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CETAC

U.S. Department of Education
Character Education and Civic Engagement Technical Assistance Center



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Community Involvement Issue

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Community Involvement in Character Education

Welcome to this issue of the *CETAC E-Newsletter*, with a focus on **community involvement in character education**.

The Partnerships in Character Education Program (PCEP), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, follows the spirit of the enabling legislation by emphasizing the important role the community has in student learning.

PCEP grantees are required to involve community members in planning and implementing their projects, a component illustrated in articles throughout this issue. You will read about organizations that provide a wealth of service-learning opportunities for students and about communities that are working together to encourage

character development both in youths and in the adults who support them.

The Student Voice section highlights a special kind of work with the community over the past year and a half as students briefly relate their involvement in hurricane relief efforts. We celebrate the achievements of students described in this issue and honor the many parents and community members who work with school personnel to ensure that students succeed academically and develop strong character.

Deborah A. Price

Assistant Deputy Secretary
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Students Focus on Environmental Service Learning in Philadelphia

By Phyllis Green, science teacher, John P. Turner Middle School, Philadelphia Public Schools, Pa.

Two eighth-grade classes from Turner Middle School in Philadelphia diligently worked on many Partnerships in Character Education Program (PCEP) community service-learning projects this year under the direction of teachers **Phyllis Green** and **Carrie Duarte**. One environmental project took place at the Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Education Center, where students practiced their responsibility regarding protection of plants and animals.

Another PCEP project involved cleaning the neighborhood storm drains, identifying the watershed and placing decals on the drains that read, “No Dumping, Drains to the River,” which were donated by the Philadelphia Water Department. This project helped community members understand their role in keeping the drinking water clean.

Demonstrating civic involvement, these students developed, published and distributed *Turner Youth Yellow Pages* with contact information for environmental and community resources, volunteer opportunities and social services. The students presented their project at a community fair sponsored by Delaware Valley Earth Force, a local environmental organization and school system partner.

For information on Philadelphia’s PCEP community activities, contact **Michelle Grimley**, project director, 215-400-5708, or e-mail megrimley@phila.k12.pa.us.



Philadelphia character education program students are engaged by community-based partners in service-learning projects to improve their communities. Students and teachers, left to right, are Tyrone Hilley, Ms. Phyllis Green, Travis Whitehurst, Mrs. Carrie Duarte and Jessica Davis.

Hope Center Brings Character Education to the Homeless in Topeka, Kan.



Ms. Debra Sabb

By Debra Sabb, Assistant Director, Topeka Rescue Mission Hope Center, Topeka, Kan.

The Topeka Rescue Mission Hope Center partners with Topeka Public Schools’ PCEP project and Topeka City of Character, a nonprofit organization. This organization provided the curriculum that we integrated into our programming—*Character First!*, which has 49 character qualities as its foundation.

This same curriculum is used in all Topeka schools. As students study about a specific character quality in school and at the Hope Center children’s character program, businesses are encouraging development of the same character quality with their employees, and parents are seeing newsletters, signs and television public service announcements emphasizing the specific trait. It makes a comprehensive statement to bring together all sectors of the community.

Our center helps guests build their character through six weekly one-hour required “Success” programs. Participants are introduced to a particular character quality, then are provided demonstrations and activities to practice determination, responsibility and patience.

For information on Topeka community collaborations, contact **Rosanne Haberman**, project director, at 785-295-3020 or e-mail rhaberma@topeka.k12.ks.us.



Alliance Mayor Middleton and Chamber President Locke are proud of their city of character.

PCEP Helps Alliance, Ohio, Become “A City of Character”

By Mayor Toni Middleton and Alliance Area Chamber of Commerce President Mark Locke, Alliance, Ohio

Alliance Mayor Middleton shares:

In 2001, Alliance City Schools collaborated with Community Services of Stark County, Inc., to create a nonprofit character education program focused on grades 6–12 and formed the Alliance for Character Training (ACT) program. In fiscal year (FY) 2002, a PCEP grant award expanded the program.

Our community provides opportunities for every student, parent and community member to experience character education presentations and events. The six pillars of good character—trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship—are displayed on banners in our schools and local buildings as reminders of the commitment to our city of character.

Alliance Chamber President Locke shares:

I credit our PCEP project with increased school attendance, reduced numbers of discipline problems and dropouts, and increased proficiency test scores. Our chamber, the Alliance Area Development Foundation and the ACT program collaborate to offer training to address business ethics and character traits, such as responsibility and respect, to develop a better workforce.

For more information, contact **Stephen Stohla**, Alliance City Schools Superintendent, at 330-821-2100 or e-mail stohla@acs.sparcc.org.

Albion, N.Y., Creates Collaborative Community Connections



Ms. Margo Bowerman's 4-H program engages PCEP students in service-learning projects.

By Margo Bowerman, 4-H Team Coordinator, Orleans County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Albion, N.Y.

The Albion Learn to Serve With Character PCEP project was developed to assist New York state teachers in integrating character education into academics and in developing model lessons that incorporate service learning into character education. Community organizations provided help with these efforts. For one service-learning project, the creation of a nature trail, Albion Central School District reached out to community youth education organizations, such as Cooperative Extension 4-H, Boy Scouts and the local Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge.

Orleans County Cornell Cooperative Extension seeks to create collaborative community networks and empower youths to improve their community. The school district was a perfect partner because the district's three guiding principals are respect, responsibility and optimism.

While creating the nature trail, 4-H instruction emphasized responsibility while seventh-graders created and led nature-based activities with second-graders. The seventh-graders learned patience and positive civic behaviors in order to be responsible role models and to communicate the benefits of a relationship with nature to the second-graders.

For further information on the Albion PCEP project, contact **Laura Rog**, character education project manager, at 585-589-2050, ext. 2302 or lrog@albionk12.org.

Positive Action Enriches a Utah Community

By Paris Anderton, Prevention Coordinator, Northeastern Counseling Center, Vernal, Utah

In FY 2004, Uintah School District received a PCEP grant, which supported implementation of the Positive Action school model in grades K–12 and in Split Mountain Youth Center, a juvenile justice facility. The school district and my Northeastern Counseling Center expanded our liaisons to include the Utah Division of Workforce Services, the Department of Child and Family Services and the Eighth District Juvenile Court. The Positive Action program offers a character education classroom curriculum and kits for principals, families and communities. To reinforce school efforts, all community partners mandated that their clients attend Positive Action for Families classes before receiving other services, then later, family classes were expanded to include any interested family. Together, we have trained over 1,000 school personnel and community members. The Positive Action program is uniting residents through a commonality of character language and practice to meet community goals, such as increasing academic achievement and positive conflict resolution, and reducing absenteeism and substance abuse.

For more information on Uintah School District's Positive Action community character education activities, contact **Mark Dockins**, Uintah School District student services director, 435-781-3100, ext. 1010 or e-mail mark.dockins@uintah.net.



Ms. Paris Anderton

The Partnerships in Character Education Program (PCEP) grants require that schools join with parents, students and the community to work together to develop the character of our future adult citizens. In this Student Voice section, students share how their character education projects provide community connections to numerous agencies and organizations that help them practice character traits, such as responsibility, respect, compassion, generosity and civic-mindedness.



Students From Baldwin County, Ala., Reflect on Katrina

By Caitlyn Cline, 11th-grade transfer student at Daphne High School, Baldwin County, Ala.

When my family learned that a Category 5 hurricane was heading for our New Orleans home, my mother and father, two younger sisters and brother gathered some personal belongings and went to the nearest shelter. After entering the overcrowded shelter, I had no idea what had happened to my extended family and friends. I learned everything we owned was lost in the storm. The next day, a bus took us to the civic center in Baldwin County, Ala. and, thereafter, my family stayed with a church member who gave us clothes, food and school supplies. I enrolled in Daphne High School, Daphne, Ala., where character education project students assisted hurricane survivors. To a high school student, peer acceptance is very important, and these caring students and community members helped me cope better with the tremendous losses and changes in my life.



Caitlin Estes (left) of Daphne High School welcomes Hurricane Katrina survivor Caitlyn Cline.



By Gregory Pettaway, 12th grade, Daphne High School

Gregory Pettaway welcomed hurricane survivors into his family's Alabama home.

After the hurricane ravished New Orleans, my family shared our home with two of my father's longtime military friends and eight of their displaced family members. I volunteered at the civic center shelter where I organized the donated toys into categories and by age group. Students at my school learned greater responsibility, compassion and caring through our character education project's school and community involvement in assisting people in the aftermath of this historic event.

By Caitlin Estes, 11th grade, Daphne High School

I could empathize with Hurricane Katrina survivors in Louisiana because our Alabama area had been hit hard by Hurricane Ivan the preceding year. Because our PCEP ShowMe CHARACTER Implementation Project promotes positive character development in everyday classroom lessons, schoolwide activities, and community and parent involvement, school clubs held fund-raisers and food drives, and made welcome bags for hurricane transfer students enrolling at our school. After returning home from my church youth group trip to D'Iberville, Miss., to help the Red Cross distribute food and supplies to Katrina survivors, I took the supply collections more seriously and persuaded neighbors, students and teachers to make donations for basic survivor needs. My classmates and I will continue to build upon and demonstrate our character traits of caring and compassion by helping people in need.



Winifred George wrote a winning school essay on her hurricane relief activities.

By Winifred George, sixth grade, Central Baldwin Middle School

When I heard about the devastation caused by Katrina, I thought of a line from President Kennedy's 1961 inaugural speech: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Acting on this inspiration, my mother and I gathered food from our home and delivered it to the Red Cross shelter. Thereafter, I was recognized at a school assembly for my winning essay about my hurricane relief efforts. I was just practicing what we learned in character education by doing something for my country and survivors whose lives were devastated by this hurricane.

For information on character education efforts in Baldwin County, contact **Lawanna Sharpless**, project director, 251-972-8525 or e-mail lsharpless@bcbe.org.

Houston Students Help With Hurricane Relief

By Marquelle Hebert, seventh grade, Welch Middle School, Houston Independent School District

When Hurricane Katrina hit Mississippi and Louisiana, I felt the need to put compassion into action. I transported people who arrived from the affected areas to shelters and helped bag donated clothes and grocery items to give to people in need. In helping the hurricane survivors, I realized how much I have learned about responsibility and compassion through my involvement in the Houston Partnership for Character PCEP project.

For more information on the Houston PCEP project, contact **Karen Washington**, project director, 713-892-7015 or e-mail kwashin2@houstonisd.org.

Duval County, Fla., Students Rally for Hurricane Survivors

By Fernando Cordova, eighth grade, Southside Middle School, Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Fla.

Our SAVE class (Selected Alternatives for Vocational Education), a part of the Exceptional Special Education program at Southside Middle School in Duval County, Fla., carried out Hurricane Katrina relief service projects in the months following the hurricane as part of our character education project. Our class purchased lots of cool things for kids affected by the hurricane. We made gift bags with coloring books, crayons and candy to keep kids occupied and cheer them up while their parents were cleaning up after the hurricane. Thanks to all the help from our mentor and former SAVE student, **Aundrea Primm**, and our other community mentors **Pat Green**, and **David** and **Pat Balanky**, we were able to help hurricane survivors. We filled three large trucks with food and other necessities for adults and kids in need. We didn't forget about the pets, either. We put in dog and cat food, too!

For more information on this Duval County PCEP project, contact **Kathleen Bowles**, project director, 904-390-2131 or e-mail bowlesk@educationcentral.org.



Clockwise from the upper left corner are Southside Middle School students Chris Krueger, Santino Rinaldo, Josh Files, and Qortez Goshay, including mentor Aundrea Primm (bottom left) as they display gift bags.

\$18.5 Million Awarded to Help Students Develop Strong Character and Good Citizenship

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, announced 38 new grant awards for FY 2006 and four new grant awards for FY 2007 under the Partnerships in Character Education Program (PCEP). The grants were funded to state and local education agencies to design and implement character education projects, which teach student core ethical concepts, such as justice, responsibility, and respect for themselves and others, civic virtues and citizenship. The grantees are encouraged to conduct a rigorous evaluation of their evidence-based character education projects. Funded for up to four years, PCEP grants must integrate character education into classroom instruction and teacher training, and must involve parents, students and the community in planning and implementing the project. For a list of grant recipients, please see the following Web site: www.cetac.org.

Making Connections: An Important Resource for Communities

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, funded through the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) by the Department's Institute of Education Sciences, bridges research and practice to remove barriers to student achievement. For more information, visit the center's Web site at www.sedl.org/connections/about.html.

Upcoming Events

For more information about any of the following events, just click on the name of the event.

- ★ **The 2007 Annual Community of Caring Youth Leadership Summit** for student teams, grades 9–12, will be held in Salt Lake City, **June 12–14, 2007**.
- ★ **Pursuing Victory With Honor Sportsmanship Seminar**, sponsored by CHARACTER COUNTS!, will be held in Los Angeles, **June 20–21, 2007**.
- ★ **13th Annual Summer Institute on Character Education, Integrating Excellence & Ethics: "Smart & Good Schools: Bringing Out the Best in Students,"** sponsored by the Center for the 4th and 5th R's, will be held in Cortland, N.Y., **June 25–28, 2007**.
- ★ **13th Annual Character Education Conference** will be held in St. Louis, **July 19–20, 2007**.
- ★ **The U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) annual conference, "Celebrating 20 years of Collaboration to Make Schools Safe, Healthy and Drug-Free: Reflections on the Past and Looking Ahead,"** will be held in Washington, D.C., **August 2–4, 2007**.

Contact Us

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

If you would like more information about the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) you may visit the office's Web site at www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html. For more information about character education and civic engagement from the OSDFS staff, please contact:

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Character Education and Civic Engagement Technical Assistance Center

CETAC would like to hear from you. Please share your resources, events, lessons learned and news items that are important to you. Our team will assist you with submissions for possible inclusion in future newsletters. You may submit items and ideas via e-mail to cetac@cetac.org.

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About CETAC

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