

Courage to Teach
~ **New England**
c/o The Stone Center
Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
781-283-2861

Courage to Teach

*An 18-Month Personal & Professional Renewal
Program for Elementary & Middle School Teachers*

Supported by a grant from The DuBarry Foundation

Facilitators:

Pamela Seigle, Open Circle Program, Wellesley College &
Chip Wood, Principal, Sheffield Elementary School,
Author, and Co-Founder of Responsive Classroom®

Spring-Summer, 2005

Most of us become teachers for reasons of the heart—we teach because we care deeply about our students and about some subject. But the demands of teaching and the conditions in some schools cause too many of us to lose heart as the years go by. Is it possible to take heart once more so that we can continue to do what good teachers always do—which is to give heart to our students?

—Parker J. Palmer

Dear Educator:

It takes a lot of courage to be a teacher today. As former classroom teachers ourselves, we know firsthand the struggles and joys of Monday mornings and Friday afternoons. Now as teacher educators, we are joining together to offer an opportunity for a group of elementary and middle school educators in their 3rd to 5th years as teachers to participate with more experienced educators in a Courage to Teach® retreat program. Through these retreats, you will be able to reconnect with the sense of vocation and passion that brought you to teaching and that makes it possible to continue, with joy and commitment, in the profession.

The Courage to Teach retreats are rooted in the belief that good teaching flows from the identity and integrity of the teacher. In our time together, we will focus neither on teaching techniques nor on reform of the school system. Instead, we will focus on renewing that which is closest to us—the inner life of the teacher. In whole-group, small-group and solitary settings, we will explore “the heart of the teacher,” making use of stories from our own journeys, reflections on classroom practice, and insights from poets, storytellers, and various wisdom traditions. We will each be invited to speak honestly about our lives as teachers, and to listen and respond to each other—and to ourselves—with encouragement and compassion.

Thanks to a generous grant from The DuBarry Foundation to explore ways to help new teachers remain committed to the profession, we are currently seeking elementary and middle school educators who are in their 3rd-5th years of teaching, as well as more experienced teachers, to join us for an 18-month Courage to Teach retreat series that will take place in five retreats beginning in November, 2005. Each retreat will be held at the Wellesley College Club on the beautiful campus of Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA. They will begin with dinner on Friday evening and will run through Sunday morning.

We have attached additional information about how this retreat cycle will unfold, including dates and application materials. Twenty-five teachers will be selected for this 18-month retreat cycle, and participants will be selected by August 15, 2005.

Applications with personal statements should be sent by July 15, 2005 to:

Lisa Sankowski
WCW Stone Center
Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481

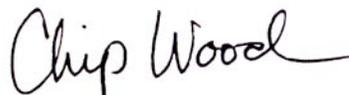
If you have questions about the program and would like to speak with one of us directly, please call or email Lisa Sankowski at 781-283-2861 or lsankows@wellesley.edu. We look forward to hearing from you. Also, please feel free to spread the word about this opportunity.

As educators, each with over 30 years of practical experience, we are finding this experience to be one of the most significant of our careers. We believe the Courage to Teach experience will be extraordinarily meaningful to you as well.

Sincerely,

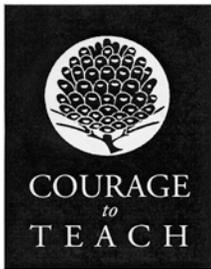


Pamela Seigle



Chip Wood

Attachments



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COURAGE TO TEACH® (CTT) is a program of quarterly retreats for the personal and professional renewal of teachers, administrators, and counselors in the public schools. The program is designed for educators, on whom our society depends for so much but for whom we provide so little encouragement and support. COURAGE TO TEACH® retreats focus neither on "technique" nor on school reform, but on renewing the inner lives of professionals in education.

What happens at the retreats?

Groups of 20-30 educators gather at a beautiful retreat center once a season for five weekend sessions over 18 months. The retreats consist of carefully designed, intensive individual and collegial activities around seasonal themes, making use of the power of a diverse range of poetry and teaching stories, journaling, art, nature, and dialogue. Regular time is spent in reflection, alone and with others, on our educational practice and the interconnections between our personal and professional identities. All activities are optional – each person is free to choose to participate in whatever way best serves his or her needs. In addition, each retreat includes unscheduled time to rest, play, get exercise, or explore the natural world.

Eligibility

Thanks to a grant from The DuBarry Foundation to support initiatives aimed at new teacher retention, we hope to bring together both teachers early in their careers and master teachers for this retreat series. We are seeking a mix of elementary and middle school classroom teachers who are in their 3rd-5th years in the profession and more experienced teachers. We actively recruit participants of diverse backgrounds, especially people of color, men, and educators from financially challenged neighborhoods, schools and districts.

Dates for Courage to Teach Retreats

Fall	November 4, 5 & 6, 2005
Winter	February 3, 4 & 5, 2006
Spring	May 5, 6 & 7, 2006
Summer	August 11, 12 & 13, 2006
Reunion	(Exact dates to be determined)

All retreats will begin on Friday evening at 5:00 p.m. with dinner at the Wellesley College Club and will conclude at approximately 12:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Massachusetts Professional Development Points (PDPs) will be provided for our meeting times.

Venue for the Retreats

The Wellesley College Club on the campus of Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA provides an informally elegant and serene setting for the retreats. Meeting and overnight rooms overlook a beautiful, tree-lined lake. Participants will have time to explore the beauty of the campus.

Cost

This Courage to Teach retreat series is partially underwritten by The DuBarry Foundation. The cost per participant, including all meetings, materials, food and lodging for all five retreats is \$500.

Scholarships

We will be able to provide some scholarships to offset the cost of participation based on financial need. Please indicate on your application if you would like to be considered for a full or partial scholarship. If you are accepted to the program and have expressed interest in financial aid, we will contact you for more information about determining your financial need. Acceptance to this program is not based in any way on whether or not you require financial aid.

Research Component

This Courage to Teach retreat program is part of a larger effort, funded by The DuBarry Foundation, to support and sustain talented and committed teachers in our public schools. To this end, part of the grant funding procured for this Courage to Teach retreat series has been allotted towards research and evaluation. The focus of the companion research project will be on understanding the unique experiences and challenges facing teachers in their 3rd-5th year of teaching. This research project will be led by Dr. Sam Intrator from Smith College. Dr. Intrator's work focuses on understanding how teachers and students experience school and classroom life. His books include *Teaching with Fire: Poetry that Sustains the Courage to Teach* and *Tuned in and Fired Up: How Teaching Can Inspire Genuine Learning in the Classroom*. He has also conducted several national evaluations of the Courage to Teach Program.

Those selected to participate in the Courage to Teach retreat series will be asked to participate in the research and evaluation component. This will entail filling out questionnaires and participating in occasional face-to-face or phone interviews. The goal of our work will be to more fully understand what can be done to support teachers so that they can be more present and inspired for themselves, their students, their colleagues and the communities in which they serve

For more information

For more information about this Courage to Teach retreat program, contact Lisa Sankowski at the address provided below, or by phone: 781-283-2861 or e-mail: lsankows@wellesley.edu. Also if you have not already done so, you may wish to read Parker Palmer's book *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, which provides the context for the program and information on the retreat experience.

Application and Selection Process

An application form is attached with this package. **A personal statement must accompany the application.** Once your application has been submitted you will receive a notice confirming receipt of your application by mail or e-mail. Participants will be selected and notified by August 15, 2005.

Please return your application form and personal statement by July 15, 2005 to:

Lisa Sankowski
WCW Stone Center, Wellesley College
106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02481
Fax: 781-283-3717

About your Facilitators

Pamela Seigle, M.S., is a teacher educator and program developer with over thirty years of experience in education. A former classroom teacher, she is the founder and executive director of the Open Circle® Social Competency Program, a social-emotional learning program based at the Stone Center at Wellesley College and currently being implemented in over 260 elementary schools in New England, New Jersey and New York. She is co-author of the Program's *Open Circle Curriculum*. For information about Open Circle, visit its website at www.open-circle.org.

Chip Wood, M.S.W., is principal of the Sheffield Elementary School in Turners Falls, MA, and a teacher educator and author with thirty years of experience in the field of education. He is also a co-founder of the *Responsive Classroom*® professional development model for teachers and schools. He is author of *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom, ages 4-14* and *Time to Teach/Time to Learn* as well as numerous articles in education.

Quotes from Courage to Teach Retreat Participants

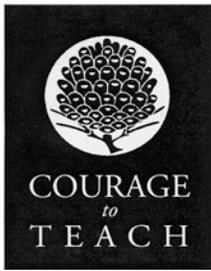
"I learned to pause and reflect and consider my own needs while strengthening my abilities to be a teacher once again. To become receptive, open and curious, not just burdened. I learned it was not just through learning that this would occur, but through pausing to observe, reflect and renew."

"This program has allowed me to focus and give value to my life, allowing me to concentrate on my emotional and spiritual growth and enabling me once again to teach truly from the heart."

"Courage to Teach has provided me with a framework that allows me to reconnect with the reasons I became a teacher. And I felt renewed through the process."

"The most deeply meaningful educational experience I've ever had is the Courage to Teach. Full of substance, affirmation, and light, it is life-altering."

"I say that it is a program that is incredibly respectful of the work of teachers. It provides a space where I can reflect on my work as a teacher in a space where others are doing the same."



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APPLICATION FORM *Fall 2005-Fall 2006 • Wellesley College*

Name _____

Home Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Home Phone (w/area code) _____ **Summer Phone** _____

Name of School _____ **District** _____

School Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

School Phone (w/area code) _____

Work Email _____ **Home Email** _____

What is the best way to contact you? _____

For how many years have you been an elementary or middle school teacher? _____

What grade level do you teach? _____

Would you like to be considered for a scholarship to defray the participation fee of \$500, based on financial need? Yes No

(Acceptance to this program is not based in any way on whether or not you require financial aid.)

Special Dietary Needs (if any) _____

Personal statement: In 1-3 pages, please let us know why you are interested in attending this retreat program and how you hope to benefit. We are interested in what you have to say and not concerned about writing style. In your statement:

1. Briefly describe the setting where you work.
2. What issue(s) or question(s) involving your work and identity as a teacher do you find yourself thinking about or struggling with right now?
3. Reflect on what changes you have noticed in yourself since you became a teacher.

To register send this registration form & personal statement BEFORE July 15, 2005 to:

Lisa Sankowski
WCW Stone Center
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106 Central Street
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lsankows@wellesley.edu
Fax 781-283-3717

Courage to Teach admits participants of any race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to its students. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school administered programs.