

The Spirit of The Season-All Year Long

A recent national report showed that the rate of community volunteerism in our country is up over the past three years. Especially significant is that the age bracket with the highest increase was among high school students, followed closely by middle school and elementary students. In a time when secondary students have been criticized for being overweight, spending too much time on video games and TV, and for getting into trouble on the Internet, this piece of good news went relatively unnoticed in the media. The CSO would like to correct this oversight.

Students at FSU-authorized academies have repeatedly shown compassion for others not only at their school but also in their communities over the years. For example: **Voyageur Academy** (Detroit) and **Consortium High School** (Detroit) recently gave away over 30 food baskets at Thanksgiving with complete fixings (including turkeys) to less fortunate members of their community. Students at **Creative Tech-**

nologies Academy (Cedar Springs) raised thousands of dollars in pennies to assist students with expenses for needed care for a rare blood disorder. Students at **New Bedford Academy** (Lambertville) recently held a Jeans for Marines day which allowed students to wear jeans for bringing in an item to be included in care packages for Marines serving in Iraq. At **Hope of Detroit Academy** (Detroit), the students gave away food baskets along with 30 turkeys to community members at Thanksgiving. Now the students are involved in the area Toys for Tots campaign. At **George Crockett Academy** (Detroit) students gave away 15 food baskets and are now collecting blankets for the Red Cross. At **New City Academy** (Lansing) students put on musicals, read, and brought gifts to their local Senior Citizens home. And there are many more examples of students helping to make their communities better places through their efforts.

This list does not include many of the other community acts that students engage in during other times of the year such as painting park fences, picking up trash along vacant lots, and raking leaves of elderly citi-

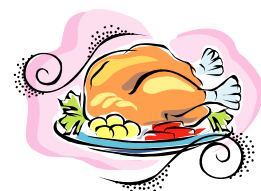
zens. The fact is, many students ARE learning something about living in and giving back to a community and neighborhood because staff at these schools are making it a point to see that students get involved. Statistics show that once they are involved, they tend to stay involved not only as students, but also as members of a community themselves one day.

One Principal related the story of a student who brought two potatoes to school. The Principal knew that the student's family did not have surplus food themselves, but they wanted to contribute in some way. There are many more touching stories of students and their families assisting those less fortunate not only at the holidays, but all year long. To all of these staff, students and their families, we say THANK YOU for your example. Your communities and neighborhoods are better places for your efforts!

Special Points Of Interest

- Two Educators Nominated for State-wide Awards
- MAPSA Offers Grant Opportunities
- CSO Holds Professional Learning Community
- Happy Holidays!

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!**





Spotlight On Academies



Two Educators Nominated For MAPSA Highest Honors

Two educators from FSU-authorized academies were recently honored as finalists for the Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA) Statewide awards. **Mary Lou Van Antwerp**, Principal



of George Crockett Academy (Detroit), was a finalist for Administrator of the Year. Mrs. Van Antwerp has been the Principal of George

Crockett Academy for 7 years, and has been an educator for almost 40 years, including 4 years at a mission school in Bolivia.

Khalid Abdulla, 3rd grade teacher at Bridge Academy (Hamtramck), was a finalist as Teacher of the Year. Mr. Abdulla



is in his 3rd year of teaching at Bridge Academy, and is the School Improvement

Team Coordinator. He also coaches the school's basketball team. Mr. Abdulla comes from a family of educators and tries to inspire his goal of challenge his students to do their very best. **Congratulations Ms. Van Antwerp and Mr. Abdulla!**

Happy Holidays From The CSO Staff



From all of us to all of you, we wish you a wonderful holiday season!



Please note that the CSO will close for Winter Break December 23, and will reopen on January 3, 2007.



CSO Holds First Professional Learning Community Workshop

Suzanne Finney, CSO Assessment Specialist, recently held the first in a series of Professional Learning Community (PLC) workshops. The workshop was held at Webers in Ann Arbor and the focus of the workshop was Early Reading Assessment (DIBELS) and the MiBLSSI project. Fifteen Curriculum

Directors, School leaders, School Improvement Chairs, and Assessment Coordinators attended.

Dr. Steve Goodman, Co-Director of the MiBLSSI project, was the afternoon presenter. His presentation was on the Michigan Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative.

The next PLC is scheduled for January 23 at Webbers Inn and will focus on responding to the Education Yes! Indicators. Future PLC workshops are also slated for February and April.

“The PLC is a wonderful and positive experience in discussion

and sharing of practices,” said CSO Assessment Director Suzanne Finney. Invitations for the January PLC will be sent out soon. If you have any questions about the PLC sessions, please contact Suzanne at (231) 591-5805.



Looking For Grant Dollars? Need Help?

The Michigan Association of Public School Academies has announced a new grant partner program. No matter what the need or the amount you're looking for, MAPSA is offering support services from full grant writing to assisting with start-up ideas for fundable projects.

For more information log onto the MAPSA website:

www.charterschools.org



School Improvement Corner

By Suzanne Finney

Many thanks for all who attended the first meeting of the FSU Charter Schools Office Professional Learning Community (PLC), “Assessment for Learning.” “A professional learning community is educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve.” This definition is from Professional Learning Communities at Work Plan Book by Rebecca DuFour, Richard DuFour, and Robert Eaker.

In the past we have viewed assessment's main role as an evaluation of learning rather than for learning, so what is the difference? The difference is what we do with the information we gain from both summative and formative assessments. This work takes place in the collaborative atmosphere of a PLC that asks and responds to the questions:

1. What do we want each student to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
4. How will we respond when a student already knows it?

Resources:

Professional Learning Communities at Work by Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker

Whatever it Takes, How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn by Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Gayle Karhanek

Professional Learning Communities at Work Plan Book by Rebecca DuFour, Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker.

Until next time. . .

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Suzanne".



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Calling For Academy News

Have an article about an event at your academy you'd like to share with others? Send them to the CSO for inclusion in the Newsletter. We'd be happy to pass along interesting information to our other readers. Pictures and text articles should be forwarded to : rizzor@ferris.edu

Save The Date!

The CSO will hold it's 4th Annual Spring Briefing on May 3, 2007 at the Double Tree Hotel in Dearborn. More information to follow. Please mark your calendars now!



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