is the defining feature. Over the years the town’s businesses have closed, but the school has always remained. It has provided not only education for the children but a sense of community for all. Christmas plays written by teachers were the highlight of the season. Awards day picnics were attended by all, young and old. Whenever there was a need at the school, there was always someone to come to the rescue. The local people, many of whom attended the school themselves, were proud of their school.

It is so hard to describe the responsibility the local people felt towards this school. When someone coined the phrase, “it takes a village to raise a child,” they could have truly been describing Lily, Wisconsin. It is evident that the level of commitment will be difficult to maintain with the students being bused throughout the district.

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GrantsWatch

Grant Title: LYSOL/NSTA Science and Your Health Challenge
Organization: Lysol Brand and National Science Teachers Association
Deadline: December 16, 2002

Lysol Brand and the National Science Teachers Association invite elementary teachers to submit innovative science projects on health related issues for grants of $1,500 to be used for professional development and classroom materials. Submissions must focus on a classroom project used to help students learn science while engaging in issues related to health. Issues could include, but are not limited to, personal health and hygiene, home/community health and environment, food growing, food preparation and consumption issues, disease, infection control and safety. Applicants must be certified, K–6 classroom teachers, U.S. citizens and currently teaching in a public or private school. Forty teachers will be selected. Additional information is available at the following Web site: http://www.nsta.org/lysol. For questions, contact Christina Gorski at (703) 243-7100 or e-mail cgorski@nsta.org.

Grant: Toyota TAPESTRY (K–12 Science Teachers)
Funder: Toyota Motor Sales, Inc. and the National Science Teachers Association
Deadline: January 16, 2003

The 2003 Toyota TAPESTRY program will award 50 grants of up to $10,000 each and a minimum of 20 “mini-grants” of $2,500 each to K–12 science teachers. Interested teachers should propose innovative science projects that can be implemented in their school or school district over a one-year period. Toyota TAPESTRY projects demonstrate creativity, involve risk-taking, possess a visionary quality, and model a novel way of presenting science. Toyota TAPESTRY grants will be awarded in three categories: environmental science education, physical science applications and literacy and science education. For more information, please visit http://www.nsta.org/programs/tapestry/index.htm.

Grant: Ventures in Leadership
Funder: Wallace Reader’s Digest Funds
Deadline: December 2002

Ventures in Leadership is a program of the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds designed to support innovative ideas in education leadership from a wide range of communities, especially those in low-income neighborhoods. Its goals are to create new knowledge of broad potential value to others in the field, and to advance other Funds-sponsored leadership programs in school districts and states across the nation.

Ventures in Leadership is a part of LEADERS Count, an initiative of the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds whose goal is to foster a national movement intended to improve classroom learning by: attracting a broader pool of talented principals and superintendents, strengthening the preparation of these school leaders and improving the conditions under which they run their schools. Grants of $5,000 to $50,000 will be made on a monthly basis through December 2002. Grant recipients will have up to two years to develop, implement and test their practical, innovative ideas about strengthening school leadership. Non-profit organizations, public schools, colleges, universities or other community-based organizations are eligible to apply for awards. The application must be submitted online at http://www.wallacefunds.org/questionnaire/form_intro.cfm. For more information, call the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds at (212) 251-9700, state that you are calling with a question about Ventures in Leadership, identify your name and organization, and you will be forwarded to the appropriate member of the staff.

Saying Goodbye to Lily School
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And, what will happen to the building? Over the last few years the students have researched the history of Lily School. We know this was the fourth building the town built. The “new building,” as the old-timers refer to it, was constructed after a fire had burned the previous one in 1933. The town and the school board are discussing how to “dispose” of the building. The district doesn’t want the building, but may want the revenue from its sale. Some members of the town would like to keep it as a community center. Others are concerned that it will be an added burden for the taxpayers to maintain. Nobody won in this situation. The students lost a school that felt like home to them. The community lost a part of its history. Parents lost a school where they were welcome and that connected them to the community. And the staff lost a vision of education.

Submissions

Rural Roots contains stories that share the incredible variety of place-based work going on around the country, its successes and challenges. Stories on rural community development, individuals and organizations making a difference in education and community life, and practitioner interests are all highlighted throughout the year.

Rural Roots is published six times per year and is distributed to more than 6,000 constituents. We encourage stories that focus on groundbreaking place-based education projects, youth-adult partnerships, small schools and consolidation, economic development, conservation, the arts, and instructive resource guides geared to teachers, to name a few.

We publish stories ranging from 400 to 2,000 words. If you are interested in submitting an article, please e-mail the editor at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177. We cannot offer payment for articles.
News Briefs from page 3

as Wallis Annenberg Scholars. The Rural School and Community Trust was invited to designate three students as Wallis Annenberg Scholars.

To apply for the program, students were required to submit academic transcripts and two letters of recommendation, in addition to a writing sample about why they wanted to attend the program. This unique opportunity enabled the Wallis Annenberg Scholars to earn three college credits by participating in one of six, six-week seminars offered by USC (Acting Workshop, Art: A Studio Experience, Art and Architecture, Engineering, Introduction to Film and Introduction to Parliamentary Debate). All their expenses were paid, and each student received a laptop computer to help with their work—and to keep at the conclusion of the seminar.

Last year’s Wallis Annenberg scholars were Luiz Munoz from Schleicher County (Texas) Rural Challenge, Jarthy Monterroso from Ventura County (California) Rural Challenge, and Seth Fowler from Matfield Green Consortium in Kansas. Due to their academic success and motivation, each scholar was invited to return for a second summer in the program at the end of their junior year.

Students who participated in the Annenberg Scholars Program for a second year were delighted to return.

“I wish I had the words to describe this experience,” said Munoz. “This program helped me find myself.”

Fowler described the program as “the best experience” he ever had. “Besides what I learned in the classroom, a majority of the learning was done on my own,” he said.

Wallis Annenberg Scholars who attended the seminar for the first time this past summer include Jessica Williams from the Mississippi Delta Five Project, Claudia Martinez from Ventura County and Joshua Trejo from Schleicher County.

The Annenberg Scholars will be writing about their experiences, which will be posted on the youth page of the Rural Trust Web site by the end of the year.

Child Welfare Journal Publishes Special Issue on Rural Child Care


New Journal for Rural Mathematics Educators

Rural Mathematics Educator, a new online quarterly journal dedicated to rural mathematics education, has recently been established by the Appalachian Collaborative Center for Learning, Assessment, and Instruction in Mathematics (ACCLAIM) at Ohio University. The inaugural issue was published in June 2002 and readers across the globe can now subscribe free online at http://kant.citl.ohiou.edu/ACCLAIM/comm/comm_sub/sign_up.htm.

“Our mission is to raise the profile of the rural context within mathematics education. Hardly any attention has been paid to it,” said Craig Howley, a faculty member of the Ohio University College of Education, who co-directs ACCLAIM’s Research Initiative with another faculty member, Jim Shultz.

The journal aims to provide information on issues facing mathematics education in rural areas and includes feature stories, reviews, useful resources for rural mathematics educators and professional development and publishing opportunities.

Endowment Awards $2.3 Million for Arts Partnerships Serving Youth

The National Endowment for the Arts recently announced that its Challenge America: Positive Alternatives for Youth program has awarded 249 grants totaling more than $2.3 million for projects featuring artist residencies in schools and civic and community organizations. Funded projects serve young people in communities ranging from rural, isolated towns that lack art and social service resources to low-income urban neighborhoods. A complete listing of grant recipients is available at http://www.nea.gov/learn/02grants/PAY1.html. In 2003, the program will become part of the NEAs newly expanded and restructured Arts and Learning grant category, which supports opportunities both in school and outside the regular school calendar in the areas of early childhood, school-based and community-based projects. For more general information on the new Arts and Learning grants, visit http://www.nea.gov/guide/ArtsLearning03/ALIndex.html or call (202) 682-5536 for early childhood and school based projects or (202) 682-5026 for community-based projects.
Leader Sees Growing Trend in Youth Civic Engagement
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What organizations and publications are good resources for people who want to learn more about youth development?

Resources about youth development really depend on the audience. For young people and their allies, I’d recommend checking out the Web site of “At the Table” (http://www.atthetable.org). “At the Table” is a clearinghouse of resources on youth in decision-making, governance and community involvement. Youth can learn how to get involved, find out about conferences and specific organizations, review surveys and polls and participate in online discussions. Engaging youth in developing policy and decision-making in local communities is what “At the Table” is all about.

For teachers and community members, I’d recommend investigating the work of the Forum for Youth Investment and the International Youth Foundation. The Forum for Youth Investment helps organizations in the U.S. invest in youth for positive change. Mainly, they promote more youth development and policy development. The International Youth Foundation’s work spans over 60 countries and tries to improve the conditions and prospects for young people in their local communities. Learning about youth development from organizations that have been doing it for years is a good place for teachers and community members to start.

There are general publications on youth development out there, and more are starting. Youth Today is a newspaper for a general audience interested in youth development. The CYD Journal is a quarterly publication that is geared more for adults working to promote youth development such as youth and community workers, educators, administrators, researchers, and policymakers. A brand new academic journal that will soon be published is the Journal of Positive Youth Development. This new journal will combine youth development research and practice. I have been invited to serve as one of the editors.

Are there any days, weeks or months dedicated to national youth development?
There really aren’t any, because there isn’t an organized youth policy in the U.S. so there is no organized movement dedicated to youth development.

Are there any countries that do have organized youth movements that we should look to for guidance?
Yes, internationally there are several places that do have organized youth movements. For example, the United Nations hosts a Triennial World Youth Summit. Also, the European Union has national youth commissions.

How do youth development initiatives benefit society at large?
The answer on how youth benefit is easy: they learn new skills, get connections, and are able to understand the roles and responsibilities of living in a democratic society. The larger revelation is that youth development positively influences adults, too. People don’t often realize this.

A report that we did with the University of Wisconsin, Madison, sheds some light on how youth development affects adults. The report, Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations, releases three new findings on youth development that really have not been discussed before. We found that: (1) young people enrich organizations’ discussions; (2) young people are strong contributors to boards; and (3) better decisions are made when youth are involved in decision making. We hope that these findings make people realize that youth development activities have a greater impact than influencing youth themselves, but that they can also foster substantial change in other areas.

What advice would I give to others who want to get involved with youth development?
The main advice I’d give is to look around at local nonprofits that already exist and investigate the opportunity to use an existing organization to partner with youth to further promote that organization’s mission. I would recommend that adults start working with young people and help them start programs. In every place where adults meet, I’d challenge them to ask themselves: Are young people here? What could young people do in a decision-making process? What avenues would they choose? How can I get them involved? Then, adults can start to really see the change that can happen when they utilize the talents of young people.

Feedback
Do you have any questions, comments or feedback? Something got you jazzed up? Think we should cover your story? Have an idea for us? Have a rural education need that we are not fulfilling? We greatly value your thoughts and opinions. Write to the Editor at the Rural School and Community Trust: 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006. Or e-mail: editor@ruraledu.org. We look forward to hearing from you.
Publications of Note

New from the Rural Trust

Dollars and Sense: The Cost Effectiveness of Small Schools
By Barbara Kent Lawrence, Ed.D., et al.
KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Rural School and Community Trust, and Concordia, Inc., September 2002

Research on the relationships of school size, poverty, and student achievement has shown that small schools are better for kids—particularly children from poorer communities. Now, a new report goes head-to-head with conventional wisdom about economies of scale, demonstrating that smaller schools can be cost-effective as well. Dollars and Sense: The Cost Effectiveness of Small Schools is a collaborative effort of the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, the Rural School and Community Trust, and Concordia, Inc. It draws on the work of architects, researchers, and top school facilities experts to challenge the common belief that big schools are cheaper to build and maintain than are small ones. Their conclusion: investing tax dollars in small schools makes good economic sense.

Single copies of Dollars and Sense are available free of charge by writing the Rural School and Community Trust, 1825 K St., NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006, or sending e-mail with complete mailing address to info@ruraledu.org.

Other New Publications

All Over the Map: A Look at State Policy to Improve the American Public High School
by Monica Martinez and Judy Bray
Institute for Educational Leadership, June 2002

This report, recently issued by the National Alliance on the American High School, examines trends, policy assumptions, and tensions that key state education statutes and board requirements hold for high schools. The state policies considered are divided into three categories: policies specific to high schools; policies that detail opportunities to learn; and policies that are new and in rapid flux. A hard copy is available for free on written request by either fax (202) 822-8405 or by filling out an online order form at http://www.iel.org/pubs/order.html (shipping costs may apply).