

# THE SERVICE-LEARNING CHRONICLE

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## LEARN AND SERVE COLORADO



### PUBLIC ACHIEVEMENT IN LAFAYETTE, COLORADO

Public Achievement (PA) has taken off in Lafayette, Colorado! An international youth civic engagement initiative aimed at renewing democracy, PA teams volunteers with youth to help them identify issues that matter to them in their communities. After the issues have been identified, the youth develop tangible public projects that positively address those issues. Thanks to the Naropa University Community Studies Center and its partnership with Project Y.E.S. (Youth Envisioning Social Change), an innovative non-profit organization dedicated to the youth of Lafayette, Public Achievement is running strong as vehicle for youth participation while having an impact on their local community.

The Naropa University/Centaurus High School Public Achievement partnership has flourished since its inception in the fall semester of 2004. Since then, nearly one hundred youth in Lafayette have identified public issues that are of importance to them and created dozens of projects to impact those issues. At Centaurus, Naropa students with a passion for working with youth and creating positive social change, “coach” Centaurus students in discovering what community issues matter to them. Naropa coaches build trusting relationships with the youth and engage them in the exploration of what public issues are meaningful and important to them. After deciding what issues are the most salient to them, the youth form groups around which aspect of their communities they want to have an impact on.

So far, Public Achievement groups at Centaurus High School have created projects that address racism, sexual assault, homelessness, war and many other important issues. In the fall of 2005, one group formed out of a concern that there was a driver’s license requirement to park in the school lot. Many of Centaurus’ students are undocumented immigrants and thus cannot drive legally in the state of Colorado. Those students had to park off campus making their cars subject to vandalism and theft. But the “Parking for Everyone” team spent the semester researching the issue to find out what kind of policy it was, “power-mapping” to discover who held sway around the policy, and networking and building a public relationship with the school’s principal to figure out how to correct this institutionally racist policy. After discovering that it was a school policy and not a district policy, they submitted a proposal to the principal to change it. She agreed and has already changed the parking permit application form and is currently in the process of changing the school handbook. These students were affected by an unfair policy and took action to create the change that they wanted to see in their



school. This is just one example of how PA has given students a venue to discover what they care about and have a “voice.”

Public Achievement has recently been brought to Angevine Middle School in Lafayette and has been implemented in an eighth grade United States History class as a part of the curriculum. Volunteer

coaches include AmeriCorps\*VISTA members, Naropa University graduate students, and members of Project Y.E.S. The eighth graders have already identified public issues that concern them including public safety, the environment and racism. One student said in a public evaluation of their initial PA session that, “It’s cool that we’re all participating, that there’s no adult telling us what to do and that we can decide what we’re going to do.”

Public Achievement is a powerful vehicle for youth to be participants in our democracy. PA at Centaurus High School has proven an effective means for students to be the shapers of their school and community. This is shown by the slew of poignant projects that they have accomplished including a bilingual tutoring program at Centaurus, a public forum on racism and events aimed at changing negative stereotypes of youth. During a time in which American society faces a variety of cultural crises, PA is giving youth the opportunities to be active players in the life of their communities by allowing them to have a “voice” around what they care about and work together as co-creators of their communities.



Susannah Aquilina and a Public Achievement Team at Centaurus High School in Lafayette, Colorado

Article submitted by Susannah Aquilina, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, Project Y.E.S./Naropa University Partnership

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- National and Global Youth Service Day—April 21-23, 2006
- State Service-Learning Conference—April 27-29, 2006
- AmeriCorps\*VISTA Recruitment deadline June 19, 2006
- AmeriCorps\*VISTA PSO August 15-18, 2006

**PEACEJAM JUNIORS CURRICULUM EXPANDING IN ARVADA**

Over the past few months, use of PeaceJam Juniors curriculum has been rapidly gaining momentum within the Arvada elementary schools of Foster, Lawrence and Russell.

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members Toni Kattelmann has been feverishly researching, outlining service-learning potential and aligning lessons with Colorado state standards in an effort to create the last few units of the elementary curriculum.

AmeriCorps\*VISTA member, Ryan Hanschen has been spending time in the field assisting teachers to implement the program in their classrooms. Connecting with two dozen 3rd – 6th grade teachers, Ryan has provided support by uniting academic content, classroom needs and PeaceJam curriculum. Work-

ing alongside educators to design and apply lesson plans, Ryan can no longer enter a classroom without being greeted by students in Tibetan or Mayan languages spoken by the Dalai Lama and by Rigoberta Menchu!

PeaceJam Juniors sessions vary depending on the individual Nobel Peace Laureate. The lessons include the Dalai Lama and haikus, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and memoirs and Rigoberta Menchu, human rights in Guatemala, and persuasive letter writing. In several classes, students have built upon these lessons with an assessment of their own school's community and have taken direct action using what they have learned from the PeaceJam lessons.

As the school year winds down, no end

is in sight for the students' excitement for service-learning! The experiences and knowledge gained by students will continue to exponentially grow next year as the PeaceJam Juniors program expands into even more elementary schools.

For more information concerning PeaceJam Juniors, please contact Toni or Ryan at 303.455.2099.

Article submitted by Ryan Hanschen, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, The PeaceJam Foundation

**SAVE LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA**



On February 06, 2006, President George W. Bush released his budget request for fiscal year 2007. The budget included \$34 million for Learn and Serve America funding, a 20% reduction from the traditional Learn and Serve America funding level of \$43 million. The impact of the proposed reduction in funding will be detrimental. Not only will Learn and Serve America suffer from an \$8.5 million funding cut, more than 300,000 youths will be unable to serve their communities through Learn and Serve America and communities across the

country will suffer from a loss of \$34 million of leveraged resources and a combined 7.3 million service hours.

What can you do? Please contact your local members of Congress to explain (1) the importance of Learn and Serve America; (2) the possible consequences of accepting the funding cuts proposed for fiscal year 2007; and (3) the need to restore funding to the traditional \$43 million.

In addition, with National and Global Youth Service Day rapidly approaching,

we urge you to invite your local representatives and senators to your event to demonstrate the importance of service-learning in your community.

For more information, please log onto [www.servicelearningunited.org](http://www.servicelearningunited.org) or [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org).

Your voice can make a difference!

## LINCOLN STUDENTS PRESENT RESULTS OF FAMILY SURVEY

A group of fifth graders and their teacher at Lincoln Elementary have had a long day at school today. In fact, every Monday and Wednesday evening you will find this group at the school until well after dark working to boost academic skills and collaborate on projects to benefit the school community. Tonight, however, representatives of the group who call themselves the "Service-Learning Team" are here to present the results of their first project during a Family Literacy Night.



Leilani, Alicia, Forest, Aryana & Chelsea present their findings.

Twelve students regularly participate in an evening tutorial program being piloted this year that focuses on strengthening math and writing skills through the use of service-learning projects which are also designed to meet the needs of Lincoln families. The first project the group took on this year was creating, administering and compiling data from a comprehensive survey of Lincoln families. The purpose of this survey was to gain a better sense of how

the school can meet the needs of its families as it moves forward with broad efforts to support and stabilize its population.

The five young students stand on stage with their power point presentation in the background and explain to parents and staff who they are and what results their survey has shown. They explain the process of creating and distributing the

survey, offering incentives for return and counting the results. When asked what adult education classes parents would be most interested in taking, choices were ranked in the following order: 1) parenting, 2) computer, 3) English as a Second Language, 4) finance, and 5) taxes. Concerning evening enrichment activities, the family poll showed bowling, "fun night," family games, and science night as the most popular. A majority of families did not request language translation for classes and activities and 1-2 hours was the preferred duration for these events. The preferred duration for these events included Thursday and Friday evenings from 6:00-8:00.

Great job Lincoln Service-Learning Team!

Article submitted by Alexis Ball, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, Colorado College Partnership for Civic Engagement

## SENIOR SEMINAR AT MITCHELL HIGH SCHOOL

At Mitchell High School in Colorado Springs, students are participating in Senior Seminar. Senior Seminar is a semester long class with five blocks lasting three weeks each. The blocks include the Colorado Springs Challenge block which introduces students to the beginning of geologic time in Colorado Springs to the present; the Feeling Fine block which focuses on physical, mental and spiritual well being; the Wilderness Experience in which the students raft the Green River in Utah; the Capstone Project where students focus on a potential career and the Service-Learning block.

Mitchell High School has participated in service-learning initiatives in the past, but this year has been more successful for a variety of reasons, says co-teacher Wayne Thomas. For one, AmeriCorps\*VISTA member, Joe Mock, has been working with the students on developing service-learning projects. In order to increase options and develop community partnerships, Joe brought in several organizations to present volunteer opportunities at their sites to Mitchell High School students for a day.



AmeriCorps\*VISTA member, Joe Mock., at Mitchell High School.

These organizations included Greccio Housing, Cool Science, Partners in Housing, Memorial Hospital, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, and Volunteer Services.

Furthermore, Joe trained the students about service-learning and how to differentiate between a service-learning project and a community service project. The students came to Colorado College for a day and with the help of Service-Learning District Coordinator Amy Belcastro, each student planned his/her own service-learning project ensuring

each had a service and learning component. Each student presented his/her project to the group and received feedback on how to improve the project.

As a result of this training, several exciting projects have been developed. Several students utilizing Volunteer Services as a resource have been working one-on-one with elementary students. John Moore has developed a relationship with Winter Park Ski Resort and several students have been helping special education students ski for the Special Olympics. Another project involves three students helping elementary students at Steele Elementary School paint a mural at their school. Two students who are interested in careers in construction have been helping Greccio Housing repair and maintain low-income properties.

With a total of twenty four individual service-learning projects Senior Seminar has done a great job of increasing service-learning in District 11.

Article submitted by Joseph Mock, AmeriCorps\*VISTA member, Colorado College Partnership for Civic Engagement



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Visit us on the Internet at [www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning](http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning)

**WESTWORD ACKNOWLEDGES THE PEACEJAM FOUNDATION**

Each year, the Westword acknowledges "The Best of Denver," in a variety of categories such as, People and Places, Goods and Services, Sports and Recreation, Arts and Entertainment and Food and Drink. This year, the Westword acknowledged The PeaceJam Foundation as the "Best Colorado Ambassadors."

The Westword reported,

We couldn't make up a story this outlandish. Ten years ago, former society scribe (for 87 days), artist and car-parker Ivan Suvanjiuff decided he needed to do something to convince kids to stop the violence, and so started PeaceJam. Today he and partner Dawn Engle run a global operation out of an Arvada bungalow, organizing more than a dozen conference for kids around the world each year answering to a board of Nobel Peace Prize winners. The Nobels are coming to Denver in September 2006—only Oslo will have seen a larger group of Nobel Peace Prize winners—to mark the tenth anniversary of PeaceJam at a major gathering of thousands of youth from around the world. Give peace a chance—PeaceJam did.

The PeaceJam Foundation is an international educational program built around leading Nobel Peace Laureates who work personally with youth to pass on the spirit, skills and wisdom they embody. The goal of PeaceJam is to inspire a new generation of peacemakers who will transform their local communities, themselves and the world.

In addition to the powerful partnerships developed between The PeaceJam Foundation and Nobel Peace Laureates such as Bishop Carlos Belo, The Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, PeaceJam also collaborates with local schools. In Jefferson County, Colorado, PeaceJam incorporates its curriculum in conjunction with the practice of service-learning in three local elementary schools. PeaceJam is a world leader in service-learning, which is a teaching method and school reform strategy that fosters academic learning and citizenship development in our youths.

In order to achieve its mission and goals, The PeaceJam Foundation utilizes two full-time AmeriCorps\*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members for the duration of twelve months. Together, these two AmeriCorps\*VISTA members serve alongside PeaceJam in local elementary schools in order to expand the PeaceJam curriculum and ensure high quality service-learning practices. Furthermore, the AmeriCorps\*VISTA members also advise three PeaceJam Leadership Squads throughout Jefferson County. The AmeriCorps\*VISTA members assist The PeaceJam Leadership Squad members in the establishment of service-learning initiatives, while at the same time fostering youth voice, choice and leadership.

Article submitted by Colleen O'Patry, AmeriCorps\*VISTA Team Leader, Colorado Department of Education