

Chicago Named Youth Civic Innovation Fund Site

Out of more than 210 applicants around the country, the Chicago Civic Innovation Consortium was recently awarded one of eight \$100,000 grants from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to participate in a nation-wide effort to engage young people as decision makers in the civic life of our institutions and cities. The Chicago Civic Innovation Consortium is made up of the Chicago Public Schools Service Learning Initiative, Mikva Challenge, Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago, and the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention. Chicago joins Portland, Oregon, Portland, Maine, Cleveland, Mississippi, San Francisco, California, Nashville, Tennessee, Hampton, Virginia, and Ypsilanti, Michigan as grant winners.

Over the next four years, each of these sites will participate in the Youth Innovation Fund for Youth-Directed Civic Action. Each site will build a board of directors consisting of 20 young people and five adults. Each board will fund youth-directed civic action projects after receiving grant application from groups of young people in schools or community organizations. One of the founding board members from the Chicago Civic Innovation Consortium, Jamie Smith from Austin Community High School said, "One of my goals in life is to help and give back to my community. I will be able to do this through the program. I promise to give my all and put my whole heart into the program."

As the board of directors of the Chicago Civic Innovation Consortium (CCIC) funds and supports worthwhile projects in the city, members will engage in action research to identify those issues that inhibit or promote the active involvement of young people in the civic life of Chicago's institutions. During the

third and fourth years of the initiative, the board will develop and implement an impact plan to directly address those things that keep young people from full participation in the life of the city.

Student groups in classrooms, clubs or after-school programs can apply for grants to support civic innovation projects early in 2004. For more information about this exciting project, contact Sarah Lieberman at 312/863-6345.

What is Service Learning?

Service Learning is a teaching and learning methodology that connects classroom curriculum with identified community issues and needs. Service Learning engages students in projects that serve the community and build their social and academic capacities.

Why use Service Learning in the Classroom?

In a recent article in Harper's Magazine, John Taylor Gatto, a former New York State and New York City Teacher of the Year, contends that boredom is everywhere in education. "...If you asked kids, as I often did, *why* they felt so bored, they always gave me the same answers: They said the work was stupid, that it made no sense, that they already knew it. They said they wanted to be doing something real, not just sitting around." Indeed, students often ask the vexing question: "What's the relevance?"

Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that asks students to examine a pressing important, social problem that is tied to their classroom studies and then do something about that problem. The impact on student learning, self-confidence, problem solving and analytical ability and excitement about learning is tremendous. Students long to make a positive contribution in a meaningful way that makes a real difference in the lives of people and the environment. Service Learning is a strategy that enables students to do that. The question of boredom and relevance is solved, while they gain a new appreciation for both self-directed learning and their role in society.

25 CPS Teachers Attend Summer Service Learning Intitute

One group of CPS teachers worked with an ex-prostitute who is currently organizing a campaign to help women who have been imprisoned on charges of prostitution, identify and secure affordable housing opportunities. These women learned that homelessness and the dearth of affordable housing can cause a woman to turn or return to prostitution.

Another group of teachers spent the day sorting and packaging food at the Greater Chicago Food Depository while learning about the social dimensions of hunger.

A third group of teachers studied the customs, politics, and geography of Brazil, created a

display on the country and then cooked a traditional Brazilian meal.

A fourth group learned about the advocacy campaigns currently underway at the Friends of the Parks including an effort to fight a plan to introduce hundreds of new boat slips at Monroe Harbor, while a fifth group worked with teachers at the Chinese Mutual Aid Association and its summer learning program for immigrant youth and children.

These experiences highlighted the four-day Summer Service Learning Institute hosted by the Service Learning Initiative of the Office of High School Programs. Twenty-five teachers from eleven schools participated in the institute designed to introduce teachers to

the pedagogy and practice of classroom-based Service Learning.

One teacher stated: "This is one of the best professional development sessions I have attended."

Another said: "I am excited about the entire process. This conference really inspired me to get involved and to motivate others." While some teachers brought their own Service Learning experiences to the institute, others were new to Service Learning: "I know I never thought to use Service Learning in class because I didn't understand it or its opportunities. This was very helpful."

Teachers from the Summer Institute began to design their own Service Learning projects and will meet again mid-way through the school year to share their experiences. Thanks to the Coalition for the Homeless, Friends of the Parks, Chinese Mutual Aid Association, Greater Chicago Food Depository, and Hostelling International for hosting teachers during the service day.



Service Learning Pilot Project Evaluation Identifies Successes, Areas for Development

—We are getting students into places we haven't gotten them before—into the field with experts.

This comment from a Service Learning Coach was captured in a comprehensive evaluation of the Service Learning Pilot Project Initiative conducted by Marcia K. Festen Associates. The evaluation, which included site observations, teacher evaluations and surveys, teacher and student focus groups, and a full review of year-end Service Learning Coach reports, identified very positive trends in the development of Service Learning in Chicago Public Schools. As one teacher stated, “the pilot project is a step in the right direction.”

The Service Learning Pilot Project is a strategy to introduce Service Learning as a pedagogical strategy to classroom teachers at a limited number of schools each year and then assist teachers with professional development, community and curricular resources, and support as they integrate service projects with classroom instruction. Fifteen schools participated in Wave 1 of the pilot project during the 2002-03 academic year.

One finding from the evaluation was the positive impact on both students and teachers. According to the evaluation, “the impact on students was multi-dimensional in nature, building an array of life-enhancing skills.” Students and teachers mentioned the development of life skills, the opportunity to build bridges across communities, teamwork, responsibility, an appreciation of history, feeling respected and valued by others, and new perspectives on social issues as

key positive outcomes for students from Service Learning experiences.

Teachers discussed the new professional and personal skills that they developed through Service Learning experiences, including expanding creativity, improved planning and organizational skills, and being able to integrate with other subject areas through a project. As one teacher stated, “I learned how to teach while I am learning and while the students learn.”

Despite the positive gains, the Service Learning Initiative still has a set of challenges ahead that teachers, coaches, and students identified.

- Funding for Service Learning is critical to its success.
- Time presents the greatest obstacle to teacher involvement in Service Learning and its overall sustainability.
- Students—and teachers—are resistant to Service Learning. The Office of High School Programs still has a long way to go in terms of changing the perception of Service Learning as something more than another requirement placed on students and teachers.
- There is confusion about what constitutes Service Learning and how a Service Learning hour is counted. This confusion leads to inconsistency within and across schools.
- Teachers need to be recognized for their participation in Service Learning.

In order to move forward and address these challenges, according

to the evaluation, the Service Learning Initiative must

- continue to build infrastructure,
- clarify policies and procedures,
- continue to provide professional development and expand it,
- develop a commitment to Service Learning at all levels of the CPS administration, and
- continue to develop the network of resources, tools, and recognition opportunities for teachers involved in Service Learning.

The Service Learning Pilot Project Initiative Wave 1 smashed all expectations for the first year of utilizing Service Learning as a pedagogical tool. At 15 schools, a total of 412 teachers participated in professional development opportunities and 246 teachers implemented classroom-based Service Learning projects, representing 22% of total faculty at the pilot schools. A total of 4,298 students participated in classroom-based Service Learning projects, representing 26% of the student population and earned a total of 40,712 service hours.

We welcome 11 new schools to the Service Learning Pilot Project Wave two for the 2003-04 academic year and expect to enjoy much success with them as well. If you would like a copy of the evaluation report e-mailed to you, contact Jon Schmidt at jjschmidt@cps.k12.il.us.

A Student's Perspective on Service Learning

Hi, my name is Ana deJesus and I am a junior at Chicago Military Academy-Bronzeville. As an intern for the Service Learning Initiative, I was assigned to write an article pertaining to the *student perspective* on Service Learning. While doing this assignment, I had to interview other students my age on how they felt about Service Learning. To my surprise, many if not all of the students, really like to help communities and people and participate in ways that can make a difference in the world today. And because there is such a great variety of places and organizations at which we can volunteer, everyone actually gets a chance to explore careers that may interest them, while experiencing different cultural neighborhoods in the city. We are also learning about issues

that might even help us after we graduate.

As a student, there are many things in life that most of us look forward to doing everyday, and even though it's not always our homework, we, as students, like to lend a helping hand to those who are in need of one or maybe even two hands. We also realize that our voices and views are hardly being noticed by our fellow peers, teachers and parents, which is why most of us are labeled as rebellious. Most adults say, "They have attitude problems," or "They have no respect for their elders," which is not necessarily true. That statement is why we volunteer, not just because we need the required 40 hours to graduate, but because it actually helps us attempt to volunteer at a place of which

we've probably never heard or even at a place in which we may participate everyday after school.

As volunteers, we are building leadership skills. We are also learning how to solve problems that we may have at school or even in life. By volunteering, we are becoming our person, experiencing new things, meeting new people and even making new friends. Almost every high school student who I interviewed realized that if you get more than your required amount of hours, you are bettering your chance to obtain a scholarship to the college of your choice. If you don't get a scholarship, the students know that serving beyond the minimum requirement will look great on a transcript or even a resume.

continued on page 5

CPS Service Learning Leaders Recognized

On June 3, 2003, 100 teachers, students, administrators, and community leaders gathered at the Museum of Science and Industry for the first ever Service Learning Coach Recognition Event. A highlight of the evening was the awards ceremony recognizing outstanding leaders in Service Learning in Chicago Public Schools. Awards were presented for the outstanding principal, teacher, coach, community partner as well as one student from each CPS high school area.

- Principal of the Year – Ms. Judith Hernandez, Senn High School
- Teacher of the Year – Ms. Saswati Koya, Gage Park High School
- Coach of the Year – Ms. Audrey Scott Kelley, Fenger Community Academy
- Community Partner of the Year – Bethel New Life
- Students of the Year: Emily Matthews, Northside College Prep
Kenethia Thompson, Collins
Mariela Estrada, Gage Park
Isabel Maldonado, Chicago Discovery Academy
Nely Marquez, Curie



Student award winners received a \$500 scholarship to a school of their choice. All winners received a gorgeous trophy with the inscription of a quote from Cesar Chavez: *The end of all education should surely be service to others.*

Congratulations to all of this year's award winners who were nominated by their peers and evaluated by an independent panel of judges. Be sure to nominate individuals from each category for the 2004 Coach Recognition Event in May.

CPS Students testify before the Chicago Board of Elections

Since 2000, the Mikva Challenge has engaged students from 36 high schools in Chicago in the electoral process, public policy debate, and public service work. More than 1500 students have participated in Mikva programs, including serving as election judges for national and local elections. Mikva challenge has recruited and trained over 400 students to work in polling places around Chicago.

During the most recent local election, 150 high school students served as election judges and then had the opportunity to present testimony before the Chicago Board of Elections about their experiences as judges. Erice Smith of Hales Franciscan stated: "Serving as an election judge has been a great educational experience.... We have enjoyed the responsibility of participating in such an important democratic process.... However, one area of concern has arisen during discussions between students after the last election.... Students talked about the problems occurring in Chicago polling places and created a list of recommendations that could be made to the Commissioners of the Board of Elections to improve the voting system."

Brandii Ogbevire of Steinmetz High School described, for the commissioners, consistent themes

and problems and then recommended solutions to the problems. Among the problems were adult judges who were not trained to serve and others who engaged in electioneering in the polling place. Other judges refused to treat student judges as equals at the polling places. On behalf of her fellow students, Ogbevire suggested that all judges be screened and attain a minimum level of education in order to serve and a list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors should be provided to all judges prior to serving. Ogbevire concluded her comments by stating the hope that "together we can help make the system of voting in Chicago a model for the whole nation."

Commissioners of the Board of Elections received the comments from Mikva students enthusiastically and began to work with Mikva Challenge to identify opportunities to expand opportunities for students to serve as election judges. The student election judge program facilitated by Mikva Challenge is an excellent model for students to learn and exercise civic responsibilities and to make their classroom learning real in the community.

Student Perspective
continued from pg. 4

"By having a large amount of Service Learning hours, it appears as though you are dedicated to what you do," said Maria Brown, a fellow high school student.

Even though many high school students are willing and may even love to volunteer, more than half of the people who I interviewed said that if they know nothing about volunteering, then they wouldn't volunteer at all. Many students are now being informed as to where, when, and how they can volunteer. This is mainly because teachers and Service Learning coaches are dedicated to their jobs and want to help the students learn and grow to become better persons in society.

It is good to know that after a hard day of volunteering, the students had fun, and they each gained a sense of accomplishment. "Even if it seems as though no one is listening or even paying any attention to what we do, at least we know that we've made a difference or even changed a life for the better."

Now my fellow readers, I leave you with this: "Everything in life takes time and dedication, so if you can spare a little time every now and then to volunteer at the place of your choice, then go out there and have fun doing it." To those of you who are just dreadfully busy, tell someone about what you read in my short article or let him or her read it. This has been the *students' perspective* on Service Learning...pass it on.

3rd Annual Conference Focuses on Successful Service Learning Strategies

Almost 200 CPS faculty poured through the doors of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. College Prep. High School on Thursday, May 1, 2003, for the Third Annual CPS Service Learning Conference entitled *Strategies for Success*. The conference was designed for teachers and school administrators to develop new skills and practices in using Service Learning in the classroom and in utilizing Service Learning as a school improvement strategy.

Twenty-four workshops in three strands provided remarkable opportunities for learning about Service Learning as a classroom pedagogy. CPS teachers and community organization leaders led workshops in successful teaching strategies, successful service projects, and successful school-wide implementation strategies.

More than 25 community organizations joined workshop participants over lunch, networking and sharing ideas and opportunities for creative service opportunities.

CPS faculty register for conference



Hyde Park faculty members display school's service projects



Cultural Kitchen staff members recruit CPS teachers



Stephanie Shapiro recruits teachers for violence prevention campaign



Conference participants pose by King mural



Best Practice faculty members discuss effective Service Learning strategies



CPS Student Named to National Civic Education Steering Committee

Joan de los Santos, a student at Steinmetz High School, has been invited to join the national steering committee of a coalition of organizations that will develop a campaign designed to restore the civic mission of schools.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) prepared a report published in February of this year suggesting that the restoration of the civic mission of schools should become a top priority in order to develop young people as interested, knowledgeable, prepared and skilled in the responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy. The Carnegie and CIRCLE report has been embraced by a widely diverse group of educators, foundation officials, scholars, researchers and concerned citizens. Service Learning is identified in the report as one extremely promising strategy to reinvigorate the civic mission of schools. To view the report, you can go to <http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/>.

Congratulations to Joan on her appointment to the Steering Committee. She will leave for Warrenton, Virginia, located just outside of Washington, DC, on October 2, 2003, for the kick-off retreat of the Steering Committee. We are proud of Joan's appointment and know that she will serve Chicago Public Schools well. Joan is also a founding member of the Youth Innovation Fund Chicago (see story on page 1).

Students Creating Gardens Across the City through Greencorps Chicago

Greencorps Chicago, a program of the City of Chicago Department of Environment, has been working with students and teaches across the city to design, build and maintain gardens and green spaces.

Roosevelt High School has been an active participant with Greencorps Chicago since the inception of its work with Chicago Public Schools. Since 2000, Roosevelt students and teachers have installed five gardens. Two gardens have been selected to win the Mayor's Award for creative use of green space in the city. In 2001, a Roosevelt garden won third place in the competition, and in 2002, the school won 2nd place.

Over 100 students from Roosevelt have been involved in these high-quality gardening projects. Besides planning, installing, and maintaining the Roosevelt gardens, the Greencorps Club grows vegetables, flowers, and houseplants in the school's green house and is active in the community with other neighborhood gardens. Students have helped, extensively, at Drake Gardens, a neighborhood garden space within two blocks of the school.

Greencorps Chicago is now sprinting into fall at full speed. Fall features a variety of projects, and Greencorps has just announced an expansion of its schools program this fall through three new curriculum-based tracks: Produce Garden Network, Green Roof Pilot and the Ecological Restoration Pilot.

The practice of community food security, or enabling residents to grow their own food, is a booming segment of Chicago's gardening community. This project will introduce the concept to high school students and will operate year-round to allow students to actively participate in the growing season. Greencorps is currently seeking interested teachers whose schools will be open in the summertime.

Interest in green roofs and their environmental benefits has been increasing since the installation of the green roof on City Hall. Responding to requests from a number of schools, Greencorps and its green roof colleagues in the Department of Environment will assist schools in constructing their own green roofs. While less hands-on for the students than traditional gardening projects, the green roof pilot will engage students in the classroom with exciting and intelligent study.

Building on the work Greencorps has done with a number of schools, building prairies, restoring river beds and re-claiming vacant lots, this year, Greencorps will expand gardening program to focus on the benefits of ecological restoration. Schools are not limited to their own campus; Greencorps encourages schools to consider transforming neighboring areas as well as their own sites. In this, the goal is to not only educate and engage the students, but also to involve members of the surrounding community. For more information about

Greencorps Chicago, contact the hotline at (312) 744-8691 or e-mail at environment@cityofchicago.org.



CALENDAR

**Service Learning Pilot Project
Wave 2 Coaches' Meeting**
Thursday, September 11, 2003

Service Learning Coaches' Meeting
Thursday, September 18, 2003

Coastal Clean Up
Saturday, September 20, 2003

**Service Learning Pilot Project
Wave 1 Coaches' Meeting**
Thursday, September 25, 2003

Service Learning Symposium
Thursday, October 9, 2003

CROP Walk
Sunday, October 19, 2003

The Service Learning Initiative

Chicago Public Schools

City of Chicago

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Board of Education City of Chicago

Michael W. Scott, President

Avis LaVelle, Vice-President

Members

Norman R. Bobins

Tariq H. Butt, M.D.

Alberto A. Carrero, Jr.

Clare Muñana

Gene R. Saffold

Chicago Public Schools

Arne Duncan

Chief Executive Officer

Barbara J. Eason-Watkins, Ed.D.

Chief Education Officer

Office of High School Programs

Donald R. Pittman

Chief Officer

Jon Schmidt

Service Learning Manager

Janice Itiher

Newsletter Lay-Out and Design

Service Learning Initiative
Office of High School Programs, 9th Floor
125 South Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Phone: 773/553-3425
Fax: 773/553-2148
Website: www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us