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## Phi Delta Kappan - Special Section on Youth Service

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PHI DELTA

JUNE 1991

# KAPPAN

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A Special Section on  
**Youth Service**

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Joe Nathan and Jim Kielsmeier, Guest Editors

# The Sleeping Giant of School Reform

*Learning through service is an idea that is bubbling up, rather than trickling down, Messrs. Nathan and Kielsmeier point out. It creates new roles for students and teachers, makes use of action-based instructional methods, and leads to the learning of meaningful, real-world content.*

BY JOE NATHAN AND JIM KIELSMEIER

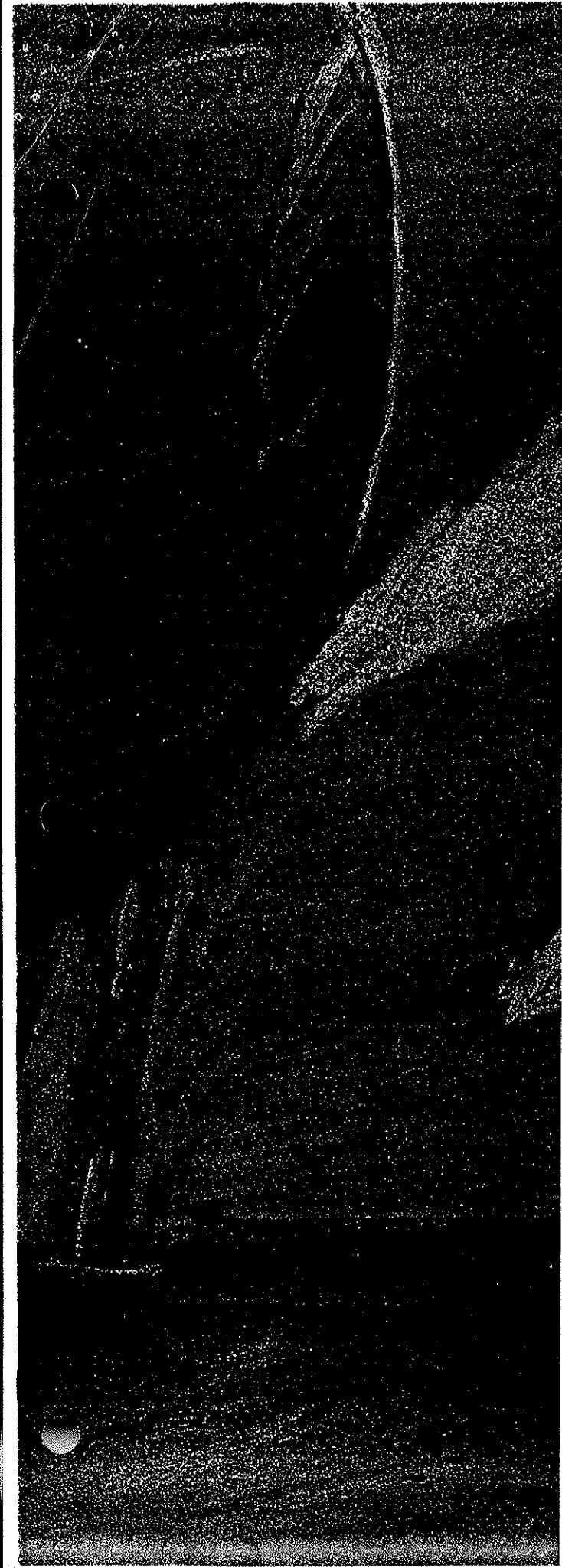
**B**RISK WINDS blowing across the American political landscape are now converging behind national proposals for youth service, and their force has stirred a sleeping giant in the school reform movement. Combining classroom work with service/social action projects can help produce dramatic improvements in student attitudes, motivation, and achievement. Moreover, this strategy is not a "one size fits all" change imposed from above but builds on local circumstances and teacher insights.

Before going any further, let's get specific. Barbara Lewis is a Salt Lake City teacher whose fourth- through sixth-grade students have been

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*Illustration by Bruce Dean, Dean Johnson Design*

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responsible for the cleanup of a hazardous waste site, the passage of two new environmental laws, the planting of hundreds of trees, and the completion of a number of other neighborhood improvements. The families of the students in Lewis' school have the lowest per-capita income in Salt Lake City, and the students themselves aren't unusually gifted or articulate. However, according to Lewis, "One thing they do have is courage. They don't give up easily. They believe that the future depends on them. They're not afraid to attack things that other people say can't be done."<sup>1</sup> And Lewis' students are not alone.

and then created a new playground. They had to make 20 phone calls before finding someone who would donate six truckloads of sand. The arrival of that sand was a big event in the students' lives.

The youngsters at this inner-city school learned important skills in research, thinking, writing, public speaking, and problem solving — the very outcomes that many school critics demand. The students also learned that they could make a difference.

As one youngster noted after his picture appeared in a local newspaper story about the consumer action class, "I often thought I might have my name in the

I felt needed for a while." Boyer then commented, "There's something unhealthy about a youth culture where feeling needed is pushing Big Macs at McDonald's."<sup>4</sup>

Young people used to assume increased levels of responsibility gradually as they grew into adulthood. Over time, however, the classic agrarian models of apprenticeship with and mentoring by adults have given way to the isolation of young people in youth-only educational, social, and employment groupings.

Young people have become a distinct subculture that is unique in modern history, and their adjustment to this phenomenon has been uneven. In a University of Minnesota poll conducted in 1985, 66% of the young Minnesotans polled said they believed that adults have a negative view of youths.<sup>5</sup>

Though they may be in high demand for entry-level employment at fast-food restaurants and all-night gas stations, many young people are alienated from the society. They are heavy users of drugs and alcohol, they consistently maintain the lowest voting rates of any age group, and the teen pregnancy rate has been described as epidemic.

We believe that these problems stem in part from the way adults treat young people. Unlike earlier generations, which viewed young people as active, productive, and needed members of the household and community, adults today tend to treat them as objects, as problems, or as the recipients (not the deliverers) of services. Young people are treated as objects when they are routinely classified as a separate group, isolated in age-based institutions, and beset on all sides by advertising — though not otherwise recognized or treated with respect. They are treated as problems when they are feared, criticized, and made the focus of preventive and remedial programs. They are treated as recipients of services when they are viewed as creatures to be pitied, "fixed," and "controlled."

We need to change our views of the young. We need to see youths as citizens: as resources and producers who are valued, needed, respected, and acknowledged. Ken Nelson, a Minnesota state representative and a strong advocate of learning from service, believes that much of the concern in this country about youths "at risk" should be refocused on "youth potential, youth strengths, youth

## YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BECOME A DISTINCT SUBCULTURE THAT IS UNIQUE IN MODERN HISTORY.

- Students at Bronx Regional High School in the South Bronx are working with a local community organization to restore a building near their school that will then provide housing for homeless people, including some of the students' own families.

- Middle schoolers in Chicopee, Massachusetts, saved their town \$119,500 while helping to solve a sewage problem.

- High school students in Brooks County, Georgia, conducted a needs assessment of their county and determined that day care was a major need. The students and their teacher established a day-care center that is still operating today — 10 years after its founding.<sup>2</sup>

One of us taught a class in an inner-city public school in which 14- to 18-year-old students learned about consumers' rights and responsibilities. The youngsters read a variety of materials and listened to outside speakers. In addition, they worked on real consumer problems referred to them by adults. Over the course of several years, the students successfully resolved more than 75% of the 350 cases adults had turned over to them.

A group of 5- to 9-year-old students at the same school designed, obtained permission to build, gathered materials for,

newspaper. I even thought I might have my picture in the paper. But I never thought that it would be for something good."<sup>3</sup>

The idea that students can learn from community action and from performing a variety of services is not new, as Dan Conrad and Diane Hedin make clear later in this special section on youth service. But in the wake of largely unsuccessful reform proposals and daunting new societal challenges, the political/educational climate has become more open to the kinds of school change demanded by learning that derives from service and social action. We now have the opportunity to expand and improve service/social action projects, to help many more youngsters learn important skills, and to help them realize that they have the power to make changes.

Much recent discussion of school reform has focused on rules, regulations, and decision-making processes. While these are important matters, we think it is also critical to change the way we view young people.

Ernest Boyer recalls a young person's description of his summer job: "Last summer I got a job working at McDonald's. It didn't pay too well, but at least

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participation, and contributions.”<sup>6</sup> The Children’s Defense Fund agrees, noting that “the experience gained through service can make a lasting difference, giving young people a sense of purpose and a reason to remain in school, strive to learn, and avoid too-early pregnancy.”<sup>7</sup>

Both of us have worked with angry, alienated, and violent students. We readily acknowledge that no single curriculum or strategy will solve every problem, transform every student, regenerate every school. However, each of us has experienced and heard about situations in which acting on a new view of students produced dramatic improvements.

When teachers integrate service and social action into their academic programs, students learn to communicate, to solve problems, to think critically, and to exercise other higher-order skills. They learn these things because they are deeply immersed in a consequential activity — not a metaphor, not a simulation, not a vicarious experience mediated by print, sound, or machine. A task force of the Minnesota State Department of Education explained that service-learning occurs when youths, “involved in planning and providing,” render “significant and valuable service to meet genuine needs in their community.”<sup>8</sup>

The point merits emphasis: learning is furthered when students play an active role in selecting and developing their own service projects. For example, students who attend Gig Harbor High School in

Washington State make decisions about how their newly acquired science, social studies, and English skills will be applied in addressing environmental issues in and around Puget Sound. And the students can feel the importance of their new role. Later in this special section, Kate McPherson quotes Roland MacNichol, a teacher at Gig Harbor High, who explains: “For the first time, students become central and valued.” Also in this special section, John Briscoe, the director of Pennsylvania’s PennSERVE program, describes this shift in our perspective on youth as “profound.”

In the best youth service programs, students have a chance to reflect as well as to serve. Their reflections often lead to new attitudes toward school and academics. Seventeen-year-old Quinn Hammond of Waseca, Minnesota, describes the impact of his tutoring third- and fourth-graders: “The little kids look up to you so much. This taught me to have a lot more patience and gave me a real good feeling. Before, I was kind of a class clown. Volunteering gave me a lot of respect for teachers.”<sup>9</sup>

**T**HE MOST effective service/social action projects are developed at the local school site, rather than in the district office or in the state education department. This means that real authority to design programs must be vested in the school and its staff. It’s no mystery that the teachers most involved in service projects are those who feel personally responsible and empowered to tackle important issues. And teachers derive enormous satisfaction from seeing youngsters become more motivated and eager. As Waseca teacher Don Zwach comments, “This is the most enthusiastic class I’ve had in 30 years. You hear a lot about the problems of motivating students in the 1990s. But there’s absolutely no problem motivating these young people.”<sup>10</sup>

The most effective service/social action programs are integrated into a school’s curriculum. The entire range of courses — math, English, social studies, home economics, science, art, physical education, and so on — can be modified to include some form of service or social action. Handled correctly, these changes enable youngsters to apply classroom les-

sons to the world beyond the classroom and so make it much more likely that teachers’ academic goals for their students will be attained. For example, Eliot Wigginton, founder of the Foxfire project, reports that students become much better writers as they help produce a magazine (originally intended just for a few people in Rabun Gap, Georgia, but now read throughout the world).<sup>11</sup>

A vast array of service/social action learning programs now operate in the nation’s schools. However, research and experience lead us to conclude that the most effective programs include certain key elements. The following features of successful programs are drawn from criteria used for the Governor’s Youth Service Recognition Program in Minnesota:

- significant, necessary, and measurable service is accomplished;
- youths are directly involved in planning and implementation;
- clear institutional commitment to the service program is reflected in goals or mission statements;
- community support for and involvement in the program are strong;
- learner outcomes for the program are well-articulated;
- a well-designed and articulated curriculum for service exists that includes preparation, supervision, and active reflection on the experience; and
- regular and significant recognition of the youths and adults who participate takes place.<sup>12</sup>

**C**OMBINING classroom work with service and social action means learning by doing and giving. And it’s the *giving* that answers the “why” questions students so often raise about school. Students and teachers trained to address issues of environmental quality in Puget Sound have a clear purpose for learning principles and skills in science, sociology, and English. Students in St. Paul who solved consumer problems learned the importance of carefully reading and understanding in advance any paper they are asked to sign; they also learned to value clear writing. Students in Folsom, Pennsylvania, discovered the importance of basic principles of physics as they helped families weigh different options for making their homes more energy efficient. Philadel-

phia high school students who tutor their peers or teach a health lesson in a junior high school see a clear application for their knowledge and a larger purpose for schooling.

We reject the often-stated assertion that *the* fundamental task of school is to prepare students for the work force. In a democratic society, one of the basic purposes of public schools is to prepare students for active, informed citizenship. Part of being a responsible citizen is knowing how to get and keep a job, but an equally important part of citizenship is working to build a better world. Moreover, a thoughtful citizen will sometimes question what's happening in the workplace. For example, one's employer might be discriminating against certain people or polluting the air or ignoring basic safety principles. Today, more than ever, schools must help youngsters develop the skills and attitudes needed to work for justice — not just the skills needed to pass an examination or to work on a high-tech assembly line.

Unlike most school reform initiatives, the new interest in learning through service is arriving on the scene without the impetus of top-down pronouncements from high-level committees. While the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and parts of the national goals for

education do endorse and provide incentives for youth service, the growing acceptance of this idea is largely a product of successful efforts by small national and state-level organizations that provide networking, materials, and technical assistance to interested educators.

Teacher creativity is central to this effort. Teachers dreamed up and developed the environmental service programs at Philadelphia's Lincoln High School. Teachers in Springfield, Massachusetts, initiated programs that provide services to the elderly — not by replicating someone else's model, but by responding to local needs and interests. Teachers in Ortonville, Minnesota, didn't follow a statewide curriculum when they showed students how to use computers to help their parents run more efficient farms.

Learning through service is an idea that is bubbling up, rather than trickling down. Fueled by a fresh infusion of energy during the 1980s, it rekindles an idea brought to life by John Dewey in the 1930s: that schools should be democratic laboratories of learning, closely linked to community needs. These learning labs create new roles for students and teachers, make use of action-based instructional methods, and lead to the learning of meaningful, real-world content.

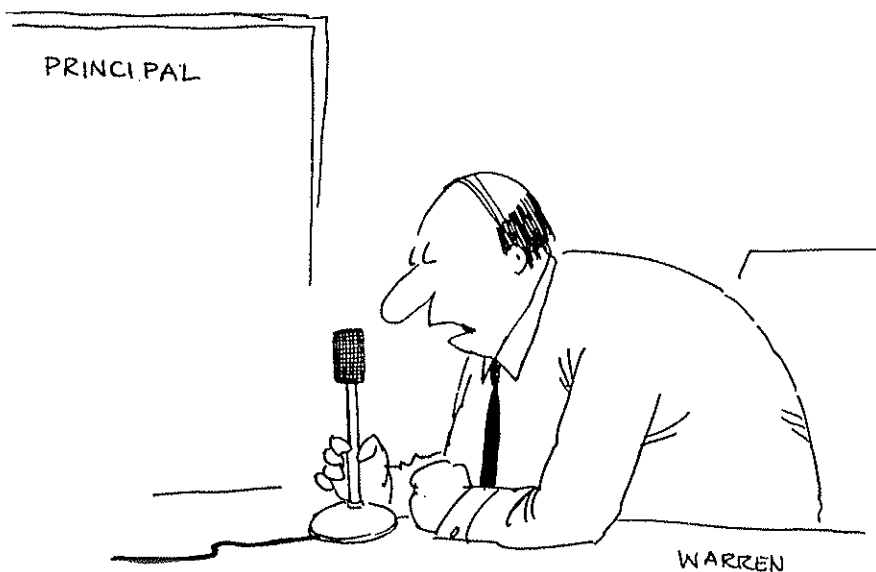
Salt Lake City teacher Barbara Lewis

points out that "the real world is chock-full of real problems to solve: real letters to write, real laws waiting to be made, real surveys to analyze, real streams needing monitoring, scraggly landscapes in need of attention." Writing with youngsters as her audience, she concludes:

Solving social problems will bring excitement and suspense into your life. Instead of reading textbooks and memorizing what other people have done, you'll create your own history with the actions you take. And here's a promise: As you reach out to solve problems in your community, you will not only design a better future. You'll also learn to take charge of your personal life. You'll become more confident in yourself because you'll prove to yourself that you can do almost anything.<sup>13</sup>

What wonderful gifts to pass on to young people. What wonderful gifts to our communities, our country, and our world.

1. Barbara Lewis, *The Kids' Guide to Social Action* (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1991), p. 11.
2. For information on school-based economic development programs, contact Paul DeLargy, Georgia REAL Enterprises, P.O. Box 1643, Athens, GA 30603. DeLargy has worked closely with Jonathan Sher, who originally developed this concept.
3. Joe Nathan, *Free to Teach: Achieving Equity and Excellence in Schools* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1991), p. 38.
4. Ernest Boyer, "Foreword," in Charles H. Harrison, *Student Service: The New Carnegie Unit* (Princeton, N.J.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987), p. vii.
5. Diane Hodin, *Minnesota Youth Poll* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Agricultural Station, 1985).
6. Ken Nelson, "Minnesota's Youth Development Initiative: Building on Strengths," *Community Education Journal*, October 1988, p. 5.
7. Children's Defense Fund, *Service Opportunities for Youths* (Washington, D.C.: Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Clearinghouse of CDF, May 1989), p. 3.
8. *Model Learner Outcomes for Service Learning* (St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Education, September 1990).
9. Joe Nathan, "Youth Service Class Helps Kids and Community," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 26 November 1990, p. 5-C.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Eliot Wigginton, *Sometimes a Shining Moment: Twenty Years at Foxfire* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1985).
12. Jim Kielsmeier and Rich Cairn, "Minnesota Governor's Youth Service Recognition," program guidelines, May 1988.
13. Lewis, p. 2.



"This is the last day of school. All teachers are to refrain from exchanging high fives or otherwise taunting the students."

# School-Based Community Service: What We Know from Research and Theory

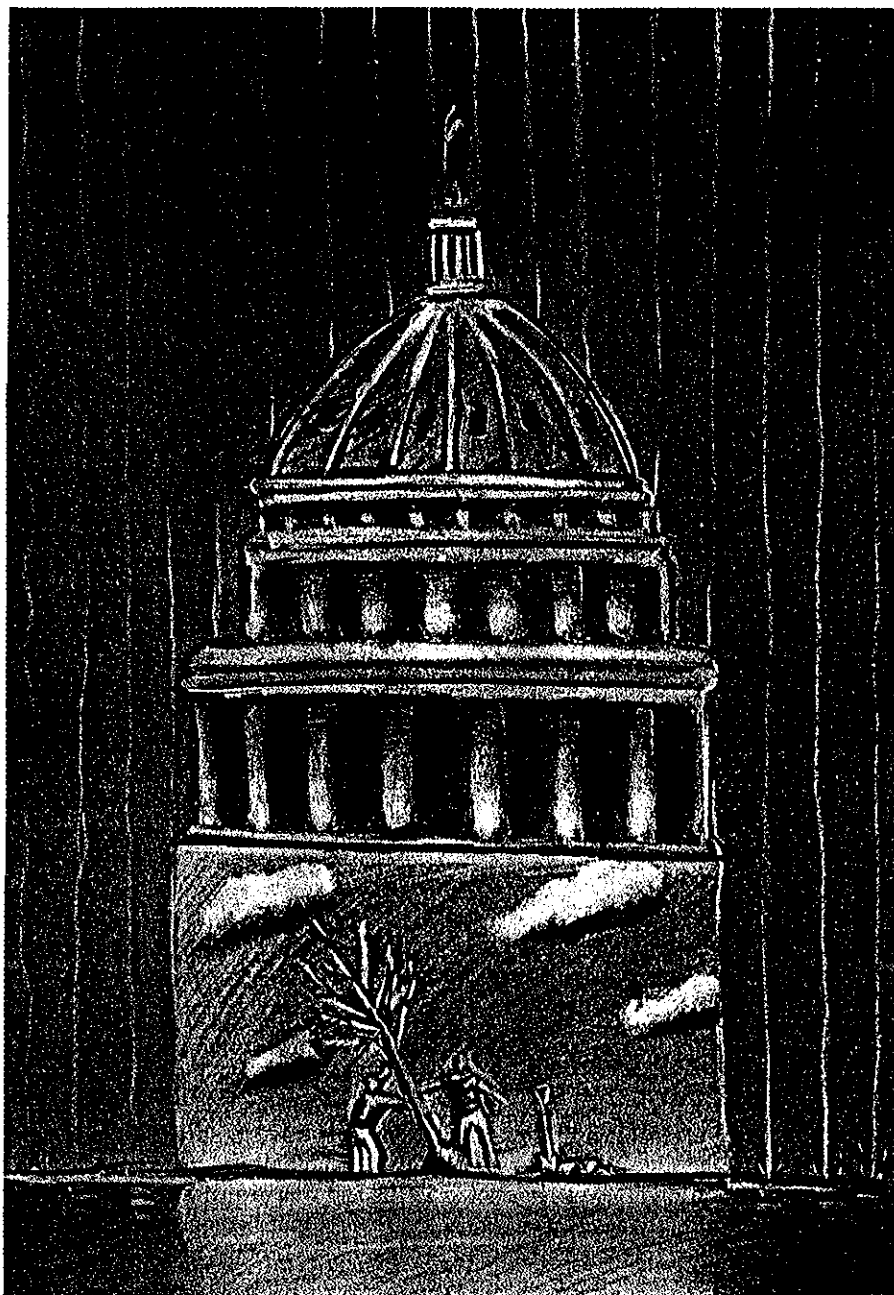
*The authors hope that decisions about whether to make service a regular feature of school practice will be informed by evidence about its value to young people.*

BY DAN CONRAD AND  
DIANE HEDIN

**I**N NOVEMBER 1990 President George Bush signed into law the National and Community Service Act of 1990, the most significant community service legislation in many decades. The act provides funding for community service programs in schools and colleges and support for full-time service corps that students can enter after high school. In a period when every issue in education becomes more and more politicized, this legislation stands out as a cause championed by both outspoken liberals and staunch conservatives. Even more remarkable, the law was passed in a time of severe federal budget austerity.

Yet there has been almost no mention of Congress' action in the public media or in education publications. In fact, when the subject of youth service was featured in the press a few weeks after

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the legislation passed, it was in the context of the possible renewal of the military draft in light of events in the Persian Gulf.

Youth service seems to be one of those ideas that many people view as "good" but not of critical importance to education or to the wider society. Only time will tell whether the current interest among politicians and educators in strengthening the service ethic of our nation's youth will be sustained or whether new priorities or the same old pressures for higher test scores and improved basic skills will keep youth service on the fringes of the political and educational agenda. We hope that deci-

what purpose suggest the possibility of stimulating academic and social development through actions directed toward the welfare of others.<sup>1</sup>

Probably the earliest proponent of school-based community service was William Kilpatrick, who, in the waning years of World War I, urged the adoption of the "project method" as the central tool of education.<sup>2</sup> He argued that learning should take place in settings outside the school and involve efforts to meet real community needs. Throughout the 1930s, the idea was echoed by Progressives, who believed that schools should inculcate the values of social re-

munity. Reports by the National Committee on Secondary Education, the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee, and the National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education were among those urging that young people be reintegrated into the community, encouraged to interact with a wider range of people, involved in real and meaningful tasks, and afforded more responsibility through a variety of direct experiences that included, but were not limited to, service activities.<sup>4</sup> The National Commission on Resources for Youth worked on many fronts throughout the 1970s to promote youth participation programs, such as those described in the commission's report, *New Roles for Youth*.<sup>5</sup> In *Education for Citizen Action*, Fred Newmann outlined the most comprehensive and sophisticated curriculum proposal we have had to date for using community service as a stimulus for developing in students the attitudes, skills, and knowledge required for influencing social policy.<sup>6</sup>

The value of service experiences for young people has been the topic of more recent educational literature as well. In *Sometimes a Shining Moment*, Eliot Wigington describes his work with the Foxfire project in a way that offers inspiration, theoretical grounding, and practical assistance to teachers working with youth service programs.<sup>7</sup> In *A Place Called School*, John Goodlad includes community service among suggested practices to improve education.<sup>8</sup> The same is true of *Reconnecting Youth*, a 1985 report of the Education Commission of the States,<sup>9</sup> and of a series of reports sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation, including Ernest Boyer's *High School*, in which he recommends that high schools require 120 hours of community service for graduation.<sup>10</sup> The latter idea was further developed in Charles Harrison's *Student Service: The New Carnegie Unit*<sup>11</sup> and in another Carnegie report, *Turning Points*, which focuses on the educational needs of junior high and middle school students.<sup>12</sup> A report of the William T. Grant Foundation, *The Forgotten Half*, makes a strong plea for non-college-bound youth to perform community service, arguing for the "creation of quality student service opportunities as central to the fundamental educational program of every public school."<sup>13</sup>

## MUCH OF THE INITIATIVE FOR SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE COMES FROM POLICY MAKERS AND POLITICIANS.

sions about whether to make service a regular feature of school practice will be informed by evidence about its value to young people. And in that hope we present the "evidence" — both the arguments for including community service in the educational programs of elementary and secondary schools and the research findings on the impact of service.

### THE IDEA OF SERVICE IN THE EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE

While much of the initiative for school-based service currently comes from policy makers and politicians — not from educators — this has not always been the case. Recommendations that service be a part of the school experience have reappeared in cycles throughout this century and have been a consistent, if less than dominant, feature of educational reports and reform proposals for the last 15 or 20 years.

Proponents of service who stress its power as a tool for teaching and learning typically link their ideas to the educational philosophy of John Dewey. It is not so much that he directly advocated service as an educational method as that his ideas on how learning takes place and for

form and teach the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to accomplish it. Such books as *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?* and *Youth Serves the Community* exemplify the passion of that time for using education for social transformation.<sup>3</sup>

Curiously, it was in the more cautious and passive Fifties that the idea re-emerged, most prominently in the Citizenship Education Project initiated by Columbia University's Teachers College. Launched with great fanfare and prestigious endorsement (President Eisenhower was the honorary chair), the project stressed participation and direct community involvement. Its famous "Brown Box" of teaching ideas contained (and still does if you can find one) hundreds of detailed guides to social investigation and social/political action. Suffice it to say, its timing could hardly have been worse. And by the time community activism became the rage, in the Sixties, the project was but a dim and dusty memory.

The next wave of emphasis on school-based community service arose in the 1970s and was propelled by several major reports that bemoaned the passivity of life in the schools and the separation of young people from the life of the com-



## RATIONALE AND POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Our brief historical review suggests some of the arguments for the role of service in an educational program — as a way to stimulate learning and social development, as a means of reforming society and preserving a democracy, and as an antidote to the separation of youth from the wider community. The term *youth community service* represents a wide array of programs operating under an equally wide array of assumptions about their impact. While advocates of youth service agree at least superficially on a general rationale for its adoption, there are differences in what they emphasize, and these differences carry over to the types of service programs they advocate. At the risk of oversimplification, advocates can be divided into those who stress the reform of youth and those who stress the reform of education.

The heart of the case put forth by those who would reform youth is that there is a crying need for young people to become engaged in democracy. Those making this argument produce statistics showing that youths vote less frequently than any other age group, that they are less likely to volunteer than older citizens (and the rate is dropping steadily), and that their values have shifted dramatically in the last 15 or 20 years in a direction that is dangerous for democracy. Data on participation are commonly accompanied by statistics on crime, pregnancy, suicide, and drug use — and, nearly always, by data from the annual survey of incoming college freshmen conducted by the American Council on Education. These survey results do seem to indicate a change in the attitudes of young people over the years: between 1970 and 1987 the percentage of students choosing “being well-off financially” as their most important goal rose from 29% to 76% (the highest percentage accorded any goal). In contrast, “developing a meaningful philosophy of life” moved from being the students’ top-ranked goal in 1967 (chosen by 83% of the respondents) to being the 13th-ranked goal in 1987 (chosen by 39%).<sup>14</sup>

From this base, it is argued that service provides a potent antidote to young people’s ills and should be added to their experience through requirements — or

opportunities — for participation: a national service program, state or local youth service corps, a revitalized service ethic in traditional youth organizations,

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school-based service clubs, and service requirements for high school and/or college graduation.

The other dominant strain in the advocacy of youth service is a focus on the reform of education. With a longer history but less current fanfare, this approach stresses the power of service to meet the basic objectives of schools: promoting the personal, social, and intellectual development of young people and preparing them to become involved and effective citizens. Those who make education reform their chief concern are more likely to emphasize service as a part of the academic curriculum and to urge its integration into the regular activity of schools.

Since our emphasis in this article is on school-based community service, we shall discuss this second perspective in more detail. Community service as a means of education can be viewed as a particular manifestation of a still broader method labeled “experiential education.” Rooted in the developmental theories of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and others who stress learning as an interaction with the environment, this approach holds that development occurs as individuals strive to come up with more satis-

fying and complex ways to understand and act on their world.

James Coleman contrasts this experiential approach to learning with what he terms the “information-assimilation model” used in most classroom instruction.<sup>15</sup> The latter model consists of receiving information that has been presented through symbolic media, organizing the information into principles, inferring a particular application from the general principle, and applying the principle in a nonclassroom situation. The experiential approach essentially turns this model on its head. Information is not introduced symbolically but is generated and assimilated through an entirely different sequence of steps. First, a student performs an action in a particular situation; then he or she observes its effects, understands these effects in a particular instance, understands the general principle in operation, and applies the principle in new circumstances.

Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. The strength of the information-assimilation model is that it can impart large amounts of information and systematically develop principles and generalizations from that information. Its concomitant weaknesses are that instruction may bog down in the presentation stage and that the information may never be applied in practice — and thus not really learned.

The strengths and weaknesses of the experiential approach are just the reverse. The weaknesses are the less efficient presentation of information and the danger that students will not draw out principles and generalizations from practice. The strengths are that it counters the distancing abstraction of much classroom instruction by placing information in context, with the real-life nuances and applications that any fact or principle must have if it is to carry genuine and useful meaning; that it motivates the learner by providing connections between academic content and the problems of real life; and that it aids in retention of knowledge, as learning is made personal and applied in action. A 16-year-old member of an ambulance crew put it more succinctly: “In school you learn chemistry and biology and stuff and then forget it as soon as the test is over. Here you’ve got to remember because somebody’s life depends on it.”

## THE IMPACT OF SERVICE

Very little, if anything, has been "proved" by educational research. Advocates of almost any practice — be it cooperative learning, team teaching, computer-assisted instruction, or the lecture method — can find research evidence in its favor. Detractors and empirical purists can likewise find reasons for discounting the results of almost any study. Moreover, it is doubtful that substantiation by research is the prime reason for the adoption of any educational method — even those most commonly practiced. Educational research is a difficult and complex business — and particularly so when service is the target of investigation.

The analysis of community service programs presents unique problems to researchers, problems that go beyond the usual assortment of methodological snares. The fundamental difficulty is that service is not a single, easily definable activity like taking notes at a lecture. An act of service may be visiting an elderly person in a nursing home, clearing brush from a mountain trail, conducting a survey of attitudes about recycling, or participating in any of a vast array of other activities — each with different potential effects.

Not only is the independent variable — service — difficult to define, but any service activity has a wide range of plausible outcomes. This situation makes it hard to determine the appropriate dependent variables to study. Newmann laid out nine possible benefits that could accrue to a person from one act of direct civic involvement, and he did not even touch on how that involvement could affect one's political efficacy, later civic participation, factual recall, or self-esteem!<sup>16</sup>

Sound research into the effects of community service is difficult, but not impossible. Many solid and inventive studies have been undertaken, and, while none are without flaws, they provide useful information on the impact of service. Some of these findings are reviewed below.

There are two types of research evidence on the effects of community service. The first is qualitative, drawing on researchers' observations of community service programs, reports from participants, journals, interviews, testimonials, and the like. Often these sources of data

are dismissed as "soft" — not serious or objective enough to count as evidence. In the eyes of some educational evaluators and policy analysts, the only evidence

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that counts is quantitative — with numbers derived from standardized instruments administered before and after, with control groups, random assignment of participants, sophisticated statistical analysis, and so on.

We have both kinds of evidence regarding the impact of community service, and both can be informative. Evidence from quantitative methodologies is somewhat limited, though a body of research does exist that tends to show that social, personal, and academic development are fostered by community service. Evidence from qualitative, anecdotal studies suggests even more strongly and consistently that community service can be a worthwhile, useful, enjoyable, and powerful learning experience.

## QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

**Academic learning.** Many proponents have claimed that community service is an effective way to improve academic learning. The evidence for this relationship is strongest for service in the form of peer tutoring or teaching younger students. Using the technique of meta-analysis, researchers have combined the findings of many tutoring studies and

have consistently found increases in reading and math achievement scores for tutors and tutees.<sup>17</sup> The gains in reading and math tend to be modest, but such is the case with most learning and growth. Changes in curriculum and instruction rarely, if ever, produce dramatic results. Yet the gains achieved through tutoring are consistently positive — most particularly for the tutors.

It may be that, when we seek to determine whether community service influences academic outcomes, we find a positive correlation most frequently when we look at tutoring because it is the form of service that is most "school-like" and because the knowledge and skills in question are most like the ones the tutors have already been using. In the few cases when students in other forms of service have been tested for gains in factual knowledge, the results have been less conclusive. When the measuring instrument is a general test of knowledge, there is usually no difference at all between students in service programs and those in conventional classrooms — which may establish that at least nothing is lost by time spent out of school. Consistent gains in factual knowledge have been found, however, when researchers have used tests designed to measure the specific kinds of information that students were likely to encounter in their field experiences.<sup>18</sup>

Some researchers have focused on the effect of service experiences on such basic processes of thinking as solving problems, being open-minded, and thinking critically. Thomas Wilson found that students who participated in political and social action in the school or wider community became more open-minded.<sup>19</sup> In a study that we conducted in 1982, we found that problem-solving ability, as measured by reactions to a series of real-life situations, increased more for students in community service (and other experience-based programs) than for those in comparison groups. Furthermore, students' ability to analyze problems improved the most when they had encountered problems similar to those presented in the test and when the program deliberately focused on problem solving. Students who had neither discussed their experiences with others nor encountered problems similar to those in the test showed no more change than stu-

dents in conventional classrooms.<sup>20</sup>

**Social/psychological development.** Well-run, well-conceptualized community service programs can also influence social development and psychological development. Our study looked at 27 school-sponsored programs featuring direct participation in the community, including programs of community service, community study, career internships, and outdoor adventure. We found that students in participatory programs, including service programs, gained in social and personal responsibility.<sup>21</sup> Stephen Hamilton and Mickey Fenzel reported similar gains in social responsibility with groups of 4-H members engaged in various forms of service: child care, community improvement efforts, and the like.<sup>22</sup> Fred Newmann and Robert Rutter found less dramatic and less consistent differences between service and classroom programs but concluded that community service appeared to affect students' sense of social responsibility and personal competence more positively than did regular classroom instruction.<sup>23</sup>

Researchers have investigated several other dimensions of social development as well. In our work, we found that students in service programs and in other experiential programs developed more favorable attitudes toward adults and also toward the types of organizations and people with whom they were involved.<sup>24</sup> Kathy Luchs reported that students involved in community service gained more positive attitudes toward others, a greater sense of efficacy, and higher self-esteem than nonparticipating comparison students.<sup>25</sup> Raymond Calabrese and Harry Schumer reported that a program that assigned junior high students with behavioral difficulties to service activities resulted in lower levels of alienation and isolation and fewer disciplinary problems.<sup>26</sup> Studies that have examined political efficacy and inclination toward subsequent civic participation as a result of service activities have had mixed results. About an equal number of studies find increases and no increases on these factors.

The effect of community service on self-esteem has been the psychological outcome most commonly investigated. Increases in self-esteem have been found for students who play the role of tutor, who provide for the mentally disabled,

and who fill more general helping roles. Newmann and Rutter reported that students involved in community service projects gained a better sense of social competence in the performance of such tasks as communicating effectively to groups, starting conversations with strangers, persuading adults to take their views seriously, and the like.<sup>27</sup>

A number of studies have used the developmental theories of Lawrence Kohlberg and of Jane Loevinger to frame their assessment of the impact of service experiences (usually those involving work as a peer counselor, interviewer, or teacher) on moral and ego development.

### FINDINGS ARE MIXED REGARDING THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE ON PARTICIPANTS' POLITICAL EFFICACY.

The typical, though not universal, outcome is that students gain in both moral and ego development.<sup>28</sup> Reviewing the research on developmental education, Ralph Mosher concluded that moral and ego development can be enhanced by educational programs, the most powerful of which combine discussion of moral issues with the exercise of empathy and action in behalf of moral and social goals.<sup>29</sup>

The value of combining action and discussion has been noted by other researchers as well. Rutter and Newmann, in examining the potential of service to enhance civic responsibility, concluded that the presence of a reflective seminar was probably the key to achieving that goal.<sup>30</sup> In our own study, we examined the impact of several program variables (e.g., length, intensity, type of community action) on student outcomes and found that the presence of a reflective seminar was the one program feature that made a clear difference — particularly with respect to intellectual and social dimensions of development.<sup>31</sup>

**Effect on those served.** In assessing the impact of service programs, researchers have mainly been concerned about the effect on the volunteer and have seldom

taken into account what young people accomplish for others. There are two significant exceptions — assessments of tutoring and peer-helping programs. Researchers have consistently found tutoring to be an effective mode of instruction. In one comparative study, for example, tutoring was found to be a more effective tool for raising academic outcomes than computer-assisted instruction.<sup>32</sup> With regard to peer helping, a meta-analysis of studies of 143 drug prevention programs for adolescents concluded that, of five approaches examined, peer programs were the most effective on all outcome measures and stood out most

on the criterion of reducing actual drug use.<sup>33</sup>

In summary, quantitative research on the impact of community service suggests that it can and often does have a positive effect on the intellectual and social/psychological development of participants. Researchers consistently report a heightened sense of personal and social responsibility, more positive attitudes toward adults and others, more active exploration of careers, enhanced self-esteem, growth in moral and ego development, more complex patterns of thought, and greater mastery of skills and content that are directly related to the experiences of participants. Furthermore, when the impact of service on others has been examined, young people have proved to be effective in raising mathematics and reading scores and in reducing drug use among peers.

Findings from quantitative studies are mixed on whether community service increases one's political efficacy and later involvement in civic affairs. Only rarely does participation result in higher scores on tests of general knowledge, with the clear exception of academic achievement scores for students in the role of teacher or tutor.

## QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

While quantitative research yields reasonably consistent evidence on the positive impact of community service, the methodological problems mentioned earlier stand in the way of establishing a clear causal connection. Yet anyone who has worked with or evaluated community service programs cannot help but be struck by the universally high regard in which the programs are held by those associated with them. Students, teachers, community supervisors, parents, and those being served consistently attest to the benefits of community service.

The gap between what quantitative and qualitative methodologies uncover about community service suggests that a practice so varied and complex demands equally complex and varied types of assessment. Sometimes the rigid reliance on paper-and-pencil surveys and tests can obscure the most obvious and meaningful data of all. In an inquiry into the impact of service on social responsibility, for example, the fact that participants are willingly and consistently acting in a socially responsible manner (volunteering in a nursing home or petitioning city hall to crack down on polluters) is at least as relevant to the issue as how they score on a test of attitudes about being socially responsible.

The spontaneous comments of participants in interviews and in journals are a rich source of qualitative data, revealing not only the general effect of a service experience but its particular and peculiar impact on each individual. The more the analysis is grounded in theories of how growth and development take place, the more useful these data can be. Below, we offer an example of how qualitative analysis can reveal the dimensions of learning and intellectual development that can accrue from service experiences.

**A qualitative analysis of what is learned from service.** A consistent finding of research into service and other kinds of experiential programs is the high degree to which participants report that they have learned a great deal from their experiences. In a nationwide survey we conducted of nearly 4,000 students involved in service and other experiential programs, about 75% reported learning "more" or "much more" in their participation program than in their regular

classes.<sup>34</sup> Similar findings are regularly reported in other studies. When people feel strongly that they have learned a great deal, they probably have done so. But it is not always possible for them or others to articulate just what they have learned.

To probe this issue more deeply, we analyzed the journals of high school students whose social studies curriculum included time spent working as volunteers four days a week in schools and social agencies.<sup>35</sup> The journals were a valuable tool for qualitative analysis in that they revealed what the students learned *specifically* from their service experiences (95% of them had indicated that they learned more or much more from those experiences than from their regular classes).

Many students commented on the power of being in a new role, as in this excerpt from one student's journal:

As I walked through the hallway [of the elementary school on my first day of leading elementary children in theater experiences], I realized what I had gotten myself into . . . a challenge. But as I step through the door I transform from student to person. . . . The first day went extremely well, but I'm glad I don't have to go through it again. Now I return to school and become student again.

In another entry, a student suggests that a relationship with a child is a more compelling incentive to act responsibly than are the demands and sanctions of school authorities.

As I entered St. D's it was my joy to see Adam, wearing a smock covered with paint, washing his hands at the sink. "Hi," I said.

"Did you go to school yesterday?" he replied shortly.

"Yes," I said guiltily [having skipped my service assignment].

"Why didn't you come?" he demanded.

"I didn't have a ride to get back from here," I explained, thinking as fast as I could. When I started to touch his shoulder, he jerked away and said, "Don't." So I left him alone. . . . I felt like a criminal.

Another dimension of the service experience is that it gives students a sense

of connection with a wider range of people, places, and problems. In this report, a student recounts how her world was broadened:

I have come a long way, though. I remember my first few days at Oak Terrace Nursing Home. I was scared to touch people, or the doorknobs even. And I used to wash my hands after I left there every single day! Can you believe it? Now I go and get big hugs and kisses from everyone. Get this — I even eat there! That's a horror story for some people.

Unfamiliar settings, new experiences, and wider associations can lead to new knowledge and understanding, as they did for this girl, who volunteered in a soup kitchen:

I feel bad when they're called bums. I kinda understand why they're there. People end up on the street because of depression mostly. They have a divorce, or they lose the right to see their kids, or lose their job or their housing, and they get depressed. One guy I regularly talked to said suddenly one day, "I don't want to talk to you — you're a kid." I was hurt. But I found out his wife had just denied him the right to see his kids. He was lashing out at me as a kid and as a woman.

Some journal entries reveal insights even more profound than these — something akin to a new way of knowing, a new process of thinking. Consider the words of a young woman volunteering in a nursing home who discovers a new pathway to knowledge and understanding:

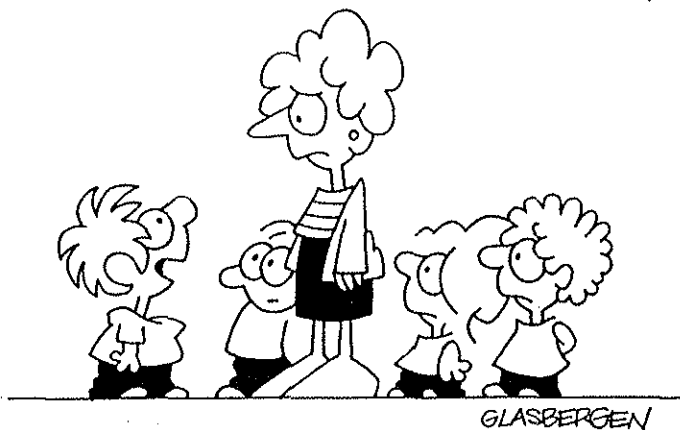
As the [first] morning came to an end I began to deeply ponder the reason for my parents telling me to respect my elders. Honestly, I thought, I doubt if I can respect these people that wear diapers, drool gallons of saliva a day, speak totally incoherently and [are] totally dependent on a youth. But finally the first week passed. I became very attached to the residents. I think those insecurities you feel when you start working with elderly people disappear when you begin to really *love* them.

The writer of the journal went on to describe the beauty of the residents as she

came to really "know" and relate to them. Her observations about them — especially about what they knew and could do — changed dramatically. But the turning point, the new perspective, was her insight that love precedes knowledge — not the other way around. It is precisely the point that the philosopher George Santayana made in 1925 about knowing the truth about another person.<sup>36</sup>

Through comments such as these, the "more" or "much more" that these students had said they learned from their service experience began to take on meaning. The "more" turned out to be a reference not so much to *amount* as to *significance*, not so much to new information as to more important and more personal knowledge and understanding. The students were probing the fundamental questions of life: Who am I? Where am I going? Is there any point to it all? They were thinking and writing about the basic issues of adolescence and beyond: relationships, significance, connection, suffering, meaning, hope, love, and attachment.

In summary, the case for community service as a legitimate educational practice receives provisional support from quantitative, quasi-experimental studies and even more consistent affirmation from the reports and testimony of participants and practitioners. Whether the current interest in youth service represents the wave of the future or a passing fancy cannot, of course, be known. Whether service as a school practice merits the serious consideration of practitioners and policy makers seems to be beyond question.



"I'd be happy to play duck-duck-goose if you can show me how it would benefit me in later life."

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# Project Service Leadership: School Service Projects In Washington State

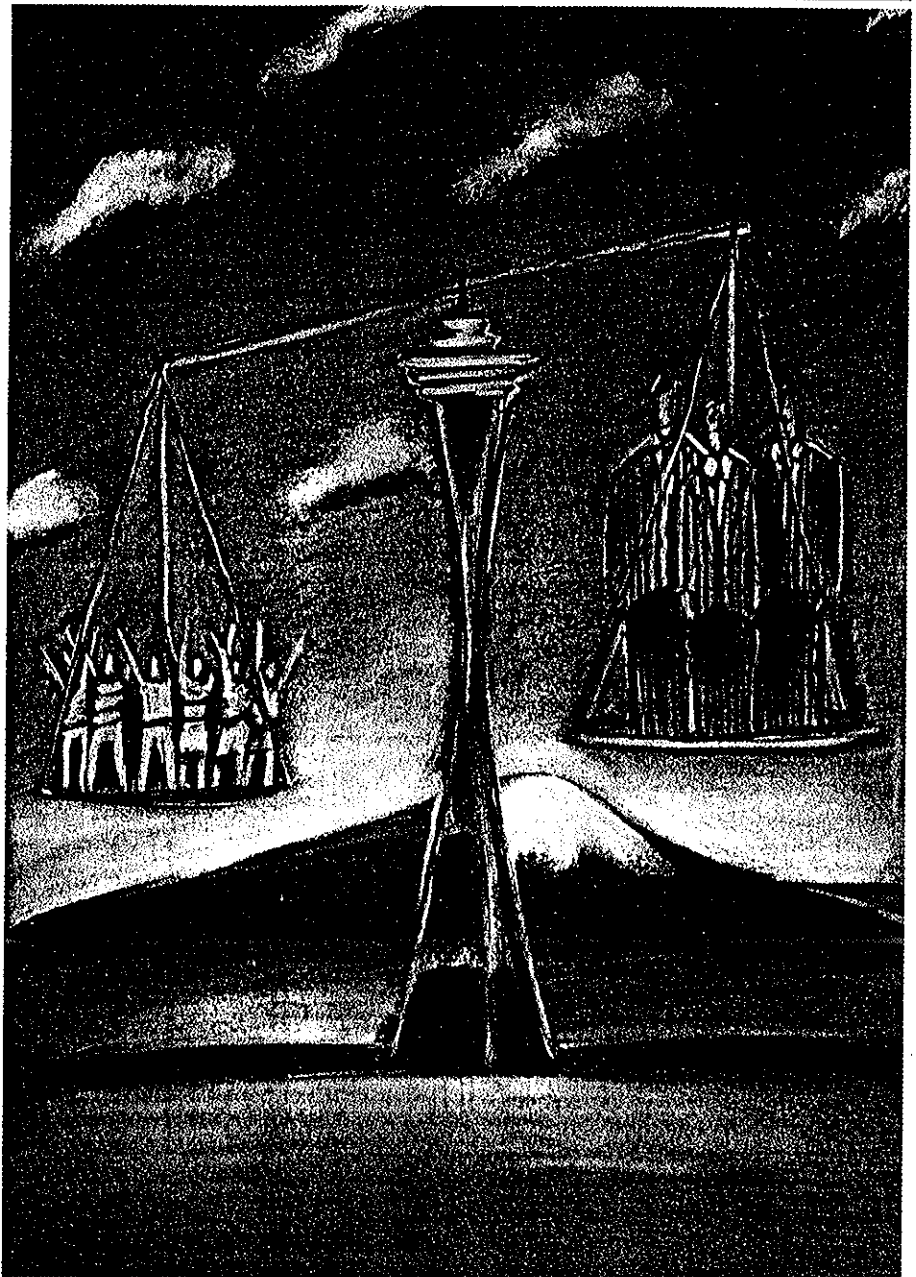
*As the value of service-learning to education becomes ever clearer, schools will need advice, models, and the lessons of experience. Ms. McPherson describes a program in Washington State that provides all three.*

BY KATE McPHERSON

**T**HE STATE OF Washington has a tradition of decentralized innovation in its schools. As a result, the concept of incorporating service into education has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Several districts offer elective courses in or credit for community service. Shorecrest High School, one of Washington's Schools for the 21st Century, has integrated service as a central part of its curriculum and provides time during the school day for students to serve in the school and the community.

A coordinated effort to help schools and districts integrate service into their curricula was launched three years ago with the formation of Project Service Leadership (PSL). Initially PSL was a coalition of three districts — Peninsula, Tacoma, and Issaquah — which joined together to help one another implement programs and policies that would foster an ethic of service. While each district approached the program differently, each made a three-year commitment to the process. The superintendents of the three

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*Illustration by Bruce Dean, Dean Johnson Design*

districts had strong visions of the ways in which service experiences could contribute to students' learning and to the community, and each district had individuals at both the building and district levels who were willing to assume leadership of the project. Each district also seemed predisposed for success; either there was a high degree of trust between the schools and the central office or there was ownership for the initiative at both the district and the building levels.

The three districts have implemented their programs in different ways.

- Peninsula School District is infusing service into its K-12 curriculum. More than 25 high school teachers and a growing number of middle school and elementary teachers have enriched their curricula through service.

- Tacoma School District now offers elective credit for community service experiences. Four of the district's six high schools have building coordinators who monitor the program and help to match students with placements.

- Issaquah School District is using service as a way of integrating its curriculum and is exploring the possibility of including community service as part of student portfolios.

These districts are in their final year of participation in PSL. I hope that the lessons of the past three years can help others as they begin a similar journey.\*

#### PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Tom Hulst, superintendent of the Peninsula School District, has a strong commitment to service experience because, in the Seventies, he coordinated a service program for students enrolled in the state's community colleges. While writing an extensive evaluation of that program, he saw firsthand the benefits that can come from the kinds of learning opportunities that service affords.

In the spring of 1989 Peninsula School District inaugurated its service initiative. Roland MacNichol, a social studies teacher at Gig Harbor High School, provided the leadership for this initiative. He had credibility in his school because he was an effective teacher and a strong union

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participant. He also had a clear vision of how students could learn through service activities. "Service-learning changes the whole experience of learning for a student," MacNichol believes. "For the first time, students become central and valued in the process. They are asked questions, they are asked what they can do, they are asked how they can apply what they learn to make the world around them better."

MacNichol organized awareness meetings at his school, encouraged teams of teachers to attend a state conference on youth service, and invited representatives of national programs to visit the school. A 15-member steering committee composed of teachers and administrators was formed to help shape the program and organize a summer institute.

During this weeklong institute, 10 teachers heightened their awareness of the dimensions of human need by meeting people who lived in shelters, by visiting hospitals, and by talking with homeless children. Teachers also examined their own personal service experiences and saw how service can enhance child development and learning. They then met with representatives of community agencies and organizations to try to link their curriculum content with possible service programs.

In the first year of the program, the high school initiated several student service projects.

- A buddy program was established in the leadership skills class. Fifty high school students became mentors and friends to elementary students, visiting their buddies weekly.

- A Spanish class entered into a partnership with the Centro Latino, a Latin cultural center in a neighboring city. Student artwork depicting various Spanish-speaking countries, which formerly bedecked a classroom, was donated to the center. Piñatas that students constructed for a classroom party were given to the center for use at a children's party. In addition, a number of students have become tutors to youngsters at the center for whom English is a second language.

- The high school arts program joined with an elementary school to create a community mural on which older and younger students worked side by side.

- A peer-assistance program was established in the library. Students were

able to sign up to be either tutors or tutees and were then matched with one another. More than 120 students are now tutoring before school, during lunch, and after school.

- Students initiated and formed a service club called WAYS (World Awareness Youth Service). The members established an after-school program for homeless children, and they helped to make their own high school cafeteria styrofoam-free. In the process, they learned how to negotiate and how to effect change.

Thirty additional teachers from five schools attended the second summer institute, held in 1990. The service program has now moved into a second high school and is beginning to take shape in the middle and elementary schools.

Gig Harbor High School is now examining ways of restructuring its schedule in order to enable teachers to reach more deeply into the community. Jan Reeder, principal of the school, comments, "Service-learning may be the vehicle to facilitate school reform. Specifically, it can assist us in changing the structure of the school day, which I think is a critical key to any reform effort."

On the district level, a restructuring task force has been established. This body has assigned high priority to the incorporation of youth service into the schools and is now setting the stage for district policy that will support the service initiative. The district strongly believes that infusing service into the curriculum doubles the benefits of service. Through service, young people come to feel that they are valued members of their community; when service is connected to the curriculum, students also become more engaged in the learning process.

#### TACOMA SCHOOL DISTRICT

In 1987, to follow up on a recommendation from its recently completed high school study, the Tacoma public schools appointed a task force — made up of parents, students, community members, staff members, and administrators — to devise a way in which students could apply their learning in the community. The group suggested that the high schools adopt a community learning requirement that students could complete through community service, through a significant



research project, or through participation in community clubs and organizations. At the time, this recommendation was strongly supported by central office leadership but had much less support at the building level.

In the fall of 1988 major changes occurred. A new superintendent and deputy superintendent were hired. These actions were followed by extensive personnel changes, budget cuts, and a variety of major initiatives, including an effort to decentralize decision making. As the schools moved toward site-based management, the interest in requiring service for graduation waned, and teachers recommended that the district move slowly in this area.

For this reason and others, the district chose not to make community service a requirement. However, the district developed an independent study course for community service. Students can now earn one-half of a Carnegie unit for 90 hours of community service and reflection. In addition, a few teachers have built service into their programs. For example, the career center at Wilson High School has students participate in service experiences as part of their career-planning activities.

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#### ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT

The third member of the coalition, Issaquah School District, approached the initiative in a very different way. With input from the community, the district drew up a plan that centered on a "Student for the Future" theme. The plan envisioned the characteristics of such a student and then suggested ways in which the schools could foster those qualities. One of the most important attributes to be cultivated was "the ability to contribute effectively within a democratic society," and service experience was viewed as a powerful way to attain this goal.

PSL has assisted schools and teachers in developing youth service programs. Its conferences and workshops have provided generative settings in which committed teachers can develop their ideas. Jim Sieber, the district's case manager for at-risk youth and facilitator for service-learning projects, has devoted himself to the concept and practice of building students' self-esteem by involving them in service activities. In many cases, students

are placed in service situations that give them the experience of being *needed*.

In the summer of 1990 Seiber organized a community-service camp. Middle school and high school participants provided more than 650 hours of service to the community and planned service programs that are being implemented during this school year. A teacher/coordinator from each school attended the camp to help students finalize these plans and develop strategies for implementing them in the schools.

In order to implement their plans, students need the support of one or more school staff members who can provide advice and assistance with the follow-through activities. This support has varied from school to school — a situation that reflects the district's commitment to site-based decision making.

Service has been the focus of another district initiative: the move toward a cross-disciplinary, thematic integration of the curriculum. A community issue can become a theme around which the curriculum is integrated, and service projects can be used to demonstrate student competence in meaningful ways. For example, students at Liberty High School are studying local environmental issues. Scientific knowledge and methods will allow them to analyze the chemical and biological indicators of environmental health. Social studies concepts will help them become aware of the political, environmental, and economic factors that contribute to the establishment of local policy. Through language arts, the students will develop ways of communicating their findings to broader audiences — their peers, the general public, and policy makers. When curriculum integration is driven by a need to solve a significant problem, its purpose is clearer.

The district is also moving to a more personalized process of student assessment. Each school will examine how well it is promoting civic responsibility, personal efficacy, and engaged learning — and community service may become part of student portfolios.

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#### LESSONS

There are several lessons that can be learned from the experience of PSL thus far. In addition to the standard conditions that have come to be associated with or-

ganizational change — ownership, a local champion, broad-based communication, and the importance of policy — other factors should be taken into account. The following insights may be helpful to those who are interested in developing service programs.

*Service as part of the overall change process.* Rather than create a separate service program, it is important to integrate youth service into major initiatives aimed at changing curriculum and instruction. Making service a part of education is one way of addressing many of the current reform recommendations: restructuring, performance assessment, engaged learning, and education for social responsibility. Reeder perceives the connection when she states, "As we reexamine the purposes of the American high school, we are more and more convinced that social responsibility and self-esteem are very important issues. Teaching students to be decent human beings may, in fact, be our primary mission." As a principal, Reeder has seen the significance of youth service and has worked with her staff to develop creative ways to find the time and the resources needed to make it an integral part of her school's program.

*Focus on student outcomes.* The assessment process has been a weakness of service programs in the schools. Teachers have encouraged written and oral reflection from students involved in service programs, but there has been no systematic examination of how students are affected by their involvement. In what ways is learning different if young people engage in service activities? In March 1991 teams from both PSL and nonaffiliated districts met to work on ways of assessing civic responsibility. During the 1991-92 school year, each team will develop and refine some user-friendly classroom assessment techniques. We hope to discover together how to incorporate what we have learned about assessing outcomes into the overall evaluation processes of both schools and districts.

It is important to remember that our purpose is not to develop a mass of service programs. Rather, it is to develop a series of experiences and learnings that consciously foster an ethic of service, develop civically responsible students, help students feel a sense of efficacy, and enrich the learning process. Teachers need

to determine whether or not these things are happening for their students. If they are, we should celebrate. If they are not, the school and its community need to develop a plan to bring them about. Service is one of the most powerful tools I know, but it is not the only means to these ends.

*Staff development.* Project Service Leadership provided teachers with the training and networking they needed to develop usable models of service programs. Districts that were not members of the PSL coalition were also invited to take advantage of its on-site institutes, its yearly statewide conference, its statewide newsletter, and its curriculum materials. In addition, PSL has provided broad access to national training and to information from national organizations.

Teachers and their communities are often limited by rigid images of service and scared off by imagined problems with transportation and liability. The summer institutes help teachers see that service can happen within the classroom and the school and can enliven course content. When teachers have the opportunity to meet and talk with representatives of community agencies, they develop personal contacts that make future planning easier.

Awarding credit to teachers for participation in institutes or training sessions is a helpful incentive. Many teachers first got into the program in order to gain credit toward teacher certification or salary increases. Holding institutes during the summer gives teacher participants time to meet with community agencies and to develop curriculum.

*Partnering with the community.* When the community views schools and students as resources, many channels of service open up. Realizing that a partnership with schools could help it reach its goals, the Region 10 Office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) entered into a collaboration with four high schools. Each high school team is developing an integrated curriculum that addresses a local environmental concern. Tom Wilson, director of the Water Division of the EPA, comments,

Our partnership with the high schools offers us the help we need to do a job we cannot do alone. As President Bush recently said, "Through millions of individual decisions, we are de-

termining the fate of the planet." EPA's traditional regulatory approaches for industry are clearly inappropriate in dealing with such individual lifestyle choices. Service-learning, on the other hand, offers us a unique opportunity to work with the educational system to help society understand the need for changes and, most importantly, to help society in implementing those changes.

Schools need to do a better job of brokering service programs for young people. As schools plan to implement service initiatives, they need to encourage community agencies to take an active part in providing resources and programs. It is often easier for someone who is not employed by the school district to encourage community involvement by suggesting possible roles for such organizations as 4-H, Campfire, and United Way.

Both the community and the schools benefit from these new partnerships. Wilson points out that service programs

can fundamentally redefine both the perception and the reality of our educational system. Schools would no longer be viewed as irrelevant "babysitters" for bored students, but rather as a critical resource to the community itself. Thus the students, rather than simply being trained for the future, would be active participants in shaping that future.

*Time.* One of the biggest barriers standing in the way of setting up service programs is time. Schools such as Shorecrest High School have become creative, developing planning time for teachers while providing opportunities for young people to be involved in community service. For a half day each week, sophomores are involved in a variety of community service projects. During this time staff members are able to meet and develop curriculum and programs. This arrangement has been adopted in a number of schools and has demonstrated how school renewal and youth service can become powerful companions.

Reader has some interesting ideas about scheduling service activities:

In order to provide service-learning opportunities that are viable, we really need to change the structure of the school day — we really need to provide time during the regular school day

for students to be in the community performing their service. We also need an opportunity for them to reflect on the service in the school setting. Both of these require a change from the 55-minute consecutive periods. I am hopeful that we can provide a school day that would give students time to be out in the community at least half a day a week and that we can also structure time for seminars for reflection-type activities.

*Honoring culturally diverse traditions of service.* Too often, I base my suggestions for service activities on my own past and, as a result, come up with ideas that seem quite foreign in other cultures. In the Hispanic communities, for example, service tends to be carried out within the extended family or between neighbors. Since elders usually stay home with the family, a visit to a convalescent center would probably not have the same meaning to Hispanic students as it might to young people of another culture. Thus we are beginning to work with young people in different ethnic communities to discover what the traditional values of service are and how they can be expressed in contemporary times. For example, we plan to work with the National Indian Youth Leadership Council to explore that issue and to learn how to help young Native Americans build on the tradition of tribal service.

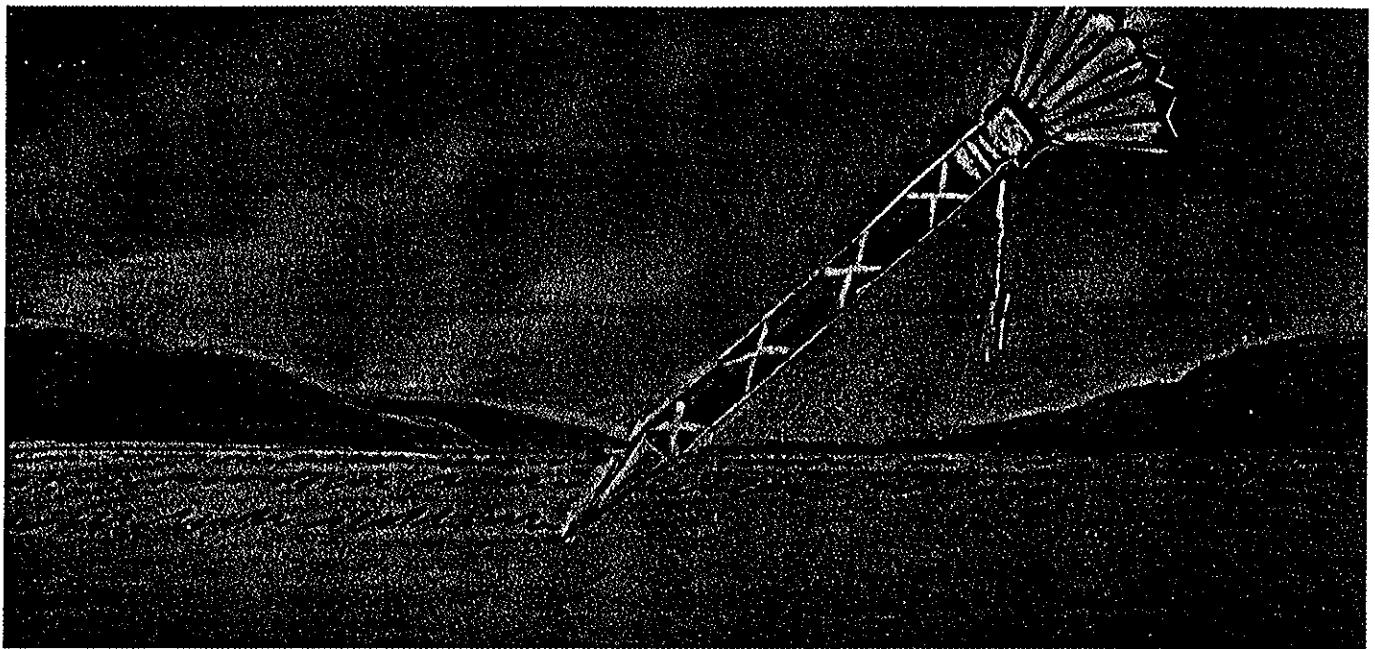
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#### THE CONTINUING ROLE OF PSL

With the aid of grants from a variety of local corporations and a Chapter 2 grant for Statewide Innovation and Impact, Project Service Leadership is now helping other districts throughout the state. It is also one of four programs that are part of the Kellogg Foundation's National Service-Learning Initiative, which will focus on elementary and middle school students and emphasize the development of expressions of service that are meaningful to young people from various cultural traditions.

As the value of making service a part of education becomes ever clearer, a growing number of schools throughout Washington State are implementing their own programs. Project Service Leadership is there to offer advice, models, and — perhaps most important — the lessons of experience. □

# Gadugi: A Model of Service-Learning for Native American Communities



*Mr. Hall shows how, by combining the best of the education reform movement with traditional Native American values, the National Indian Youth Leadership Project has pioneered the spread of service-learning into Native American communities.*

BY McCLELLAN HALL

**M**ANY OF THE concepts that are the foundation of the outdoor/experiential education movement — service-learning, self-directed learning, mentoring, challenge-based learning, and so on — have parallels in Native American traditions. The National Indian Youth Leadership Proj-

*McCLELLAN HALL is director of the National Indian Youth Leadership Project, Gallup, N.M.*

ect (NIYLP) has identified and implemented several traditional Native American approaches to teaching and learning that both affirm the group identity of our people and can help rebuild our communities through the efforts of our young people.

One example of a Native American concept that can be usefully developed by the schools is the Cherokee tradition of *Gadugi*. Among the *Tsa-la-gi* (Cherokee) people, the call for a *Gadugi* is a call to

bring people together to help one another, much as the early European settlers came together for barn raisings. As Cherokees, we are connected to one another through a clan system that defines our relationships. This system of interdependence and mutual obligation has helped us maintain our identity and culture to the present day, and similar concepts exist in all Native American traditions. For example, Bernie Bearskin of the Winnebagoes was quoted by Studs Terkel as saying, "I think that perhaps my early training in the home impressed me with the philosophy of our forebears. It was taught to us that if one could be of service to his people, this is one of the greatest honors there is."\*

For young people to become involved

\*Studs Terkel, *Division Street, America* (New York: Avon Books, 1967).

in service to others is thus a natural extension of Native Americans' traditional sense of communal responsibility. At the same time, learning through providing service to others can be a significant step toward breaking the cycle of dependence in which many Native Americans feel themselves trapped.

Service-learning has been a key ingredient in the evolution of the NIYLP as a model program in Native American communities. The group of people who would later form the nucleus of the NIYLP came together in 1981 in north-eastern Oklahoma, where dropout rates for Cherokee students were as high as 70% in some public school systems. In those early discussions, we were confident that the traditional Native American concept of "leader as servant" would work well with the idea of service-learning to help reunite the Cherokee people in the 14-county area that makes up the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. We weren't at all sure that contemporary Cherokee young people would recognize and accept such traditional values and commit themselves to this unique effort. Nor were we sure how such traditional values could be made relevant to and practiced in the 1980s and beyond. However, we were optimistic that it could be done, and the spiritual leaders of the Cherokee Nation encouraged our efforts.

As director of the Cherokee Nation's alternative high school from 1981 to 1983, I spent many hours in conversation with Cherokee spiritual leaders — primarily Crosslin Smith, grandson of Redbird Smith, hereditary Chief of the Keetoowah Cherokees (an extremely traditional faction of the tribe that still practices the ancient religion). In response to my concerns about what was happening

to contemporary Cherokee youth, Crosslin replied that long ago the spiritual leaders had fasted and gone through prayer and rituals to see into the future and had already seen this situation coming. The lesson I drew from this discussion — though it was never articulated — was that we should view the plight of our young people as a challenge and see what could be done, rather than accept it as something beyond our control. From these conversations, the NIYLP philosophy began to take form.

In the early 1980s none of us had heard of Kurt Hahn and William James, and we were only vaguely aware of the experiential education movement. But we didn't have to look far for examples of the service ethic.

Before she became Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Wilma Mankiller was quietly attracting national attention through her work with self-help community service projects in isolated Cherokee communities. The most dramatic of these involved the tiny community of Bell, where local Cherokees designed and carried out a project that became a catalyst for bringing their community together. The project could have been done *for* the people (the approach usually taken by government agencies) rather than *by* the people, but that wasn't what Mankiller had in mind.

As is customary among the Cherokee people, a process of consensus building, in the form of a painstakingly thorough grassroots needs assessment, was undertaken in the community to find out exactly what the people felt were priorities. As it became evident that what people really wanted was running water in their homes, the skills and resources of the Bell residents proved to be impressive.

Wilma and her husband, Charlie Soap, were told repeatedly that the project wouldn't work. But when the families were asked to put in the hours required to bring the water lines to their homes, they did their share and more. Much more was actually accomplished than just the creation of a water system; a community based on the concept of *Gadugi* came to life.

A further challenge faced the founders of the NIYLP: how replicable would a model developed in Cherokee country prove to be with other tribes that have different cultures, governmental structures, and historical experiences? In late 1984 a small-scale project was started on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico to test the effectiveness of the model with southwestern tribes. Since 1985 the Indian Youth Leadership Camp has been held in New Mexico, and a number of tribes (Navajo, Zuni, Acoma, Laguna, Santa Clara, Hopi, Passamaquoddy, Colville, and Lakota) have taken part over the years.

Under the auspices of the National Youth Leadership Council, the NIYLP has also conducted similar camps in Native American communities from Alaska to Maine and has provided training nationwide in the basics of the model. As more tribes became involved and as the reputation of the project grew, the NIYLP was incorporated as a private, Indian-led, nonprofit organization and has been recognized by the U.S. Office of Indian Education as a model program.

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#### TRADITIONAL VALUES FOR THE 1990s

The NIYLP focuses on key values common to Native Americans. We believe that these values can be practiced

today, in spite of the tremendous changes that have taken place in our tribes and communities. These critical values are listed and briefly described below.

*Family.* The most important unit in Native American culture has always been the family. In these times of rapid change and social fragmentation, special attention and concerted effort are needed to restore the strength of the family and to develop in young people a strong sense of commitment to family values.

*Service to others.* Service to others has been highly valued in Native American cultures from the earliest times. Cultivating the spirit of service and generosity

that we recognize the accomplishments and transitions in the lives of our young people. These turning points are often referred to as "rites of passage" and need to be acknowledged and celebrated.

*Responsibility.* As young people mature and as their roles expand, their responsibilities increase. A strong sense of personal responsibility is a vital element in the development of capable young people.

*Natural consequences.* Young people need to understand that actions are followed by consequences. Nature is often the best teacher, and young people must not be overprotected from reality.

## SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES CAN PROVIDE A LEGITIMATE WAY TO REINTEGRATE ALIENATED STUDENTS.

provides young people with an opportunity to transcend self-centeredness, to develop genuine concern for others, and to put into action positive attitudes and skills. Service permeates the approach of the NIYLP.

*Spiritual awareness.* Traditional spiritual teachings of Native Americans often complement many Christian beliefs (e.g., the belief in a supreme being, in the concept of brotherhood, in the existence of a moral code, in the value of prayer and fasting, and so on). In modern times, a return to spiritual values — be they Christian or traditional — will provide young people with a constant source of inner strength, self-knowledge, love for others, and the feeling of gratitude for the gifts of life.

*Challenge.* There is value in involving young people in risk-taking activities that call on them to tap their sources of strength and to stretch their capabilities. In such activities, they experience directly the relationship between their own performance and success or failure.

*Meaningful roles.* Young people must have meaningful roles in the life of the family and the community if they are to develop positive social skills and a sense of self-worth.

*Recognition.* It is critically important

*Respect.* In order to develop a sense of their relationship with the universe, young people must learn to respect the traditions, values, and customs of their heritage, as well as those of other individuals, generations, races, and cultures.

*Dialogue.* Traditionally, there was a high level of intimate communication between adults and the young in Native American culture, and this contact provided a strong foundation for a child's education. The key to getting the most from learning experiences is "processing" those experiences through meaningful dialogue. Talking about *what* happened, analyzing *why* it's important, and generalizing to determine *how* we can learn from the experience helps young people to internalize the lessons of their experience and thereby to become empowered to apply them in other situations.

### SOME EXAMPLES

Our research has identified alienation and social isolation as contributing factors in the cycle of substance abuse and school failure into which all too many young Native Americans fall. Service opportunities can provide a legitimate way to reintegrate alienated students.

I once took a group of three boys and

three girls from the Cherokee Nation alternative school to visit Anna, an elderly woman of mixed blood, who lived alone several miles from Stillwell, Oklahoma. She grew a large strawberry patch, raised cattle that her son looked after, and did some trapping. When we arrived, we decided first to split and stack firewood for her, since it was fall and starting to get cold at night. After some time had passed, I realized that the three girls had wandered off. We finished our splitting and took the load of wood to the house to stack it in the yard. When I went inside, I found the three missing students sitting at the table engaged in lively conversation with Anna.

These three girls were known for fighting and stealing and generally had very negative reputations in the community. They had been expelled from the public school and had been recruited by the alternative school. In this setting, however, they knew intuitively that they could provide a much more valuable service than splitting and stacking firewood.

As we made ready to leave, Anna offered us \$5 to help pay for our gas. I explained that we couldn't take her money because we were volunteers. She insisted and slipped the \$5 bill into my pocket. As we began to move toward the door, the young woman with unquestionably the worst reputation in the group walked over to me, discreetly pulled the \$5 bill from my pocket, and quickly slipped it under the sugar bowl on her way out the door.

When we got back to school I gave her a hug and let her know how impressed I was with what I had seen. I think that day was a turning point for her, and it certainly restored my confidence in a group of young people that most community members had given up on.

There have been many success stories over the years as students have carried out a number of projects, including the following:

- Students assisted the Pueblo of Picuris in rebuilding a 250-year-old adobe church. In one day, we made nearly 1,000 adobe bricks by hand, mixing straw and mud, pouring the mixture into molds, and cleaning molds — and we transported about 3,000 dry bricks to the church site.

- Students painted the administrative offices of the Jemez Pueblo Social Ser-

vices complex, including the governor's office. One group taught songs and games to children in a summer lunch program while the larger group painted.

- Students worked for the National Park Service at El Morro National Monument, repairing existing trails and building new ones, cleaning and weeding the Anasazi ruins, working to contain erosion on trails, and so on.

- In 1988 our entire camp group (approximately 80 people) went to Canyon de Chelly, one of the most scenic locations on the Navajo reservation. Our Navajo guide told stories about the history of the canyon, including the infamous roundup of the Navajos by Kit Carson and the U.S. Army in the 1860s. We heard about the burned houses, the trampled corn fields, and the fruit trees chopped down in an attempt to drive the Navajos from the canyon. One student came up with the idea that we should begin to replant peach trees in the canyon to make up for Kit Carson's destruction. That year we began with a single peach tree, and we have continued the tradition ever since.

#### YEAR-ROUND PROGRAM

At the request of school administrators, parents, and students, the NIYLP has evolved into a year-round program, with our camp serving as the "ignition" experience. While at the camp, the students learn valuable skills and plan projects that they can implement in their home communities during the school year. A teacher or another adult must accompany students to the camp, where the adults go through an intensive orientation to the model to prepare them to work with students in the follow-up program.

NIYLP staff members serve as facilitators in an effort to cultivate volunteers from among the parents and others in the home communities. Incoming sixth-graders take part in the Pathfinders program, which uses a skill-building and prevention approach; seventh- and eighth-graders focus on "leadership for service"; high school students are currently testing the Community Response Corps in the Zuni Pueblo. The high school program works cooperatively with the United World College to offer search and rescue training and training for service with volunteer fire departments. Training for

parents and inservice training for teachers are also provided by the NIYLP. The Zuni Youth Council provides an opportunity for young people to have genuine input into programs in their community.

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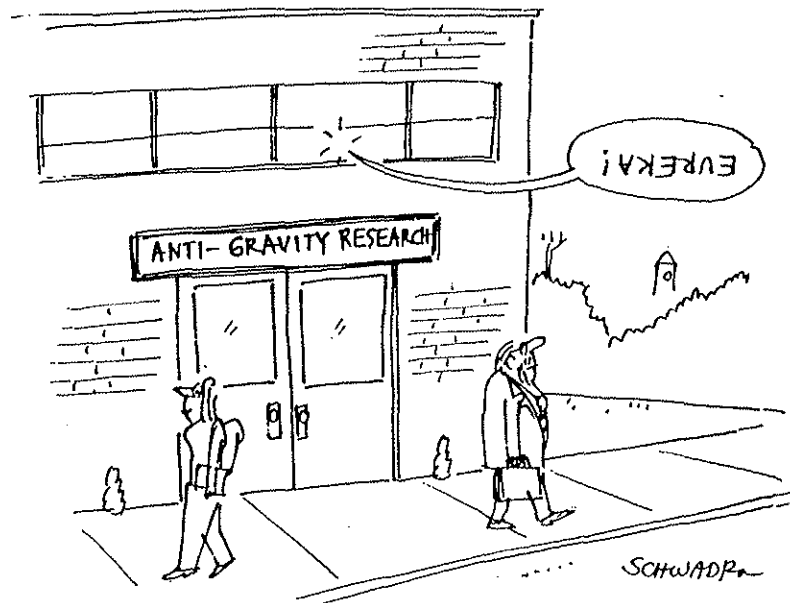
One of our long-range goals is to develop a core group of Native American youths who have attended our camps and are positive role models who can serve as staff members and leaders. At present, our key "service staff" members are all former participants with an average involvement of three years. One student, who attended our first camp in 1983 as

an eighth-grader, will graduate from the University of Notre Dame in the spring of 1991 and plans to join our full-time staff.

Currently we have projects under way in the school systems in Ramah (Navajo) and in Zuni, Acoma, and Santa Clara Pueblos in New Mexico, plus a new project on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Our projects are both school- and community-based and operate only in communities to which we have been invited.

To support our efforts to introduce service-learning into schools serving Native American students, NIYLP works collaboratively with the National Youth Leadership Council under a grant from the Kellogg Foundation. Also under this grant, we are working closely with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society to provide teacher training. Initially, a small number of teachers, NIYLP staff members, and a group of respected Native Americans will come together to develop a curriculum that will then be used to train teachers who will go back to teach in Indian communities.

The NIYLP has pioneered the spread of service into Native American communities, and we are confident that our traditional values — key concepts that once held our tribes and communities together — will combine with the best efforts of the education reform movement to offer our young people what they deserve: the best of both worlds. K



# Citizenship, Service, and School Reform in Pennsylvania

## PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service

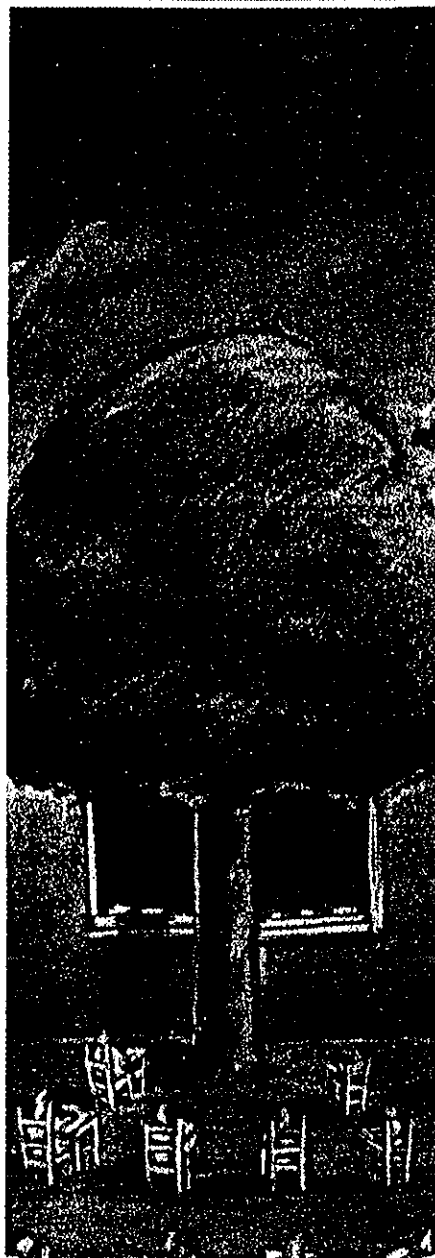
*Community service transforms a basic expense — students — into a community resource, Mr. Briscoe maintains.*

BY JOHN BRISCOE

**I**N THE FALL of 1988 Gov. Robert Casey of Pennsylvania launched PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service. He charged PennSERVE to "ask and enable all Pennsylvanians to serve, so that community service becomes the common expectation and experience of all Pennsylvanians."

In February 1990 the 50 governors and the President adopted national education goals that included a resolution to the effect that all students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility. In October 1990  
*(Continued on page 759, column 3)*

*JOHN BRISCOE is director of PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service, Harrisburg.*



## Abraham Lincoln High School: Community Service in Action

*Mr. Silcox describes how PennSERVE has made education come alive in one large urban high school.*

BY HARRY SILCOX

**N**OWHERE is the success of PennSERVE's seed grant and advocacy initiative clearer than at Philadelphia's Lincoln High School. A large urban school in the nation's fifth-largest school district, Lincoln serves a racially diverse, but largely working-class, student body. In 1987, as PennSERVE emerged on the scene, Lincoln was developing a horticulture/environmental program dedicated to cleaning up and beautifying the community while educating students uninspired by traditional teaching methods. Three of the teachers (David Kipphut, John Murray, and Barbara Horwitz) and I realized the connection between our ideas and service-learning. By 1988 — several phone calls,

*HARRY SILCOX is principal of Abraham Lincoln High School, Philadelphia.*



meetings, and grant applications later — Lincoln had been awarded two of PennSERVE's minigrants, one for the environmental program and one for an oral history/community museum program.

The environmental program has provided the community with more than 2,000 water samples, 600 soil samples, 100 air samples, and 600 radon samples. Nearby Pennypack Creek was monitored for the city and the state, and tons of trash were removed from the creek and a nearby park. The community responded with food for the clean-up days and funds for the required equipment. The students in Jerry Newman's oral history class presented their ideas to community groups, recruited an advisory board, and recently published a 160-page book on the history of Philadelphia's Tacony community. Media coverage has been intense.

For the school, the seed grants and the issues surrounding the incorporation of service into the curriculum changed the way Lincoln operates. Rather than depend on the resources of the school system, teachers are beginning to see that they can do things on their own. A grant writer was appointed to work with teachers to find money to meet newly discovered needs. A grant paid the horticulture students to work in the city's Fairmount Park during the summer. Students were hired to design and install a historically accurate "federal garden" at the Atwater Kent Museum. The city made Lincoln the site of a major nursery for the park system.

As the business community became familiar with the program, it began to contribute equipment. Today, the Lincoln Environmental Laboratory — the only such facility in a high school in the United States — has over \$2 million in donated environmental equipment. Community service built the network of people and generated the contagious energy that the school needed.

Teachers involved in the program found that their role changed. Community service demanded that teachers and students act as a team, and this relationship allowed them to develop a different attitude toward one another. There was more cooperation and discussion about shared, real problems. Students began to see and understand the connection between education and "real life." Other faculty members, spurred by these suc-

cesses, began to explore the possibility of integrating community service into their curriculum.

Karen Lehman developed an outstanding horticulture/therapy program, which provides intergenerational services to 13 hospitals and nursing homes. John Murray teamed up with the Philadelphia Youth Service Corps to start a corps-in-a-school program. The corps brings dropouts back to school for two hours of classes and seven hours of work rebuilding houses, cleaning playgrounds, and removing graffiti.

Barbara Horwitz and John Dalton launched a literacy program that sends Lincoln students to tutor in surrounding elementary and middle schools. Richard Rayne's accounting students provide tax preparation services for the blind and elderly. Yona Dansky, a hearing-impaired teacher, worked with her students to compile and print a directory of services for the hearing impaired. Elaine Bluestein has encouraged the Interact Club to help with the homeless, and Naomi Block has her business students writing résumés, typing letters, and preparing business forms for citizens in the community. In all, more than 1,000 students in a school of 1,700 are now taking part in a credit-bearing course that features a community service component.

In just three years Lincoln has become a center of school-based service in the city and across the nation. The resulting recognition has provided a variety of opportunities for students and teachers. A team of students from the environmental program is just back from an environmental conference in Moscow. In 1992, 30 students will visit and study the rain forest in Costa Rica. The school was recently named by President Bush as one of 12 national Starserve schools.

But all the recognition is secondary to the change in climate and productivity in the classrooms. Active learning in real-life settings has stimulated students and teachers alike to consider more creative means of service and more dynamic means of teaching and learning. "What amazed me," says teacher John Dalton of the literacy project, "is seeing students who were withdrawn and passive take the initiative and become enthusiastic about what they are doing." The students are clearly aware that they are benefiting from an educational experience of a dif-

ferent order from that to which they are accustomed. As Mike Ristine, one of the tutors, put it: "I'm helping people instead of sitting in class. If I were in class, I probably wouldn't be listening right now."

Jennifer Griffin, a soft-spoken 16-year-old, described one of her pupils: "He's really smart, but he's a discipline problem. He gets very little done in class, but when I'm with him he gets everything done."

The Lincoln experience shows that community service has the power to galvanize an entire school community and possibly to fuel the engine of reform. To the students and teachers at Lincoln, school-based service has changed attitudes, values, and relationships and made education come alive. It has created a partnership of pioneers. K

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### PennSERVE

*(Continued from page 758)*

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a financially strapped Congress passed the National and Community Service Act of 1990, authorizing \$287 million over the next three years for youth service programs "that will benefit the nation and improve the life chances of the young."

Why this revived interest in community service? Because it works!

Pennsylvania has gone through wrenching economic changes, and Gov. Casey wants the state's work force to be internationally competitive. "The qualities of a productive worker," he contends, "are the same as those of a good citizen, and community service is an effective means of cutting dropout rates and aiding in the difficult transition from school to work by giving youth direct career and citizenship experience." The habits and skills of a world-class work force and a committed citizenry are best learned not through lectures, but through experience. Like bicycle riding, basketball, and leadership, citizenship is a participant sport.

Service-learning is more than a pedagogy. It is a profound shift in our perspective on youth. It is as if we were returning to a time when the responsibilities for educating, mentoring, inspiring, and disciplining our young people were more evenly divided between families, communities, businesses, and schools. Service-learning seeks to bring the com-

munity back into the youth development picture, from which it has been pushed by two-income and single-parent families, television, suburban sprawl, and the "youth economy."

Most education and youth development policies and practices reflect negative expectations — the perception of young people as a problem rather than a resource. We have focused on overcoming the deficiencies of youth: ignorance, irresponsibility, and immaturity. Ironically, however, such an approach often reinforces the negative behaviors and attitudes that we seek to overcome.

An approach based on youth service views young people as a resource. It generates programs that challenge them to participate in socially meaningful and valued activities. It works on the principle that youths can make an important contribution to their communities and that those who see themselves — and are seen by their communities — as producers, contributors, and agents of improvement will take on the attributes of responsibility, productivity, and self-worth that such roles imply.

Operating on these insights, PennSERVE has tried to build a statewide system of service that asks young people — persuasively and methodically — to play a part. It seeks to infuse schools, community organizations, colleges, and job training systems with a culture of service. It has used the traditional methods of ad-

vocacy — money, information, exhortation, and regulation. It has avoided mandates or requirements, on the ground that service should spring from voluntary roots. But it is by no means averse to using *very strong* incentives, with rewards for those who serve and sanctions for those who don't.

From an overall budget of \$7 million and a staff of seven, PennSERVE dedicates one full-time staff person and \$400,000 to school-based service. Using its own funds and some state money set aside for dropout prevention, PennSERVE has been able to provide 85 school districts with three-year mini-grants of \$15,000 apiece for service programs. It sponsors workshops, inservice training sessions for teachers, and a host of informal presentations. In cooperation with the Philadelphia School District and the Citizen Service Project of Pennsylvania, PennSERVE has just launched a statewide training institute focused on community service. Above all, PennSERVE seeks to spread the good news about school service programs that work.

Through its literature, newsletters, electronic mail, and presentations, PennSERVE exhorts teachers and administrators to "go and see" what's happening at Chestnut Ridge High School or Overbrook or Muhlenberg or Lincoln or Western Wayne or Steel Valley or Wisahickon. It brings representatives from "model schools" to meetings and work-

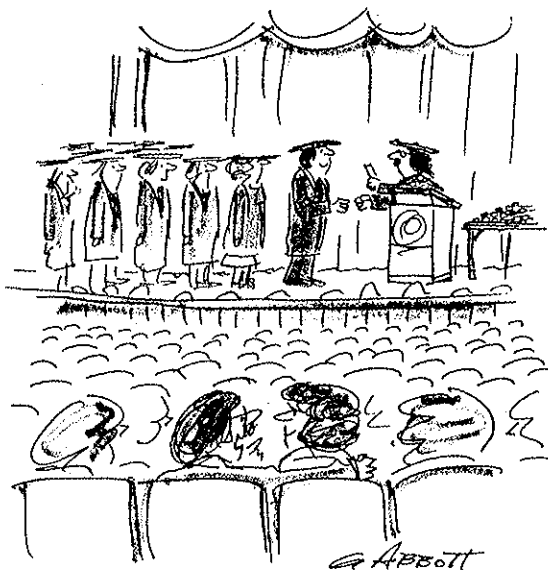
shops. It makes extensive use of one of the world's most important research and learning tools — the telephone.

School service programs are spreading. Five school districts in Pennsylvania now require community service for graduation. Surveys indicate that the proportion of schools offering academic credit for community service has increased from 5.6% to 13.5% in two years. Community service has become a common topic of debate at conventions, workshops, and gatherings of educators.

PennSERVE stresses the links between community service and the second wave of school reform. In an article titled "The Youth Service Movement: The Trojan Horse of School Reform," published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in May 1990, Harry Silcox writes, "Community service programs have changed the way teachers view their classrooms and how children learn. . . . Service increases the active participation of the learner. . . . There is less memorization and book learning and more doing and remembering."

PennSERVE now holds joint workshops and regional gatherings with the 27 schools engaged in Pennsylvania's "RE:Learning" effort, because we believe that that project's guiding principle — "student as worker, teacher as coach" — is also central to school service programs. Furthermore, we believe that such programs can bring to schools two vital resources that they need to carry out restructuring: time and money.

In Pennsylvania less than 20% of the taxpayers have children in the public schools. Unless schools make themselves of service to their communities in non-traditional ways, they are unlikely to command the support that they need. Community service can help us move from begging to bargaining. Community service transforms a basic expense — students — into a community resource. When youths take care of senior citizens, clean up a park, rehabilitate abandoned houses, or tutor "at-risk" peers, they are performing a service of value to their communities, and the community is much more likely to be willing to support the school. As an added benefit, placing students in community service during school time gives teachers those blocks of planning time that are so scarce and so essential to success. K



"We made it."

# Community Service Learning And School Improvement in Springfield, Massachusetts

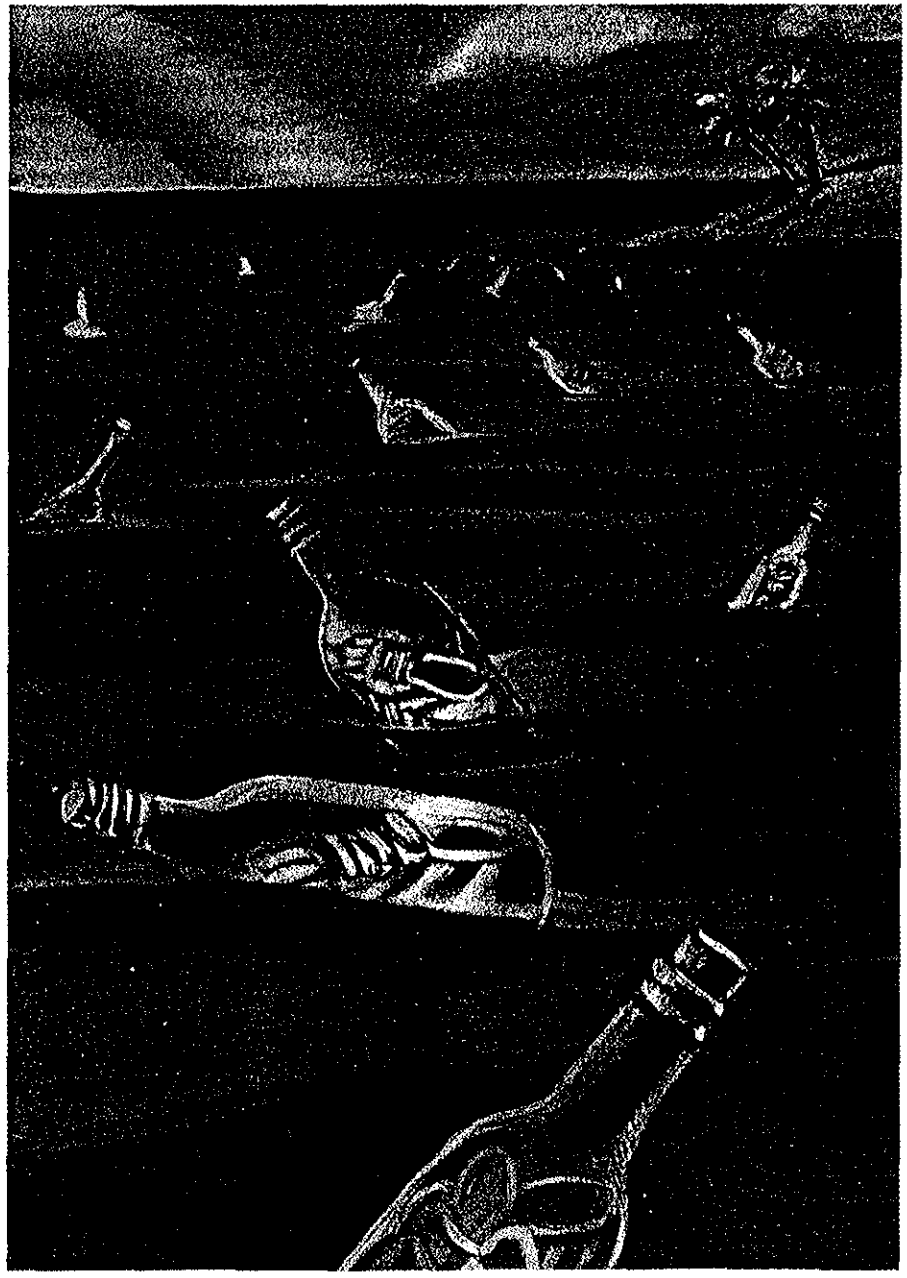
*Educators in Springfield see connections between the current agenda for school reform and their own program of Community Service Learning. For details, read on.*

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BY VIRGINIA ANDERSON, CAROL KINSLEY, PETER NEGRONI, AND CAROLYN PRICE

**C**ALLS FOR changes in the education system continually issue forth from various segments of society. Each outpouring of public concern challenges educators to address the needs of young people and to achieve school renewal. The current literature on school reform advocates an agenda of improvement efforts aimed at creating effective, caring schools that will provide active learning opportunities for students, develop learning communities, expand learning into the community, foster collegiality among staff members, and enable teachers to become "orchestra conductors" in the classroom rather than lecturers. But educators ask, "How can all of this be achieved?"

Educators in Springfield, Massachu-

*VIRGINIA ANDERSON is principal of Chestnut Street Middle School, Springfield, Mass.; CAROL KINSLEY (University of Massachusetts Chapter) is director of the Springfield Community Service Learning Center and a consultant to the Springfield Public Schools; PETER NEGRONI is superintendent of the Springfield Public Schools; and CAROLYN PRICE is principal of Lincoln School, Springfield.*



setts, believe they have an answer. They see connections between this vision of school improvement and the program of Community Service Learning (CSL) in which they have participated for the past several years. Although the CSL program did not set out to demonstrate such connections, the process of integrating community service with classroom learning had an unanticipated ripple effect throughout the system.

In 1986 Springfield's Mayor Richard Neal (now a U.S. representative), who was chairperson of the district's school committee, suggested that a community service program should be started in the schools. Inspired by Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* and by his own experiences as a social studies teacher, Neal saw service as a way of building students' sense of citizenship and increasing their involvement in their communities.

In order to implement Neal's proposal, the district established an office devoted to community service learning, which from the beginning linked learning to the concept of community service. It was determined that, if community service was to be part of the educational process, then it should meet instructional goals and be integrated into the entire K-12 curriculum. The school committee adopted the policy that *all* public school students would participate in community service learning, and CSL was launched. Neal appointed an advisory committee made up of both school and community representatives to work with a district coordinator from the CSL office.

#### INTEGRATING CSL INTO THE CURRICULUM

Instead of requiring a specific number of hours of community service for high school graduation, the program was designed to give each school the opportunity to determine how it would involve its students in CSL. For principals and teachers who were already active in the efforts of the Red Cross, the March of Dimes, and many other charities, this new policy was perceived as "another thing to do." With the school day already crowded, it was clear that CSL would need to be integrated into the curriculum. Besides, linking service and learning seemed to make sense. Why not use the community as a laboratory for learn-

ing? Why couldn't CSL become "another way of teaching"?

The CSL office developed a set of guidelines to help schools integrate CSL into the educational process. These guidelines were issued to the principals and CSL building representatives (one teacher in each school, whose task was to coordinate that school's effort). The prescribed procedure made use of a thematic approach and had a theoretical foundation in the writings of John Dewey, Hilda Taba, Louise Berman, and Ralph Tyler. In addition, service, reflection, and celebration were all to be integral parts of the CSL experience, which teachers found they could easily organize by going through the following steps:

1. Establish an individual school or classroom service-learning theme.
2. Determine school or classroom objectives.
3. Meet with community representatives.
4. Build a repertoire of activities.
5. Develop learning experiences.
6. Establish a time line.
7. Reflect.
8. Celebrate.

#### CSL IN ACTION

In order to come up with their service-learning themes, the staff and students first identified existing community needs. Then teachers found ways to use the service experience to motivate students to learn or as the culminating activity of a unit of study. Students who participated in the service activity used it to develop their content skills. The following examples of CSL projects show how service effectively reinforced classroom study.

In the spring of 1988 the Environmental Center of Springfield (ECOS) initiated a service project in which all of the district's 1,500 fifth-graders spent one school day cleaning out a ravine and turning it into a conservation area. Students cleared trails, planted shrubs and bushes, and helped develop a sledding area for the community to use. The service project gave students a better understanding of topics they had studied in the classroom: soil erosion, animal habitats, and plant life. Christopher Collins, the ECOS supervisor, sent letters home to parents, recognizing the students' efforts and inviting families to use the site.

At Freedman School, which serves fifth- and sixth-graders, each classroom "adopted" a resident of a local nursing home. Karen Chartier, the CSL building representative, helped the students communicate with their adopted resident each month. The students sent messages and pictures and sometimes devised special class projects that were directly related to their elderly friends. For example, several students surprised one resident on her 88th birthday. Knowing of her fondness for butterflies, they brought her a "butterfly" cake that they had baked as a class project. Because the resident was a native of Scotland, the students also studied Scotland in their geography class and shared what they had learned with her. Chartier worked with Sally Wittenberg, a staff member of the Springfield School Volunteers, to set up a "phone pal" network. Residents of the nursing home called their "student pals" each day to chat and hear about the day's events.

At Alice B. Beal School, which serves students in grades K-4, the teachers adopted the theme "Helping the Hungry and the Homeless." The major service project took place in the spring, when students collected 140 pounds of sneakers for children in Haiti. As the sneakers piled up, the children weighed them and graphed the progress on a wall chart. They viewed slides of Haiti in geography class and read about the country in their basal reader. A local resident who often travels to Haiti delivered the sneakers to an orphanage there.

Katherine Heaps Kessler, the CSL building representative, observed, "For the first time, many of these youngsters understood poverty. The thing that most affected them was that none of the children in the slides had anything on their feet. By donating their own used sneakers, they really felt they could affect poverty, if only in a small way." A letter arrived from Haiti telling the children that "lots of Haitian boys and girls will have their first pair of shoes, thanks to you." The children were gratified by the acknowledgment of their contribution.

#### SEEING LONG-TERM EFFECTS

An ethic of service is clearly present in some of the schools that have been involved in the CSL program since its inception four years ago. Two inner-city

magnet schools, Lincoln School (K-4) and Chestnut Street Middle School, provide particularly good examples of this orientation.

**Lincoln School.** When Lincoln School initiated the CSL program, its primary objective was to develop a sense of community within the school. The school adopted "citizenship" as its service theme. Teachers met to develop criteria to define "Lincoln School Good Citizens." Children were exposed to diverse models of good citizenship from history, literature, and contemporary society. They cut pictures of good citizens out of magazines and covered the walls with them. They wrote stories about citizenship and displayed them on the "Wall of Fame."

In order to make the concept of good citizenship relevant and to reach out to the community, the children held a "good citizen" contest. They nominated parents, grandparents, foster parents, neighbors, social workers, teachers, older brothers and sisters, baby sitters, and camp counselors. Then each class discussed its nominees and elected the one who best exemplified good citizenship. Through participating in and reflecting on these activities, the children learned that good citizens are everywhere. They come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic levels. The common denominator that makes these citizens special is that each of them is a caring, sharing, and loving individual.

The entire school community came together in a grand celebration featuring "Good Citizens on Parade." The children, wearing green-and-white Lincoln School T-shirts, carried banners and balloons,

creating a festive atmosphere. Mounted police, followed by the drill team and a fourth-grade band, led the parade to a nearby park, where each "good citizen" was honored by then-Mayor Neal and many dignitaries.

In recognition of their participation and effort, the children were treated to a concert and given ice cream sundaes and snacks donated by a local citizens' group. Now an annual celebration, the event has come to be known as "Kids' Appreciation Day" and is designated as the time when those who have received services come to the school to thank and acknowledge the children for their efforts.

Lincoln School's participation in CSL has been a developmental process. Curriculum-based, thematic units have been created and implemented. Recipients of services now include the elderly, children's wards at local hospitals, neighborhood social service organizations, and, of course, the school community.

As the school reached out to the community, the response was overwhelming. A cadre of volunteers from neighborhood organizations came forward to share their expertise with the children and to help them expand their vision of community. A school/business partnership with the local power company focused on the concept of CSL. The partnership pays for materials, equipment, and transportation for CSL projects.

Today, the staff at Lincoln School recognizes the value of CSL to students. Staff members view the program as a way to increase student learning, to enrich the curriculum, and to foster the spirit of caring and lifetime service. They believe that, if children are exposed in their formative years to the values of participation in the community, they will internalize those values. They believe that, given the opportunity, students will choose to become interested, involved citizens.

Is there a connection between Lincoln's involvement in service and school improvement? Concurrent with the development and implementation of CSL, the Lincoln School staff began an ongoing process of introspection, analysis, and evaluation in order to determine how staff members could better deliver educational services to children. They realized that, in order to meet the needs of a rapidly changing, technological society, edu-

cation must change. The school was reorganized into instructional teams. Staff development was used for team building and to train teachers in whole-language and cooperative learning techniques. Ongoing training has been designed to help teachers understand how children learn and to provide them with the skills to identify and build on students' individual strengths. By integrating CSL into this instructional approach, the school has created a learning environment that is exciting, stimulating, and motivating — in short, an environment that works for students.

The rewards for the school are both intrinsic and extrinsic. Children's self-esteem has grown, and this heightened sense of self-worth has led to improved academic achievement. The students' scores on the Massachusetts Test of Basic Skills have increased consistently over a three-year period. The motto of CSL at Lincoln School — "Caring, Sharing, Loving" — has become part of the school's ethos. The climate of the school is orderly, friendly, open, and warm. Negative behavior is rare, and children routinely choose to be helpful, kind, and caring. They have been given the opportunity to develop in a setting and structure that focus on the intrinsic rewards that come to those who support and serve one another and the community.

**Chestnut Street Middle School.** Building a sense of community within Chestnut Street Middle School through the CSL program has consisted of a careful attempt to free staff members and students from the "system" and, in so doing, to empower them to assume responsibility for their choices and actions.

As defined by Chestnut's staff and students, the concept of community begins with one's own family and then extends to the school, the city, and so on, in a widening circle that eventually embraces the world and all its peoples. The Chestnut approach to CSL always revolves around some global theme, such as "Be a Good Neighbor" or "Reach Up and Reach Out." The theme serves as the umbrella under which students and teachers develop a variety of activities.

In an inner-city school, teachers, parents, and students alike often have a hard time raising the expectations that they have for themselves and for others. The theme "Reach Up and Reach Out" has in-



"I want to go to Yale or Princeton."

spired all those associated with the school to set their sights higher and to assume responsibility for others and for themselves. The concept was introduced on the first day of school in September. The Chestnut parents, students, and teachers were all asked to look toward the sky. They were told not to be limited by the roof over their heads but to go beyond what they could see, to reach out to the heavens and become a star. In one mathematics classroom, shiny stars with the names of all the children were hung overhead.

As CSL has matured, the practice of reflecting on what was learned, how the knowledge was applied, how it made students feel, and how it benefited others has become a key to changing attitudes and behaviors among the students and staff members and to making improvements in the learning program. The sense of community that was cultivated during the first two years of the program evolved into a much more sophisticated interdisciplinary approach to learning that now influences everything that takes place at Chestnut.

For example, the entire seventh-grade Gold House is organized so that the theme of community is examined in all subjects. Students in the house have been assigned to study one of five world communities in their language arts, social studies, math, science, and reading classes. Eventually, they will learn about the impact of their community on the others.

Each teacher in the Gold House picked one community service project to participate in with the students. The teachers' method of introducing the projects to their students taught about commitment in a highly symbolic way. The students were asked to trace their hands on construction paper, cut the forms out, write their names on them, and bring them to an assembly the next day.

On the walls of the auditorium were huge paper hands, each marked with the name of a community service project. Each teacher or agency representative introduced his or her project and told why it was important. Each student was then encouraged to select the large hand representing the community service project he or she wanted to work with and to place the outline of his or her own hand on that large hand. Students were told that only those who wished to participate

should do so and that they could change their minds in the next few days.

The students took this selection process very seriously, and some did change their minds. After a few days, every youngster in the Gold House had made a commitment to a community service project and had placed his or her hand on one of the larger ones.

Students began participating in their service experiences in October. And the teachers used the projects as the basis of lessons in the appropriate subject areas. For example, all students in the Gold House classes solved mathematics problems related to seating arrangements at the Paramount Theatre, where some students served as ushers for the New England Puppet Series. Social studies classes looked at the effects of Red Cross projects worldwide and discussed the factors that have contributed to the need for help around the world. In language arts classes students kept journals and reflected on their service experiences.

Chestnut's schoolwide Brothers and Sisters program has been one of the most successful service initiatives. In a neighborhood where gangs flourish, the group now boasts 140 members. Older students in the Brothers and Sisters program check younger ones' homework, visit them at home, meet them before and after school to work together on projects, share quiet moments with them in school, and show that they care about them. Early in 1990, students in the program attended a Saturday seminar in which, guided by teachers and counselors, they explored bias, brainstormed about exactly what a friend is, discussed peer pressure, and exchanged ideas about what they could bring to another student in a helping relationship.

While adding new service initiatives, Chestnut continues to build on its first community service theme, "Be a Good Neighbor." Service experiences based on this theme have given students a sense of local history and an understanding of their relationship to the school's neighborhood, whether they live in it or come to Chestnut through the citywide magnet school program.

Students researched and produced a video called "Portrait of a Neighborhood." An exploration of the neighborhood's heritage, the program has been shown on the local cable station and continues to be used by students and teachers


as an orientation for new students.

The neighborhood theme has inspired an annual "Be a Good Neighbor Workday." In 1991 the event was organized as a Hispanic neighborhood festival. Parents and students planned the festival together, focusing on ways to help one another in the school neighborhood.

Including CSL in the educational equation at Chestnut Street Middle School has made a difference in the school community and has helped create the kind of caring school climate that is necessary for learning to occur. Because CSL is not an "add-on" program, the ethic of service has become pervasive in the school. The integration of CSL into the academic and social life of the school has provided a framework for teaching students in such a way that they will be able to meet their own needs while recognizing, responding to, and respecting the needs of others.

#### CSL AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

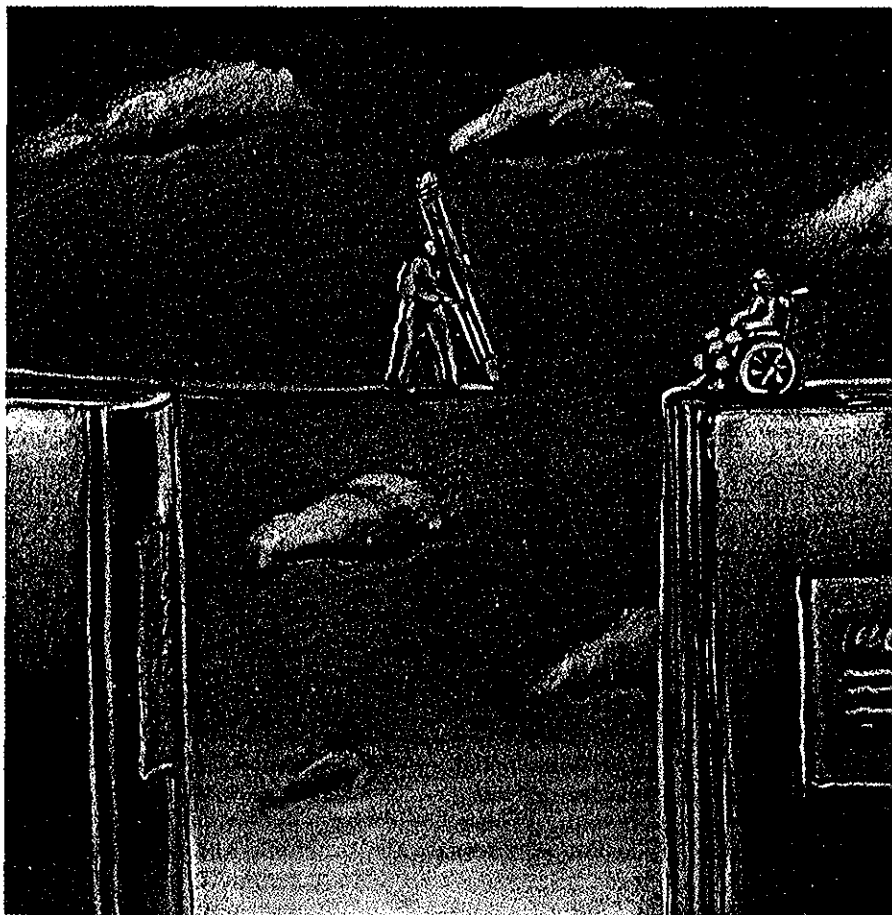
Does CSL help advance the agenda for school improvement? The evidence from schools in Springfield clearly indicates that it does. One of the most obvious links between CSL programs and recommendations for improvement is a focus on active learning. When a school develops service projects and interdisciplinary team experiences, active learning becomes part of the pedagogy. Cooperation and collaboration are inherent in the process of planning and carrying out service experiences. CSL harnesses the energy of all to create the necessary conditions for building a learning community, and students can bring the lessons of service into their own lives. They learn by doing, and in the process they begin to shape their own behavior. They start to understand how they want to relate to others and to themselves. They truly have an opportunity to become socially responsible adults.

Beyond these benefits, Springfield's service experiences clearly demonstrate that everyone — regardless of economic or social level — can serve. The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve." The Springfield CSL experience validates King's observation. With meaning and purpose, CSL provides an integrated, active, and vital way to educate young people. 

# Community Service and Civic Education

*Advocates claim that community service prepares a self-centered generation for citizenship. Not so, Mr. Boyte asserts.*

BY HARRY C. BOYTE



COMMUNITY service, widely touted as the cure for young people's political apathy, in fact teaches little about the arts of participation in public life. To reengage students in public affairs requires redefining *politics* to include, in addition to electoral activity, ongoing citizen involvement in solving public problems. It requires a conceptual framework that distinguishes between public life and private life. And it calls for a pedagogical strategy that puts the design and ownership of problem-solving projects into the hands of young people.

According to conventional wisdom, teenagers and young adults are deeply disenchanted with politics and public issues. The Times Mirror Center reports that, for the first time since World War II, young people show less interest in public affairs than their elders. Only one in five follows major issues "very closely."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, youths today have a complex set of attitudes about the world. More detailed probing finds a generation not so much apathetic as furious at adults' apparent inaction in the face of mounting social problems. Today's young people are jaded with Sixties-style protest and uncertain about what else there is to do. It is clear, however, that senior-class trips to Washington, D.C., or exhortations to be "good citizens" — the stuff of earlier generations' civic education — are not going to interest young people in politics.

Community service is proposed as the resolution of this dilemma. Advocates

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claim that service prepares a self-centered generation for citizenship. Thus, for instance, the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship has argued that, "if the service commitment begins early enough and continues into adulthood, participatory citizenship would become what Robert Bellah and his colleagues call habits of the heart, family and community traditions of local political participation that sustain a person, a community and a nation."<sup>2</sup>

Using this rationale, community service initiatives are on the rise. Detroit schools now require 200 hours of com-

tutoring projects and literacy campaigns. In addition, the phrase sometimes encompasses activism with regard to such issues as homelessness and drug abuse.

Service involvements can produce a number of desirable educational outcomes: connection with other cultures, experiential learning, personal growth. But service does little to connect students' everyday concerns with the political process. Nor do service projects normally teach the political skills that are needed to work effectively toward solving society's problems: public judgment, the collaborative exercise of power, conflict resolution, negotiation, bargaining,

**F**ROM THE perspective of civic education, the weakness of community service lies in a conceptual limitation. Service lacks a vocabulary that draws attention to the public world that extends beyond personal lives and local communities. Most service programs include little learning about the policy dimensions of issues that students address through person-to-person efforts. Volunteers rarely have the wherewithal to reflect on the complex dynamics of power, race, and class that are created when middle-class youths go out to "serve" in low-income areas.

Most notably, without a conceptual framework that distinguishes between personal life and the public world, community service adopts the "therapeutic language" that now pervades society. From television talk shows to election campaigns, such public concepts as accountability, respect for public contributions, and recognition of varying interests and viewpoints have given way to a language of self-development and intimacy. Thus even sophisticated community service programs designed for high school students use personal growth as their main selling point. Educational objectives include self-esteem, a sense of personal worth, self-understanding, independence, personal belief in the ability to make a difference, consciousness of one's personal values, openness to new experiences, capacity to persevere in difficult tasks, and the exploration of new identities and unfamiliar roles. *Politics* is absent.<sup>6</sup>

A different way to teach politics is essential if we want to reengage students with citizenship — understood as playing an ongoing role in public affairs. Partly, this new approach means retrieving older definitions. The word *politics* comes from the Greek *politikos*, meaning "of the citizen." A citizen-centered politics re-creates the *concept of a public realm*, as distinct from private life, in which diverse groups learn to work together effectively to address public problems, whether or not they like one another personally. To be meaningful, public work also requires an *experience of power* that can come only from self-directed action.

Project Public Life of the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota<sup>7</sup> has found that teens

## EVEN SOPHISTICATED COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS USE PERSONAL GROWTH AS THEIR MAIN SELLING POINT.

munity service for graduation. Atlanta issued a 75-hour minimum requirement to increase "understanding of the obligations of a good citizen." Minnesota and Pennsylvania have developed statewide financing for student service. Congress passed the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to provide federal support.<sup>3</sup>

*Community service* refers mainly to a variety of individual voluntary efforts, from working in food banks and shelters for the homeless to helping in nursing homes or hospitals to participating in

and holding oneself and others accountable.

Adults often see community service as a renewal of the political tradition of civic republicanism, in which citizens learn to "put aside" their self-interests in altruistic concern for others. To younger Americans, steeped in a culture that glorifies "lifestyles of the rich and famous" and praises the virtues of free enterprise, calls to renounce self-interest sound disingenuous at best.

Instead, young people find that service meets their needs for personal relevance and a sense of membership in a community. Volunteers usually disavow concern with larger policy questions, seeing service as an *alternative* to politics. "I do community service for myself," explained one young woman at a North Carolina college who had begun a successful mentoring program for pregnant teens. "I have a passion for it. I can't save the world."<sup>4</sup> In schools where learning seems dry and remote, service experiences create a sense of usefulness and connection. A young student from Ohio who does volunteer work with retarded children explained, "I like to see people gain from what I can do for them. I like myself better for helping them."<sup>5</sup>



"You don't need an access code — you just play with it."

and younger students alike have great interest in "problem-solving politics" in which they are central actors. The Public Achievement program of Project Public Life — undertaken with the cooperation of St. Paul Mayor James Scheibel, Minnesota 4-H, and others — is based on a pedagogy that allows youths to define their own concerns and design and manage their own projects in the context of public environments in which they learn how to work constructively with diversity.

A Public Achievement training effort conducted in the fall of 1990 with the Inner Urban Catholic Coalition — a group of 13 St. Paul Catholic schools — illustrates the approach. Principals, teachers, and students asked to participate in Public Achievement in order to lend new energy and meaning to Martin Luther King Day celebrations, which many felt had grown stale. At the outset, educators agreed to hand over authority for the project to teams of junior high school students. The students, with educators watching but not talking, received training in public skills and concepts in order to design King Day celebrations relevant to their own lives.

In the training, Peg Michels and Rebecca Breuer of the Public Achievement staff emphasized such skills as public speaking, recruiting other students, organizing meetings, analyzing problems, developing action plans, and conducting evaluations. They also structured public meetings to ensure that students would interact across school lines, delivering reports and obtaining diverse feedback.

The King Day activities that emerged from these sessions varied, but on balance administrators and teachers were amazed at the creativity, zeal, and skill that students displayed in response to being "taken seriously" and having the freedom to plan their own public projects.

The process allowed students to design events that were connected to their own lives and reflected their own capabilities. At St. Luke's Catholic School, for instance, the initial team of students who participated in the training recruited a task force from grades 4 through 8 to plan class activities that would culminate in a large public event for the school and community on January 18. Students from each grade participated in and reported on projects in which they applied to prob-

lems in their own lives the principles that King's life exemplified, such as the non-violent resolution of conflicts and the disavowal of prejudice. Jeff Maurer, a

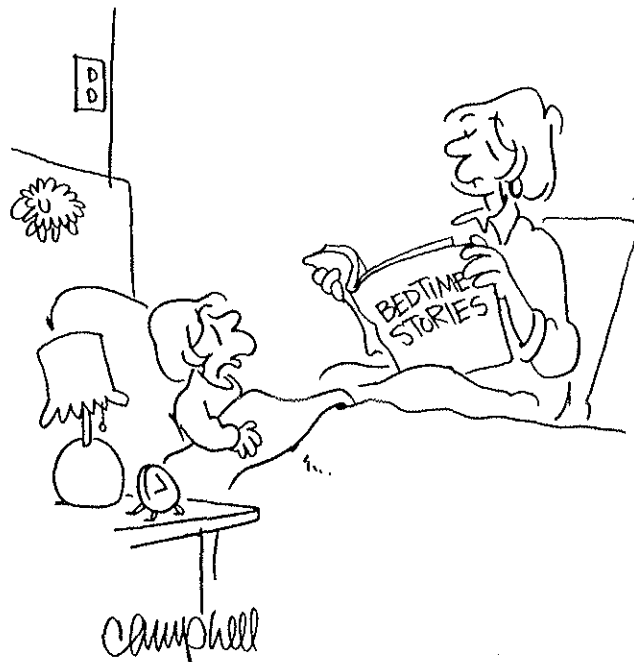
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teacher at St. Bernard's, another Catholic school involved in the project, said, "I have developed a new appreciation and respect for my students as I watched them identify issues, devise strategies to deal with those issues, and evaluate their own progress."

The service language of "caring and community" is simply no antidote for to-

day's youthful cynicism about politics. Moreover, the predominantly one-on-one character of typical service experiences leaves little room for political learning. As this generation defines itself politically, it will focus on finding practical answers to the problems of the nation. Teaching the skills and concepts of such problem solving will require a far more public pedagogy.

1. For figures on the disenchantment of youth with politics, see Michael Oreskes, "Profiles of Today's Youths: Many Just Don't Seem to Care," *New York Times*, 28 June 1990; "An Indifferent Age?," *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 June 1990; and Rushmore M. Kidder, "Children's Moral Compass Wavers," *Christian Science Monitor*, 16 May 1990.
2. William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, "Pathways to Success: Citizenship Through Service," in Jane Kendall, ed., *Combining Service and Learning* (Raleigh: National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, 1990), p. 441.
3. The figures on service are from Alonzo Crim, "The Obligation of Citizenship," in Kendall, pp. 240-41.
4. Dan Conrad, "Learner Outcomes for Community Service," *The Generator*, January 1989, pp. 1-2.
5. Ernest Boyer, "Service: Linking School to Life," in Kendall, p. 100.
6. For a representative listing of learner outcomes, see, for example, Conrad, op. cit.
7. For further information on the program, write to Project Public Life, Humphrey Center, Rm. 147, 301 19th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55455. ☐



"It's the weekend, mom. Read me one without a moral."

# SerVermont: The Little Initiative That Could

*Ms. Parsons describes the process of putting a community service initiative — supported neither by legislation nor by public funds — on track.*

BY CYNTHIA PARSONS



**I** THINK I CAN. I think I can. Puff, puff. Over Apathy Mountain, through Disinterest Tunnel, along the River of Self-Containment. I think I can. I think I can. A load of cheer for the elderly, the environment, the community. Puff, puff.

SerVermont is a little initiative. No legislation created it, and none sustains it. No public funds support it. It has no formal office or officers. It's just a little initiative that could. And the puffing started in 1986.

With a marvelously generous grant from the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children, I was able to spend 1985 exploring — coast to coast and overseas — just why it was that, although every recent U.S. President had talked about the importance of national youth service and every modern Congress had introduced bills to support national and/or community service, no such bill had yet become law. (Not until 16 November 1990 would Congress pass a National and Community Service Act.)

I came to two firm conclusions: 1) that we would never get any large proportion of our 18- to 25-year-olds to volunteer for civic or defense-related national service until the doing of service became a natural part of our public school movement; and 2) that we would never get any large proportion of our 18- to 25-year-olds to volunteer for civilian service unless we could develop as organized a system as the armed forces have for recruiting volunteers.

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After several meetings with a member of the governor of Vermont's staff and with the state commissioner of education, it was agreed that I could start a little initiative with a good strong push-off from then-Gov. Madeleine Kunin and then-Commissioner Stephen Kaagan. Together, they wrote a letter to every secondary school principal in the state, explaining that I would be visiting their schools to talk about ways their students could enrich their schooling while enriching their communities by doing voluntary community service. They stressed that community service should not be a Carnegie unit and should not be graded or made mandatory.

The governor put the following message in her 1986 State of the State Address:

In this coming year, we will launch a volunteer program for high school students, stressing public service in the community, called SerVermont. Students will be taught the value of personal volunteer service, and our communities should benefit from their efforts.

The letter that went to the principals explained: "SerVermont gives schools in the state a very important vehicle to introduce the students to the responsibilities of citizenship."

I had my own goals, not the least of which was better schooling for Vermont's children: more exploratory activities, more experiential opportunities, learning by doing translated into serving to learn and learning to serve. I also wanted to waken the public schools to their responsibility to produce "small-d" democrats, as Kaagan describes them — students prepared to be responsible citizens in a participatory democracy. And I wanted adults to recognize in their community's children voices of courage and strength, to recognize that children have a real part to play in helping us meet environmental and human services challenges.

SerVermont's first brochure carried the message that "SerVermont is a dream":

- a dream that every student in Vermont's public schools will do some important community service;
- a dream that every community will be enriched by the voluntary service done by its student citizens;

- a dream that each nonprofit organization in Vermont will train and use students to enhance the quality of services it provides to clients;

- a dream that each government agency in Vermont will make a place for student volunteers, enabling them to learn by doing;

- a dream that school authorities will encourage and support community service for students as an essential part of free public schooling.

In addition to these rather "high-flying" goals, I proposed to do three things right away in 1986-87. One was to begin compiling information about setting up service programs, to be put into a booklet that would be distributed free of charge statewide and at cost nationwide. The second item on my list was to secure private funds to enable SerVermont to offer any set of students with a good community service plan a minigrant to defray out-of-pocket expenses for implementing that plan. The third item was to compile an inventory of the service opportunities available to students in each of the state's 59 school districts.

I was able to accomplish the first two items but failed miserably on the inventory. Before I explain why no inventory materialized, let me explain why I wanted the minigrant funds and why I wanted to write the booklet.

I wanted the funds to prime the pump. There was no way to find a niche for community service in the regular school curriculum if it involved "extra" time, absorbed special resources, or distracted the college-bound from the pursuit of their goal.

And so I begged foundations for funds for such programs as "SerVermont's Seniors," "SerVermont's Towns and Cities," and "ConserVermont." The minigrants met a variety of needs. For example, one chemistry teacher needed \$167 for a device to monitor heat and other elements in a local stream, thereby adding vital data to a regional and state-level study of water quality. One junior high teacher needed funds to produce a booklet to provide all teenagers in the county with information about nutrition, about mental and physical abuse, about substance abuse, and so on. A junior/senior high school media club had the idea of helping preschoolers learn the alphabet by producing a set of slides of sights around

the community that were linked with each letter.

During the first year, the money for projects such as these came from the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children, the Turrell Fund, the Commonwealth Fund, and the Hazen Foundation; subsequent grants to SerVermont have come from the Vermont Community Foundation, Ben & Jerry's, the Windham Foundation, several private individuals, the New York Times Foundation, and the *Burlington Free Press*.

I wanted to write a booklet — addressed to school personnel, parents, nonprofit managers, and students — that would answer stumbling-block questions and give those teachers who wanted to incorporate service-learning into their classroom programs some suggestions for ways to proceed. I titled the booklet *SerVermont and the U.S.A.* It was published in 1988 — thanks to a grant from the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children — and quickly went through four printings. Since then, more than 100 community service teachers have reviewed the booklet and suggested material to be included. Fall 1991 is the target date for publication (supported, in part, by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation) of its successor, *Made Not Born: Small 'd' Democrats*, a full-length book.

**W**HAT WENT wrong with the inventory? I made a mistake. I thought that, if every school had a working notebook that listed volunteer jobs for students with telephone numbers and contact names, this would be an invaluable resource. I envisioned sending the information through the Vermont library system via computer and persuading some college students to volunteer to keep the database updated. I worked hard on the inventory; I even had two assistants, a college student and a junior high student, who conducted a search for 100 community service agencies within easy commuting distance of one rural Vermont high school. We got the information. It was accurate, readable, usable. But no one wanted it. No one ever used it.

I'm a slow learner, so I kept at this inventory idea for more than two years, trying several ways to stimulate interest

in it. While I may be slow, however, I do keep puffing, and I eventually found a much better answer.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is now active in nearly every county in Vermont. I met with the supervisors of RSVP and explained to them why schools needed help making community service connections, and they came up with a marvelous solution. The RSVP offered to provide any public school in the state with an adult volunteer to serve as a liaison between students who wish to volunteer their services and local agencies looking for volunteers. Little by little, schools are taking advantage of the offer.

I covered a lot of ground during 1986-87. At the request of Gov. Kunin and Commissioner Kaagan, I concentrated on Vermont's 66 academic high schools; 14 of them started new community service activities for students with the help of SerVermont. Ten high schools were already involved in some community service, most of it connected with honor societies or with the remaining shreds of a program called DUO (Do Unto Others) that had been started nearly 20 years earlier. I'm happy to say that, in the 1990-91 school year, all but a handful of Vermont high schools have expanding programs of community service.

On one score, SerVermont has been very successful. SerVermont offered to match funds up to \$100 for schools planning alcohol-and-drug-free graduation parties, organized by graduating seniors, and to that end it gave out \$3,000 in 1988. In 1989 SerVermont offered to give a planning grant of \$100 to any school that was planning its first or second such party, and every school in the state held such a party.

I want to stress that SerVermont is an *initiative* and not a program. Thus it has changed somewhat over the years. I registered SerVermont with the Vermont Department of State as a nonprofit corporation, but for the first four years the funds were handled by Norwich University. In 1990-91 funds for SerVermont have been accepted and disbursed by Farm and Wilderness, Inc. I anticipate that, beginning next year, SerVermont funds will be handled by the University of Vermont, in conjunction with a three-year multidisciplinary project combining adult, college-level, and K-12 students.

During 1987-88 and 1988-89, I tried holding regional seminars and workshops for interested teachers to talk about service-learning and to offer help in defraying their out-of-pocket expenses for such projects. I emphasized SerVermont's desire that the voluntary service should, ideally, complement academic coursework, just as playing games for physical education complements textbook learning about reasons to be physically active.

I say that I *tried* to hold such workshops. I held them, but I was consistently disappointed at the small numbers of teachers who came. I offered to pay transportation expenses; I served coffee and Danish; teachers could leave with a check for as much as \$300 to support their service-learning projects; and the meeting places were as convenient to local schools as possible.

My big mistake here was holding the workshops on Saturday mornings so that teachers would not need to take time off from school, so that no substitutes would have to be hired, and so on. I found out that teachers would much rather go to a workshop on a school day than give up one of their precious free days. Moreover, it turns out that there's money for such staff development almost going begging in school after school. It also turns out that teachers don't want to come to a workshop on service-learning unless they already know that they want to incorporate service into their courses.

And so, little by little — a few teachers at a time and with a few minigrants to prime the pump — community service is happening in Vermont schools.

I offer to visit any school and talk to students or to faculty members. I offer to talk to school boards. I keep an ongoing relationship with all the college-level community service efforts, particularly with those sponsored by the University of Vermont's Center for Service-Learning, which has more than 400 students doing course-related community service.

Now, let me take up the part about speaking to school boards. I could, of course, go directly to the chair of any school board in the state and ask to be placed on the agenda of the next meeting to talk about SerVermont. And I can't imagine being refused the opportunity. But I decided five years ago that I would write to all the superintendents in the state (and I have done so three times) to ask

them to invite me to come to a board meeting to talk for 15 or 20 minutes about student community service. I am still waiting for my *first* invitation.

By requesting an invitation to address their boards, I did elicit other invitations from the 59 superintendents in the state. At their invitation I have talked with district administrators, spoken during in-service training days, been a visitor at schools, been given a five-minute slot during a regular faculty meeting, and been asked to meet with honor societies and student service clubs.

Why haven't superintendents invited me to talk with their school boards? I've been up and down the state of Vermont, visiting nearly every one of its 375 schools, and I've been given national recognition for my efforts on behalf of service-learning. Hence I must assume that no superintendent wants the local school board to "get excited" about community service for students, particularly since more than half of all Vermont school district budgets are failing to pass on the first vote. The superintendents seem to see service-learning — quite falsely, I believe — as a boat rocker instead of as a significant opportunity to improve community relations.

If we could factor out the elements cleanly enough, it would be interesting to know if there is any correlation between reluctant financial support for a town's schools and the amount of student volunteer service going on in that community. My informal survey of the state suggests that there is a negative correlation.

The year 1991 is Vermont's 200th year as a state, and SerVermont's 200 is an effort to have 200 service-learning projects — conceived by students and focused on community improvement — carried out during the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years. I'm working closely with the Governor's Institutes for the Arts, Sciences, and International Affairs to try to achieve this goal. The Vermont Bicentennial Commission is supporting SerVermont's 200, and at the close of the 1991-92 school year I will produce a book detailing the 200 (we hope!) projects — both the failures and the successes.

At the close of 1990, some 50 of SerVermont's 200 community improvement projects were ongoing or completed. So the little initiative that could is on the tracks and has its engine running. ☐

# National Service and Education for Citizenship

*It's time to harness the energy and idealism of 60 million students across the country by offering them opportunities to serve, Sen. Kennedy suggests. And that is the purpose of what may be the most important legislation enacted by the 101st Congress.*

BY SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY

**S**ERVICE TO others — to the community and the nation — is an idea as old as 1776. It was the spirit of the first national frontier and of President Kennedy's New Frontier. Throughout history, Americans have served the nation in times of crisis — in war, depression, or natural disaster. In quieter times, they have served their communities, helping a neighbor in need or a stranger in trouble.

The famous observer of early America, Alexis De Tocqueville, wrote that "an enlightened self-love continually leads Americans to help one another and disposes them freely to give part of their time and wealth for the good of the state." He noted that, in the United States, individualism is balanced by a strong commitment to the public well-being.

The uniquely American crisis of De Tocqueville's century, the Civil War, also saw the creation of the Red Cross, which brought nurses to the battlefields to com-

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fort and minister to the wounded and dying. Later in that century, settlement houses — neighborhood centers that provided social services — began to emerge.

During the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps, through which thousands of unemployed young Americans found work and a new sense of purpose. In his inaugural address in 1961, President Kennedy appealed to this tradition by urging all Americans to ask what *they* could do for their country. The legacies of his Administration — the Peace Corps, VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and countless local projects across the nation — continue. Each year, millions of Americans serve their communities, their country, and the underdeveloped nations of the world.

Democracy means more than the freedom to pursue our own self-interest. It also means the responsibility to participate in the life of the community and the nation — the responsibility to give something back to America in return for all it has given us. This commitment to public service has been the hallmark of the best of the American experience. Yet there are disturbing signs that we have lost sight of that principle in recent years, and we need to find it again in the 1990s.

The world's oldest democracy now ranks last in the world in voter participation — down 20% since 1960. Even more disturbing, the youngest voters are those least likely to cast their ballots on Election Day. Americans who do not vote are also less likely to engage in other aspects of civic life. It is not surprising that the failure to respond to the cen-

sus questionnaire correlates closely with the failure to exercise the right to vote.

To their credit, many young people are asking for more ways to get involved. In-

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deed, where service opportunities are available, young Americans have set an example by directing their energies to meet the challenges before them.

Most teenagers who donate their time and caring to their communities do so through their schools or churches, often because a teacher, a friend, or a parent suggests that they join in. According to a recent poll, 90% of 14- to 17-year-olds who had been asked to volunteer did so. We do not have to compel young people to become involved in community service. All we have to do is ask — and provide the opportunity.

**T**HAT IS the purpose of what may be the most important legislation enacted by the 101st Congress: the National and Community Service Act of 1990. This act will fund programs enabling students from kindergarten through college to serve their communities and enabling older Americans to volunteer as well. It will expand the nation's full-time and summer youth corps programs, which bring young people together to work to meet environmental and human service needs. And it will fund innovative, state-sponsored programs that offer educational scholarships and other benefits to young adults who make a substantial

commitment to community service. The legislation provides federal appropriations of \$62 million in fiscal year 1991, \$95.5 million in fiscal year 1992, and \$105 million in fiscal year 1993 to support these activities.

While the new act will increase opportunities for Americans of all ages, its most important outcome may well be its impact on young citizens in the earliest grades. About a third of the funds are targeted on programs for students, and schools across the country will have an incentive to involve students in community service. By teaching young children to help others, we will also be encouraging the values that will keep America strong for the next generation.

By learning that they can make a difference in the lives of others, students discover their power to control their own lives. Service programs are particularly effective in helping to motivate disadvantaged young people. For example, when at-risk students tutor younger children, the tutors themselves consistently show improved academic achievement.

Once exposed to the needs of the community and the responsibility of helping others, young people will have an increased sense of community involvement and a more realistic view of the value of their own learning. This effect was movingly articulated by a sixth-grade volunteer speaking at a Senate hearing on national service: "There are some times when even just to see the homeless people lets you down about your city. But I've never come to the point where I say it's just so bad that I don't feel that I can help. I feel that you just have to keep on trying, no matter how hard it is." It is not surprising that the majority of young volunteers continue to serve after their initial experience or that most volunteers decide to increase their time commitment.

Service-learning is a time-tested educational tool that traces its lineage back to John Dewey. It helps students understand the relevance of their coursework and enables them to test their classroom work against the reality of the world around them. Service-learning should be a central component of current efforts to reform education. There are few better ways to inspire a child's interest in science than by allowing him or her to analyze and clean up a polluted stream. There are few better ways to help a stu-



*"You forgot your homework again, didn't you?"*



dent understand grammar than by having him or her tutor a recent immigrant learning to speak and write English.

Service projects involving groups of students allow young persons to learn to work together and develop leadership roles. In addition, they offer opportunities for students to analyze problems and propose and execute solutions. When students are put in positions of responsibility, they are counted on to show up on time and ready to work and to see a project through to completion. They learn the

consequences of letting down those they intended to help. These "life skills" are important for later success.

Ultimately, these benefits add up to young Americans who are better prepared to be citizens. They will be better educated and more confident, and they will have valuable experience in meeting the needs of their communities.

We know the serious domestic challenges waiting to be met: 23 million Americans are illiterate; more than half of all adolescents use drugs before age

18; the number of homeless families doubled over the last decade; we have failed to protect our environment adequately. The challenges are many, and volunteer efforts are no substitute for effective action by the public and private sectors. But it would be a mistake to waste the talents of 60 million students across the country. It is time to harness their energy and idealism by offering them opportunities to serve. In doing so, we will be helping to guarantee the continued vitality of our democracy in the years ahead. ☐

## National Resources For Service-Learning In Schools

**Association for Experiential Education.** Dan Garvey, Executive Director, P.O. Box 249-CU, Boulder, CO 80309; Ph. 303/492-1547. Materials, training, networking, information clearinghouse.

**Constitutional Rights Foundation.** Todd Clark, Executive Director, 601 S. Kingsley Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90005; Ph. 213/487-5590. National newsletter, technical assistance, materials, policy development, networking.

**Council of Chief State School Officers.** Barbara Gomez, Project Director, 379 Hall of the States, 400 N. Capitol St. N.W., Washington, DC 20001; Ph. 202/393-8161. Policy development, networking, information resources.

**National Center for Service Learning in Early Adolescence.** Joan Shine, Program Director, Early Adolescent Helper Program, CUNY Graduate Center, 25 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036-8099; Ph. 212/642-2947. Materials, technical assistance.

**National Center on Restructuring Schools.** Fred Newmann, Director, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1025 W. Johnson St., Madison, WI 53706; Ph. 608/263-7575. Research.

**National Crime Prevention Council.** Maria Nagorski, Deputy Director, 733 15th St. N.W., Rm. 540, Washington, DC 20003; Ph. 202/393-7141.

Materials, youth service demonstrations across the nation.

**National Governors' Association.** Susan Green, Senior Policy Analyst, 444 N. Capitol St. N.W., Washington, DC 20001; Ph. 202/624-5300. Policy development, networking.

**National Society for Internships and Experiential Education.** Sally Migliore, Associate Executive Director, 3509 Haworth Dr., Suite 207, Raleigh, NC 27609; Ph. 919/787-3263. Materials, training, networking.

**National Youth Leadership Council's National Service-Learning Initiative.** Training, materials, technical assistance, policy development, and national newsletter.

**National/Midwest Center — National Youth Leadership Council.** Jim Kielsmeier, President, 1910 W. County Rd. B, Roseville, MN 55113; Ph. 612/631-3672, 800/FON-NYLC.

**National Indian Center — National Indian Youth Leadership Project.** McClellan Hall, Director, 605 Vandebosch Pkwy., Gallup, NM 87301; Ph. 505/722-9794. Second office: Box 1249, Zuni, NM 87327; Ph. 505/782-4404.

**Northwest Center — Project Service Leadership.** Kate McPherson, Director, 2810 Comanche Dr., Mount Vernon, WA 98273; Ph. 206/428-7614.

**Private/Public Ventures.** Jim Klasen, Senior Program Officer, 399 Market St., Suite 300, Philadelphia, PA 19106; Ph. 215/592-9099. Research.

**STARSERVE.** Gail Kong, Director, 701 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 220, Santa Monica, CA 90401; Ph. 213/452-STAR. Program model, celebrity promotion.

**Youth Service America.** Roger Landrum, Executive Director, 1319 F St. N.W., Suite 900, Washington, DC 20004; Ph. 202/783-8855. Technical assistance, materials, policy development, national newsletter, National Youth Service Day.

## Federal Government Contacts

**Office of National Service.** Rm. 100, The White House, Washington, DC 20500; Ph. 202/456-6266. Coordination of federal service programs, administration of 1990 National and Community Service Act and National Commission, promotion materials, networking, recognition.

**Points of Light Foundation.** 736 Jackson Place N.W., Washington, DC 20503; Ph. 202/408-5162. Promotion, networking, materials, recognition.

**Office of Sen. Edward Kennedy.** United States Senate, 632 Hart, Washington, DC 20510-6300; Ph. 202/224-5501. Information on 1990 National and Community Service Act.

## State and Local Resources

**National Youth Leadership Council.** 1910 W. County Rd. B, Roseville, MN 55113; Ph. 612/631-3672, 800/FON-NYLC. Information on state and local resources. ☐