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Finding Solutions Newsletter

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GROWING UP WITH HUNGER...

By Jen Chapin

I grew up with hunger. Not that I was ever deprived of nutritious food, or was raised in one of the millions of families that have to make those impossible budgeting choices between rent, medicine, and fresh vegetables. No, rather I was raised as the child of two hunger-fighting activists in a home where the issue was never far from our family consciousness. My mother Sandy is an educator, businesswoman and poet, who while raising 5 children has always been involved in one community effort or another for the arts, civil rights, peace and justice. My father Harry was a performing songwriter who used his public profile and indomitable energy to raise awareness, money and political will for a variety of progressive causes. They were united in the belief that individuals and small committed groups of people can make an impact in improving their communities, and both saw hunger as the fundamental issue of our time.

In the 70s, I was a little girl, and we were all learning. My dad dove into books by the experts, coming to understand that (as Frances Moore Lappé would later write): hunger was not caused by a scarcity of food but rather by a scarcity of democracy. Harry effectively lobbied for the creation of a Commission on World Hunger under President Carter and, with that group of legislators and citizens, learned more—and started pressing for action. In 1975, after a series of in-depth conversations with his friend Bill Ayres, they started WHY (World Hunger Year). My mother was a guiding force, constantly asked the probing questions of what does and does not make sense in this world, and pointing toward innovative solutions. My older sister Jaime spent her 16th summer working in a hospital for malnourished kids in Haiti, and studied issues of Latin American poverty and development in college. My dad died in 1981, but by the time I was in high school, hunger-fighting heroes like Frankie Lappé and Larry Brown were as well known to me as pop stars, benefits were as regular as soccer games, and questioning the utility of trade vs. aid or domestic farm subsidies were part of my adolescent wonderings.

Hunger was one thing – though intellectually understood, it was still an abstraction, even as conditions in America brought it increasingly closer to home. Food was another. After-school friends would complain about the lack of sweet and salty snack options in our fridge, but we had plenty. Yet real food was also abstract in its way. My dad was in and out

About this issue...

Jen Chapin (pg.1) returns to this publication to relate the effects that growing up with hunger had on her life. It is not what you might expect!

Are you aware the U.S. military has “free” access to our youth? Josh Golin (pg.3) outlines how the military has adopted corporate marketing techniques to meet the increased demand for troops.

In our last issue (Summer 2005), Carol Gose Devine of The Caedmon School explained why we must teach about social justice issues in the classroom. Laura Lampman and Greg Minahan of Caedmon (pg.5) detail the school’s “Peace Circle” curriculum.

Ava McCall (pg.8) writes about actions teachers and students can take in response to Hurricane Katrina. She suggests web sites that aid in discussing appropriate responses to natural disasters.

As some of you are aware, the last issue of the year (and this is it!) is when we come to you for your financial support. (pg.9) Please do not view this as a commercial break, but as an opportunity for you to renew your support of KIDS or become a first time participant.

This marks the second time that an innovative program, Project Spira, has participated in the World Affairs Challenge. Whitney Shinkle (pg.10) is our guide and introduces us to the process the participants underwent.

Take a moment and see what fun we had at our 11th Anniversary Concert (pg.11).

We wish you a very happy holiday season and look forward to “meeting” you again in the new year.

Enjoy,

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at all hours and ate accordingly. He would spout statistics about nutrition, pesticides, and industrial agriculture, make quips about the high plastic content of junk food, and then wolf down a greasy sandwich or sugared snack cake. For my mom, with 5 kids, two constantly-ringing phone lines and multiple manic schedules, food was definitely more about necessity than carefully-selected ingredients, gourmet cooking or settled family time. She would affectionately quote her own father saying, of his own lack of interest in food: "I eat to live, I don't live to eat." She took this as her own mantra, paying homage to Calvinist roots and the tacit warning that too much attention to food would be a decadent waste of time and effort. So while in the world we paid attention to how food acted as the commodity of life, death and justice, at home we treated it with the uniquely American mix of ambivalence, guilt, convenience and often, wastefulness.

At some point I left home for college and began to create my own relationship with food. I studied International Relations and learned more about the causes of hunger and poverty while discovering ethnic restaurants, the Nuyorican cooking of a Spanish Harlem-raised friend, and the procrastination-enabling potential of the University cafeteria. During my studies at Brown University and later at Berklee College of Music, meals became a bonding ritual with friends and a window into different cultures and mores. I began to appreciate flavors both wild and subtle, and to enjoy the languorous tempo of a lunch shared with a non-American. I began to shop for myself and to cook, and to think about diet and nutrition in new ways. I loved the decisions and rituals of food preparation, and I loved to eat, though it was a guilty pleasure tainted by the suspicion that I should just hurry up and get the job done — that my time would be best spent elsewhere.

Later, I moved to New York and began working as a musician and teacher. I joined the WHY Board and became involved with KIDS Can Make a Difference. Sometime in the mid-90s Larry and Jane Levine asked if I would represent KIDS at a "Just Food" conference in Brooklyn, and I had a small epiphany over lunch when a NYC restaurateur spoke of the intrinsic value to the world of something so simple as growing and eating your own basil on the windowsill. This seed of an affirmation stayed with me as I continued to carve out my own beliefs and behaviors around food: maybe my caring about the immediate con-

cern of what I would eat that afternoon was not a distraction from the big picture of caring about hungry people. Maybe the two were connected.

The fight against hunger and poverty has not gotten any simpler, but from where I'm sitting, things have gotten a little more integrated and a little more clear. The American public is questioning our food security and corporatized food systems as never before, and consumers of diverse backgrounds and incomes are demanding and enjoying increased access to natural, organic, and local food. The obesity epidemic has illuminated the reality that poor nutrition transcends class boundaries and requires immediate action. Environmental concerns, though still woefully dampened by collective denial, are making new connections to society and seeking new allies. Citizens are learning how government policies "harvest poverty" abroad by unsustainably subsidizing farm products at home. We are learning that even by the most Machiavellian view, everyone benefits when more people are well nourished and self-reliant. Everyone and everything is connected.

Living in Brooklyn now and nursing my three-week old son, my husband and I have never been more happily aware of how our own eating choices are connected to food justice in the wider world. During my pregnancy, keeping a food diary made the growing baby's development more tangible and meaningful when he was still a peanut. Now, a ritual of our family life is our weekly walk to the farmer's market 2 blocks away, where producers from upstate, Long Island and New Jersey accept food stamp coupons and cash from a diverse neighborhood clientele for their farm-fresh produce. My husband might be inspired by an offering of tart plums to make his French mother's recipe for custardy *clafoutis*, or I might select vegetables to make a big pot of chili. Over breakfast, we talk about how we will help our son make his own healthy and sustainable food choices in the face of marketing and peer pressure. We savor the knowledge that we will guide him well and that our meal has traveled far less than the average 1500 miles from farm to plate. We take a moment to enjoy our local yogurt and feel pleased with ourselves — and then we remember that there is much work to be done.

Jen Chapin is a performing songwriter, educator, and Chair of WHY's (World Hunger Year) Board of Directors. She also serves on the KIDS Advisory Board. She may be contacted at jen@jenchapin.com. Her latest album is called "Linger."

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HOW THE MILITARY EMULATES CORPORATE MARKETERS—AND WHY THAT IS A BAD THING...

By Josh Golin

As the war in Iraq stretches into its 31st month, the United States military is facing serious recruiting shortages. The branches of the military that supply the largest number of troops to Iraq have had the most difficulties with recruiting. The Army failed to reach its recruiting goals in four out of the first six months of 2005; the Army National Guard came up short in all six.

To keep up with the demand for troops, the military has increased its marketing in an attempt to sell youth on the idea of enlisting. The Army, for instance, has nearly doubled its advertising budget since 2000. Recruitment advertising has also become more sophisticated as military marketers increasingly use techniques perfected by the \$15 billion-a-year youth marketing industry. Colonel Thomas Nickerson, the Army's advertising director, recently told the *New York Times*, that the Army's marketing campaigns use "the best practices of corporate America."

Some might question, however, whether emulating these "best practices" is in the best interests of children and their families. After all, the alarming epidemic of childhood obesity, youth violence, precocious and irresponsible sexuality, excessive materialism, and family stress have all been linked to youth-directed marketing. Just as youth marketers use new media, in-school advertising, and viral marketing in order to make an end-run around parents to target children with junk food, violent media and other potentially harmful products, the military is increasingly using these same techniques to sell youth on potentially harmful military service.

In-School Marketing

Youth marketers like targeting children in schools because they have a captive audience that is unable to avoid their commercial messages. One of the more popular – and controversial – ways that students are exposed to advertising in schools is through Channel One. According to its website, Channel One's newscasts – which consist of ten minutes of news and two minutes of commercials – are shown in nearly 12,000 schools to almost eight million students each school day.

The military is one of the leading advertisers on Channel One; one study found that ten percent of the broadcast's ads were for military recruitment. This year, the Army alone will spend more than \$2 million dollars on advertising and promotions with Channel One, and the Marines and Navy are regular advertisers as well. The Army also sponsors content on Channel One during Black History and Hispanic Heritage Months that highlight the

contributions of African-American and Hispanic soldiers throughout history. Such an arrangement follows a trend favored by corporate marketers where the lines between content and advertising are increasingly blurred. It also allows the Army to target their message to two minority groups that make up a disproportionate percentage of the troops in Iraq.

Targeting Young Children

The military is also following the corporate model by targeting their commercial messages to younger and younger children. For instance, despite the fact the Army claims they only advertise to children 16 and older, their ads on Channel One are shown to children in grades 7-12. The Army also advertises in in-school publications, such as Scholastic's *Science World*, which are distributed to children as young as sixth graders. And in the latest indication that the military – like corporations – is interested in cradle-to-grave branding, a promotional film made by the Department of Defense has been showing regularly at Chuck E. Cheese, a party center for young children.

Using New Technologies

New technologies have allowed marketers to move beyond television to target youth through a variety of means. Food marketers, for instance, are particularly fond of "advergaming," computer games built completely around products that keep children's attention focused on specific brands much longer than traditional commercials. Similarly, the Army's recruiting website (www.goarmy.com) also includes a section for visitors to play and download Army branded games.

The most popular of these games is America's Army, a first-person shooter game that allows players to simulate the life of a soldier from basic training to combat. Since its release a little more than three years ago, America's Army has been downloaded more than 16 million times. The Army has referred to the game as its best recruiting tool and now organizes regular recruiting events featuring America's Army tournaments for players ages 13 and up.

It is not surprising that the Army would want to cash in on the tremendous popularity of violent video games among youth. There is something particularly disturbing, however, about using a game where all deaths are virtual in order to promote a career choice where the possibility of real killing, death and serious injuries exist. Last

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bility of real killing, death and serious injuries exist. Last year, the national advocacy group Veteran's for Peace adopted a resolution condemning the Army's use of video games for recruitment purposes.

Viral Marketing

In recent years, corporations have begun tapping into existing youth social hierarchies in order to market their products more effectively. Marketers seek out popular kids and give them free products to market to their (often unsuspecting) friends, a technique known as viral marketing. Similarly, the Nation reports that the US Army's recruiting handbook urges recruiters to "Know your student influencers. . . . some influential students such as the student president or the captain of the football team may not enlist; however, they can and will provide you with referrals that will enlist." Recruiters are also encouraged to integrate themselves seamlessly into students' lives. Suggestions include volunteering to help coach athletic teams, chaperone dances, and to "get involved with Boy Scout troops."

Undermining Parents

One of the reasons corporations like to market to children is that so many of their products – junk food, violent media, sexualized clothing – are likely to meet with parental disapproval. Military marketing also undermines parents' authority as gatekeepers by targeting youth directly, even those parents who have taken active measures to insure that recruiters do not contact their children.

A provision in the No Child Left Behind Act gives parents (and students over the age of 18) the ability to "opt-out" of military recruiting. Parents can write to their school district and ask that their child's personal information not be turned over to military recruiters. But parents cannot opt their children out of the mandatory viewing of military ads on Channel One or prevent them from being solicited by a recruiter masquerading as a football coach.

The military also has other ways of acquiring students' personal information. The Pentagon has hired Be-Now, a private marketing firm, to maintain a database of 30 million young people ages 16-25 - including those students who have opted out of military recruitment through the No Child Left Behind provision. The database includes names, addresses, email addresses, ethnicity, social security numbers, areas of study and cell phone numbers. Many advertisers view cell phones as the next great marketing medium so don't be surprised if the military starts sending games and text messages to teens and children directly through their phones.

What's Wrong With Military Branding?

Responding to critics who charged that the America's Army videogame was a sinister way of targeting

young children, a veteran recruiter told the Seattle Times, "This isn't some kind of psychological thing to brainwash anybody. It's getting the U.S. Army name out there in a positive light. It's like Coca-Cola. You see the shape of the bottle and you know what it is. It's branding."

It isn't only brainwashing, however, that is cause for concern; branding is bad enough. Marketers promote brand identification to get consumers to differentiate between remarkably similar products (e.g. Coke and Pepsi) and to make purchases based on emotions and positive associations rather than careful consideration of the benefits, costs, and potentially harmful effects of a product. In other words, branding discourages critical thinking, the very skill that young people will need before making what may be the most important decision of their young lives.

Potential military recruits should seek out as much information from as many sources as possible. Before enlisting, they should understand why the military is having such a tough time finding new recruits. They should be aware that they will most likely be sent to Iraq if they enlist. They should understand that the war is not going well, and that there is no end in sight to a conflict in which nearly 2,000 Americans have died and thousands more have been injured. They should recognize that they will be trained to kill; and that the very real possibility exists that they themselves will be seriously injured or killed. None of this crucial information is likely to be found in a video game promoting the Army brand or on Channel One.

Younger children who are not yet capable of making such difficult and complex decisions should simply be left alone by military recruiters and marketers. Older children should be actively assisted by their parents in their decision-making process. And both parents and children should be wary of anyone who acts as if the decision to enlist is like choosing between two brands of soda.

Resources

Many peace groups – including [Code Pink](http://www.codepink4peace.org) (<http://www.codepink4peace.org>), the [American Friends Service Committee](http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/Default.htm) (<http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/Default.htm>), [United for Peace and Justice](http://www.unitedforpeace.org) (<http://www.unitedforpeace.org>) and the [Coalition Against Militarism in Our Schools](http://www.militaryfreeschools.org) (<http://www.militaryfreeschools.org>) – have made counter-recruitment education a key aspect of their work. Anyone with concerns about military marketing or recruiting would do well to contact any of these groups.

Parents (and students over 18) who do not want their children to be contacted by military recruiters can find information on "opting-out" at www.leavemychildalone.org

Concerns about military marketing in schools should be directed to local school administrators, as well as to purveyors of military advertising such as Channel One and Scholastic.

Josh Golin (jgolin@jbcc.harvard.edu) is an anti-commercialism and anti-war activist from Arlington, Massachusetts.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT PEOPLE WE DON'T KNOW?...

By Laura Lampman & Greg Minahan

Why should we care about people we don't know? This is not an easy question to address at any age, yet it is at the heart of the Peace Circle curriculum that was presented to third and fourth grade students at The Caedmon School. Peace Circle is built upon the belief that, long before adolescence arrives with its socially intense self-focus, children are angels of natural empathy, "trailing clouds of glory" in their ability to imagine themselves into a story, a piece of news, or a lesson. Given this, there is much to be gained by giving our younger children the vocabulary, the habit, and the encouragement to exercise their naturally empathetic behavior. Like a language or a fine-motor skill, the empathy of a child needs to be practiced and rehearsed if it is to survive the inevitable turbulence of adolescence and become an adult quality. By teaching children to rehearse empathy, we prepare them to take responsibility for it once they have emerged as adult, global citizens.

It is Wednesday morning and our weekly "peace circle" has begun - a favorite time for our class - even for the teachers. Seated around the periphery of the rug, we pass our "squishy globe" to one another. As each of us holds the world in our hands, we describe one thing that we love about the world. "I love languages and cultures," says Michael. "I love the animals like whales and dolphins," offers Amanda. "I love people like my family and friends," adds Devash. The second time around, we toss the globe at random to each other to suggest disruption rather than order, and then describe the kinds of things that prevent us from enjoying the things we love. "War", "extinction", and "fighting" are voiced in rapid succession, revealing to their teachers the direction for future units of study.

With such a simple, emotive, yet conceptually potent ritual, the children at Caedmon were led to discover "generative concepts", those experiential cornerstones of fairness and "rightness", which lead eventually to a fundamental sense of human rights. Successive circles led them to discover in their own terms such basic rights as food, shelter, play, medicine, education, freedom of opinion, and choice of occupation. While rediscovering human rights on their own, the children were introduced to the actual Universal Declaration of Human Rights - the visionary document put out by the United Nations in 1948. Yet each

Peace Circle continued to be a clean slate upon which they painted the world as they thought it should be, and then modified their painting with images of what keeps it from being so. Like little world leaders composing constitutions, they defined and fought for the world they desired.

For today's exercise, the children close their eyes while a teacher reads material from a book titled "The Bread Winner". The book tells of a young Afghan girl who must dress like a boy and go out into the market to make money for her family, at the cost of her schooling and most of her childhood freedoms. Afterward, we all watch a video titled: "I Want To Go To School". Produced by UNICEF, the video documents children from all around the world who, for one reason or another, are not able to attend school or receive a proper education. When the video ends, we naturally progress into discussion of what we have read about and seen.

This may not be the kind of lesson one would normally think to present to third and fourth graders. On a purely emotional level, however, it may be easier for children to confront such tragic scenarios than it is for more sophisticated adults. Less burdened with conflicting layers of morality, conditioning, and rationalization, children are able to engage their imaginations with an immediacy and honesty that is difficult for adults to isolate.

When we end our discussion, we pass around the squishy globe once more. This time, each student is allowed to say a word or two about how they feel. Amisha loved the video "...cause it was about other children." She felt a strong identity with the little girl who had to stuff matches into matchboxes for twelve hours a day. John was quietly weeping as he said, "If you understood their lives, you would be sad and want them to have an education." Many expressed thankfulness that in their own lives "... they could do what they wanted and weren't forced into anything."

Imagination is the soil in which empathy will one day grow. Discussing their feelings while their imaginations were still engaged, our children were clearly experiencing a very real awareness of the commonalities they share with children they have never met, but with whom they share the earth. They were understanding that education is not only a privilege, but also a basic right that should be shared by children everywhere. They asked themselves: "How can we learn from the video?" ...and "What can we do in the future to give everybody an educa-

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tion?” “Is education a basic human right?”

A visitor listening to the children express their feelings and thoughts could not help but be impressed by the sophistication of their dialogue. Were their ideas politically realistic on an adult level? Perhaps not, but in a very real way the children were experiencing themselves as global citizens assuming responsibility as informed individuals for the squishy globe we all call home. The visitor would also be left thinking very positively that perhaps children can change the world.

Kids Creating Peace

In recognition of the unprecedented dimensions and overriding significance of issues surrounding war and peace, human rights, social justice, sustainable development, and ecological balance throughout the world, elementary teachers Sachi Porizkova and Laura Lampman created an ongoing “Kids Creating Peace” curriculum for their third and fourth grade classroom at The Caedmon School. Their curriculum plan states in Part:

- The goal of the curriculum is not only to help students understand the base causes of violence and injustice, but also to develop in them the skills, values, and attitudes for social transformation. As teachers, we believe that a holistic approach to transformative learning helps our students to develop life-long and life-enhancing human values as a necessary pre-condition to peace.
- Peace education is a transmission of the knowledge and insight needed to achieve and maintain peace. It is about developing our critical and reflective capacities in order to control, reduce, and eliminate various forms of violence – physical, economic, and psychological. Issues of conflict, disease, poverty, hunger, migration, drug trafficking, pollution, illiteracy, disarmament, child labor, and unemployment are not confined within national or even regional boundaries. They affect the entire global community and impact future generations as well as our own. It is crucial that we educate for global citizenship, because our personal, national, and global interests are linked within an increasingly interdependent world.

The Peace Circle “ritual” that Ms. Lampman and Mrs. Porizkova created to begin each lesson of study, soon came to embody the entire curriculum. The dialectic of hope-tragedy-hope that Peace Circle enacted became key to their strategy for addressing weighty issues such as injustice, tragedy, and violence with young children. As teachers in an unjust and war-minded world, they believe it is important to demystify images of unpleasant reality by

counteracting them with concrete images of peace - and not only peace in response to violence, but also positive peace; peace for the sake of peace alone; the kind of peace you just want to live in, now and in the future.

Just as images of violence are encountered and absorbed by young minds (especially through the media) long before the reality of violence is understood, images of peace and habits of empathy must also be offered as daily bread. To the extent that we teach and encourage our children to duel with light sabers, root for the winner, or seek entertainment, shouldn't we also teach and model for them the vocabulary and habits of inquiring after another's feelings, shaking hands after a game well played, and pulling one's own weight in shared tasks?

To guide their curriculum, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child were used as primary conceptual frameworks. In addition, students studied historical human rights violations, past and present peace heroes, the history of social activism, successful non-violent peace practices, world population and spending patterns, paths to inner peace, and the role of the military in global security. Their exercises and lessons involved read-aloud sessions, poetry studies, field trips to the United Nations, discussions, debates, role-playing activities and games, geography-map work, art, music, yoga, and meditation. To document their learning and growth, the students were asked to keep peace journals, including reflective pieces, drawings, photos, poems, and quotations. Their journals served as a source of ongoing dialogue between the teachers and the students.

For instance, during a Peace Circle on nuclear disarmament, the children learned about Dr. Helen Caldicott, the renowned advocate of nuclear disarmament, and then performed a contemplative exercise in which they closed their eyes and listened to beans dropping into a pot - each bead representing so many people who died in the bombing of Hiroshima. They were then asked to make journal entries on three questions:

1. What are some of the consequences of nuclear war?
2. How can we prevent a nuclear bomb from happening again?
3. How can we convince political leaders to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty?

Here are some of their remarks:

“Some of the consequences of nuclear war are getting leukemia, because when the atomic bomb hit Japan people got sick. Also dying, getting injured, and losing family members. Also the environment could be destroyed and polluted.”

“We can reason with the other governments. Or we can write a calm nonviolent letter to the gov-

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ernment saying we don't want war because of an argument. Or we can calmly talk about the problem and work it out."

"I would tell political leaders that if they don't sign the treaty they might pollute the air. Also that it is going to hurt everyone, even you. Also, that if you don't sign the treaty you're risking everyone's life, even your own."

From the mouths of babes came such simple, yet potent answers to the one essential question behind our curriculum: Why should we care about people we don't know? Do these children fully understand the reality of the things they are describing? Perhaps not, but they are learning the words, rehearsing the skills, receiving the validation, and stretching their imaginations in the direction of global, adult understanding.

It may be that we, as parents and teachers, too easily overlook the necessity of proactively introducing issues of human rights, global citizenship, violence, and peace to our children. It may be that we too easily take it for granted that our children will contemplate questions of war, deprivation, peace, and empathy on their own, when they have little or no incentive to do so given the abundance with which their needs are met and the unlikelihood that they will ever experience anything like true hardship. It may be that we need to teach them how to care about people they don't know, even before we can realistically expect them to understand why they should do so.

Laura Lampman was a Middle Level Teacher at the Caedmon School and currently teaches 3rd grade at Riverdale Country School in the Bronx. She may be contacted at llampman@yahoo.com. Greg Minahan is Director of Development and a former teacher at The Caedmon School. He may be contacted at minahan@caedmonschool.org.

Thanks to a whole bunch of folks!

- In every issue of the newsletter, you see the listing of our Advisory Board members and a brief description of what they do in their "day jobs." What you don't know is how important they are to KIDS. They always are available to help us whenever they are called upon. Their advice and guidance is always offered and gratefully accepted.
- Todd Morrissette is our pro bono web master. While we do the daily posting on the site, he gets us out of the chaos we cause.
- Al Handell and the gang at Astoria Graphics for the fine job they do in printing this newsletter and our teacher guide.
- Noreen Springstead, Bob Windorf, Mahoganie Washington and all the folks at WHY for the support they give to KIDS.
- Paul and Melanie Motter of the Satinwood Band for staging our past two benefit concerts and for their generosity.
- And finally to all of you who have contributed to the program and continue to be the fuel that drives this engine.

KIDS Advisory Board

Anne Baker-Vice President National Peace Corps Association

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Ava McCall- Professor and Department Chair, Curriculum and Instruction department, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

Father Stephen Rozzelle- St. Mark's Church (Episcopal Church), Basking River, NJ



TEACHERS AND KIDS: TAKING ACTION IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA...

By Ava L. McCall

Hurricane Katrina had a devastating effect on students and their schools in Louisiana and Mississippi. According to Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, more than 247,000 public and private school students in Louisiana were displaced, 489 schools closed, and school buildings in at least six parishes were destroyed or damaged as a result of the storm. In Mississippi, more than 125,000 students were forced to leave their schools, 226 schools in 30 districts closed, and almost 30 schools were ruined. These displaced students are enrolling in schools in 25 states around the country with an estimated 60,000 anticipated to enter Texas schools.

Hurricane Katrina has affected students and teachers all over the United States as they watched the destruction documented on national television and listened daily to stories of personal loss as a result of the storm. Some students may have questions about hurricanes and their own safety in such a natural disaster. Others may have friends or family who lost their homes, jobs, and schools and perhaps became separated from family members due to the hurricane. In all likelihood, students and teachers living in areas not touched by the hurricane want to take action to help students whose lives and education were disrupted by the storm.

For teachers who need to respond to students' questions about what hurricanes are, their destructive power, how communities can prepare for hurricanes and remain safe, and actions they can take to help hurricane survivors, the American Red Cross offers a valuable resource. Its web site <http://www2.redcross.org/disaster/Masters/HurricaneKatrina.html> suggests "Talking Points for Educators: In the Aftermath of a Hurricane" and includes lesson plans to teach students how to deal with tragic events and learn more about hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and other natural disasters. In addition, the web site provides suggestions for ways students and teachers may support children and families they know who lost their homes. It encourages

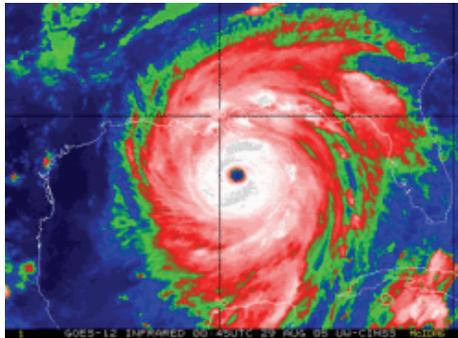
school groups to provide direct assistance to disaster survivors by raising funds to donate to charities, such as the American Red Cross, whose goal is to provide immediate relief to people in need.

Another way teachers and students can take action to help Hurricane Katrina survivors is by adopting a school serving students affected by the storm. The U.S. Department of Education established the web site "Hurricane Help for Schools: Providing Assistance for Schools Serving Students Displaced by Hurricane Katrina" located at <http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/index.html>. At this site, teachers and students can find names of schools and school districts in various states who identified their needs in order to serve additional students displaced by the hurricane. Contact information for each school or district is also given, allowing

classes to work directly with one person in providing the schools' needs. For example, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System in Louisiana requests students' school supplies, clothing, school furniture, computers, textbooks, and teaching supplies. The Galveston Independent School District in Texas has an additional

440 students from states affected by Hurricane Katrina and they ask for students' school supplies, clothing, and computers. In my own community of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, elementary students in at least two schools are collecting money to donate to relief efforts, and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh admitted and waived tuition for five college students displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Hopefully, all teachers and students committed to making the world better will take advantage of opportunities to care for children and families affected by the storm.

Ava L. McCall is Professor and Chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and a member of the KIDS Advisory Board. She can be contacted at mccall@uwosh.edu.



SUPPORT YOUR NEWSLETTER



YOUR ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION MAKES THIS NEWSLETTER POSSIBLE...

By Larry and Jane Levine

Question:

What do National Public Radio (NPR), Public Broadcasting (PBS), and KIDS have in common?

Answer:

NPR depends on their listener's contributions; PBS on their viewers donations; and KIDS depends on the generosity of readers of this newsletter for its financial security. In the past you have always been there for us, and we hope that you will continue to support your newsletter.

As a matter of fact, over 80% of KIDS income comes from individuals just like you. The rest comes from the sale of *Finding Solutions To Hunger: Kids Can Make A Difference*. Most of you know that KIDS is a self-funded program of WHY.

Since no one associated with KIDS gets paid, and KIDS does not pay rent, it does not take a great deal of money to operate the program. What it does mean is that almost 100% of the money you contribute goes directly to the program.

Because of you, the growth during these past 11 years has been robust. At the end of our first year in 1994, there were approximately 20 schools participating stretching from metropolitan New York City to the northern part of Maine. Two years later, Stephanie Kempf joined our team and developed the KIDS teacher guide, *Finding Solutions to Hunger: Kids Can Make A Difference*. This book, turned out to be the turning point for KIDS. The guide is now in its third printing and there are 4,000 books in print. KIDS is represented in thousands of schools, after school programs, and many other venues **around the world.**

If you have contributed before, you know how painless it can be. If you are new, we welcome you. In either case, all you need to do is supply the necessary information called for on the enclosed envelope. We gratefully accept donations by credit card or personal check.— and any amount is appreciated. Our largest single expense is the production of this newsletter, three times a year. If you are able, a donation of as little as \$10 will defray the cost of supplying you with a year of challenging and stimulating articles.

For those who desire to become financially more active in the program, we have some "goodies" for you in honor of our 11th anniversary celebration. This is your chance to support KIDS, and receive a tangible thank you from us.. As our way of thanking you for your past and continuing support we would like you to take the a few moments to see how easy it is for you to get a 100% cotton KIDS T-shirt. As a matter of fact, you can become the very first person in your neighborhood to sport this new fashion item.



T-Shirt Models & Grandchildren. (L-R) Sophia Aquino, Oliver & Adrian Tiu

KIDS 11th ANNIVERSARY OFFER

For a contribution of:

\$50 you will receive one shirt

\$75 you will receive two shirts

\$100 you will receive two shirts and a copy of the teacher guide.

The shirts are available in the following sizes, youth (Y), adult small (S), large (L) and extra-large (XL). The youth size fits middle school students, but as you can easily tell our three models have a few years to wait.

To order simply fill out all the necessary information called for on the attached envelope and write in the size(s) of the shirts you desire. Please allow two weeks for delivery.

THE CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE...

By Whitney Shinkle

At 7:45am on a Saturday morning, the student café at San Francisco State University is vibrating with energy. Middle and high school aged students from across San Francisco, and as far away as Ukiah and Santa Cruz, are gathered around cafeteria tables with their teammates, nervously awaiting the start of the 3rd annual World Affairs Challenge. Students in jeans and t-shirts jockey for orange juice and bagels with students in suits and ties, sports jerseys, even a muumuu or two. Some teams run final rehearsals or debate last minute script changes for their upcoming presentations, while navigating a sea of props that includes globes, microphones, posters, boom boxes and laptops.

For weeks, if not months, these students have been studying current international events and researching the global energy situation either in class or in after-school extracurricular groups in order to participate in the World Affairs Challenge. In this annual event students compete individually and in teams to demonstrate their understanding of, and ability to develop creative solutions to, global problems. This past March, about 350 students and 85 volunteer judges descended on the San Francisco State University campus to wrestle with the global energy crisis.

The President of the University is the keynote speaker for the short opening ceremony, and as he welcomes these future collegians to his campus - assuring those not from the City that "it's hardly ever foggy like this" - the students are nearly wriggling with anticipation.

The children are our future. It is a phrase that adults in the United States seem to utter with nearly equal measures of hope and trepidation. There is hope that each generation will rise above the prejudices and limitations that constrained their parents. But the great majority of stories about American youth depict a generation of individuals who are sedentary and obese, violent or depressed, under-educated, over-stimulated, and unfocused. The popular theme is that the ascending generation is neither prepared for, nor interested in, steering our country through perhaps the most complex, globally interwoven era it has ever known. One day with the student participants of the World Affairs Challenge will convince you that these dire warnings are overstated.

As a volunteer judge I observed and spoke with a number of students. Invariably they were bright, creative, thoughtful, curious, and open-minded. Some clearly embraced a leadership role, while others were more comfortable operating behind the scenes, but nearly all evinced

awareness that beyond increasing their knowledge about global energy, they were building essential skill sets - leadership and problem solving, communication and presentation, and research and analysis - as well as a new sense of self, and world, awareness.

Moreover, students clearly applied their lessons to their everyday situations outside the classroom. Jenna Bernard, a 15 year old from Mercy High School, had some constructive criticism for the University. "Did you notice, when we had lunch there was no composting," she pointed out. "They should have that. If all the schools started a compost thing, 70 percent of all landfill garbage could be reused. We found this statistic while we were researching."

While students like Bernard admitted that it was "cool to have facts to back up what you're saying," Aljona Andrejeff, a teacher at Washington High School in her second year coaching World Affairs Challenge teams, was quick to confirm that factual knowledge wasn't all that students gained from the experience. She gushed over the improvements in public speaking skills, critical thinking, confidence and camaraderie exhibited by her students who participated in the Challenge. One of her teams facilitated their research by delegating a subject to each team member who was responsible for becoming the expert on that topic. "They team taught team members. I've never seen kids do that on their own," she asserted.



Students themselves clearly realized a difference in their own attitudes towards international understanding. Elisha Chan, a 15 year old sophomore, admitted that she originally decided to participate in the Challenge because a teacher said it would look good on her college application. But when asked about her experience, she raved about co-

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

operating with students from other schools on the collaborative question. "There were a lot of ideas I would never have thought of," she said. "There is no perfect way to solve the problem, but we picked the [solution] that worked best for now... We have to think of the world as a whole, not just [one] country." Now, she added, she "reads the newspaper almost every day. Before I wasn't as interested in it."

Other students commented that the experience taught them to be more critical of their sources of information. Alex Manter, an 8th grader from River Middle School, said that based on the little information he'd seen, he expected to find that renewable energy sources were an obvious answer to the global energy problem. Instead he found that "renewable energy gets such good press, but then you learn that, oh, solar energy doesn't produce enough energy [for everyone] and there's all these other factors." In the end, his team realized that there was no clear-cut solution and that their response would have to represent a more nuanced approach to providing sustainable global energy.

At the end of the day, the three hundred plus students gathered back in the school auditorium for the award ceremony. Teams were drained from the long day of activities, ties hung loosely from unbuttoned collars and high heels had been traded for multicolored sneakers. Anticipation still

burble through the room as predictions were floated about winners and prizes. Despite the hundreds of different perspectives the students brought to the Challenge, and their ongoing disagreements about the best "solution" to global energy, they all shared the sentiment that young people need to develop a greater understanding of international issues. The competitive edge lingered, but some of the students took advantage of the brief lull as the results were calculated to mingle with their neighbors, and as the awards ceremony begins, they all applauded each other's efforts.

Perhaps 11-year-old Corey Yuan put it best when he said "People need to understand all these subjects. I want to be a doctor. If my country's economy is poor, the doctors might not receive as many vaccinations or something. [Young] people should know more about world affairs because it can affect them when they grow up."

After the culmination of the awards ceremony, one Washington High School team was already heading out to "debrief" and give each other constructive criticism to build on for next year's Challenge. If these are the young people of our future, I'm nothing but optimistic.

Whitney Shinkle is a grantwriter at the San Francisco Food Bank. She is also a member of the Media and Outreach Advisory Committee for Project Spera and was a judge at the 2005 World Affairs Challenge in San Francisco. For additional

KIDS 11th Anniversary Concert

Arts & Entertainment

The Sun, Westerly, R.I.

Tuesday, August 16, 2005 13

Al Stewart headlines Saturday benefit

■ Saturday's concert will benefit Kids Can Make a Difference, a group that encourages young people to help make the world a better place.

By Nancy Burns-Fusaro
The Sun Staff

"Nothing that's forced can ever be right," writes Al Stewart, the musician/lyricist whom many people remember for his 1976 hit "Year of the Cat." "If it doesn't come naturally, leave it."

Certainly there was nothing forced about the planning that went into the upcoming concert featuring Stewart and the New England acoustic classics band Satinwood, scheduled to take place Saturday, Aug. 20, at 7 p.m. at the Venice Ball-

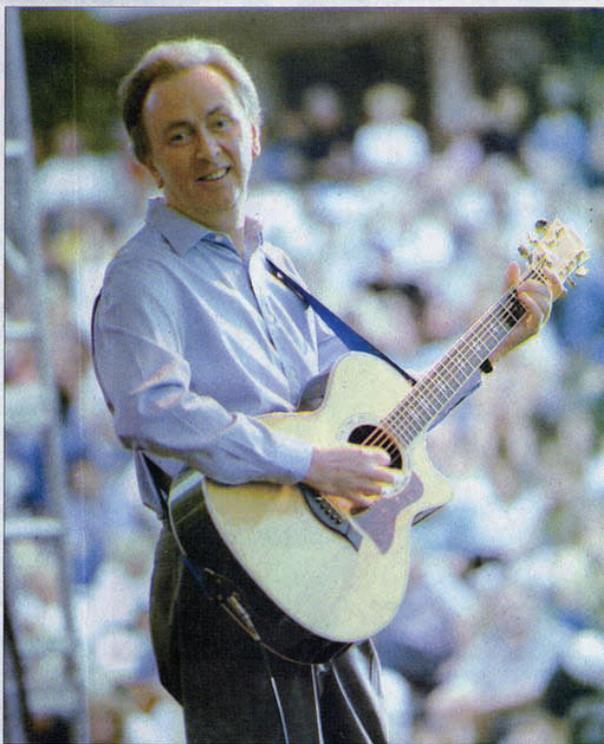


Stewart for agreeing to participate in the benefit as well as Caswell Cooke Jr., executive director of the Misquamicut Business Association, for arranging the event.

"But this was really Paul Motter's idea," says Cooke. "Paul asked if the MBA would help out with the benefit again this year. He did such a great job last year with Artex Two Step and the concert was so successful that we said we'd sponsor Al Stewart. I thought Al would fit perfectly with the program and with Venice."

"We love his music," Motter says of Stewart, "and we are so happy to have the chance to play with him and to play with Howie Fields." Motter describes his Satinwood band as "a unique group that performs a

range of fully arranged acoustic pop classics," from the music of Harry Chapin and James Taylor to Sting and the Neville Brothers, Dan Fogelberg, Gordon Lightfoot, Jim Croce, Cat Stevens, Seals & Crofts and Lyle Lovett. Motter says that



Al Stewart will headline the evening, with the acoustic band Satinwood and local fav Flav Martin also performing.

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Teachers College, Columbia University*



A Program of World Hunger Year

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The purpose of **Kids Can Make A Difference®** is to inspire young people to realize that it is within their power to help eliminate hunger and poverty in their communities, their country, and their world.