

MAPPING THE WORLD OF RURAL EDUCATION

TEACHING TOLERANCE

WWW.TOLERANCE.ORG

FALL 2010

Beyond the
Little Red
Schoolhouse



CYBERBULLYING

What you need to know

**HOMELESS
STUDENTS**

How to help them

PLUS

Get ready
for Mix It Up!

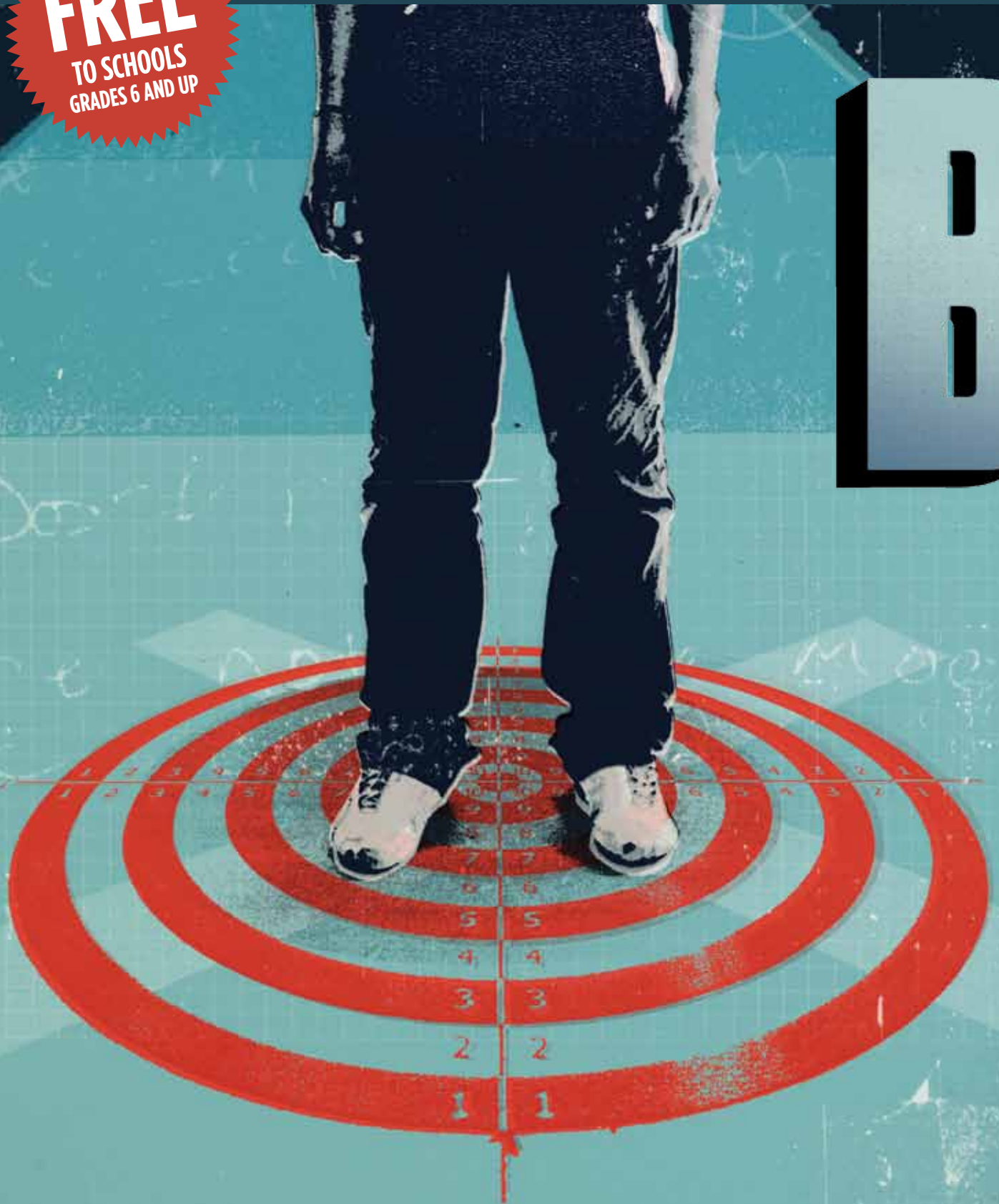
The complex truth about small-town schools

A NEW FILM THAT WILL BECOME AN ESSENTIAL

FREE

TO SCHOOLS
GRADES 6 AND UP

B



AL PART OF YOUR SCHOOL'S ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM

TEACHING TOLERANCE PRESENTS

BULLIED

A Student, a School and a Case that Made History

An exciting documentary about the precedent-setting case ruling that school administrators have a duty to protect gay and lesbian students from bullying and harassment.

KIT INCLUDES

- » 40-minute film on DVD
- » Viewer's Guide with standards-aligned classroom activities
- » Guidance for administrators and educators on creating a safe school environment

Order Bullied Today!

To receive a FREE Bullied film kit, complete and return the attached order card or order online at www.tolerance.org/bullied

"The story is beautifully told — very compelling and moving. I'm happy to endorse the film."

Charles Haynes
SENIOR SCHOLAR, FIRST
AMENDMENT CENTER

"This well-crafted film forces us to turn our heads, face the problem, and recognize bullying as nothing less than a violation of one of children's most basic civil

rights: to learn, play and grow up in a safe environment."

Joan Duffel
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR,
COMMITTEE
FOR CHILDREN



TEACHING TOLERANCE

Departments

5 From the Director

6 Letters to the Editor

8 Why I Teach

Lila Lee Silvern was celebrating Halloween with her students when a real monster came calling.

10 Activity Exchange

57 Teaching Tools

62 Story Corner

The Hutterites, members of a small religious group, are no strangers to persecution.

64 One World



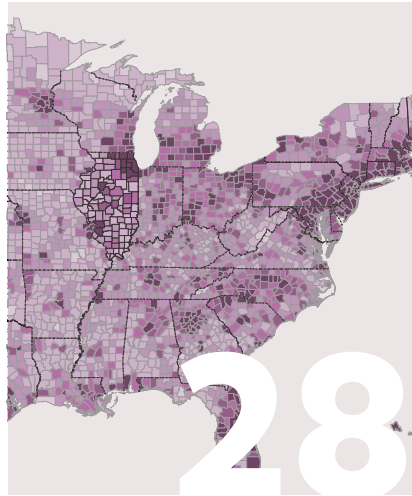
on the cover

Teaching Tolerance focuses on the tough issues faced by America's rural schools.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY **BRIAN STAUFFER**

BEYOND THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE

Diversity in Rural Schools



16 Tapping the Power of Place

Rural schools face many of the problems of their big city cousins. The solutions often lie within the communities themselves.

20 Three from the Country

Three teachers tell very different stories about what it's like to teach in rural America.

25 The Lessons of a Rural Principal

George Wood didn't set out to be a rural principal. But 18 years into it, he's enjoying plenty of success thanks to his desire to innovate.

28 What Is Rural America?

Charts, graphs and maps help shine a light on the issues in rural education.

32 Country Outposts

LGBT students in rural schools often face rejection and bullying. But teachers and parents can change that with the right kind of support.

36 High Tech in Small Places

Computers and the Internet are helping schools bridge vast distances, both geographically and culturally.

39 Using TDSi in Rural Schools

Rural educators face just as many problems as urban colleagues when it comes to helping children of color.

Features

42 Cyberbullying

Online harassment has become a life-and-death issue for students, teachers and administrators.

47 Helping the Homeless— In School and Out

Teachers can do a lot to make life easier for kids who have nowhere to stay.

51 Mixing It Up—With Purpose

Teaching Tolerance's Mix It Up at Lunch Day is the perfect way to help your students get along.

55 Fighting Back Against Bullies

Get a preview of Teaching Tolerance's new documentary, *Bullied*.



Why I Teach?

The monsters we meet at Halloween are sometimes not the ones we expect (see page 8).



CIVIL DISCOURSE
New Curriculum from
Teaching Tolerance

CIVIL DISCOURSE IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

Politeness may be nice.
But civil discourse is
about listening. It's
about shaping ideas and
challenging arguments.

•••

Your students
need these tools.

All learning activities are
standards-based and may
be used across disciplines
and grade levels.

**FREE ONLINE
DOWNLOAD**

www.tolerance.org/discourse

TEACHING TOLERANCE



A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

DIRECTOR Maureen B. Costello

DESIGN DIRECTOR Russell Estes

MANAGING EDITOR Sean Price

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Victoria Williams

CURRICULUM DESIGN MANAGER Thom Ronk

SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER Michelle Marsh Garcia

DESIGN

DESIGNERS Valerie Downes, Michelle Leland, Scott Phillips

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Sunny Paulk

PRODUCTION

WEB SERVICES DIRECTOR Ryan King

WEB CONTENT PRODUCERS Melissa Henninger, Annah Kelley

PRESS PRODUCTION MANAGER Regina Collins

WEB TECHNICAL LEAD Brian Youngblood

CONTRIBUTORS

Scott Bakal, Shannon Brady, Lecia Brooks, Christy Goldfinch, Helena Holgersson-Shorter, Jennifer Holladay, Monica James, Betsy Jerome, Don Kilpatrick, Darlene Koenig, Carol Kreis, Susan Estelle Kwas, Jessica Leo, Tim Lockette, Sean McCollum, Ron Newkirk, Milt Priggee, Susie Renner, Nip Rogers, Helen Goren Shafton, Nirvi Shah, Lila Lee Silvern, Brian Stauffer, Clio Stearns, Sharón Steinmann, Dave Warner, George Wood

SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

CO-FOUNDERS Morris Dees, Joseph J. Levin, Jr.

PRESIDENT & CEO J. Richard Cohen

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER Michael Toohey

SPLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Howard Mandell, Chair

Julian Bond

Patricia Clark

Andrew Fredman

Lloyd V. Hackley

Alan B. Howard

Marsha Levick

James McElroy

Vanzetta Penn McPherson

James Rucker

Ellen Sudow

David Wang

EDITORIAL OFFICE

400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104

EDITORIAL FAX 334/956-8484

ORDER DEPARTMENT FAX 334/956-8486

SUBSCRIPTIONS 334/956-8200

Teaching Tolerance is mailed twice a year at no charge to educators.
It is published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit legal and education organization.
For permission to reprint articles, email us at reprints@tolerance.org.

“I think we have to own the fears that we have of each other, and then, in some practical way, some daily way, figure out how to see people differently than the way we were brought up to.”

— ALICE WALKER

Stories from the Country

BY MAUREEN COSTELLO

I was named director of Teaching Tolerance back in January, and one of my first tasks was planning this issue focused on rural education.

That might seem strange when you consider that I’m a lifelong New Yorker: born, grew up, went to school, built a career in education, raised a child—all within three of the five boroughs that make up the Big Apple. Only something as wonderful as leading Teaching Tolerance could entice me to come to Montgomery, Alabama, where the Southern Poverty Law Center is based.

When I told friends about my plans to move, they reacted with disbelief. “How can you leave New York?” they wanted to know. These folks had adopted the position that New York was the norm and the rest of America was, well, if not alien, at least invisible.

I heard echoes of that same reaction when the Teaching Tolerance team began learning about the issues facing rural schools. Many of the people we spoke with assumed that only urban and suburban schools grappled with the topics we cared about, and that rural schools, few in number, existed in a kind of Edenic landscape.

Talk about invisible.

As it turns out, ignorance about rural schools is pretty widespread. We soon discovered that no one—not even the federal government—has a single definition for what constitutes “rural.” We also learned about the degrees of rurality and the world of difference between a rural school that’s a mere bus ride away from a big city, and one that’s hundreds of miles from a population center. Mainly, we learned that rural schools face many of the same problems as urban schools, but often with fewer resources and a unique set of challenges.

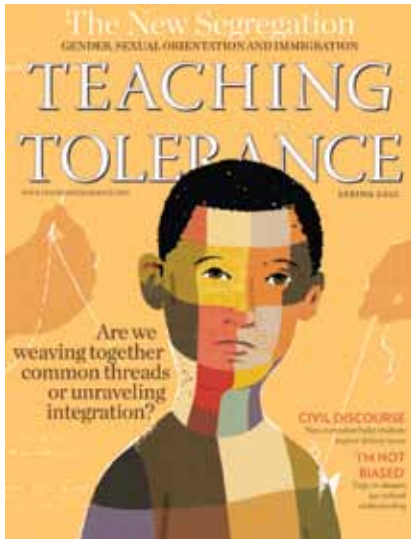
We’ve tried to make these schools visible. After all, rural students deserve access to educational opportunities equal to those enjoyed by their urban and suburban counterparts. Inside, you’ll see how individual teachers make a difference in rural schools. You’ll also see that gay and lesbian students face particular hurdles in gaining acceptance, and that the best solutions often involve communities.

We hope you’ll enjoy this glimpse into how rural schools, so rarely in the spotlight, meet their challenges. More than that, we hope you’ll be inspired by many of the stories that come out of the country.

Most of all, we’d like these stories to spark conversations, at school and online. Let us know what you think by visiting us at tolerance.org.



MAUREEN COSTELLO is the new director of Teaching Tolerance and a former teacher. She has spent the last 13 years in publishing. Starting at a local newspaper and then at both *Newsweek* and Scholastic in New York, she worked to engage students in current issues.



Being the Only One

I'm writing about "The Only One," your article about kids being the only people of color in school (Spring 2010). As a person of biracial origin living in Appalachia I am often the only person of color in my classroom and even in my school. Oftentimes I am looked at to be the voice for my racial group or, even worse, be the affirmative-action poster girl. I have always strived to represent myself as a human first and allow people to get to know me on that level.

Sumeeta Patnaik
Via Facebook

Homo High

Re "Homo High," your article about separate high schools for LGBT students (Spring 2010). Kids have enough to deal with going to school and dealing with the social scene to be picked on and harassed. Maybe some can deal with it; many can't. All people deserve respect and a refuge to learn and grow and be themselves.

Jill Oserowsky Stanevich
Via Facebook

Whose Student Is She?

In regards to your article "Whose Student Is She?" (Spring 2010), a few years ago, before the budget disaster in California, I was teaching math in a middle school in Sunnyvale, California. One day, as I checked my seating chart and marked the attendance, I saw a student who was not familiar to me.

"Excuse me, who are you," I asked. He had not given me an add slip or his schedule. No answer. I went up to him and said that I needed to see his schedule and get his name. No answer. "Why are you here?" No answer. Finally another student told me that the boy did not speak English. "What language do you speak? Where are you from? What is your name?" He held his palms upright and shrugged his shoulders to indicate that he did not understand a word. He had arrived just that day from Croatia. No one in my classes was

from Croatia. I don't speak Hrvatski. We had absolutely no resources for Slavic language students. How frustrating must that have been for this 12-year-old?

If this was the only time this happened it would have been just a teachers-lounge tale. Unfortunately, nearly all of us had a comparable story. One science teacher had a new seventh grader arrive from South Korea. State rules are that all seventh graders are given a writing test on a certain day in March. This new Korean-speaker happened to enroll on that very day. Her introduction to American schools was a test in English language writing proficiency.

If we plant the seeds of failure from the first day of school, the crop will certainly not be satisfactory at harvest time.

Gerald Hawkins
Santa Clara, California



TEACHING TOLERANCE explores the problems and opportunities to be found in rural education. Start reading our seven-article special section on p. 16 with "Tapping the Power of Place."

Join our online professional learning community

Our **blog** is a place where teachers interested in anti-bias education come to share experience, join the conversation, and support each other.

Our **lessons** help you to promote respect for differences in your classroom.

Our professional development **activities** encourage personal reflection and staff learning.

A place to get the Teaching Tolerance perspective on a wide variety of social justice topics that matter to you and your students

A host of new teachers' voices from inside the classroom

And, every week, a newsletter that brings the best of Teaching Tolerance and anti-bias education to your inbox.

GO ONLINE TO SIGN UP TODAY

www.tolerance.org

'I Don't Think I'm Biased'

I can't thank you enough for this article, "I Don't Think I'm Biased" (Spring 2010).

It is timely for me as I am a parent and trustee at a predominantly white independent school that is undergoing its first AIM (Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism) study. I am African American, my husband is white and two of our three daughters attend the school.

In my professional life, I have experience as a teacher and as a trainer leading diversity initiatives. But as the saying goes, "you can't be a prophet in your own backyard." I find that my expertise is often discounted because I'm a parent of current students and therefore "too close" to the issues under discussion.

I'm going to forward the article to the headmaster and diversity chair now and see what happens. It's a great resource and neatly summarizes much of what I've been trying to say for the past several months. Plus, the listing of sources and materials is wonderful—how nice to have all these classic pieces in one place.

Many thanks, and wish me luck!
Amanda Leinhos
Newport, Rhode Island

Tolerance of LGBT Is Not Edifying

Education is supposed to edify the student. Approval of deviant sexual behavior is not edifying. Tolerance of the behavior is not helpful.

If a person ties up their identity in their behavior, then they have bound themselves to identify with public perception of the behavior. Let those who struggle with sexual identity

understand that their rejection of homosexuality will free them from that bondage and quit subjecting them to the idea that they can be free and slave at the same time!

The people who promote tolerance should tolerate their share of the blame for the struggles these kids go through! Why tolerate something so destructive? The public will always have some sense of what is right and what is wrong, and there's nothing any movement or ideology can do about that.

Heather Alsup

Via the Teaching Tolerance blog at www.tolerance.org

Mix It Up at Lunch Day

Mix It Up at Lunch Day is a day where students can get out of their cliques or groups and experience meeting new people that they may have never noticed before.

At our school's 2009 Mix It Up, there were geeks sitting with popular students, and they actually had something in common. Some students were nervous, and some did not want to do it at all. But as the lunch period progressed, people were getting into it and were actually having fun.

When you sit with other people you get to know their personalities and expand your social skills. Now that Mix It Up at Lunch Day has ended, some students I sat with then sit with me at lunch each day.

Mix It Up at Lunch Day is a great way to get people out of their comfort zones.
Jazzmine H.
Rootstown Middle School
Rootstown, Ohio

**Each November,
Teaching Tolerance
sponsors Mix It
Up at Lunch Day.
This year's Mix It
Up will take place
November 9.**

WHY I TEACH



Monsters, Devils and Mary Poppins

HALLOWEEN IS MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY. When I taught English to immigrant children in Pacoima, California, October was the month for masks and skeletons to teach the parts of the body. Creating costumes was also the perfect activity for teaching the English words for different types of clothing.

I made sure every child had a costume. I collected ballet tutus and Superman capes from friends whose children had outgrown them. My student Maria Elena was thrilled to be the one to fit into the Cinderella dress with layers of pink net, shiny sequins and a velvet cape. Maria loved me. She was a fourth grader from Zacatecas, Mexico. She stayed after school to help me clean the room. She loved books, especially familiar fairy tales, and she would sound out the English words and help me with my Spanish.

Maria Elena didn't have a lot of friends in the classroom. She had a hot temper, cried easily and was very possessive of me. Fourth graders are like that. She wanted to sit next to me in the auditorium. She wanted to hold my hand when we did circle games or dances. She even wrote me little love messages in Spanish with hearts and flowers.

Every afternoon, Maria Elena begged to know what my costume was going to be. I told her it was a surprise. Two days before Halloween, I asked the children to draw a picture of what they thought I would wear. Some drew me in a pretty dress, like Snow White. Some of the boys drew me looking like Wonder Woman. Maria Elena drew me as an angel with a halo.

The day finally arrived. The fourth graders lined up with their Dracula makeup and monster masks. There were two Spider-Men and several princesses in 99¢ Only Store tiaras and mother's makeup. I appeared in a high-necked blouse, a long skirt, lace-up boots and a silly hat with a feather. I also carried an umbrella that made me look as if I had just flown in. "Mary Poppins!" they screamed.

At 1 p.m., we made our way to the playground. Scary Halloween music blared from record player speakers. My students took their assigned places and the parade began. The principal came out with the office and cafeteria staff to judge the scariest, prettiest and most original costumes.

The children paraded around the yard three times while the principal consulted with the other judges. Finally, the judges found the winning costume wearers and led them to the microphone to get ribbons. There was Maria Elena glowing as she was awarded the Most Beautiful Costume award. I took pictures of her.

We went back to our classroom for cupcakes and apple juice. It was almost time for dismissal. Maria asked if she could take the costume home and wear it that night for trick-or-treat. "Of course," I answered, walking the class to the school gate. When all the chil-

dren had dispersed she followed me back to the classroom.

Maria Elena wanted to do something nice for me at Christmas or my saint's day, "When is it?" she asked.

I looked down at her and answered in Spanish, "No celebremos el dia de los santos."

"Porque?" she asked.

"Porque soy judea." I am Jewish.

The child recoiled as if I were suddenly transformed from Mary Poppins to a cruel, monstrous beast. I inadvertently touched my head as if I had grown horns.

The pain in Maria Elena's face was real, and she would not allow me to comfort her. Tears

welled in her eyes and in mine, too. The world is a scary place, with ghosts and monsters lurking where we least expect them to be.

Maria Elena's horror and shock faded gradually. For the next few weeks, she kept a polite distance from me. She didn't volunteer to stay after school to clean the chalkboards or sharpen pencils, as she had so eagerly done in the past.

It wasn't until mid-November that she timidly reached for my hand on the playground when the class was lining up. By December she was once again cleaning my desk after school and wanting to help decorate the winter bulletin board with snowmen and pine trees. In class we played Holiday Bingo and identified menorahs, kinaras and luminarias as symbols of the different ways Jews, African Americans and Mexicans celebrate their special days.

The last day of school before the winter break, Maria Elena surprised me. On my desk I found a pair of filigree earrings slightly misshapen and with one purple stone missing. They were wrapped in Kleenex and tied with some borrowed yarn. Taped to the package was a card she had made at home. It read: *To my best teacher. Love, Maria Elena*

I kept the bent earring with the missing stone in the top drawer of my desk to remind me of Maria Elena and how hard—but important—it is for children to recognize the monsters and devils created by ignorance and old superstitions, and for teachers to help dispel them. ♦

LILA LEE SILVERN is a former teacher in California's San Fernando Valley and a former director of programs designed to help immigrant students.

“The world is a scary place, with ghosts and monsters lurking where we least expect them to be.”



Share Your Story

What motivates you to get up each and every morning and serve the children in our nation's schools? We want to hear from you. Send your submission for the "Why I Teach" column to editor@tolerance.org.

Compliment Tag!

AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR, I AM CONTINUALLY amazed at the number of students who do not know how to give and receive a compliment. Students seem to have no trouble, however, with the occasional teasing or name-calling.

To remedy this, I will often play “Compliment Tag” within my classrooms. This is a fun activity that requires no materials or supplies, and it is best carried out in small groups of four to six students.

Students sit in a circle and decide on one person to be “it” first. This student has to tag another person in the group. However, unlike a typical game of tag where you run and use your hands, this game requires you to tag a person with your words. The student who is “it” will say another student’s name in the group, give her a compliment, and then say, “Tag you’re it.” The person who gets tagged responds by saying, “Thank you,” and the person who gave the compliment responds with, “You’re welcome.” The person tagged then picks someone else and so on until everyone has had a chance to give and receive a compliment.

After the game of tag, it is always a good idea to have some discussion questions for the class to consider. Was it easy to give someone a compliment? Do you think it is possible to practice giving compliments on your own? How did it feel inside when you had a compliment given to you? How many compliments do you think you could give each day?

It is amazing to see students’ faces light up

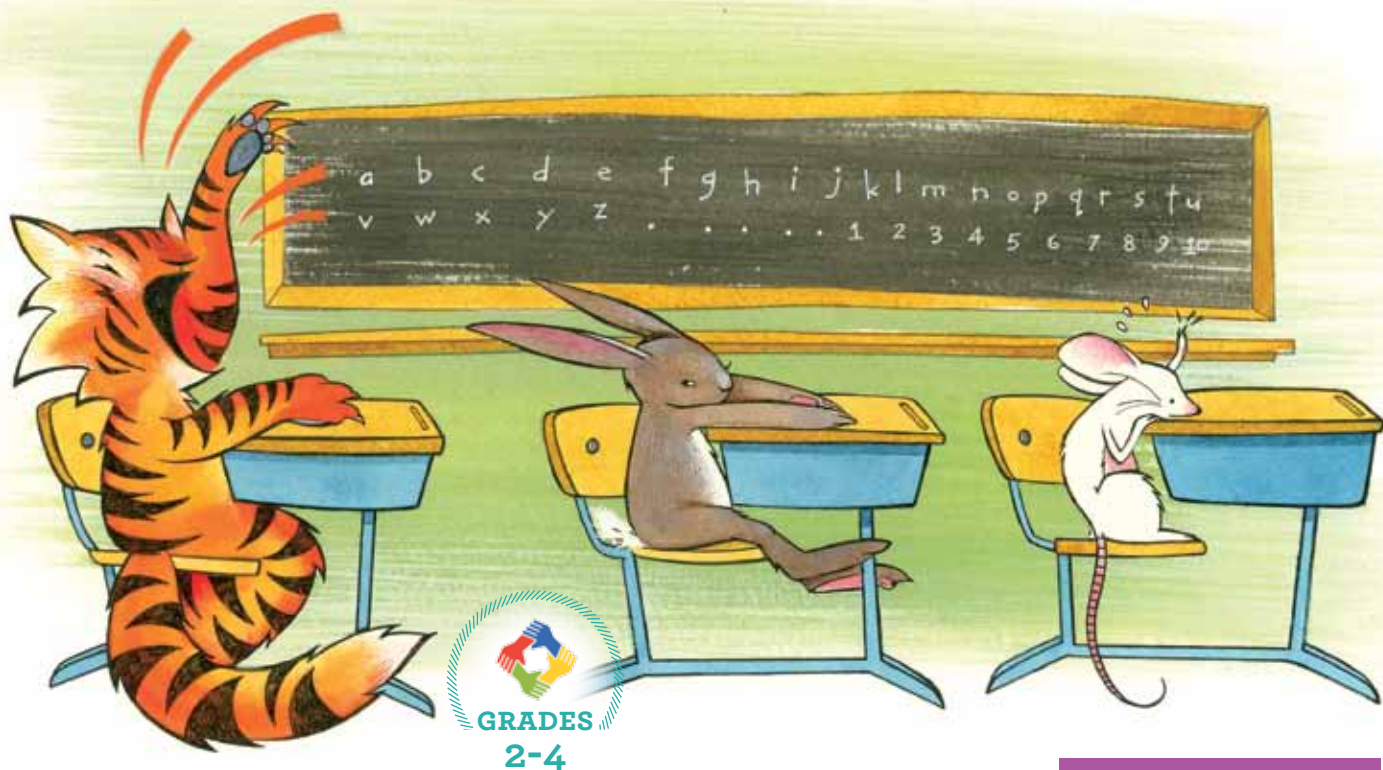
EVERYONE HAS A BAD DAY now and then. The early grades activity *Happy Faces* (www.tolerance.org/activity/happy-faces) encourages students to be sensitive to schoolmates who might be feeling down. It shows them how to bring cheer to others.

when they get tagged by one of their classmates. It is even more amazing to see the students playing this game outside of class on their own. One student reported to me, “Compliments are like my favorite soda; I just have to have one every day!”

Dave Warner, MSE

Elementary School Counselor
Fair Oaks and Oak View Elementary
Maple Grove, Minnesota





Who We REALLY Are

SOMETIMES STUDENTS GET STUCK ON SUPERFICIAL NOTIONS of identity, both in understanding themselves and in looking at their classmates. This activity uses literature to challenge stereotypes and help children think about their inner selves. It also allows them to explore metaphor, other poetic language and visual artistic expression as they get to know themselves and one another better.

Read aloud *I Look Like a Girl* by Sheila Hamanaka (Morrow Junior Books, 1999). Spend time talking about each page and the accompanying pictures. Ask students to consider what the narrator might mean when she says things like, “I look like a girl, but really I’m a tiger.” Push the discussion in the direction of gender stereotypes by asking questions like, “Why is it surprising for a girl to say that inside she is a tiger? What does she mean by ‘look twice/ past the sugar and spice?’”

Have students work in small groups to talk about aspects of their identities that might not show on the outside, particularly things that defy stereotypes. Encourage them with your own example: I tell my class that although as a teacher I seem outgoing and brave, really I’m very shy and it takes a lot of effort for me to be so outspoken.

After the kids have talked about their personality traits, have them write in their journals about the ideas that have come up. Encourage each child to think of a metaphor for one or more of her or his ‘hidden’ characteristics just like the character in the book. I usually say, “I look like a teacher, but really I’m a turtle, longing to hide in my shell.” Allow students to help each other, because part of the purpose of this

activity is to understand one another more deeply.

Finally, give each student a piece of black construction paper. Have them use oil pastels to illustrate their inner animal or whatever metaphor they have come up with, writing their statement at the bottom of the page in the style of Hamanaka’s book. After they have shared their “self-portraits,” be sure to display them in the classroom as expressions of who everyone really is, and return to these portraits when you feel children are losing track of their deeper selves and getting stuck on superficial details.

Clio Stearns

The Neighborhood School/P.S. 363
New York, New York

Write for Us

Have you created a classroom activity that would be perfect for Teaching Tolerance? We’ll pay \$250 for Activity Exchange items we publish that connect to social justice topics. For submission guidelines, go to www.tolerance.org/blog/how-do-you-teach-about-social-justice.

Send submissions to editor@tolerance.org with the subject line “Activity Exchange submission.” Or mail your activity to Teaching Tolerance Activity Exchange 400 Washington Ave. Montgomery, AL 36104

We only reply to submissions selected for publication.

Let the Hot Air Out of Bullies!

HERE IS AN ACTIVITY THAT IS FUN AND TEACHES KIDS TO recognize the problems associated with bullying. They learn to use critical thinking and empathy skills to come up with preventative strategies and become advocates for themselves and others. The materials needed for this activity include balloons (at least one per student), markers and tape. *[Note: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warns that children under eight years can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Adult supervision required.]*

Talk with your students about bullying and how it affects everyone. Discuss standing up for one another and oneself and how “doing the right thing” relates to good decision-making, empathy and character. Explain that everyone has a choice—and it is necessary to think about the consequences that may follow.

Have students brainstorm a problem associated with bullying. Then give each student a balloon to blow up. Instruct them not to tie the balloons. After students inflate their balloons, have them use a marker to write the problem that they brainstormed earlier on the balloon. Tell them that the balloon represents a student filling up with negative emotions and “hot air”—the negative things they say when mad.

Depending upon the needs of your class, have students form groups or pairs to brainstorm solutions to their problems. One by one, students come to the front of the room and share their solutions. If the class agrees it is a good solution, then the student will let the balloon go and watch it fly as the “bully is deflated.” This “lets the hot air out of the bully.” If the class doesn’t agree, help them to explore good choices and effective problem-solving. Students talk about how it felt to problem-solve, deflate their bully and do the right thing.

Kids will giggle, laugh and love this activity. It encourages students to come up with great solutions to bullying.

Jessica Leo, LMSW
Queen Creek School District
Queen Creek, Arizona



CHECK OUT another fun activity online (www.tolerance.org/activity/biased-judgments) that helps students confront gender stereotypes by learning “Give it a rest, no group is best.”



Stars for Diversity

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE TOLERANCE ACTIVITIES. IT helps students think about leaving others out of groups and tolerating differences within the classroom. You will need many small self-adhesive stars of six different colors (any shape of stickers may be used).

At the beginning of the year, I get the whole class together and discuss developing friendships. I share that throughout the year, some students get left out. We talk about cliques and the ramifications of belonging to cliques. We also briefly talk about the differences among students and how these differences may keep them from making friends. You will need to allow 10 to 15 minutes for this discussion.

I start out by telling the students that they must use body language (nodding or using hand gestures) throughout the whole activity. They are to remain silent (no talking). If a student talks or does not follow the rules, he may be disqualified. I ask the students to close their eyes as I put a sticker on each one's forehead. I usually have six different colors. Most of the students get one of four different colors. But two of the students get stars from the remaining two colors. Each student should have one star on her forehead. No student should be able to see his star.

I group the students heterogeneously. The kids are not able to see the color of their own star, but they can see everyone else's. They then move around the room and find the group to which they belong based on the color of the

sticker on their foreheads. I usually give the students five minutes to move around and find their groups. Once they find their groups, they sit down and begin talking about what they have in common.

After the four groups are formed, there are two students who do not belong to a group. Sometimes, I will observe other students motion for these solitary students to join, but often I see students indicate that "you don't belong here because your star is not the same."

In a wrap-up session, I challenge the students to discuss how they found their groups without communicating verbally. We talk about how friendships are formed based on what happened in the room. We specifically talk about the two students who did not belong anywhere and how they felt. Then, the class gets a statement from the two students who did not fit anywhere. I relate what the students observed and felt to real-life friendships, cliques and differences in others. I also challenge the group to brainstorm ways to accept the differences in others and enrich friendships with those differences.

After our discussion, we role-play the skill of joining other social groups and accepting and keeping our friendships. I remind them that they are "Stars" and that everybody has a way to shine.



Betsy Jerome, MS, NBCC, LC
Dallas Elementary School
Dallas, Pennsylvania

VISIT COMMUNITY MATTERS (www.community-matters.org) for solutions on how to stop bullying in your school. Also, check out the group's Safe School Ambassadors program.

Building a Bridge of Understanding

EACH YEAR IN MY ART ROOM I INTRODUCE A UNIT OF STUDY focused on the art and culture of another country or region. This year I decided to focus on Islamic art and culture. Since I provide art instruction to approximately 500 students in my little corner of the world, I thought this focus would be an opportunity to help build a bridge between Muslim students and non-Muslim students and begin a dialogue about Islam.

The students enter my room to the sounds of Arabia on my CD player. I give each a ginger cookie to eat as I explain about ginger, its history beginning in China, its healing properties and its use in Arabic recipes. They gather around me and my suitcase of artifacts and listen to my presentation.

I explain that the world population of Muslims, people who practice Islam, is currently approximately 1.57 billion. Without teaching about religion specifically, I explain that each of the world's religions has its own art and culture. I show them artifacts from various faiths such as the Hindu god Shiva, a Buddha, a silver and turquoise Jewish prayer book and Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*. I then begin my presentation of beautiful examples of Islamic painted manuscripts, metalwork, carved stone, architecture, textiles and ceramics. Students demonstrate their understanding of Islamic design principles through observation and discussion of geometric and natural patterns. Often my students, especially my Muslim students, enthusiastically share their personal connections to the various objects and stories. My Muslim students show pride and offer to bring in personal artifacts, such as a prayer rug.

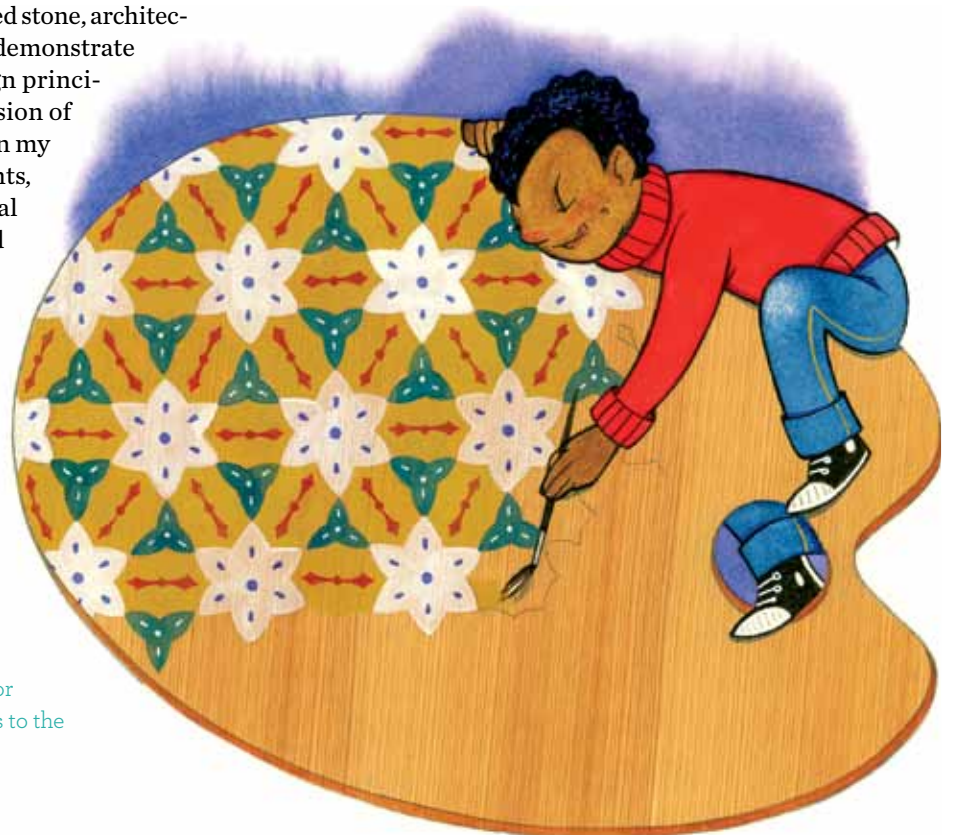
When I finish sharing my suitcase full of treasures I explain our art project. On each table are stencils, rulers and examples of Islamic patterns. The students' task is to

INVITE GUEST SPEAKERS who can present information about their own religion or faith tradition. The Islamic Networks Group (www.ing.org) helps locate Muslim guest speakers across the United States. For more on Arab culture and its contributions to the world, see www.adc.org/index.php?id=247

create a pattern of shapes that remind them of the art of Islam, based on what they just observed and discussed. I show them my example and explain the technique. First they select a paper color. I provide jewel tones reminiscent of the rugs we discussed. They use pencils, rulers and stencils to draw their repeating shapes and lines, creating wonderful patterns. Next, they dip cotton swabs into a mixture of equal parts bleach and water. They trace over the pencil lines with the bleach mixture. As if by magic, the paper color changes right before their wide eyes! Once the paper dries, additional details and complicated patterns are added using metallic colored pencils. The end results are as varied and beautiful as the art of Islam.

Helen Goren Shafton

Park View Elementary & Westfield Elementary
District 89 Schools
Glen Ellyn, Illinois





A Social Justice Study

I AM AN EIGHTH-GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER IN DURHAM, New Hampshire. My students have grown up in an environment where there is very little exposure to ethnic, racial or LGBT communities. They are ripe for learning, and are in a unique position to “be” the change.

To foster a better understanding of diversity, prejudice and discrimination, I created a social justice unit based on readings in varied genres of literature. We begin with an overview and discussions based on segments of various videos such as *If You Cried, You Died*, *The Long Walk Home* and *Come See the Paradise*. Each student chooses a topic that focuses on one particular group of people who have suffered prejudice and discrimination. Last year, student choices included American Indians, African Americans, American Muslims, Japanese-Americans during World War II, LGBT issues, Latinos and European Jews during the Holocaust.

Once students choose a topic, they are required to read non-fiction overviews, primary sources such as diaries and letters, a book (historical fiction, a biography or autobiography) as well as poetry written by survivors of prejudice. As they read independently in class, students share excerpts that

THE WEBQUEST, *Take a Stand Against Hate* (<http://questgarden.com/17/01/4/060220120601/>), promotes learning the skills needed to make your voice heard on important social justice issues.

powerfully reflect what it feels like to experience prejudice and discrimination. They also copy these excerpts into their notes, in preparation for their writing piece.



When students finish their readings, they write a three-to-five page story based on the literature. These stories must be told from the first-person perspective, and must reflect what it is like to experience prejudice. Stories can be in the form of a narrative, journal, letters or poetry. Students weave excerpts from the literature into their writing, and cite their sources. They then share their writing with one another, to teach or learn about other topics. Some years, younger students at our middle school are invited into our classroom, so that my eighth graders can share their knowledge with them.

As a culminating activity, I partner with the Office of Multicultural Affairs at the University of New Hampshire, and invite a panel of college students to spend the day in my classroom. The students are of varied ethnicities, sexual orientations and races. The panel presents its own stories, invites questions and fosters powerful discussions. At the end of this study, I ask my students to write reflections of the entire unit for their portfolios. Their thoughts and feelings show the enormous impact that this study can have on young peoples’ perspectives. In fact, former students who come back to visit years later comment on the impact that this study had on their approach to tolerance and intolerance.

Susie Renner
Oyster River Middle School
Durham, New Hampshire



TAPPING THE POWER OF PLACE

The problems of rural schools are often invisible to the public and policymakers. The solutions may be found in the communities themselves.

BY TIM LOCKETTE

In Illinois, a parent reminds her child to “pretend you’re dead” to avoid being shot if gun violence breaks out in school.

In Wisconsin, parents band together to protest the closing of a local school, which they see as the core of their community.

In South Carolina’s poorest districts, dropout rates hover around 50 percent and teachers seem to come and go as if through a revolving door.

Do these sound like problems from the

decaying heart of a major city? Think again.

In American popular culture, the word “rural” invokes images of sunny farms and little red schoolhouses—while “urban” means drugs, poverty and crime. But those who know the reality of both worlds will tell you that rural schools face many of the same challenges as their urban counterparts.

“One of the biggest myths is that rural communities don’t have anything to worry about,” said Rachel Tompkins, a longtime

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN STAUFFER

rural education advocate and former director of the Rural School and Community Trust. “They’re supposed to be scenic places full of happy, self-sufficient people who tend gardens and live off the land.”

In reality, Tompkins says, some of America’s poorest children go to rural schools. Rural poverty is often hidden away in places where policymakers can’t see it—in houses far from a paved road, in the temporary quarters of migrant farmworkers, in a car that doubles as a home. Teachers see this poverty every day, and others in the community sometimes know about it. But even they often think of concentrated poverty as a big-city problem.

In the 800 poorest rural districts, the poverty rate mirrors the rate in major urban districts such as Chicago and Los Angeles, and those 800 districts alone serve more than 900,000 students.

“Another major myth is that we don’t need to worry about rural education because rural is going away,” Tompkins said.

It’s true that America’s population has become majority-urban. But the fact is that the rural student body is larger than ever—it just hasn’t boomed at the same rate as the urban and suburban populations. A full 19 percent of America’s students are in majority-rural districts. Many states—including economically struggling states like Mississippi—are still majority rural.

“In popular culture, rural communities are all [white] and none of them are diverse,” Tompkins says. “And all poor children of color, supposedly, live in the inner city.”

In reality, children of color make up 25 percent of the rural school population. They’re African Americans in the Alabama Black Belt, American Indian students on reservations in New Mexico, Latino students on the Texas border or the children of immigrants in North Carolina—and a thousand other groups in a thousand other situations.

This shifting—and diverse—population belies another myth about rural communities. “We think of rural communities as places where nothing ever changes, but that’s not quite right,” Tompkins said.

Rural America is often the place where economic shifts and public policy changes have their most obvious impact. One big box retailer, one line in the Farm Bill, one plant closing can change the landscape forever. It’s a place where the economic and environmental consequences of public policy are written in the landscape—if you know how to read the landscape.

A Formula for Scarcity

Rural residents may not even be aware of one of the biggest changes affecting their schools right now—a small altera-

tion in federal policy that has shifted Title I assistance away from rural districts.

In 2002, Congress funded a seemingly small change that weighted the Title I funding heavily in favor of large districts, says Marty Strange, policy director for the Rural School and Community Trust.

“I’m sure this was done with good intentions,” Strange said. “But the result has been that rural communities have gotten a smaller piece of the Title I pie.”

Strange says no one begrudges funding to large, high-poverty districts like Chicago. But this policy shift has effectively transferred money from smaller districts to affluent communities like Gwinnett County, Georgia, and Fairfax County, Virginia. Strange says 10,800 rural Title I districts have lost out under the formula, as have mid-sized, struggling cities like Flint, Michigan.

“Part of the equation is to get students to start looking seriously at what it means to live in a rural place. They have questions about the world around them, and that’s a place to start teaching.”

“Because Title I funds come in one single disbursement, I have a feeling that a number of districts don’t even understand this formula has been decreasing their share of funding,” Strange said. “They’re adjusting to changes, but may not know the cause of the problem.”

Is Bigger Better?

For many districts, the answer to scarce funding is consolidation.

Combine several small schools into one large campus, the theory goes, and you can benefit from economies of scale. Administration will be cheaper; duplication will be eliminated. With a bigger teaching staff, you’ll be able to hire more specialists, provide a wider range of courses and support a healthy diversity of student clubs.

But many rural school advocates warn that the advantages of big schools, both financial and academic, may be an illusion.

“We’re rushing into consolidation, but we don’t really know what we’re doing,” said Leroy Johnson, director of Southern Echo, an organization that works to improve rural education in Mississippi through grassroots organizing.

Johnson and other rural education advocates say the financial costs of rural schools are often hidden. When school boards analyze the costs of running a consolidation, they

often don't factor in the cost of building the new school—just the yearly operating costs. With longer bus rides, fuel costs typically go up. And another spike in the price of gas could easily flip the numbers, turning a money-saving consolidation into a financial drain.

And longer bus rides have another down side—they waste students' time, and often prohibit them from participating in school activities.

Tompkins points to Pocahontas County, West Virginia, a county of roughly 10,000 residents, where all the schools are small.

"Some of these schools can barely field a marching band," Tompkins said. "But everyone is in band, or playing some sport, or both. There's accessibility, and there's participation."

Local Problems, Local Solutions

If rural schools aren't understood by the policymakers, where do we look for answers? Some rural advocates say the answers are right at our feet.

"I always tell people that we don't just have lived experiences, we have lived expertise," Johnson said. "We understand the problems better than anybody. We need to move from being the objects of power to being the architects of power."

To change both the policy and the pedagogy, they say, we need to recognize each rural community's vast potential.

"Part of the equation is to get students to start looking seriously at what it means to live in a rural place," Johnson said. "They have questions about the world around them, and that's a place to start teaching."

Johnson's organization, Southern Echo, uses the methods of grassroots community organizing to get rural residents active on the issues that matter to them—and to teach the basics of science and social studies. For instance, both of those disciplines are useful in a simple study of the local environment.

"Environmental justice is something that has real meaning in rural communities," Johnson said. "If your school is in the middle of a cotton field, you want to know what's being sprayed on it. If your diet consists largely of fish from Black Creek, you want to know what chemicals are in Black Creek."

The study of economics also plays a big role. Johnson recalls leading a group of elementary school students in an examination of property tax bills. They found that the tax assessor

seemed to be overvaluing African-American homes and undervaluing white-owned properties—and they got the county to do a reassessment.

Rural residents are often deeply ambivalent about local scandals. On the one hand, they want solutions to corruption. On the other hand, they're highly sensitive to news that "embarrasses" the community.

Rural education advocates say that's simply more evidence that rural America is not the sunny paradise of popular myth. On the other hand, they point out that there is great untapped energy and potential in rural areas. Success stories like Federal Hocking in Ohio (see p. 25) show what these schools can do.

"People need to get smart and realize they have power," Tompkins says. "They need to ask questions and take control." ♦

Grassroots Work in the Rural Classroom

"For the most part, rural schools are preparing students to leave the community," says rural education advocate Rachel Tompkins. "We don't draw on the power of the local community or the sense of place."

Leroy Johnson of Southern Echo has seen grassroots organizing principles work well in both the school and community. By sending your students out to investigate the local landscape—and the challenges facing the community—you can spark interest in content area material, and possibly ignite a fire for change. Here are a few topics students could investigate:

The Biology of Bus Rides Long bus rides are a common experience for students in rural schools. Is boarding a bus at sunrise really compatible with a child's biological clock? Students in a science classroom can look at their own school's conditions, compare them with scientific insights on biology and human performance, and come up with ways to make their schools better places to study.

Fixing the Formula Rural districts may have been shortchanged by recent changes in the Title I funding formula. The Rural School and Community Trust (www.ruraledu.org) offers an online tool to help local residents see how their district is affected. Students can ask themselves what level of funding is fair—and find ways to make their voices heard.

Environmental Justice Encourage students' questions about the world they see around them. Where are those truckloads of trees going? Why do we have a landfill to store other folks' garbage? Why are we warned not to eat the fish we catch? Looking into these local issues can lead to global lessons about how the environment affects us—and how we affect others living downstream.

Three from the Country

There is no “typical” rural teacher. But wherever rural teachers are, they struggle against mighty forces, and they often struggle alone. Here’s a glimpse into the lives of three teachers in diverse, far-flung settings.

BY TIM LOCKETTE

GEORGIA Who’s a Rebel?

David Dixon knew he was far from home when he pulled up to his new school and saw a Confederate battle flag, about 15 feet long, painted on the side of the gym.

“I knew Haralson County’s mascot was the rebel, but I’m not sure I expected this,” he said, chuckling. “It’s just a different world down here.”

Dixon teaches theater at Haralson County High School in the Appalachian foothills of northern Georgia. Atlanta is only about an hour away, if you take the interstate, but these sparsely populated hills seem far removed from the Southern metropolis. With a total population of around 25,000, Haralson County is the kind of place where only churches are open on Sunday morning, and where it’s hard to fill pews during deer season.

David Dixon came here as a sort of economic refugee. After a long career in various school-related positions in Michigan—and many years performing in community theater—Dixon made a mid-life decision to become a full-time theater teacher. His new career was just getting started when the bottom fell out of Michigan’s already-shaky economy.

“I had a friend who was a special education teacher, and he got laid off,” Dixon said. “When they’re letting go of special ed people, you know it’s bad. So we decided to go.”

At a job fair, he came across an opening in Haralson

County, where local theater advocates had managed to get a new theater built. The school system was looking for a drama teacher to help them put that theater to use. Dixon jumped at this rare chance—a chance to start a drama program in a Title I school.

As a Rust Belt native, Dixon recognizes much of the dynamic he sees in his classroom. An outsider might not notice a lot of social stratification in this 90 percent white county, but Dixon says there’s a strong undercurrent of class warfare between his rural students and more affluent “city” kids in nearby Bremen, a town of 4,600 people.

Other things, though, make Dixon shake his head in wonder. He’s sure there are gay people in this community, but the topic is never discussed openly here. Race is another third rail. And these genteel Southerners turn fierce when you lay a hand on their local traditions.

“Not long ago, there was a proposal to build a new gym, without the rebel flag,” he said. “During that football season, it was almost like a revolution here.”

The local discourse has had an effect on Dixon’s budding theater program. Interest in the program has been high overall—but African-American students seem reluctant to sign up, no matter how aggressively Dixon recruits them.

“I can’t get anybody to really tell me why,” he said. “But I have noticed that many of the students who take my class are also in the band, and there aren’t a lot of black kids in the band.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHARÓN STEINMANN



The band can be a touchy subject for Dixon. For years, the Haralson County band had an odd initiation ritual: Rookie band members were “auctioned off” to upperclassmen during band camp. They had to spend the summer acting as servants to the band members who bought them. Dixon spoke out against the practice. Band boosters didn’t take it well.

“I’m reluctant to even talk about that one,” he said. “It’s clear that the band alumni see this as an honored tradition, one you don’t touch.”

Dixon said he has also been surprised by the number of students who have family members in jail or prison, largely due to the epidemic of methamphetamine use. And he is surprised at the number of students who have been assaulted. Some of those students, he said, seem drawn to drama

“We need to give them a way to experience real diversity, and the diversity we have here is something we don’t talk much about. Theater can fill that space. It pushes you to see things from someone else’s perspective.”

David Dixon

classes, as a way to work out their feelings.

Still, it wouldn’t be fair to characterize Dixon’s students as victims. He describes them as eager, genuine, surprisingly open to new experiences. Many of them, he said, feel a strong sense of place, and would like to stay in Haralson County after graduation. Still, they know the options here are limited, and many are sure the post-graduation job search will take them to Atlanta or some other city.

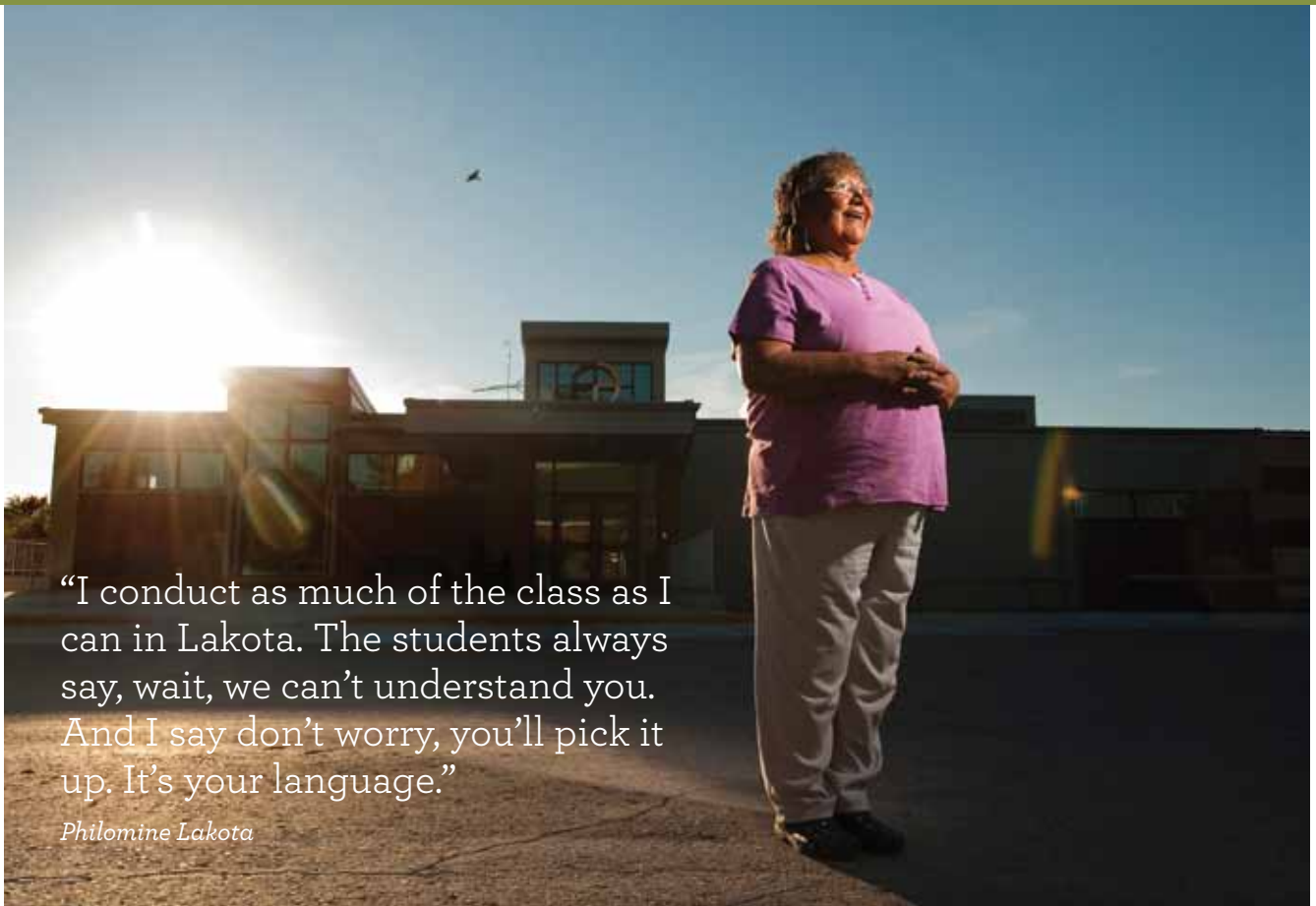
Theater, Dixon says, can help with that.

“There are important, basic job skills that are hard to get here,” Dixon said. “If you’re white and you’ve never spent significant amounts of time with Hispanic and black people, you’re going to be uncomfortable when you enter the modern workplace.

“We need to give them a way to experience real diversity, and the diversity we have here is something we don’t talk much about,” he said. “Theater can fill that space. It pushes you to see things from someone else’s perspective.”

And theater is something Haralson County is genuinely open to. Dixon says he “cut the crap out of” *Grease* to avoid offending local mores. When the school put on a one-act play with an oblique reference to a lesbian couple, a local pastor told Dixon that the mention of gay people in a school play should be illegal.

But for the most part, people come to the plays, clap, and feel proud.



“I conduct as much of the class as I can in Lakota. The students always say, wait, we can’t understand you. And I say don’t worry, you’ll pick it up. It’s your language.”

Philomine Lakota

This year, they’re putting on *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Maybe some one will object, accusing the school of playing fast and loose with scripture. But so far, the community seems to be warming to a play that covers a story they know and respect.

“I have 15 young men in this play, and all of them are pretty good dancers,” he said. “What are the chances that you’d find that in a big-city school, much less Haralson County, Georgia? It’s amazing.”

SOUTH DAKOTA Strong Enough to Be Lakota

Philomine Lakota is 63 years old. And before she retires, she has to teach her students everything.

Everything. The word for *ocean*. The word for *sky*. How to express love, how to tell a story. Why it’s important to know your father’s name.

“I was never formally educated in the Lakota Language,” she said. “My generation is probably the last to learn it the old way—in early childhood, from parents and grandparents.”

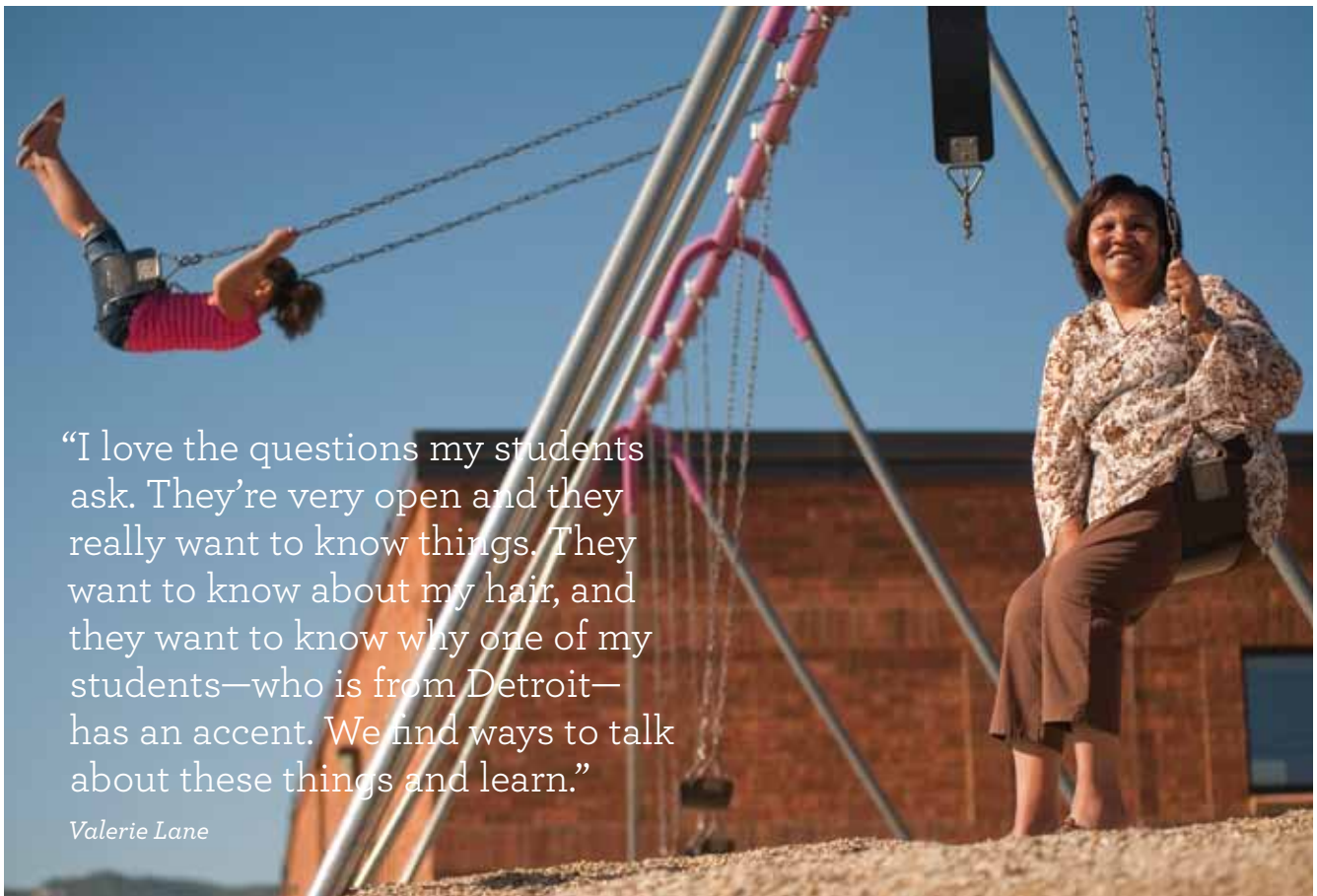
Lakota is one of two teachers of Lakota language and studies at the Red Cloud Indian School on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. To an outsider, Red Cloud might seem like just another rural high school—a small building full of hopeful people, surrounded by the bleak majesty of nature.

But long-time residents like Philomine Lakota know that the school is the product of a long conflict between monolithic forces. Pine Ridge is where many of the Lakota people were settled after the Great Sioux War of 1877, the last great Native American offensive against U.S. expansionism.

Today Pine Ridge is the poorest reservation in America and one of the poorest locales in the United States. The unemployment rate here is rarely below 70 percent. Drug and alcohol abuse are rampant. Statisticians say an average person born here can expect to live to about 50, a quarter-century lower than the nationwide average. That number is due in part to a staggering number of teen suicides and the highest infant mortality rate in the United States.

Red Cloud Indian School is one truly bright spot amidst the misery. Once known as Holy Rosary Mission, the school is now named for Red Cloud, the great Oglala war leader who invited the Jesuits to build a school here. Locals will tell you that the school offers Pine Ridge kids their best shot at college. The school competes in, and wins, national contests in science. And the school is struggling mightily to turn the knowledge in Philomine Lakota’s head—an entire language, along with the stories and worldview that come with it—into a curriculum for the high school classroom.

“I know it’s not impossible to teach the Lakota language,” she said. “Clearly, that has been done again and again. But it’s a great challenge to teach it in the classroom because I



“I love the questions my students ask. They’re very open and they really want to know things. They want to know about my hair, and they want to know why one of my students—who is from Detroit—has an accent. We find ways to talk about these things and learn.”

Valerie Lane

didn’t learn it formally.”

Every day, Philomine Lakota faces a classroom of 10th graders eager to learn. Most know only a smattering of words like *unchi*, or grandmother. They don’t know how to fit the words together, or how to make sentences of their own.

“I conduct as much of the class as I can in Lakota,” she said. “The students always say, wait, we can’t understand you. And I say don’t worry, you’ll pick it up. It’s your language.”

Many of her students live in the remote Badlands, and their parents drive them more than half an hour just to reach the bus route. Hunger is a serious problem, and Lakota often brings snacks to her classroom knowing they are more than a treat.

With so much hardship on the reservation, a language course might seem to be a luxury. Philomine Lakota sees the language as the foundation for other skills.

“One of our biggest challenges here is the cultural identity problem,” she says. When students leave the reservation—or even when they watch television—they’re exposed to racist stereotypes that tell them who they are. Students often aren’t able to push back effectively against those stereotypes, she says, because they simply don’t know enough of the Lakota story.

“At Red Cloud, there’s a strong focus on going away to college,” said Lakota. “But it’s scary out there. There is a lot of racism. There is culture shock. A lot of people who go out of the reservation become involved in drug use because of this.”

Lakota finds that her students are more than eager to learn about their culture. They may not crowd around her and ask to hear old stories. But they have plenty of questions about Lakota life in the past. “Maybe it’s just because I am their image of a grandmother,” she said. “But they show a great deal of respect. They’re eager to know.”

But Philomine Lakota knows her students need more than curiosity and knowledge. They need to be strong in their Lakota identity, she said.

For teens in an English-dominant culture, this can be harder than it sounds. The school is helping out, in part by instituting a rule that all classroom requests—for a hall pass or a bathroom break, for instance—have to be in Lakota. Philomine Lakota recently acted as announcer for a home basketball game and did the announcing in Lakota. And the school’s cheerleaders practiced Lakota cheers, as well as the “trill.” It is a ululating cry Lakota women have traditionally given to show they are proud of their men.

But when the other team showed up from a predominantly white school, the cheerleaders were too bashful to do the trill.

“They’re weren’t strong enough. Not yet,” she said.

Not yet. But there are encouraging signs. Philomine Lakota does the trill herself at basketball games and wrestling matches. She says the athletes now come up to her and ask if she is going to “do ‘le-le-le’ for them.” At a recent

recent match, the teacher did give the trill. And she was answered by another “le-le-le” from a small group of 11 and 12-year-olds.

“That meant a lot to me,” she said. “It’s a sign that we’re moving in the right direction.”

WYOMING Ambassador to Rawlins

Depending on how you look at it, **Valerie Lane** is either in teaching heaven or a kind of comical hell.

When her first-graders ask probing questions about the color of her skin or the texture of her hair, Lane feels that Rawlins, Wyoming, is where she is meant to be.

But she feels a little differently when she’s driving to Casper—115 miles away—to get a haircut.

“I actually had a cosmetologist [in Rawlins] tell me, very innocently, that she doesn’t know how to do ‘colored hair,’” Lane says, chuckling. “I’m talking about a 22-year-old woman saying this.

“That’s Rawlins,” Lane continues. “People are very open and fair minded, but there’s a lot they don’t know, because they never had the chance to learn.”

Lane grew up in Casper, the 55,000-person city that is one of Wyoming’s biggest population centers. But today she is one of a handful of black teachers in Carbon County, a thinly populated expanse of scenic mountains and forests along the Continental Divide. Carbon County is twice the size of California’s sprawling Los Angeles County. But here, the total population is just over 15,000.

If you live in Rawlins, chances are you work in the oil fields, or at the nearby state penitentiary. If not, you probably work in a business that serves the needs of people who do.

Historically, this area has been overwhelmingly white, though Carbon County is seeing some small changes. The collapse of the Rust Belt job market has attracted many Midwesterners to Wyoming, bringing a new level of racial and ethnic diversity.

Somehow, when children of color arrive in Rawlins, they always seem to find their way into Valerie Lane’s class. And she’s fine with that. Lane sees herself very much as an ambassador here, sharing new worlds with white students and giving African-American, Latino and Asian students a chance to see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

“I love the questions my students ask,” she said. “They’re very open, and they really want to know things. They want to know about my hair, and they want to know why one of my students—who is from Detroit—has an accent. We find ways to talk about these things and learn.”

Many of her students have never seen a black teacher before, and many parents haven’t either. For a teacher with a background in multicultural education, the wonder of this small mountain town means that every moment is a teachable moment.

The downside, of course, is that even the best teacher can’t be in “teacher mode” all the time. And Lane finds herself constantly, patiently, teaching the same lesson over and over again—even with adults, even when school is out.

“Some people in Rawlins have never seen an African American, except on MTV and reruns of *Cops*,” she said, again chuckling. “So you can imagine the perceptions they have.”

Those perceptions have occasionally made her work difficult, Lane admits, though she is reluctant to talk specifics. “Let’s just say that I have had to prove myself in a way others have not,” she said.

Lane isn’t alone in that experience. When University of Wyoming researchers set out to document the experiences of teachers of color in Wyoming towns of fewer than 2,500 people, the results were both inspiring and disturbing.

The researchers found that teachers were highly motivated by a desire to change their students’ lives. They also reported that students, parents and colleagues often questioned their credentials. They said their students often saw them as “freakish” because they didn’t conform to pop-culture stereotypes of African Americans and Latinos. They reported feeling invisible and isolated.

At least the curriculum is on her side, Lane said. She praised the school district for a reading curriculum that includes diverse topics and characters—including American Indian stories and articles on Rosa Parks and Jackie Robinson.

To some, that may sound like a “heroes and holidays” approach. But Lane says it’s far better than the curriculum she recalls from her own Wyoming childhood.

“When I was in school in Casper, the only black people we saw in the media were committing crimes and going to prison,” she said. “At 45, seeing African-American stories in a textbook still gives me a sense of pride.”

Lane thinks often about Casper, where students have school-issued laptops and the school system addresses de facto segregation by promising to transport any student, in any community, to the school of their choice. As a sparsely populated, oil-rich state, Wyoming enjoys the funding that can make those programs happen.

But Lane wishes more of that money could find its way to Carbon County, where teacher pay is lowest in the state. And she worries about the number of dropouts in local high schools. She believes the dropout rate is due in large part to students’ belief—real or imagined—that oilfield jobs will be waiting for them, with or without a diploma.

“I don’t want to say that Rawlins isn’t the real world,” she said. “But when I look around—at our one supermarket, our one furniture store—I know that this is just not the way things are in the rest of the world.”

That’s why Lane talks to her students about how to get into college, even though graduation is more than a decade away.

“If they want to come back to Rawlins after college, that’s fine,” she said. “But they need the tools to do more.” ♦

The Lessons of a Rural Principal

Eighteen years ago, I thought I was starting a brief stint at a rural school. It turned into a career full of experimentation and success.

BY GEORGE WOOD

Rural schools don't usually make people think of innovation or experimentation. In fact, many people view rural areas as being too traditional or complacent to blaze educational trails.

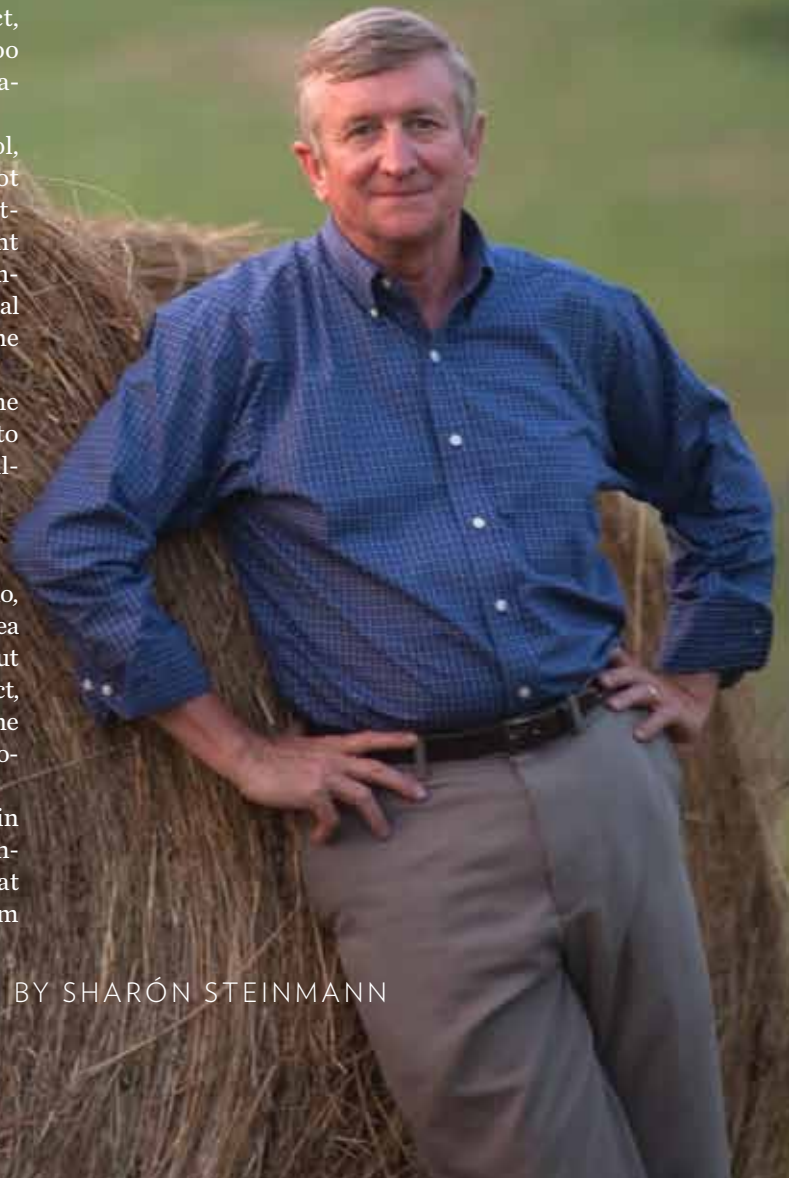
But I am fortunate to be principal of one rural school, Federal Hocking Middle and High School, that is not afraid to innovate. Federal Hocking is also committed to achieving greater equity, democracy and student achievement. Our school is not perfect, but staff members have sorted out some important issues through trial and error. And they have done so with students who come primarily from poor and lower-middle class families.

What follows are the lessons we have learned over the last two decades—lessons that might prove valuable to others who want to move their schools along to fulfilling a public, democratic purpose.

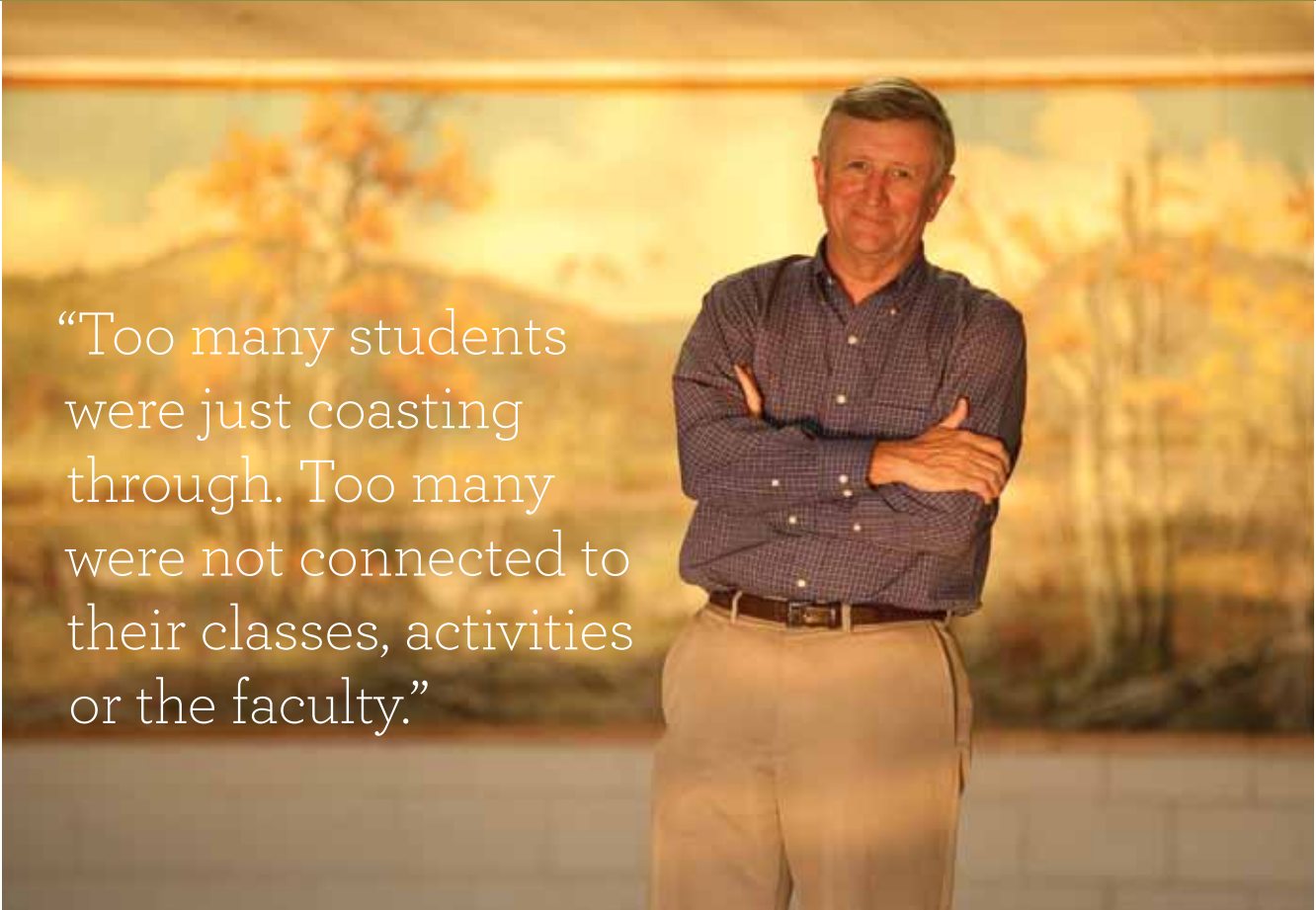
One School's Story

Federal Hocking serves a rural part of southeastern Ohio, nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Plateau. The area is large geographically, covering over 190 square miles. But it produces fewer than 1,100 students for the school district, with only 420 or so students in the secondary school. The average family income hovers around \$20,000. Many people find themselves chronically in and out of work.

Federal Hocking benefits from a nearby university in the county seat of Athens, Ohio. And I came to be principal while taking a leave from that university. What was to be a two-year stint has turned into a long-term



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHARÓN STEINMANN

A photograph of a middle-aged man with short grey hair, wearing a blue patterned button-down shirt and khaki pants, standing with his arms crossed. He is positioned in front of a blurred background of trees with yellow and orange leaves, suggesting an autumn sunset. The lighting is warm and golden.

“Too many students were just coasting through. Too many were not connected to their classes, activities or the faculty.”

career. Last spring, I shook hands with several children of folks whose hands I shook on graduation day 18 years ago. In those nearly two decades, under the leadership of a dedicated faculty, Federal Hocking has become known as a center of innovation and change in public education.

The path began 18 years ago when staff members started to look at how we could improve the school’s culture. Too many students were just coasting through. Too many were not connected to their classes, activities or the faculty. And the building had a kind of reckless feel to it. It wasn’t old, but it was in a state of disrepair. And the faculty, while committed to the students, did not feel empowered to make a difference in the lives of our kids.

The Question Was, Where to Start?

After a year of study, we realized that we needed a school that was smaller and slower. This would allow us to create a culture where the faculty could better connect with the students. At the time, going smaller and slower ran opposite of the conventional wisdom. Schools in rural areas were being consolidated and made larger to create economic efficiency and a greater number of course offerings. And the entire nation seemed devoted to speeding things up, especially when it came to schools. There was great pressure to teach more content sooner to more children.

Let me explain what I mean when I say “smaller.” Federal

Hocking was already small in population, with fewer than 400 students. But we found that we were acting like a big school (we jokingly referred to ourselves as a “big school in drag”). With an eight-period day, students had to juggle as many as eight separate subjects and teachers were seeing as many as 150 students a day. While we were in charge of helping young people use their minds well, there was no time, as Deborah Meier has put it, to get to know their minds.

I would like to claim that we did all sorts of research before launching our reforms, but that would not be true. It is true we visited a few schools and looked at some different ways of organizing how we used time and size. But the fact of the matter is that one day, over the copy machine, a senior faculty member and I just turned it all into a division problem—how few class periods a day could we go down to before the class sizes became too large to manage. The answer: four periods a day.

The following year we launched our block schedule. That is now common in many schools, but it was somewhat heretical two decades ago. We found that the school culture did indeed change. Students and faculty came to know one another better, there was more time for in-depth exploration of ideas and concepts, and discipline problems nearly vanished. There were simply fewer human interactions to work out each day.

Now we faced a new question: How do we use our newfound culture? Over the years we have added a number of

things to our plate to make sure that we engage every student well. Those changes include:

- ➔ Creating an advisory system that has teachers follow students through their school career and support them in both social and academic development;
- ➔ The elimination of ability grouping and tracking so that every student has equal access to high-status knowledge;
- ➔ The creation of integrated and interdisciplinary curricula, so that students see the world as a whole rather than as a collection of isolated facts;
- ➔ Promoting student democracy. This includes giving students an equal voice with faculty in the hiring of teachers. Students also have seats on all decision-making bodies, including ex-officio seats on our local school board. Likewise, students have control of all student events and direct responsibility for school programs such as our inter-session and senior project night;
- ➔ Graduation requirements that call for a graduation portfolio and a senior project;
- ➔ Internships for juniors and seniors that engage them in making a difference in the community while exploring careers;
- ➔ Performance assessments that require students to show that they can use their knowledge rather than just memorize for a test;
- ➔ A literacy program based on the idea that every student must be literate to be an active and engaged democratic citizen.

Trouble Ahead

I'd like to say that all these changes went smoothly and without controversy. But they didn't. The portfolio requirement caused so much anger at one point that the local school board did not renew my contract as principal. Thankfully, the non-renewal was withdrawn after a student protest and walkout. I can also thank community pressure and the good work of an attorney. Shortly thereafter a new school board was elected that supported the changes recommended. However, I realized afterward that some of the blame lay with me. Had I done a better job of communicating what we were trying to do and garnering community support for the changes, this unfortunate event would not have occurred.

Despite this setback, the initiatives we started at Federal Hocking led to some clear indications of success. The school's graduation rate is over 95 percent yearly. Well over 70 percent of our students go on to college, and nearly all of them are admitted to their first choice. Local employers report that they look forward to hiring our graduates, and data from a transcript study show that our students earn over a B+ average in college.

But there is something more. Our students continue to display the characteristics we value—tolerance, engage-

ment, lifelong learning—after they leave our walls. They are registered to vote, are active in local politics and civic groups, and volunteer in all parts of community life. They have, we believe, developed the habits of heart and mind that democracy requires, and that our communities need. ♦

Lessons Learned

Over 18 years the staff at Federal Hocking has learned a lot about changing a school culture. Here are some of the most important lessons.

Change has to begin with the perceived needs of those to whom the change is going to happen. Too often we allow the “experts” to both define the problem and present the solution. This is the case in much of school reform today, and it has led to failure after failure among reformers. When I came to Federal Hocking I was armed with my college professor ideas of how to “fix” the school—we would institute teaching teams and integrated curriculum. But the staff and students wanted a different approach. Rather than isolated teams, they asked for a school with more collaboration and community.

The most important issue for any principal is to establish the proper school culture. If the culture is not right—if teachers and students are not well connected, if democracy in all its forms is not practiced, if people are just going to school—no reform matters. Thus, any progress through the hard and good work of school change has to begin with taking the school's temperature, repeatedly.

Every change has to be measured against three standards:

Equity Does the change make it more likely that all students will have the opportunity to learn?

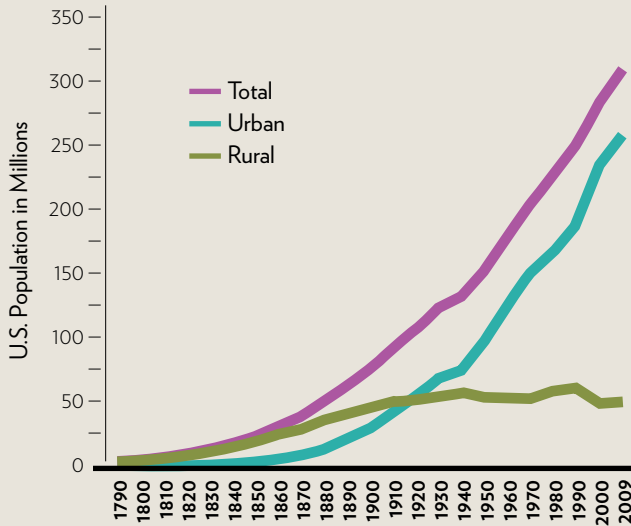
Learning Does the change more deeply engage young people in learning how to use their minds well?

Teaching Does the change enable teachers to better practice their craft?

Finally, though said too often, communication is key. You cannot stop talking, ever, about why the school is doing what it is doing. Remember, every few years the population of students and their families turns over. That means every issue, every change, every challenge must be returned to again and again to ensure buy-in and commitment on everyone's part.

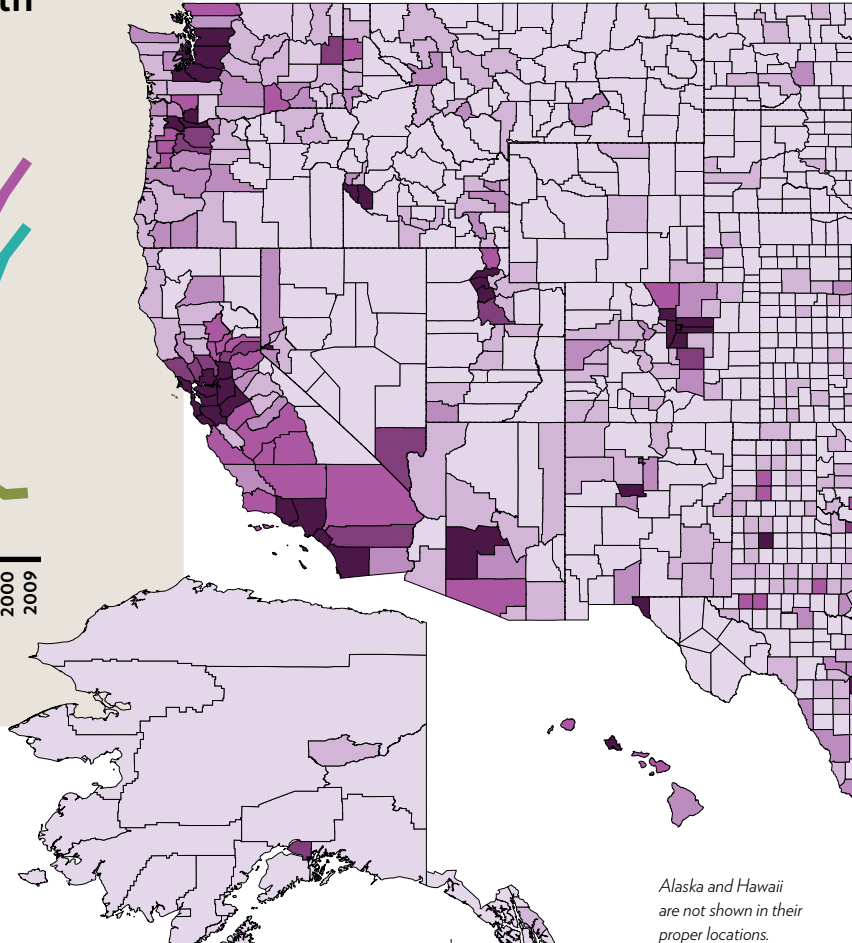
What is Rural America

Urban and Rural Population Growth 1790-2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

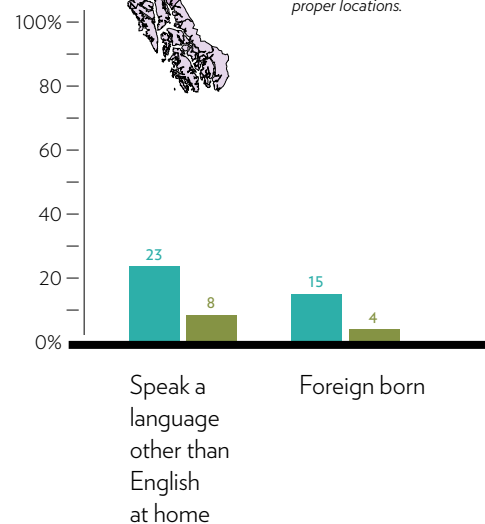
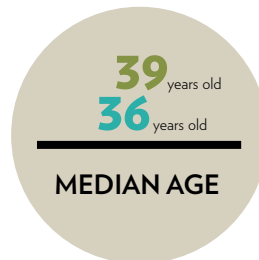
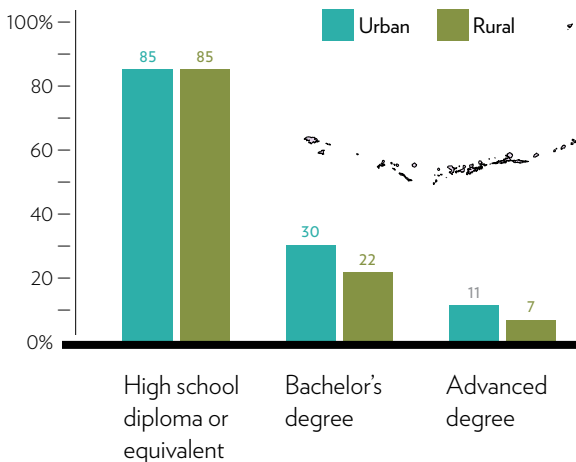
Population per Square



Alaska and Hawaii are not shown in their proper locations.

Urban and Rural America

Statistics in Percents



erica?

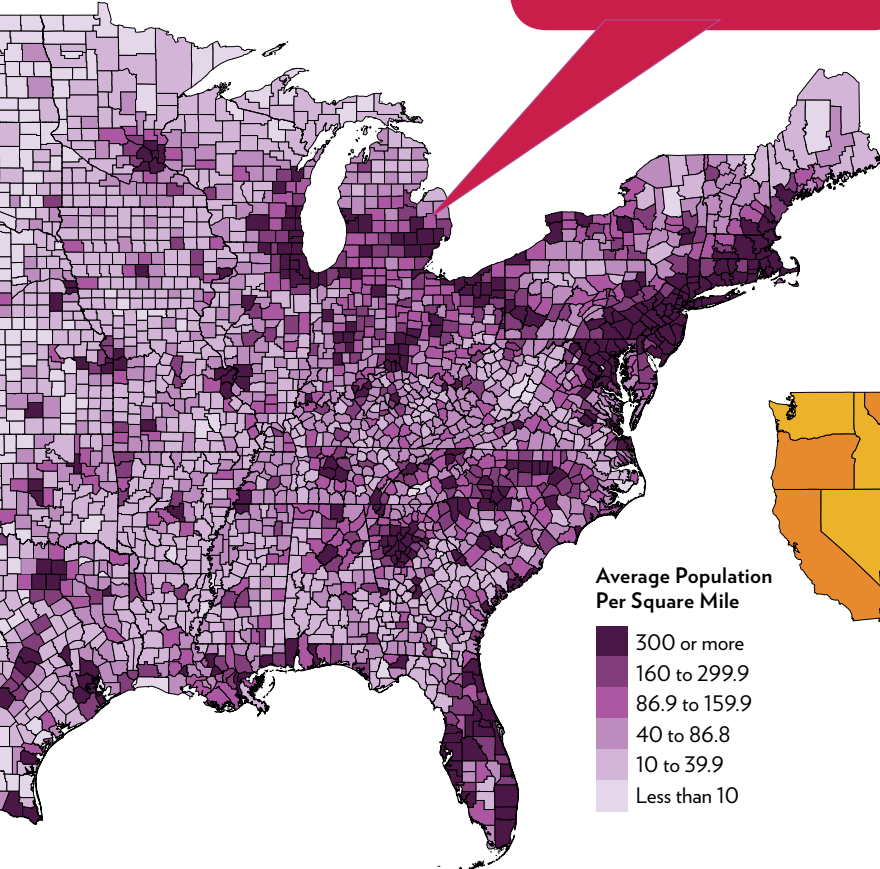
COMPILED BY CAROL KREIS

Mile

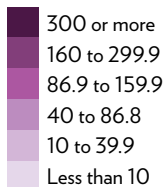
AVERAGE U.S. DENSITY

86.9

INDIVIDUALS
PER SQUARE MILE

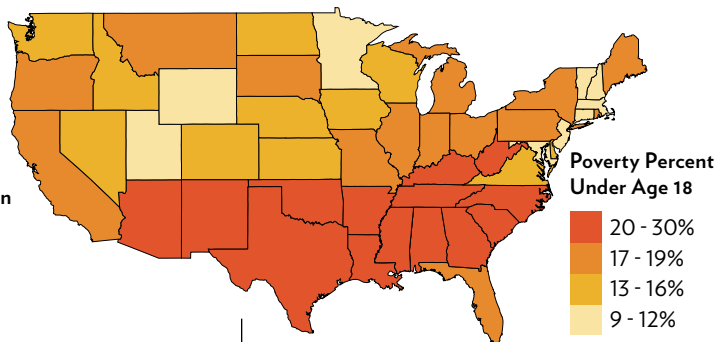


Average Population
Per Square Mile

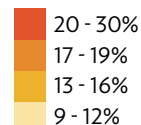


Children in Poverty

The worst child poverty occurs in 14 states within the contiguous United States. Rates tend to be highest in Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, along the Mexican border and in states with many American Indian reservations. Four counties in South Dakota, five in Mississippi, two in Kentucky, one in Louisiana and one in North Dakota have child poverty rates of 50 percent or more. Ziebach County, South Dakota, has the highest rate of child poverty at 67 percent.

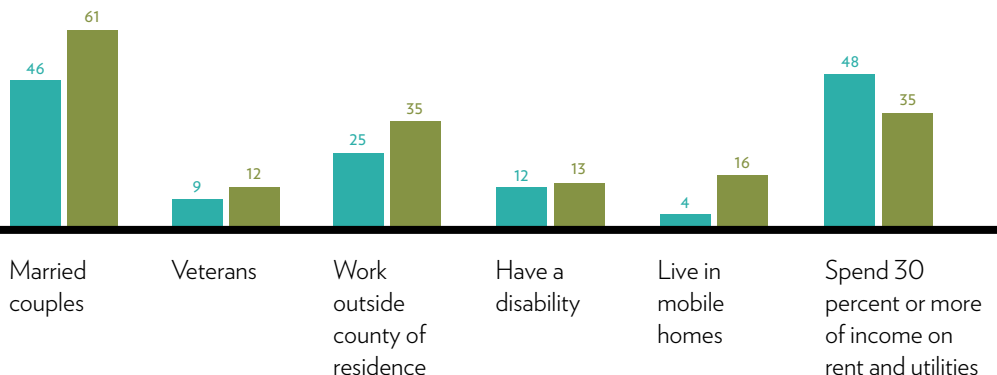


Poverty Percent
Under Age 18



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Estimates Branch, "2008 Poverty and Median Income Estimates—Counties," November 2009

RURAL AMERICA It is not limited to a single geographic region or a single group of people. These maps and charts bring some of the statistics to life.



WEB EXCLUSIVE

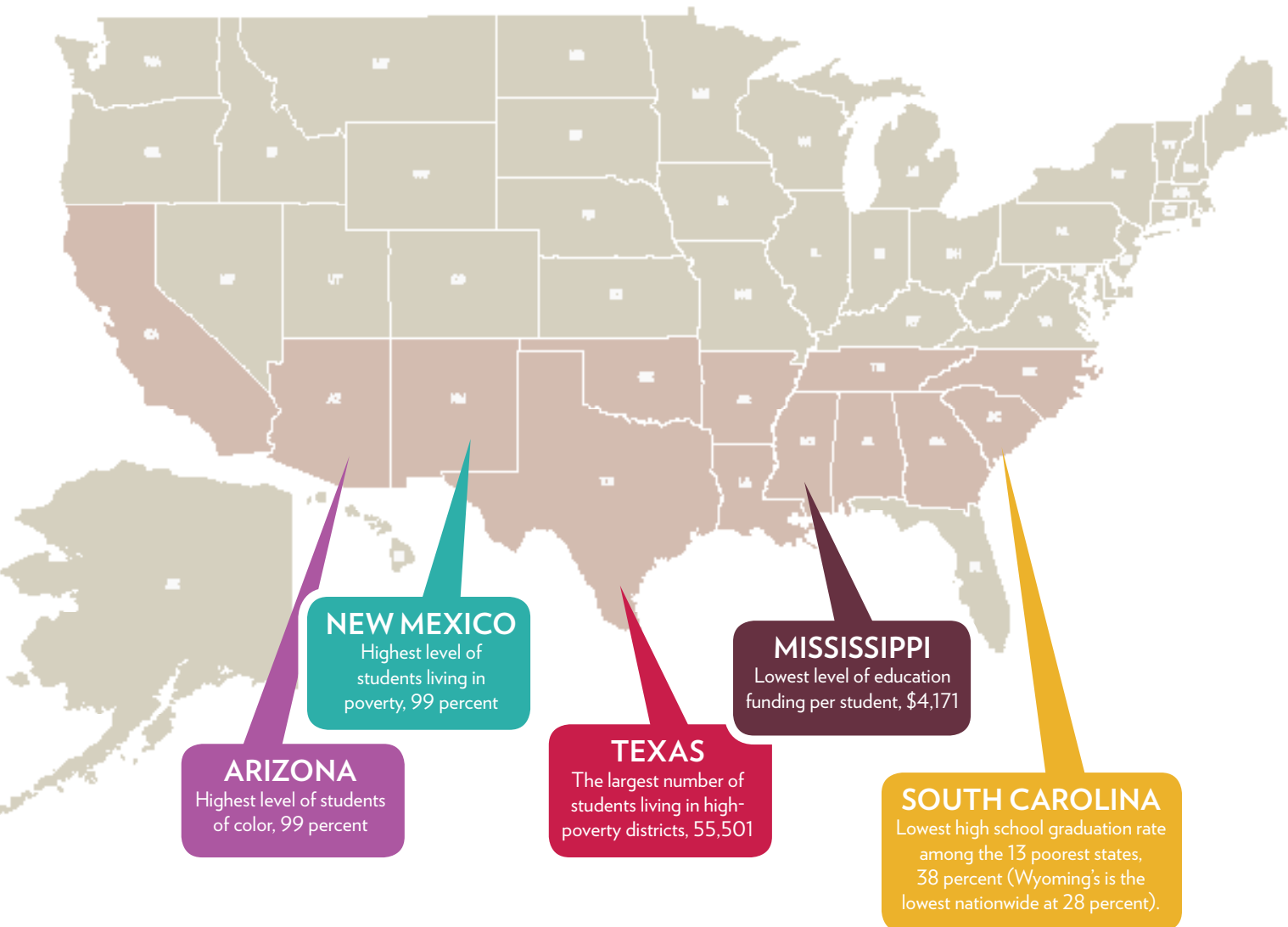
Like these pages?
Get PDFs and lessons
at www.tolerance.org

Source (bar graphs): American Community Survey, 2008, factfinder.census.gov

The Poorest of the Poor in Rural Education

Research suggests that poverty is the biggest threat to academic achievement. With that in mind, the Rural School and Community Trust set out to identify the poorest rural school districts in every state. The group used five indicators to point toward what they termed “concentrated poverty.” Those indicators are **1** number of students living in the districts, **2** percentage of those students

living in poverty, **3** percentage of students of color, **4** educational spending per student and **5** high school graduation rate. These 13 states—**forming a solid band across the southern United States**, from California to North Carolina—had the most concentrated poverty in rural areas.



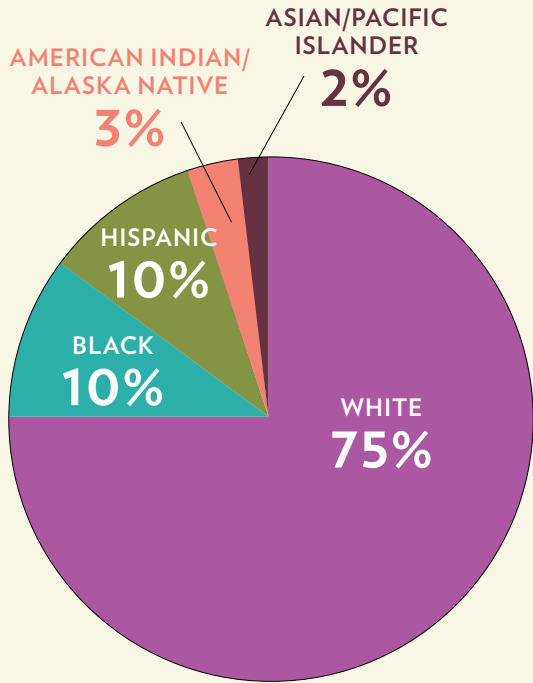
⦿ *These figures are for the 10 percent of poorest rural school districts within each state, not the state as a whole.*

Alaska and Hawaii are not shown in their proper locations.

Source: Johnson, J., Strange M. "Why Rural Matters 2009: State and Regional Challenges and Opportunities." Rural School and Community Trust, November 2009. www.ruraledu.org

Student Minorities by State

Statistics in Percents
Included are minorities that are at least 3 percent of each state's population.



Students in Rural Schools

BY RACE

8,238,311	White
1,119,974	Black
1,071,729	Hispanic
334,640	American Indian/ Alaska Native
199,441	Asian/Pacific Islander
10,964,095	TOTAL

STATES IN WHICH
MINORITIES MAKE UP A MAJORITY
OF THE STUDENT
POPULATION

In 2050, the U.S. Census Bureau expects the U.S. population of minority children to be 62 percent, up from 44 percent in 2008. Thirty-nine percent are projected to be Hispanic, up from 22 percent in 2008.

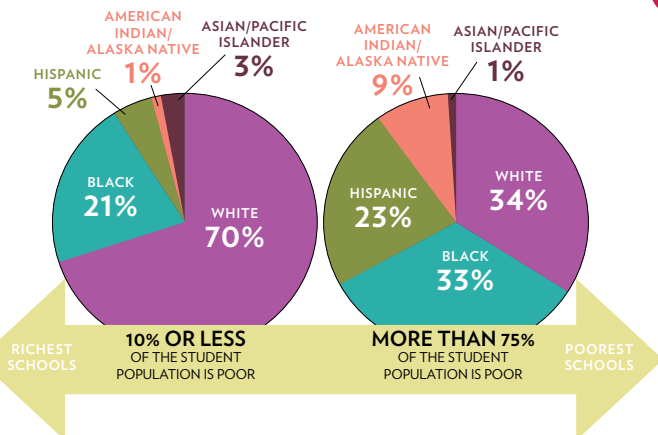
%
HISPANIC
BLACK
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKA NATIVE
ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER

Alabama	4	35		
Alaska	6	4	24	7
Arizona	42	6	5	3
Arkansas	8	23		
California	48	7		11
Colorado	28	6		3
Connecticut	16	13		4
Delaware	10	33		3
Florida	25	23		
Georgia	10	38		3
Hawaii	5	2		73
Idaho	14			
Illinois	20	19		4
Indiana	7	12		
Iowa	7	6		
Kansas	13	9		3
Kentucky	3	11		
Louisiana	3	46		
Maine		3		
Maryland	9	38		6
Massachusetts	14	8		5
Michigan	5	20		3
Minnesota	6	9		6
Mississippi		51		
Missouri	4	18		
Montana	3		11	
Nebraska	12	8		
Nevada	36	11		8
New Hampshire	3			
New Jersey	19	17		8
New Mexico	56	3	11	
New York	21	20		7
North Carolina	10	28		
North Dakota			9	
Ohio	3	16		
Oklahoma	10	11	19	
Oregon	16	3		5
Pennsylvania	7	16		3
Rhode Island	18	9		3
South Carolina	5	39		
South Dakota			11	
Tennessee	5	25		
Texas	47	14		3
Utah	15			3
Vermont				
Virginia	9	26		5
Washington	15	6	3	8
West Virginia		5		
Wisconsin	8	10		4
Wyoming	10			

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2007-2008, nces.ed.gov

Poverty in Rural Public Schools

BY RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP



Source: Planty, M.; Hussar, W.; Snyder, T.; Kena, G.; KewalRamani, A.; Kemp, J.; Bianco, K.; Dinkes, R. "The Condition of Education 2009" (NCES 2009-081). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., June 2009. nces.ed.gov

COUNTRY OUTPOSTS



Life can be tough for LGBT students in rural schools. But like kids in more urban areas, that can change with the right kind of support from teachers and parents.

BY SEAN McCOLLUM

Ninth-grader Sadie Bauer was walking hand-in-hand with her girlfriend in a hallway of Kennewick High. It was a brave act of affection, considering bigoted attitudes toward same-sex relationships in this rural area of Washington State.

The words rang out, “You ***** dyke!”

Sadie braced herself for more profanity and slurs, when out of the crowd came one of the school’s math teachers. The teacher was probably a head shorter than the bully she confronted, recalls Sadie. But she still got in the name-caller’s face until he backed off. Later, Sadie’s tormentor came up and apologized.

For Sadie, now 19, the teacher’s intervention was a memorable moment in an otherwise miserable high school career. “School was horrible,” she remembers. “I was so stressed out. There were only two or three teachers I could talk to about being gay.” She describes being so fearful of the school locker room that she lied to her doctor to get a note to escape the teasing and taunts. By sophomore year, Sadie says, she showed up at school only twice a week. In the end, dropping out was a mere technicality, though she proudly shares that she recently earned her GED.

Being an LGBT youth in America has never been a Gay Pride Parade, no matter the community setting. But most rural schools prove an especially unhappy and dispiriting place for kids whose sexuality or gender expression does not fit within community expectations. Those are the findings of researchers for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), published in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* last August.

“We keep finding that youth in rural areas—whether gay or perceived as gay—are more likely to be victimized verbally and physically,” says Dr. Joe Kosciw, lead researcher in the national study. In fact, the study found that these students are more at risk in rural districts than in urban districts with a history of bullying problems. “In addition, rural schools and communities often lack resources such as Gay-Straight Alliances or youth centers that can help offset the negative experiences of victimization.”

Where might help for these students come from? The work of GLSEN and other national groups are increasingly

entering frays to offer support. But as LGBT teens are eager to share, the intervention of friendly math teachers is not to be underestimated. “You learn very quickly to identify safe teachers,” says Korey Gaddis, also a former Kennewick High student. “You pick up on their vibe.”

For a decade now, GLSEN’s biannual *National School Climate Survey* has revealed and quantified the bias encountered by many LGBT students in middle and high schools across the United States. Lowlights from the most recent 2007 survey include 86 percent of LGBT students reporting verbal harassment; 61 percent saying that they feel unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation; 33 percent indicating that they have skipped a day of school in the last month due to feeling unsafe; and 22 percent reporting that they have been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation. The idea that rural students are at greater risk for these abuses sounds alarm bells for LGBT youth advocates.

Out in the Country

As Dr. Kosciw and his fellow authors discuss in their article, “the overall climate of a school is ... influenced by and potentially reflects the attitudes, beliefs and overall climate of the larger community”—for better and worse. For rural areas, the “better” includes local recognition of schools as integral parts of the community, with area businesses and service organizations actively supporting school programs. Schools and students may benefit from strong values promoting the care and education of “their kids.”

The “worse” is most evident when school and community leaders encounter values they consider alien. Many rural residents pride themselves on their conservative social and religious values, and distrust those whose identities and lifestyles fall outside those strictures. The relatively recent emergence of the national gay rights movement, and the fact that gay kids are growing up and coming out in their small towns, presents unnerving challenges to many rural residents and their ideas of how the world should work. These are among the views put forward by Mary L. Gray in her insightful book, *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*.

Mark Lee has spent the last three years trying to communicate

across this cultural divide in the Tri-City Area. In 2006, Lee moved from urban and progressive Portland, Oregon, to this farming region that includes the cities of Kennewick, Pasco and Richland. “The Tri-Cities are an incredibly conservative, white, religious community,” Lee says. He quickly recognized the lack of an oasis for gay kids, and soon after his arrival established the Vista Youth Center, dedicated to the wellbeing of LGBT youth, ages 14-21. The center offers a support network and social outlet for dozens of teens and young adults, some who drive more than an hour each way for meetings.

Lee has witnessed the struggles of area LGBT students close up. “[LGBT] kids at Kennewick High learn quickly how to sneak in and out of school so as not to be screamed at,” he says. “Youth have gotten beat up. They have to deal with frequent insults, sometimes from teachers as well as classmates. With all the bullying and harassment, I personally don’t know how they make it through the school day.”

At the same time, Lee describes the positive effect even a ray of support has on LGBT youth. “I’ve seen radical change in most young people who come to [Vista Youth Center],” he says. “I’ve seen them go from belligerent and depressed to being sweet, regular kids.”

“It’s an amazing place,” adds Sadie about VYC, “a home away from home where I can be myself. If the youth center wasn’t here, I don’t know what I’d do. It’s a lifesaver.”

Lee recognizes that part of his mission is to reach out and educate community leaders about LGBT youth. He has brought in panels of educators to listen and respond to concerns and complaints from students. He plans to invite local ministers and church leaders to discuss the area’s religious intolerance for homosexuality, which frequently fuels gay-bashing. “There’s a lot of consciousness-raising that needs to happen,” Lee says.

Student Non-Discrimination Act

Federal non-discrimination laws specifically address discrimination based on characteristics that include race, color, sex, religion, disability and national origin. But they do not specify sexual orientation. This leaves LGBT students and their parents with few legal options when faced with the hostility and prejudice that are so common in public schools.

The Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA) would establish a comprehensive federal prohibition on discrimination in public schools based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

First introduced in January 2010, the bill is modeled after Title IX, which prohibits discrimination based on sex. If approved by Congress, the SNDA would help ensure that all students have access to public education in a safe environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

Not Rising to the Challenge

So why aren’t more teachers and administrators in rural areas taking the lead in creating safer space for LGBT students in their schools? For some districts, it may be a lack of awareness,



says Heather Rodriguez, program director for Triple Point, a youth group for LGBT teens in Walla Walla, Washington. While virtually all U.S. schools now trumpet anti-bullying policies, most fail to include language specific to sexual orientation and gender expression. And some educators don’t even acknowledge that anti-gay references qualify as harassment.

Other reasons for failing to protect LGBT kids can be tied even more directly to bigoted attitudes, Rodriguez notes. Some teachers are fearful of being ostracized by colleagues and harassed by parents. Many rural educators carry their own anti-gay attitudes into the school building. Corey Gaddis, now 21, recalls an assistant principal telling him to his face, “You shouldn’t be gay.”

Then there is the threat to job security. In some rural districts, even engaging the subject of homosexuality can threaten careers. “Administrators in our area fear parents lashing out, whether about sex education or creating a GSA [Gay-Straight Alliance],” Rodriguez says. “Teachers and school counselors fear for their jobs. Nobody wants to rock the boat.”

These are not phantom fears, as events in the small town of Grandfield, Oklahoma, revealed last year. As part of her ethics class, high school teacher Debra Taylor received her principal’s permission to feature *The Laramie Project*, the play and movie about the murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard. Her goal was to explore the roots of hate and intolerance. A few weeks later, the principal abruptly told Taylor to stop, which she did. But when she subsequently held a 20-minute class wrap-up on the material, the district superintendent suspended her for insubordination. Taylor resigned before she could be fired.

“I would be naïve to think what has happened to my students and me is an isolated incident,” Taylor later wrote in her blog. “Unfortunately, those in charge of the school just don’t get it. I know any gay student at Grandfield High School has

been taught a dubious lesson. They have learned they better keep quiet until they are old enough to leave town.”

“We Can Be Better”

Many small-town LGBT teens have learned that lesson well: Endure lives in the closet until adulthood gives you the means to move to more accepting communities. A quarter of gay teens who come out get thrown out of their homes or run away. Others kill themselves. Studies have consistently shown that LGBT youth are at elevated risk for dropping out of school, substance abuse, homelessness, depression and suicide. The lack of support in rural communities only heightens these risks.

The attempted suicide of a former student motivated veteran visual arts teacher Allison Kleinstuber to take a leadership role in helping LGBT kids and their allies at Golden West High School. The school is located in Visalia, a small city set in the center of California’s rural Central Valley.

“There are few resources for LGBT youth here, and we don’t have an environment that makes it easy to come out,” Kleinstuber says, noting that the area has a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. “A lot of people here have a very literal way of looking at religious teachings.” While she embraces her faith-based belief that “Nothing else matters but love,” her friends and colleagues have made clear their condemnation of homosexuality as well as their disapproval of her decision to act as advisor for the school’s new GSA, launched last fall.

School administrators and GSA members are still working around their mutual distrust, Kleinstuber observes. And parents have protested when they discover that their children—whatever their sexual orientation—have attended club meetings. “But I think there’s a lot of staff, a lot of kids, who are glad [the GSA] is here,” she says.

A self-described “tough teacher,” Kleinstuber applies the same high standards to her school and district that she sets for students whose class work and behaviors do not meet her expectations. “We can be better,” she tells them. And she thinks teachers and administrators have an obligation to make schools safe places of learning for all kids, whatever their race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or gender expression.

Heather Rodriguez hopes teachers and counselors would at least educate themselves about the means to help LGBT youth. “I want educators to know where their local resources are,” Rodriguez says. “Even if they’re not comfortable dealing with the issue of homosexuality themselves, they can at least know where these kids can go to get support.”

As part of in-school efforts, Mark Lee would also like to see more teachers in his area crack down on anti-gay speech in classrooms. He presses administrators to demonstrate leadership and courage to embrace student-empowered GSAs rather than stonewall their creation. He encourages teachers and counselors to post “Safe Zone” signs on classroom doors to send a clear signal to LGBT youth—and their tormentors—that gay students are not alone when running

the gauntlet of hallways, bathrooms and locker rooms.

“I really think those signs make a difference,” Lee says. “They signal these kids that there are places they can go where they know they’re not crazy.” ♦

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Ally Yourself with LGBT students

Whether or not you know their identity, you can be certain that you are teaching LGBT students. Visible support and small acts of kindness go a long way in helping these youth feel safer and find harmony at school. Not only does fulfilling the role of ally let them know they are not alone, it models for other students that gay and transgender classmates are their peers, worthy of respect and acceptance. More often than not, bullies operate with the tacit approval of the school community.

Here are six LGBT-friendly actions teachers and school staff can take to turn their classroom and hallways into Safe Zones.

- 1. Post a “Safe Zone” sign** in your classroom and office. It signals to LGBT youth that you’ve got their backs.
- 2. Confront homophobic remarks**, including slights and slurs that you overhear. Many students use terms like “fag,” “dyke” and “that’s so gay” without thinking. Let them know in no uncertain terms that such speech is unacceptable.
- 3. Seek opportunities** to incorporate the contributions of LGBT people in science, history, athletics and the arts into your curriculum.
- 4. Don’t assume any student is gay**—or not gay. If LGBT students do confide in you, thank them for their trust. Follow the student’s lead about what else you should do. Perhaps sharing this information is enough at this point. But if the student needs additional support, you can provide invaluable help by being versed in the LGBT-competent resources available in your school, district and community.
- 5. Organize or encourage** district administrators to arrange an in-service with a qualified youth advocate about how to create a safer school for LGBT students.
- 6. If your school has a Gay-Straight Alliance**, volunteer to act as its faculty advisor, or contribute in other ways.

For additional information and resources, see the Safe Schools Coalition website at www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-SafeZones.html. Also, check out Teaching Tolerance resources at www.tolerance.org/supplement/10-tips-starting-gsa.



HIGH TECH IN SMALL PLACES

Computers and the Internet help rural schools bridge vast distances—both geographically and culturally. But the growing use of technology can create new problems as it solves old ones.

BY NIRVI SHAH



Across a giant swath of desert and mountain terrain southeast of Tucson, one yellow school bus has been carrying an extra passenger since last fall.

Along with dozens of students, the bus rolls through the Vail School District's most far-flung portions equipped with a wireless router. It delivers the Internet to students for as many as three hours a day on their long commutes to and from school in rural Arizona.

Instead of just hanging out, sending text messages or hunching over homework in their laps, high school students can now do research and e-mail their teachers as they ride.

It's just one way in which rural school districts are tapping into technology to improve student achievement. In northernmost Alaska, many students have been given their own laptops. In western Washington State, students take virtual classes their small high school cannot offer. And in tiny Howe, Oklahoma, students produce their own virtual field trips to far-flung places.

These programs are part of a broader national effort to bring technology into the classroom. The Obama administration has endorsed a plan that would help every student learn through digital technology using cell phones, laptops and other mobile devices.

Vail's so-called "Internet Bus"—once just an inexpensive experiment—is already paying off for students.

"It doesn't just restrict your homework to math that you can do on the bus," said Jerod Reyes, a freshman at Empire High.

"You can do world history research or English research," said Reyes, who spent a recent ride to school looking up information about Roman gladiators.

Reyes, 15, has a laptop issued by his school, a program offered by two of Vail's three traditional high schools, so many of the classmates on his bus have them, too. He's perfectly happy to spend the bus ride as he used to—but he has become accustomed to the access to wireless Internet.

"It's not like I use it everyday, but it's there if I need it," he said.

"A Darn Good Deal"

So far, the district has outfitted only one of its buses with a router. They didn't win a grant that would have paid to transform all 20 high school buses, said Matt Federoff, the school district spokesman.

But the price may be right even without the grant: Each device costs only a few hundred dollars, plus \$60 a month for wireless service. He said, "It's a darn good deal."

The district, which has several other technology-based initiatives, was already pondering the idea of turning its buses into classrooms when Federoff saw an ad for a wireless router that could be used in a car.

"When I saw the ad in the electronics catalog, it talked about putting this device on an SUV to keep kids quiet," Federoff said. "I wasn't thinking of the behavior angle. That was never the intention."

Instead, the hope was to turn the time kids spend on the bus into something more productive. About 400 of Vail's roughly 3,000 high school students spend at least an hour or more on the bus every day.

"We have 186 school days and [because of their bus rides] students spend 15 entire days stuck on the school bus. We give them those 15 days back," said Federoff, who recalls his own long rides through rural Arizona to and from school. "We turn transit time into classroom time."

The district, though solidly middle class with just 11 percent of students considered to be living in poverty, is sprawling enough that Internet access simply isn't available for some students at home.

"Some of those kids are from ranching families that could afford it, but there's no infrastructure," he said. For example, a cluster of just three or four houses might require a company to lay dozens of miles of cable.

In addition, after riding home on the bus, "if you're a ranch kid, you've got chores. You might not even get to your homework until eight." With Internet access on the bus, many students can get to a lot of their homework well before then.

The connection is pretty solid, only turning spotty when the bus ventures along winding roads and through steep hills. It's fast enough for students to surf to mostly text-based sites, Federoff said.

"They run fairly well on low-bandwidth connections—it's not for YouTube," he said.

The router isn't just for daily school bus runs. When a soccer team traveled 225 miles to a game, the bus served as

a wireless hotspot for the whole team, including the coaches.

Federoff said the concept furthers the district's ideology that all learning doesn't take place in the classroom.

"The learning really happens at odd moments of the day. It also happens outside of classes," he said. "The magic just doesn't have to be for those 55 minutes" of classroom time.

No Magic Bullet

However, the use of technology to solve educational problems often creates controversy. For instance, not everyone is impressed with the idea of turning school buses into classrooms. Many rural school advocates say that it helps make people comfortable with the idea of epic-length bus rides.

"If bus rides are so long that we have to try to invent ways to make the time useful, the problem is the length of the bus ride," said Marty Strange, policy program director at the Rural School and Community Trust. "All that does is show that certain kids will take advantage of every opportunity, no matter how bad you abuse them."

Technology's problems don't end there when it comes to rural schools. Bringing up-to-date technology to a school district can be expensive, despite grant money and bond issues. And without teacher training—that sticks—and teachers who adapt, the investment may be wasted.

In Alaska's North Slope Borough District, which is the size of Minnesota, technology seems like the ideal bridge between the district's eight villages, connected only by air in the winter and sea in the summer.

Students from fifth through 12th grades have their own laptops—an investment the community hoped would help improve students' math and reading skills.

But many computers were damaged or lost, and many families don't have Internet access at home. The computers now remain at school after hours. Internet access comes from a satellite, which yields a speed a little bit slower than a landline. So even at school, streaming video is too much of a strain on the district's bandwidth.

"I'm not exactly sure how well it has worked," instructional technologist Linda Frink said of the undertaking. The first two years of the laptop program, there was major teacher turnover. "Having teachers knowledgeable about how to use the computers and integrate them into lessons is the key to making them work." In some cases, Frink had to teach teachers the machines' basic functions.

Teacher turnover is an issue in many rural school districts. But the problem can be especially acute in Alaska. "Like today, we still haven't gotten the sunrise," Frink said. "There's no orb in the sky. There hasn't been in months. It's 55 below with the wind chill. Having to walk to work and get places—a lot of people just can't handle that."

A Technology Mindset

Farther down the Pacific Coast, however, in western

Washington State's Quillayute Valley School District, school-based technology has met with more success. The main town here is Forks, the setting for the *Twilight* book series. Forks has about 3,000 residents, and the high school boasts of only 350 students.

Like many rural schools, Forks High has the staff and resources to offer a fairly limited number of classes. As a member of Virtual High School, based in Massachusetts, Forks High can now offer 100 spots in courses its students would otherwise never get to experience. Without the program, says English teacher Elizabeth Sanches, "our school has one Advanced Placement class. We have high poverty in our district. It helps level that playing field."

Technology can help rural districts overcome their isolation in other ways. Over the last 10 years, starting when Superintendent Scott Parks came to town, the 500-student Howe Public School District in Oklahoma has built a technology mindset along with a store of actual hardware.

In a district where 80 percent of students live in poverty and a third are American Indian, all third- through eighth-graders have Macbooks and high school students received less expensive netbooks this year. SmartBoards in classrooms across campus record lessons that can be taken home on iPods.

The stars of the district's array of technology are elaborate, feel-like-you're-there virtual field trips. They began in 2003, when students produced their own trips for the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration in Indiana.

This has allowed students to travel to the Mote Marine Laboratory in Florida, the Baseball Hall of Fame in New York and Australia's Great Barrier Reef without leaving school. Howe is two hours from the nearest zoo or museum—one way.

Parks said professional development was integral to making the technology initiatives meaningful. Prior to his arrival, some of the district's technology "had become dust collectors," Parks said.

"Teachers need an understanding of how technology impacts the learning process to the extent that they will shy away from traditional methods," he said.

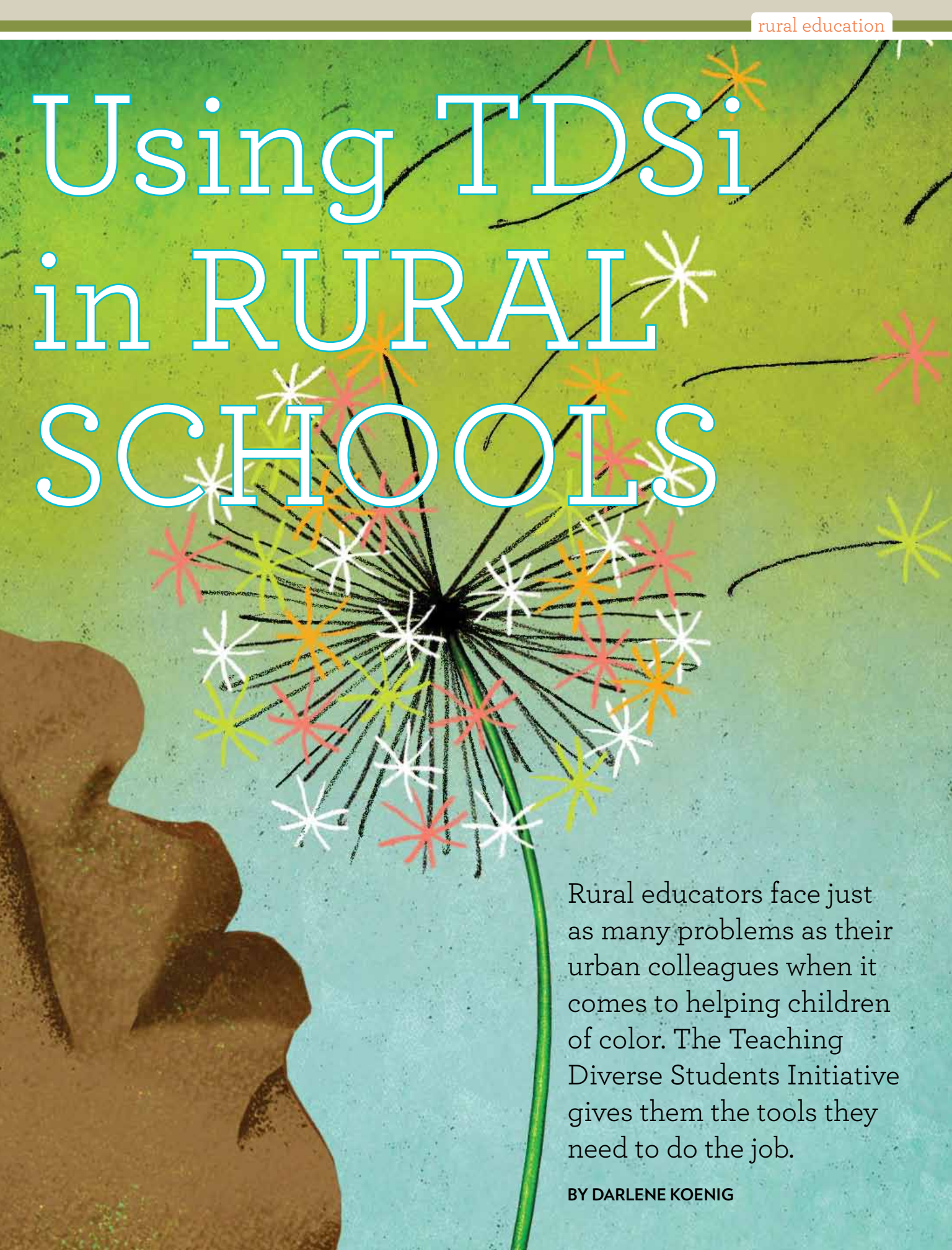
Because of the virtual field trips, for example, students have learned to tell engaging stories. They have also learned the technical skills needed for shooting and editing video along the way. Samantha Hill, a sophomore, has produced her own virtual field trips. She says that has absolutely expanded her horizons.

"When I came to this class, I had never worked on computers—I knew nothing," she said. "Just because we're small doesn't mean we don't have a lot of opportunities."

Those opportunities created by technology translate into learning, Parks said.

"It truly provides purpose for the three R's," he said. "We believe it does in a very effective way provide purpose for accomplishing the things we have historically struggled to accomplish." ♦

Using TDSi in RURAL SCHOOLS



Rural educators face just as many problems as their urban colleagues when it comes to helping children of color. The Teaching Diverse Students Initiative gives them the tools they need to do the job.

BY DARLENE KOENIG



Rhoda Hubbard-Anderson describes her Minnesota community as having “a split personality.” Once a sleepy spot among corn and soy bean fields, Hutchinson—like many rural areas of the nation—is changing. Latino families from Texas and Mexico are joining the German and Scandinavian descendants that have farmed there for generations.

Hubbard-Anderson describes both overt and subtle discrimination toward the newcomers, a phenomenon she sees reflected daily in the school district where she teaches. Staff members leaving her building one day found pamphlets from a white supremacist group plastered to their cars.

“We had no idea this group even existed,” she says. “But as the Hispanic population grew, so did resistance.”

Another teacher of English language learners (ELL) describes high school students who have developed such negative views of themselves that they ask her, “Why would you want to work with us Mexicans?”

“The biggest thing I’ve realized is that we don’t have a system in place to fold these kids into,” Hubbard-Anderson says.

That sounds familiar to Jodi Fletcher.

Fletcher is a teacher on special assignment in curriculum instruction and assessment for Falcon School District 49 in Colorado. Serving about 12,500 students across 16 schools, the district encompasses the northeastern portion of Colorado Springs and the rural area of Falcon. A quiet ranching community that got its first major grocery store only 10 years ago, Falcon also is undergoing rapid change. It is predominantly white. Yet, the number of people of color—particularly Latino, African-American and Asian families—has increased.

Fletcher is comfortable talking about race and other cultural differences. She came to Falcon from Prince George’s County Public Schools in Maryland, just outside Washington, D.C. In Prince George’s, African Americans make up nearly 75 percent of its 130,000 students. Fletcher’s own children are biracial. In Falcon, she saw that there was work to do.

It wasn’t as if the district hadn’t addressed cultural differences. About 30 percent of students in the district are from military families, which Fletcher points out is “a culture of its own.” Located near several Air Force bases and the U.S. Air Force Academy, the district provides a variety of support programs for those students. But three years ago, spurred by concerns and complaints from parents, she teamed with Martina Meadows, an English as a second language (ESL) lead teacher, and positive behavior support coach Martha Clingman. Their job: Create a more welcoming environment culturally.

“We have to meet every student’s needs,” she says, citing 41 different languages spoken among the district’s students. While an inclusive school climate is essential, “we needed to go beyond the food, fun and festivals,” says Fletcher. “We needed to do some purposeful, meaningful work.”

The committee turned to the Teaching Diverse Students Initiative (TDSi).

Using TDSi

TDSi helped take the group beyond its initial efforts to merely change school and district policy. “We needed [TDSi] to start some difficult conversations about race,” Fletcher says. TDSi is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, done in partnership with the National Education Association and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. TDSi’s materials are all free and available at www.tolerance.org/tdsi.

The team started with TDSi’s Common Beliefs Survey, which helps identify personal beliefs about instruction and learning that might have unintended negative consequences in the classroom. They set up sessions around the district, calling them “conversations around culture.” The sessions included not just classroom teachers but every staff member who came in contact with students: administrators, technology specialists, cafeteria workers, custodians and even bus drivers.

Fletcher jokes that the team was a “three-woman wrecking crew.” But they saw barriers begin to fall.

“We were worried about the reaction,” she says. Teachers

could have seen the effort as “just one more thing on our plate.” Instead, “these sessions have been amazing”—provoking questions and conversations that some had been reticent to share.

“One teacher said to me, ‘What do I call my kids?’ And I said, ‘Call them by their names.’ The key is to first build relationships with them,” she says. Fletcher added that they will give you the cues that allow a deeper exploration of culture. And that exploration leads to richer classroom experiences for every student.

With “some tweaks,” Fletcher hopes to have students themselves take the questionnaire and apply it to their relationships with peers.

active discussion boards that encourage students to share knowledge and opinions on race and culture. For now, she also has turned to TDSi and its Common Beliefs Survey for use in her educational technology courses.

Rhodes says it has not been easy to get her students to talk about race and the importance of acknowledging it in the classroom. Students from rural areas often refuse to open up, she says, and are clearly uncomfortable with the process. She tries to ease their discomfort by emphasizing that there are “no right or wrong answers” when assessing personal beliefs—just starting points for continuing the conversation, shifting tightly held perceptions and “letting our secondary responses be different.”

“While an inclusive school climate is essential, we needed to go beyond the food, fun and festivals . . . we needed to do some purposeful, meaningful work.”

In the Wake of Katrina

Like Fletcher, Elizabeth Rhodes is also new to a rural environment. With an expertise in educational technology, she left a career at Xavier University in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Now, she’s with the Center for Educational Services and Resources at Southeastern Louisiana University.

The town of Hammond, Louisiana, lies north of New Orleans, near the junction of Interstates 12 and 55. At the 2000 census, Hammond and surrounding Tangipahoa Parish were majority white. But the devastating 2005 hurricane drove people of all races to rural areas of the region. Rhodes aims to influence future teachers—those who come from rural areas and those who teach in them. Rural areas are changing, she says, and education students must have the tools to work with a diverse group of learners effectively.

Southeastern Louisiana University’s education program mandates courses in diversity, but they are offered online. That can be efficient for students, says Rhodes, but not as effective as courses that foster conversation and interaction among students.

“Teaching is all about the person,” she says. “It’s about content, but it’s also about who you are,” what you bring to the experience and “how you react and respond to things.” Rhodes hopes that the online courses can evolve, with inter-

Rhodes also hopes to use the students’ field experience to broaden their perspectives. She encourages them to use TDSi’s School Survey when they are placed in schools in poorer, rural parishes. An important part of their education, she says, is to assess the current quality of education for the students they will teach.

Celia Hilber of Jacksonville State University in Alabama agrees. She tries to prepare new teachers for being placed in a variety of settings. Some of her students—many of them from smaller, rural communities in Alabama and northwestern Georgia—will interact with diverse populations for the first time.

Hilber says that TDSi is vital to helping with that effort. But she also emphasizes the need to recruit teachers and future teachers of color—teachers who resemble their students. Of the 25 students in her assessment class, 23 are white and female. There is one male and one African-American female.

Jodi Fletcher echoes that sentiment. She says her Colorado district needs to recruit more quality teachers from diverse backgrounds. “We’re not there yet,” she says. But with introspection on the part of existing staff, along with cultural proficiency guided with the right professional development tools, “we’re heading down a path we can be proud of.” ♦



www.fox.com
• 800.338.3388 • 8301.3797.830-3798
• KD13802G2LXVC

Cyberbullying

The stakes have never been higher for students—or schools.

BY JENNIFER HOLLADAY

Phoebe Prince is loved by her peers. At least, now she is.

Hundreds of people have lent their voices to support her on Facebook. Taylor Gosselin wrote, “Your story touched my heart.” Dori Fitzgerald Acevedo added, “I am so glad we are not letting this get swept under the carpet.”

“This” is what is some might call bullicide—suicide by bullying.

Before Phoebe Prince hanged herself, she was a new student at South Hadley High School in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Phoebe was a newly arrived Irish immigrant, but that doesn’t seem to be what ignited the ire of her peers—or her own self-doubt. Instead, Phoebe reportedly dared to date boys whom others thought should be off limits to her.

Girls at Phoebe’s school reportedly called her an “Irish slut,” a “whore” and a “bitch,” viciously harassing her in person and on Facebook. Public documents indicate that at least one student gloated after Phoebe took her own life, “I don’t care that she’s dead.”

Phoebe’s tormentors have since been dubbed the “Mean Girls,” after the clique in the 2004 Tina Fey-scripted movie of the same name. And for the Mean Girls of South Hadley, the consequences of their purported actions have been severe. They are now maligned across the Internet, from

postings on Facebook to the comment areas of news websites worldwide.

The Mean Girls, along with two male students, also face an array of criminal charges for allegedly bullying Phoebe Prince. Since then, it’s become clear that Phoebe’s reasons for taking her own life were complicated. She had struggled with depression and had even attempted suicide once before. But the bullying she endured definitely had an impact on her.

New Term, Old Concept

Cyberbullying. The word didn’t even exist a decade ago, yet the problem is pervasive in children’s lives today.

Simply put, cyberbullying is the repeated use of technology to harass, humiliate or threaten. When fingers take to the keyboard, or thumbs type into a cell phone and craft messages of hate or malice about a specific person, cyberbullying is emerging. And unlike most types of traditional bullying, it comes with a wide audience.

“You can pass around a note to classmates making fun of a peer, and it stays in the room,” said Sheri Bauman, a 30-year education veteran who now works as director of the school counseling master’s degree program at the University of Arizona. “But when you post that same note online, thousands can see it. The whole world becomes witness and is invited to participate.”

Anywhere from one-third to one-half of youths have

ILLUSTRATION BY SHANNON BRADY

been targeted by cyberbullies. And those experiences produce damaging consequences—everything from a decline in academic performance to thoughts about suicide.

“Our study of upwards of 2,000 middle school students revealed that cyberbullying victims were nearly twice as likely to attempt suicide compared to students not targeted with online abuse,” said Sameer Hinduja, the study co-author, who is also an associate professor at Florida Atlantic University and a founder of the Cyberbullying Research Center. “Cyberbullying clearly heightens instability and hopelessness in adolescents’ minds.”

Findings like these, and actual deaths like Phoebe’s, lend a sense of urgency to anti-cyberbullying efforts. Legally speaking, those efforts can be tricky for school administrators. The judiciary has long struggled to balance freedom of speech against the darker side of digital communication.

More and more though, courts and law enforcement are sending the message that cyberbullying will not be tolerated. For instance, in March 2010, California’s Second Appellate District concluded that online threats against a student were not protected speech and allowed a civil lawsuit against the alleged perpetrators, their parents and school officials to proceed.

The notion that schools must respond to behavior that takes place off-campus and online may seem like a tall order. But schools are coming to understand that bullies don’t just attack in the cafeteria or on the playground. “Wherever kids go with their computers or phones, which is nearly everywhere, the bullies come with them,” explained Bauman.

A 2010 study by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

found that technology access among children has skyrocketed since 1999. Today, 93 percent of children ages 8 to 18 have computers at home, 66 percent have personal cell phones (on which they are more likely to text than talk), and 76 percent own another multimedia device, such as an iPod.

These tools give them access to a dizzying array of social media. Some of them, such as Twitter and Facebook, are well known among parents and teachers. But others, such as Formspring, fly well below the radar of most adults. Yet it’s sites like Formspring that can create the biggest headaches. Formspring offers its users total anonymity. That makes it at once a huge draw for curious teenagers and a nearly perfect medium for cyberbullies.

Relieving the Drama

The ostensible boundary between off-campus behavior and school life evaporated for Highline Academy, a K-8 charter in Denver, last spring when a conflict fueled by Facebook posts ultimately led to a physical altercation in the middle school. (*Editor’s Note: The author sits on Highline’s board of directors.*)

“When I looked at the pages, I was shocked by how freely and harshly the kids were talking to and about one another,” said principal Gregg Gonzales.

In the wake of the incident, Highline officials spoke with students in morning meetings and issued a special packet of information to parents and guardians about cyberbullying and Internet safety. Still, a new Facebook page soon appeared, with a growing stream of posts about a student directly involved in the altercation.

“As a community, we needed to step back from the incident and relieve some of the drama,” Gonzales said. He asked every parent in the middle school to support a 48-hour moratorium on Facebook activity at home. He also asked parents to discuss the use of the social networking site with their children.

Gonzales and his colleagues also placed personal phone calls to parents of students who had engaged in the online conversations. “It may be outside our jurisdiction to dictate what students do on their own time, but it was important to let parents know we’d discovered their child had engaged in cyberbullying or inappropriate conversations about the incident,” Gonzales said.

As it turned out, his initial shock about students’ online behavior was shared. “Numerous parents came back to us and said, ‘I had no idea’—no idea

Is Cyberbullying Largely a Problem for Girls?

Conventional wisdom suggests that boys are more likely to bully in person and girls are more likely to bully online. Sheri Bauman, the director of the school counseling master’s degree program at the University of Arizona, cautions against jumping to conclusions. “Cyberbullying is a new area of inquiry, and it’s just hard to draw definitive conclusions from the research that’s currently available,” she said.

What is clear is that cyberbullying, like traditional bullying, is about power. “Students attempt to gain social status through cyberbullying,” said Bauman. Sameer Hinduja of the Cyberbullying Research Center says that gaining social status often means tearing someone else down, and *boys and girls often do that differently.*

“Girls tend to target each other with labels that carry particular meanings for them,” said Hinduja. Labels like “slut,” “whore” and “bitch”—the epithets reportedly used against Phoebe Prince—are common within girl-to-girl cyberbullying. The main tactic of boy cyberbullies who attack other boys is to accuse them of being gay. “The amount of abuse boys encounter because of real or perceived sexual orientation is pronounced,” Bauman said.

what their child was doing online, or even that they had a Facebook page.”

Such responses are typical. A 2009 study from Common Sense Media found that parents nationally underestimate children’s use of social networking sites and often are unaware of *how* they are used. Thirty-seven percent of students, for example, admitted they’d made fun of a peer online, but only 18 percent of parents thought their child would engage in such conduct.

“The episode taught us—teachers, parents and students—that practicing respect, one of our core values, means practicing it wherever we are, at school or online,” Gonzales said.

Getting in Front of the Problems

The Seattle Public School District took a proactive stance last year when it launched a pilot curriculum to prevent cyberbullying in its junior high and middle schools.

Mike Donlin, the senior program consultant who led the curriculum’s development, says the district chose to create its own resources rather than use off-the-shelf products. This ensured that the resources would be easy to use and easy to integrate into existing curricula. “There also was the issue of cost,” he said. “We believed we could create something great with far less expense.”

Unlike many programs that address cyberbullying piecemeal—focusing only on Internet safety skills, for example—the Seattle curriculum attacked the entire problem. It did this by using the four most promising prevention practices. They are:

- Debunking misperceptions about digital behavior;
- Building empathy and understanding;
- Teaching online safety skills;
- Equipping young people with strategies to reject digital abuse in their lives.

The Seattle curriculum also recognizes the importance of parental engagement by offering take-home letters and activities.

Academically, the curriculum focuses on writing. This not only boosts student skills in a tested area, it also allows the program to discard common, ineffective practices. Instead of asking students to sign a pre-crafted pledge, for example, the curriculum prompts children to write personal contracts for themselves about their online behavior.

The curriculum also educates teachers about cyberbullying and introduces a language they can share with their students. “We couch lessons in a way that resonates for teachers, too,” said Donlin. “So, we use the Golden Rule. We use the old-fashioned mantra ‘don’t kiss and tell’ to address sexting.”

Still, some information requires repeated explanation. Some might wonder, for example, why the curriculum prompts students to try to see things from the *bully’s* perspective. “A single student can be a victim, a bystander and a bully in different moments,” Donlin explained. “Maybe a

child was bullied at school this morning, but gets online later and bullies back. Their roles shift. Technology gives them tremendous freedom and power to reach out and touch in nearly every moment, for good or evil.”

Learning how to resist the urge to “bully back” is important for many students, as is un-learning some common myths about being online. Kids often think they can be anonymous on the

DISCIPLINING BULLIES

Not As Easy (or Effective) As It Sounds

Advocates have spent years trying to get schools to take cyberbullying and its traditional counterpart seriously. It’s no wonder then that so many express support for increasingly harsh consequences being handed out across the country.

When a prosecutor charged nine students with criminal offenses related to bullying Phoebe Prince, Elizabeth Englander, director of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, called it a “watershed” moment. Across the country, in Seattle, after more than 20 students were suspended for taunting a classmate online, Mike Donlin, a senior consultant in the district, called it “a clear message—hard and fast.” Many states and districts mandate required punishments like suspension or expulsion, and some are now considering heftier use of criminal penalties as well.

Sheri Bauman, the director of the school counseling master’s degree program at the University of Arizona, encourages everyone to take a deep breath.

“Pushing children out of school isn’t going to help,” she said. “Bullying, online and in person, is rarely solved with punitive methods. Children who are punished typically persist; they just change their methods.”

Bauman, who has studied cyberbullying and its traditional counterpart in the United States, Australia, Canada, Germany and Norway, points to different models of justices. She prefers the “Method of Shared Concern,” which involves all parties—the bully, the victim and the bystanders—in examining and addressing conflicts. However, this needs to be done by educators who have been properly trained or it can make the situation worse (see *Recommended Resources*, p. 46).

“We need to expand our toolbox,” Bauman said. “Punishments may make us feel better or safer, but other options can yield actual results.”

Internet, or that what they do there is fleeting. Both ideas are mistaken. The Library of Congress, for example, is archiving all Twitter messages sent from March 2006 forward. Even the “mean tweets” will be immortalized for future generations. “Everything students do online reflects on them, permanently,” says Donlin.

For teachers, a common stumbling block revolves around First Amendment protections and discomfort about corraling students’ speech. Donlin believes that should not be a problem in most cases. “We have Second Amendment rights to possess weapons, but that doesn’t mean we allow children

to bring guns to school,” he observed. “When it comes to cyberbullying, we’re still talking about school safety.”

The new curriculum hasn’t been a total remedy for Seattle’s schools. In January, one middle school suspended two dozen students who “friended” or became “fans” of a Facebook page maligning another child. It was a reminder that, despite the best efforts, a school’s struggle against cyberbullying never ends. “Phoebe Prince was lost earlier this year,” Donlin said. “There were others before her. ...Their names and stories faded. My fear is that we’ll forget the lesson learned—again. We have to teach this *now*.” ♦

Recommended Resources

Books

Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying by Sameer Hindjuda and Justin W. Patchin

Endorsed by the executive directors of both the National Association of Secondary School Principals and National Association of Elementary School Principals, this exemplary volume provides information, tools and strategies that can be used in every school. \$29.70; ISBN-10: 1412966892; ISBN-13: 978-1412966894

Teen Cyberbullying Investigated

by Thomas A. Jacobs, J.D.
Written by a juvenile court judge, this book consistently asks, “What would you do?” As noted in the *School Library Journal*, the book “distinguishes itself by covering more than 50 actual court cases involving teenagers. ... The hearings are a sobering reminder of the real dangers and legal consequences of cyberbullying.” \$16; ISBN-10: 1575423391; ISBN-13: 978-1575423395

Online

A Thin Line

www.athinline.com

A great resource for students, this social marketing campaign from MTV addresses the “thin line between what may begin as a harmless joke and something that could end up having a serious impact on you or someone else.” The campaign stands

apart from other programs directed at youth, thanks to edgy design, engaging use of multimedia and unsanitized treatments of digital abuse.

Bullying in Schools and What to Do About It
www.kenrigby.net

This online resource from Ken Rigby, an author, former teacher and counselor, offers an array of free materials and research briefs dealing with the Method of Shared Concern, a restorative-justice approach to bullying interventions.

Cyberbullying Research Center
www.cyberbullying.us

The Center provides constantly updated information about the nature, extent, causes and consequences of cyberbullying among adolescents. Its website offers an array of downloadable resources—from word-search activity sheets to discussion guides for use at home and school.

Cyberbullying: Understanding and Addressing Online Cruelty
www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/cyberbullying/

This online-only curriculum from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) offers age-appropriate lessons for early, middle and upper grades and squarely confronts the bigotry that can fuel cyberbullying. The ADL, which has regional offices across the country, also offers related workshops for school communities.

Middle School Cyberbullying Curriculum
www.seattleschools.org/area/prevention/cbms.html

This pilot curriculum from Seattle Public Schools incorporates the most promising practices of prevention—and strengthens students’ writing skills at the same time. Its focus on parent engagement also makes the curriculum a standout.

NetSmartz

www.netsmartz.org/resources/reallife.htm

NetSmartz, a partnership of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, gives much attention to online predators and also offers scenarios specifically about peer-to-peer abuse, brought to life in cartoons and supplemented by activity sheets.

Wired Safety

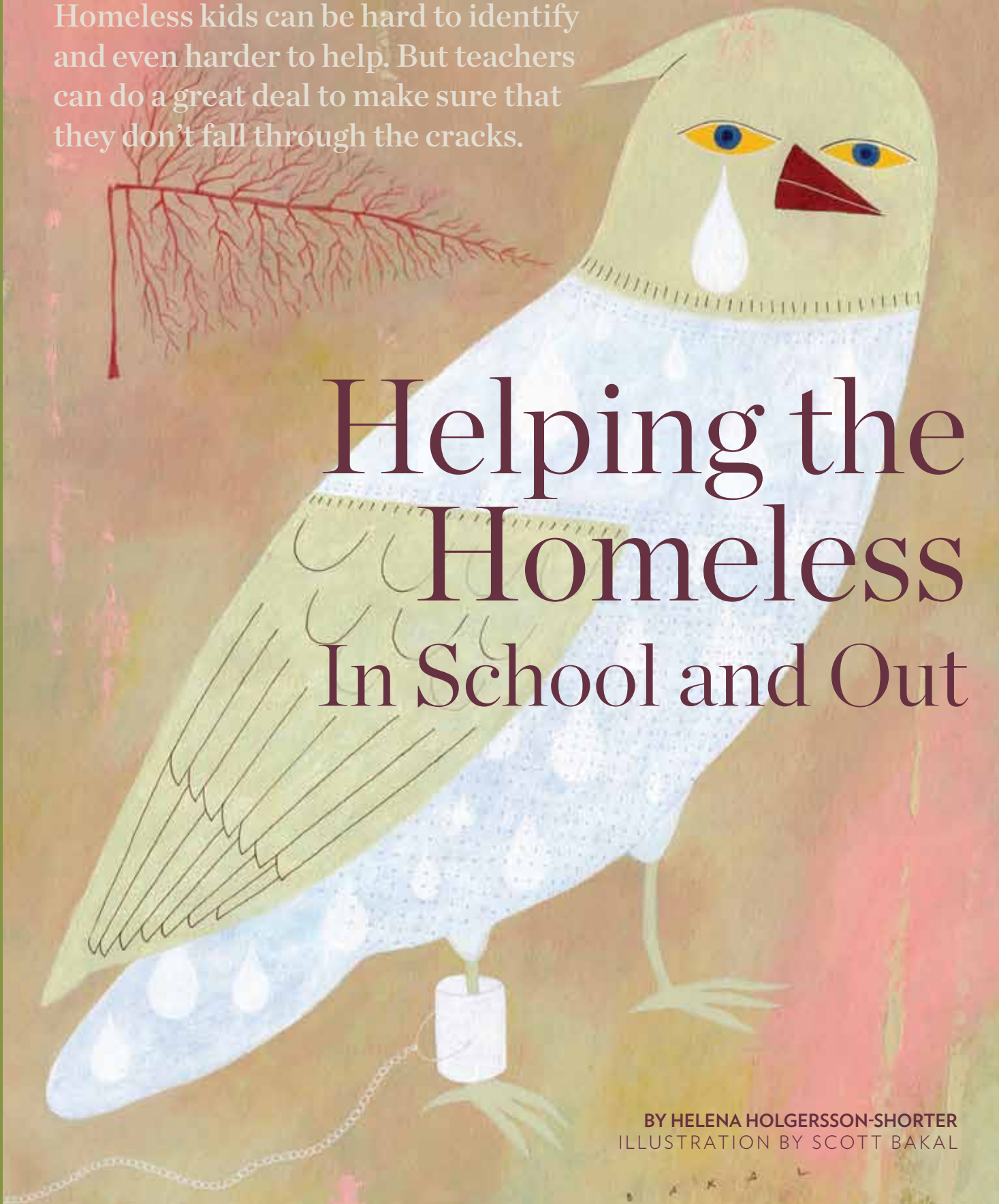
www.wiredsafety.org

One of the longest-running online safety organizations, Wired Safety sponsors the often lauded Tween and Teen Angel programs, which train and empower youths to lead presentations about responsible technology use for other children, parents and teachers. Get your students involved, or find an Angel who can meet with students in your school.

Homeless kids can be hard to identify and even harder to help. But teachers can do a great deal to make sure that they don't fall through the cracks.

Helping the Homeless In School and Out

BY HELENA HOLGERSSON-SHORTER
ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT BAKAL





It did not take long for John Heegard to put the clues together. Valencia McMurray was one of the most promising students in his Advanced Placement U.S. History class at North High School in Minneapolis. But the junior was missing three, four, five days in a row, often just showing up to pass an exam—no small feat, considering the legendary toughness of Heegard’s tests.

Heegard tried but was unable to reach Valencia or her family to check if she was okay. When she did show, he noted her usual wit and intellect were often muted by depression. “It was evident something was up,” Heegard says. “When a kid’s that bright, it doesn’t take long to figure out they’re having some kind of trouble.”

Finally, he asked to see her after class and asked what was going on.

“Nothing,” Valencia replied.

A veteran teacher of more than 20 years, Heegard knew better, and he had laid the groundwork with Valencia and his other students to get past the “nothings.” North Minneapolis is a community stressed by unemployment and poverty, where youth are forced to grow up fast and wary. “The way I look at it, my job is to build relationships, get to know my kids. I have to be honest, open, and treat them like young adults, which is what they are. Valencia and I already had a relationship, so the trust level was at a place where she could trust me.”

Now he reminded her how much potential she had. He laid out a vision that if she could stay on track and focus on her education through senior year, her chances of earning a college scholarship were better than good.

Valencia lowered her guard. She revealed she was homeless, and had been bouncing from living space to living space since sophomore year.

Heegard and Valencia went to work connecting her to the resources she needed.

Hard Times for Many Families

However much the recession might be receding, the effects remain deep and cruel to families living in poverty. Many have fallen through their communities’ social safety nets. Today, families with young children comprise 41 percent of the nation’s homeless population. According to the Institute of Children and Poverty, more than 1.35 million kids in the United States are homeless. And most experts in the field figure that the true number is far greater. This does not count the indefinite number of families living on the edge of foreclosure and eviction.

Not surprisingly, teachers and schools are on the front lines in meeting the substantial needs of students who have no home to truly call their own. In Valencia McMurray’s case, she had the moxie, the tuned-in teacher and the available resources to regain her footing. Many schools and

teachers, though, are underprepared to deal with the urgent and unique psychological, emotional and educational demands of this growing number of “highly mobile” students.

Yet teachers in most school districts—rural, urban or suburban—are finding themselves scrambling to teach and care for these students in their classrooms. The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) reports that half the states saw a collective 50 percent jump in homeless students between the 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 school years. Even as they deal with drastic budget cuts, districts and communities are struggling to address the wider needs of homeless families.

The Compounded Stress of Homelessness

Homelessness may conjure images of cardboard boxes, sleeping bags and heating grates. The realities are more complex. By federal definition, the term “homeless child and youth” includes minors living in shelters with or without family, doubling up with friends or extended family, settling into motels, campgrounds, trailer parks or using vehicles for overnight shelter.

The strain on families as they face declining fortunes can be soul-draining. Survival needs such as food, safety and shelter become daily struggles. The stress is often compounded by other factors. Single mothers head 84 percent of homeless families, for example, and over half of these women are homeless due to domestic violence, according to the National Resource and Training Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness. In many cases, depression and substance abuse add to the emotional and psychological burdens.

For kids, the impact of homelessness or frequent dislocation is nothing less than traumatic, says Sarah Benjamin, education advocate for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Eastern Suffolk County, New York. “And traumatized people, or people who are under stress, are not thinking with the cognitive part of their brains, but are thinking more with the survival part: fight, flight, or freeze,” she says.

These instincts may aid survival in a life of hard knocks, but they are counterproductive in the classroom and schoolyard. Homeless kids can be distracted by many things: hunger, shabby clothing, lack of school supplies or constant anxiety about their family’s security. Studies indicate that children whose address has been in flux for more than a year are subject to developmental delays at four times the rate of their peers, are twice as likely to repeat a grade and are identified with learning disabilities twice as often. Withdrawn or disruptive behavior in the classroom can also be natural reactions to a family life riddled with uncertainty.

The McKinney-Vento Act

Laws are on the books to support students experiencing homelessness, most notably the McKinney-Vento

Education for Homeless Children Act. Renewed in 2002 as part of No Child Left Behind, McKinney-Vento allows students to enroll immediately in school without proof of residency or other paperwork. School districts must provide transportation so that highly mobile students can stay

Strategies for Teaching Highly Mobile Students

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) advocates tailoring strategies to address three areas of unique need for highly mobile students.

Affective needs involve issues of emotional security and motivation. Teachers should:

- ▶ Create a stable learning environment with a structured routine;
- ▶ Assign a “buddy” to new students to introduce them to the classroom and school;
- ▶ Handle disruptions in a private and respectful manner;
- ▶ Make time to talk to students on a personal level;
- ▶ If a student suddenly leaves school, have farewell letters inserted in the student’s records for forwarding to his or her new school.

Academic needs deal with teaching strategies.

In seeking to meet them:

- ▶ Create a stable learning environment with a structured routine;
- ▶ Plan mini-lessons and units that can be completed in limited periods of time;
- ▶ Include a variety of levels in reading materials about the same content;
- ▶ Assess these students’ interests to hook them into learning;
- ▶ Give students credit for partially completed work.

Technical needs include supports for students’ general well-being. In seeking to meet them:

- ▶ Keep a supply of healthy snacks and extra school supplies;
- ▶ Identify and connect with school and district support staff, including guidance counselors, homeless liaisons and the district’s director of special services;
- ▶ Consider fostering a partnership with a community tutoring program.

For additional information and resources, visit NCHE’s Publications and Products website at <http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/reading-go.php>.

in the same school—a place of familiar faces and constancy in a shifting personal landscape. Federal law also mandates that states have coordinators of homeless services, and that each district must provide a homeless liaison charged with connecting families to appropriate social and educational services.

Family reluctance may throw up barriers that deter homeless kids from seeking assistance, however. “Children want to share with [teachers] what’s going on, but oftentimes you’ll have to ask the questions,” explains Bilal Muhammad, director of the Newark Public Schools Homeless Unit in Newark, New Jersey. “One reason for this is because parents instruct them not to tell anyone they’re in a shelter or doubled-up situation because of their fear the child will be transferred out of the school.” Also, homeless parents often worry that social services might take away their children.

McKinney-Vento, though, is terribly underfunded, with \$65.4 million allocated for the entire country. “This is only enough to serve nine percent of all the districts in the country, while the need is far, far greater,” says Barbara Duffield, policy director of NAEHCY.

As a rule, major U.S. cities have more experience and are better prepared than rural or suburban communities to address the needs of their homeless citizens. In New Jersey, for example, the Newark Public Schools Homeless Unit distributes packets of information about the rights of homeless families, as well as comprehensive lists of resources such as shelters, health care services, food pantries and advocacy support through the state’s Department of Social Services.

In contrast, many non-metropolitan communities are struggling to come to grips with poverty and homelessness the likes of which they have never faced. “By 2008, suburbs were home to the largest and fastest-growing poor population in the country,” the Brookings Institution reported recently. Suburbs now account for almost one-third of the nation’s poor.

Teachers and Schools on the Front Lines

Ultimately, teachers and schools are the most common resources available to homeless kids. “School is the most important thing in [these kids’] lives: it’s where they’re safe,” says Sarah Benjamin. Teachers of highly mobile students must develop the skills to make these children and youth feel welcome while quickly weaving them into classroom routines. They must rapidly assess new students’ abilities, recognize emotional needs, employ a variety of teaching strategies, arrange for students to complete homework at school, and provide individual or group tutoring. They must also routinely play the role of social worker and match highly mobile students and their families with additional resources. (See p. 49 for specific suggestions.)

In some areas, outreach programs help fill the gaps. In addition to her work with Suffolk County, Sarah Benjamin

runs the Mobile Outreach Parent-Child Program. Through that grant-funded program, she and other tutors bring their talents directly to temporary living situations to offer literacy instruction for homeless children. They also connect families with various support programs.

Brooklyn, 10, has been one of Benjamin’s students through the outreach program. But Benjamin has also become a kind of mentor to Brooklyn’s mom, Delilah. “What helped me to stick with [the Mobile Parent-Child Program] was all [Sarah],” Delilah says. “No matter if I was going through something terrible and didn’t feel like having company, she was very understanding but very persistent. ... Eventually that wall that you have begins to open up, and now she’s one of my biggest strengths.” Brooklyn has moved up academically to the honor roll of her Long Island school, Delilah has found work and their family has moved into a real home.

Providing an atmosphere where the child feels safe and nurtured is the most critical thing teachers can do to ease the social alienation resulting from high mobility. Effective teachers establish relationships and trust with homeless students whose belief in themselves and the future may be stunted or badly shaken. “The goal of teaching highly mobile children is not to ensure they pass the state assessment,” says Dr. Patricia Popp, coordinator of homeless education for the state of Virginia. “It’s about building a connection so that children have something to take with them when they move on.”

Such a connection between Valencia McMurray and John Heegard got the North High junior back on track. With the help of a school social worker, she was soon living at The Bridge, an emergency shelter for homeless youth. “One of the greatest places *ever*—as far as shelters go,” says Valencia.

“At that point, the smart, witty kid I knew was back,” Heegard says.

And she got that college scholarship—four years at Augsburg College, including room and board. ♦



Resources for Teachers

Leslie Grant, Ph.D., James H. Stronge, Ph.D., and Patricia Popp, Ph.D., *Effective Teaching and At-Risk/Highly Mobile Students: What Do Award-Winning Teachers Do? Case Studies of Award-Winning Teachers of At-Risk/Highly Mobile Students*
www.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff_teach.pdf

The National Center for Homeless Education
www.seirtec.org/nche/index.php

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
www.naehcy.org



MIXING IT UP

with PURPOSE



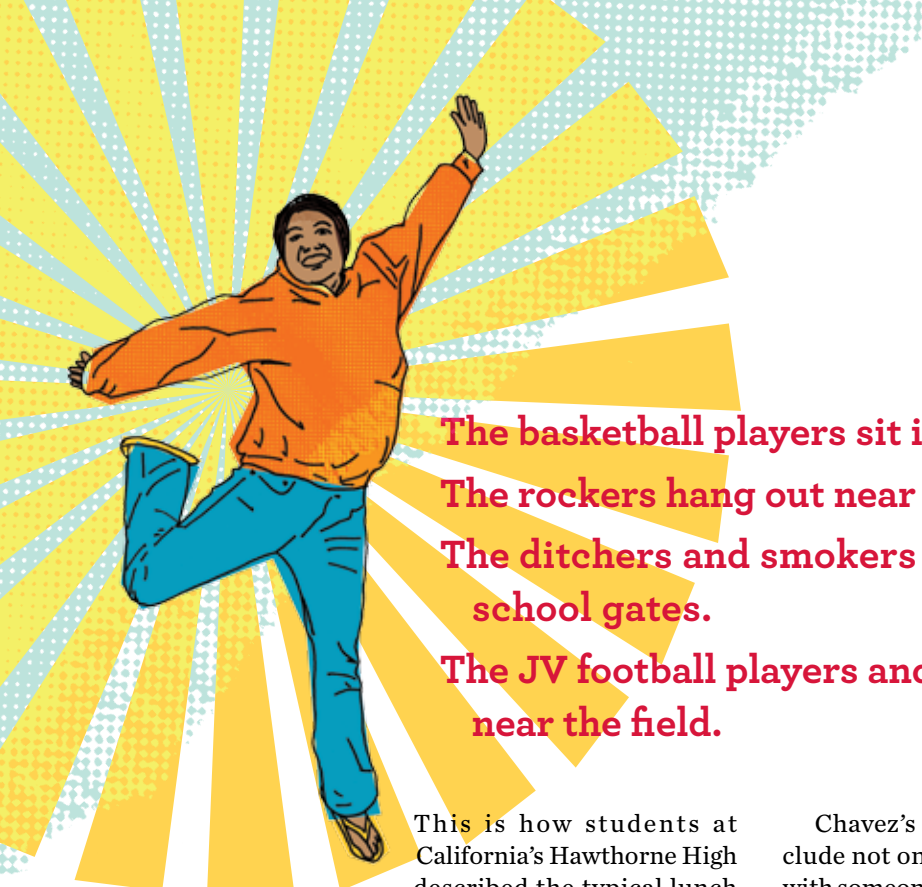
Educators use national Mix It Up at Lunch Day to address the social and academic needs of their students.

BY JENNIFER HOLLADAY



Mix It Up at Lunch Day
NOVEMBER 9, 2010

Make the commitment to participate today! Register on the Mix It Up Map at www.mixitup.org.



**The basketball players sit in a corner of the cafeteria.
The rockers hang out near the stage.
The ditchers and smokers congregate near the school gates.
The JV football players and cheerleaders? They're near the field.**

This is how students at California's Hawthorne High described the typical lunch period at their school. In doing so, they also made the unspoken rule clear: Stick to your own kind.

But last fall, Hawthorne's students broke out of their rigidly segregated habits. Why? They answered the call of Mix It Up at Lunch Day, a national event sponsored by Teaching Tolerance that asks students to break bread with someone new. This year's Mix It Up at Lunch Day will be Tuesday, November 9.

"Cliques, even those seemingly based on interests or hobbies, often serve as a proxy for social and cultural differences," said Lecia Brooks, Mix It Up's national coordinator. "And when we allow ourselves to be fully separated from others, stereotyping and conflict can take shape."

School conflict drew Los Angeles educator Jamie Diego Chavez to the Mix It Up program. "When I first started working here in 2005, I helped organize Mix It Up at Lunch Day to address increasing concerns about social and racial tensions—and to promote dialogue and better understanding among different groups."



Chavez's approach to the program has evolved to include not only the lunch activity—asking students to sit with someone new on Mix It Up at Lunch Day—but also intensive peer-run "discussion circles" beforehand that help students root out the intolerance and fear that sometimes fuels their separation.

A desire to make sure that every student belongs—or, in her words, are "seen"—drew Norma Harb, a social worker at Fordson High School in Dearborn, Michigan, to Mix It Up. She recalls walking by two African-American 11th graders and barely acknowledging them. Only later did she ask herself how those two students—anomalies inside a school where 90 percent of students are of Middle Eastern descent—might be faring. "How many students are invisible?" she asked. "How can we make the invisible visible?"

To answer that question, Harb pulled together a committee of teachers and students to organize. On Mix It Up at Lunch Day, students sat down to lunch with people who were not in their usual social circles and played a game to help get conversations started. One person had to tell two truths and one lie. Their new lunch mates had to guess which statement was false.

"[We] had a lot of fun," Fordson junior Omar Nasrallah said. "And some walked out with friends they didn't have before."

For Harb, the day wasn't just about fun. It was also about creating a community where every student was seen and engaged by peers.

"Black, white, Arab, non-Arab, bilingual, special education, jocks, musicians—it didn't matter," she said. "What did [matter] at that time was a group of human beings enjoying lunch, and taking a leap of faith in communication and bonding.

"One huge score for humanity," she said.

Seven Steps to Mixing It Up

How can you make this year's Mix It Up at Lunch Day—November 9—a success? The following tips and ideas come from the 2009-2010 “Mix It Up Model Schools,” honored for their exemplary, sustained efforts to create welcoming and inclusive environments.

Make the commitment. Educators at Brunson Elementary School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, first committed to Mix It Up in 2006. “The students are engaged in different curriculums—part of our school is a magnet for the highly academically gifted—and [they] rarely have the opportunity to mix,” explained assistant principal Andy Lester-Niles. “We saw the need to intentionally provide time for kids to interact and feel part of the larger Brunson community. Mix It Up fit beautifully.” At Brunson, Mix It Up is woven into class projects and its themes extend throughout the school year.

Identify the divisions in your school. Ask students to share their experiences of exclusion as a way to build support for the event. At California's Sierra Vista Junior High School, students wrote short stories about personal injustices on red paper “bricks” that were then assembled into a wall. On Mix It Up Day, students tore the wall down by removing bricks and sharing during the school-wide reading period. Many schools made use of the Mix It Up survey, available for free at www.mixitup.org.

Promote the event. Students need to know—ahead of time—what they'll be invited to do and why it's important. Schools in the William S. Hart Union High School District in California used video announcements and displays on school welcome signs. Other schools created their own posters and fliers, or they used those available for free at www.mixitup.org.

Conduct supportive activities beforehand. At North Hills Elementary in York, Pennsylvania, educator Clydiene Liverman asked students to think about the ways they sometimes put other students down. She then asked them to brainstorm “put ups,” or words and phrases that lift someone up. The “put ups” were later placed on tables during Mix It Up at Lunch Day. “Each student got to keep a put-up as a reminder,” she said. “A reminder that someone else in their school family has something nice to say, and [a reminder] to use put-ups, not put-downs.”

Take action on national Mix It Up at Lunch Day. At Northley Middle School in Aston, Pennsylvania, organizers moved cafeteria tables around and used playing cards to mix stu-

dents up. “We also gave them conversation starters attached to balloons and had them play a game called the ‘name/symbol’ game,” said counselor Kevin S. Siegel. “They had to go around the table and say everyone's name and introduce their symbol (a gesture). They earned prizes—and loved it!” Meanwhile, at California's Valencia High School, each class received a set of Popsicle sticks, and, in a “human scavenger hunt,” students had to locate someone from another class with a matching word written on the stick.

Reflect on the lunch activity. Request three minutes of class time for students to write on prompts such as, “Today's lunch activity showed me that. ...” Allow time for teachers to share what they observed or experienced in faculty meetings, too. Use this feedback to inform additional efforts.

Follow up. Use national Mix It Up at Lunch Day to launch a year-long campaign to make the school inclusive and welcoming for all students. Rogers Park Elementary, in Anchorage, Alaska, holds “Mix It Up Mondays” every week, using a wide array of table grouping themes, from peace symbols to Dr. Seuss characters. “Our students are learning more about each other and continue to build a stronger learning community through Mix It Up,” reported Erika Crumley, the school's Social Emotional Learning specialist. Back at Brunson Elementary, “mixed up” student teams work collaboratively on service-learning projects throughout the school year, from a Valentine's Day project that “shares the love” through a book drive for a sister school in Botswana to an environmental project with a local grocer on Earth Day. ♦





TODAY, NABOZNY has a full-time job. But he still travels across the country to talk with students about his experiences. "Harassment is harassment, and it should not be tolerated," he says. "It doesn't matter whether somebody's gay or whether they're Jewish or whether they're overweight. Kids do not deserve it, and they deserve to be protected and safe in their schools."

Fighting Back Against Bullies

A new Teaching Tolerance documentary points the way

The Film Is Based on a True Story

Jamie Nabozny carefully planned his every move at school. He had to. The bullying by his classmates in Ashland, Wisconsin, was unrelenting.

The attacks began in middle school. Jamie knew he was gay and had told his family, but hadn't come out to friends and classmates. It didn't matter; his classmates saw him as gay. At first, the bullies called him names. That progressed to tripping and shoving, and then to kicks and punches. They ganged up on him in the restroom. Jamie was once kicked so hard that he had to go to the hospital.

Jamie adapted as best he could. Before the first class bell rang, he was already mapping out his day. Jamie got to school early to miss the rush and took refuge in quiet corners. He used hall passes to avoid crowded class changes. And he looked for out-of-the-way restrooms where he wouldn't be attacked. Only after other students left school would Jamie finally make his way home.

"I spent a lot of time thinking defensively, which is a strange thing to have to do at school," said Jamie, who is now in his mid-30s. "Looking back, I feel like I tried to be numb as much as possible to not feel what was happening."

Jamie reported the abuse to teachers and administrators, but they did little to stop the bullies. A middle school administrator told Jamie he should expect to be bullied if he was going to be gay. A high school official asked him what he did to cause the attacks.

Nabozny's story is told in the new Teaching Tolerance film *Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case that Made History*. The documentary shows how Nabozny coura-

geously stood up for his rights. He filed a lawsuit against the district and school officials. His suit led to an important court decision that public school officials had to protect all students from bullies, even those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

Viewer's Guide Offers Advice for School Leaders

The *Bullied* viewer's guide that comes in the film kit includes professional development activities and guidance for school leaders as well as classroom lessons. While most schools and educators will act promptly when faced with bullying based on race, religion or ethnicity, many are less likely to confront harassment based on sexual orientation. The *Bullied* guide provides guidance in a series of answers to the questions educators who use the kit may be asked by their colleagues, members of the community or parents.



The guide addresses these important issues:

- Why is a film on anti-gay bullying necessary?
- What are the risks to students?
- What is at stake for the school?
- Does the ruling depicted in *Bullied* apply to my school?
- What about a teacher's, student's or parent's personal beliefs?
- How can I explain the decision to use *Bullied* to my school community?
- How can I use *Bullied* in staff development?
- How can I assess my school's climate?
- Where do I find resources for effective anti-bullying programs? ♦

ACADEMY AWARD WINNER FOR DOCUMENTARY SHORT SUBJECT

A POWERFUL LESSON FOR TODAY'S YOUTH ABOUT THE DANGERS OF HATE AND EXTREMISM

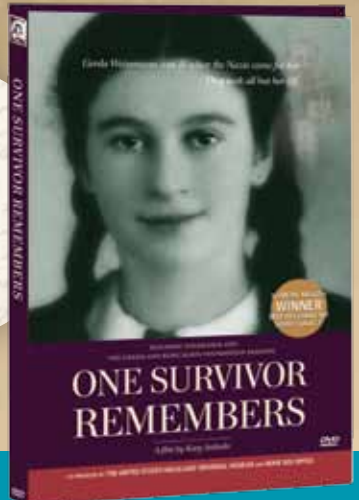
In the winter of 1945, on the day of her liberation from six years of Nazi rule, Gerda Weissmann clung to life at the end of a 350-mile death march. She weighed 68 pounds, her hair had turned white, and she had not had a bath in three years. The next day, she would turn 21.

FREE
TO SCHOOLS
GRADES 8-12

Teaching Tolerance and the Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation Present

One Survivor Remembers

- Oscar®-winning film
- Teacher's guide with standards-based lessons
- Primary Documents with artifacts from the Holocaust
- Learning materials including a Holocaust timeline on CD Rom

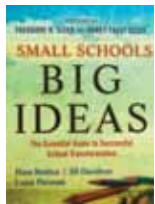


Order One Survivor Remembers Today!

For a FREE copy of *One Survivor Remembers* complete and return the attached order card or visit www.tolerance.org/osr

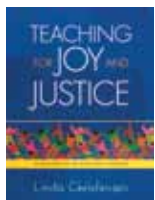
THE TEACHING TOLERANCE STAFF reviews the latest in culturally aware literature and resources, offering their best picks for professional development and teachers of all grade levels.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Small Schools, Big Ideas: The Essential Guide to Successful School Transformation (\$30), by Mara Benitez, Jill Davidson and Laura Flaxman, offers a compelling framework for redesigning our schools to be equitable learning environments for all. Through an equity lens, this guide provides practical tools and strategies based on experience and evidence to support all members of our education community in order to transform our public schools.

ISBN 978-0-4702-5907-8
Jossey-Bass Publications
(877) 762-2974
josseybass.com



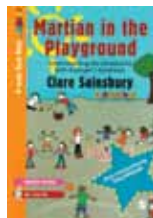
In *Teaching for Joy and Justice: Re-imagining the Language Arts Classroom* (\$19.95), author Linda Christensen shares various models for teaching writing, reading and thinking. Throughout, she relies on a social justice curriculum. Christensen believes that real learning comes from “putting students’ lives at the center of the curriculum.” Each chapter ends with authentic student writing samples and easily reproduced handouts. This book is useful for teachers of many subjects.

ISBN 978-0-9429-6143-0
Rethinking Schools
(800) 669-4192
rethinkingschools.org



Written by Muslim-acclimated scholars, *Muslim Voices in School: Narratives of Identity and Pluralism* (\$39), edited by Özlem Sensoy and Christopher Darius Stonebanks, provides a much-needed collection about Muslim student experiences in Western schools. Each chapter ends with meaningful discussion questions and extension activities for teachers. This is a true handbook for educators to “imagine what could be” in schools for Muslim students.

ISBN 978-9-0879-0955-0
Sense Publishers
(866) 216-1072
amazon.com



Martian in the Playground: Understanding the Schoolchild with Asperger's Syndrome (\$29.95), by Clare Sainsbury, aims to increase awareness and understanding among teachers. The author and 25 other people with Asperger's syndrome chronicle their first-hand school experiences, shedding light on the injustices they endured. This book will help future Asperger's syndrome students enjoy a supportive and constructive school experience.

ISBN 978-1-8492-0000-4
Sage Publications
(800) 818-7243
sagepub.com



Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives (\$30), by leading multicultural scholar James A. Banks, explains

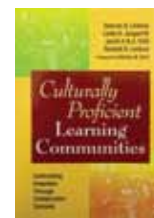
why citizenship education is the key to just and inclusive societies around the world. The book examines the central tension between the need to “balance unity and diversity.” And it explores how cultural values, transnational identity formation, and the economics of nation building influence emerging democracies. The book also explores how those factors affect beliefs about equity.

ISBN 978-0-7879-8765-7
Jossey-Bass Publications
(877) 762-2974
josseybass.com



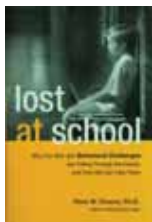
“Isn't every crime a hate crime?” *Hate Crimes* (\$29.95), by Janell Broyles, answers that question. The book thoroughly explains the concept of hate crime and explains the need for hate crime legislation. A glossary and recommended resources are included at the back of the book.

ISBN 978-1-4358-5035-4
Rosen Publishing
(800) 237-9932
rosenpublishing.com



Culturally Proficient Learning Communities: Confronting Inequities Through Collaborative Curiosity (\$28.95), by Delores B. Lindsey et al., encourages educators to examine their practices by asking tough questions. Why do we do what we do? How does that perpetuate inequity? How can we do things better? The book also provides a road map for collaborative inquiry in straightforward, accessible language.

ISBN 978-1-4129-7228-4
Corwin
(800) 233-9936
corwin.com



Lost at School: Why Our Kids with Behavioral Challenges Are Falling Through the Cracks and How We Can Help Them (\$26.00), by Ross W. Greene, explores the frustrating world of kids with

behavioral problems. Ross argues that these kids are not manipulative and attention seeking, as many believe. Instead, they are lost in a maze of behavioral obstacles that most adults don't comprehend. Ross's book is designed to help these kids—and the adults around them—get on the right track.

ISBN 978-1-4165-7226-8
Scribner
(800) 223-2348
simonandschuster.com

ELEMENTARY



Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad? (\$18.95), by Sandy Lynne Holman, is a multi-generational story between a grandpa, Rufus, and

his young grandson, Montsho. Through his grandfather's wisdom, Montsho learns about his African heritage and history. Lela Kometiani's vivid and colorful illustrations provide a visual journey that complements the story. (Grades 1-4)

ISBN 978-0-9644-6550-3
The Culture C.O.-O.P.
(877) 265-6777
cultureco-op.com



What does "heritage" mean? *We All Have a Heritage* (\$18.95), by Sandy Lynne Holman and illustrated by Lela

Kometiani, explores this essential question. It reminds students that our differences make us special and unique. However, we are all human beings. This is a wonderful approach to diversity and respect by studying personal history. (Grades 1-5)

ISBN 978-0-9644-6552-7
The Culture C.O.-O.P.
(877) 265-6777
cultureco-op.com



Gracias, Thanks (\$17.95), by Pat Mora and illustrated by John Parra, is a lovely reminder to be thankful for what you have. Through a series of everyday events, a small

boy acknowledges his thanks for the people in his life and for many small wonders, from old pajamas to ladybugs, that sometimes go unnoticed. Children will be thankful for this story and the beautiful illustrations. (Grades Pre-K to 4)

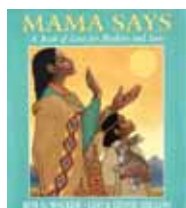
ISBN 978-1-6006-0258-0
Lee & Low Books, Inc.
(888) 320-3190, Ext. 28
leeandlow.com



Violet (\$14.95), by Tania Duprey Stehlik and illustrated by Vanja Vuleta Jovanovic, tells the story of a young girl, Violet, who is anxious about the first day

at her new school. Among the red, yellow and blue kids, she's the only violet one. Violet wonders why her dad is blue and her mother is red, but she's violet. She learns that people come in a whole rainbow of beautiful colors. Kids will delight in and connect with this biracial/multiracial story and the colorful illustrations. (Pre-K to 3)

ISBN 978-1-8971-8760-9
Second Story Press
(416) 537-7850
secondstorypress.ca



Whether families are Cherokee or Korean, whether they speak English or Hebrew, parent-child love transcends all cultures. *Mama Says: A Book of*

Love for Mothers and Sons (\$16.99), by Rob D. Walker, celebrates the universal bond between mothers and their children. Each of the 12 verses includes art expressing different cultures and languages. (Grades Pre-K to 3)

ISBN 978-0-4399-3208-0
Scholastic Books
(800) 724-6527
scholastic.com



On a make-believe planet that mirrors our own, everyone is an egg! Two families, one from AmerEGGa and the other from MEGGxico, reunite to find out that they are

more alike than they are unlike. *The Eggbees* (\$15.95), by Olivia Echeverria-Bis, introduces children to cross-cultural interactions. (Grades Pre-K to 3)

ISBN 978-1-5588-5529-8
Arte Público Press
(800) 633-2783
latinoteca.com



Geography is about more than just landforms. *Sacred Mountain Everest* (\$19.95), by Christine Taylor-Butler, tells the story of the

Sherpa. These people have lived on Everest for centuries and consider it sacred. (Grades 3-6)

ISBN 978-1-6006-0255-9
Lee & Low Books
(888) 320-3190, Ext. 28
leeandlow.com



In *Caravan* (\$8.95), by Lawrence McKay, Jr., a 10-year-old Kirghiz boy named Jura goes on his first caravan across Afghanistan. Readers will learn about Afghanistan

and its geography, culture, language and people. (Grades 3-6)

ISBN 978-1-6006-0346-4
Lee & Low Books
(888) 320-3190, Ext. 28
leeandlow.com



Salsa (\$7.95), by Lillian Colón-Vilá, tells the story of salsa music through the eyes of a girl named Rita. Rita learns everything she can about playing, singing, dancing and dressing for salsa. Students will learn about the combination of African, Caribbean and American cultures that created salsa. (Grades 3-6)

ISBN 978-1-5588-5238-9
Arte Público Press
(800) 633-2783
latinoteca.com



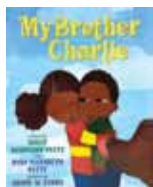
Our Grandparents: A Global Album (\$7.95), by Maya Ajmera, Sheila Kinkade and Cynthia Pon, explores the intergenerational bonding of grandparents and grandchildren throughout the world. Poignant photographs show stories of love, compassion, strength and history. They also show how “the wisdom of our ancestors is passed on to the next generation.” The book ends with Five Things to Do with Your Grandparents. (Grades 1-6)

ISBN 978-1-5709-1459-1
Charlesbridge Publishing
(800) 225-3214
charlesbridge.com



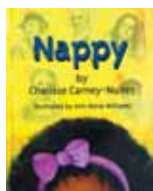
Sara Mee celebrates *tol*, her first-birthday celebration with family and friends. They play an ancient prophecy game, *toljabee*, to predict Sara Mee's future. *What Will You Be, Sara Mee?* (\$7.95), by Kate Aver Avraham and illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien, gives readers a beautiful glimpse into Korean culture. (Grades 1-5)

ISBN 978-1-5808-9211-7
Charlesbridge Publishing
(800) 225-3214
charlesbridge.com



My Brother Charlie (\$16.99), written by Holly Robinson Peete and Ryan Elizabeth Peete and illustrated by Shane W. Evans, tells a delightful story about family, dignity and affection. It demonstrates the value of our differences while showing how alike we are. As Callie aptly states, “Charlie has autism. But autism doesn't have Charlie.” (Grades 1-4)

ISBN 978-0-5450-9466-5
Scholastic Books
(800) 724-6527
scholastic.com



Nappy (\$14.99), written by Charisse Carney-Nunes and illustrated by Ann Marie Williams, shows a mother combing her daughter's “nappy” hair—with pulls, twists, turns, kinks, coils, snaps, cracks, pops. Then, in a comforting moment, the mom shares historical connections of significant African-American women from Harriet Tubman to Rosa Parks to Sonia Sanchez. This is a beautifully illustrated book with a profound message. (Grades Pre-K to 3)

ISBN 978-0-9748-1421-6
Brand Nu Words
brandnuwords.com



How We Are Smart (\$16.95), by W. Nikola-Lisa and illustrated by Sean Qualls, provides a multicultural perspective into understanding more about multiple intelligences (or “smarts”). Twelve biographies, including those

of Thurgood Marshall (logic smart) and Patsy Takemoto Mink (people smart), demonstrate each kind of smart. The book includes some engaging activities and a list of resources. (Grades 3-6)

ISBN 978-1-5843-0254-4
Lee & Low Books
(888) 320-3190, Ext. 28
leeandlow.com



How do you feel? Natalie Christensen and Kris Laroche created *Feeleez*, a collection of educational resources that focus on kids' facial expressions and body language. The package provides three tools—a poster (\$19), buttons (\$19.95) and a card game (\$20)—that help kids communicate their feelings. The package also helps students listen to other people and learn empathy. This is great for conflict resolution and teaching about non-violence. (Grades 1-6)

Syracuse Cultural Workers Press
(800) 949-5139
syracuseculturalworkers.com

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL



Lessons from Little Rock (\$24.95), by Terrence Roberts, one of the “Little Rock Nine,” provides a close-up and personal look at the attitudes and conditions in the Jim Crow South that led 15-year-old Terrence

Roberts and eight other students to face their fears and integrate Central High School in 1957.

ISBN 978-1-9351-0611-1
Butler Center Books
(501) 320-5716
butlercenter.org



The documentary *Taken From My Home: Indian Boarding Schools and The Holocaust in Perspective* addresses two distinct histories using the diaries of

teenagers. One lived through the Carlisle Indian School in 1879. Another lived through the Jewish Holocaust by the Nazis. The DVD set shows how both groups, although separate and facing very different circumstances, suffered because of racial elitism. Included are a variety of useful supplementary teaching resources, e.g., “Five Guidelines for Teaching About Genocide.”

Fascinating Learning Factory

(866) 545-9955

fascinatinglearningfactory.org



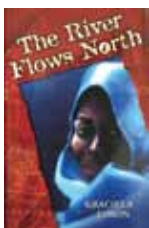
The powerful documentary *Darius Goes West: The Roll of His Life* (\$10) tells the story of Darius, a 15-year-old student with

Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). The documentary follows him as he travels with 11 friends from Athens, Ga., to the West Coast. Their goal: get his wheel-chair “refurbished” on MTV’s *Pimp My Ride*. The documentary raises awareness about wheel-chair accessibility and inspires action for equality and a cure. Accompanying classroom materials are available online.

The Darius Goes West Organization

(888) 832-7487

dariusgoeswest.org



The River Flows North (\$24.95), by Graciela Limón, illuminates the harsh realities and desperation of a small group of immigrants as they attempt to cross the Mexican desert to the United States.

The immigrants share how their “intolerable lives” drove them to risk everything to find something better in the United States. Limón writes with compassion.

ISBN 978-1-5588-5585-4

Arte Público Press

(800) 633-2783

latinoteca.com



In *The Dreamer* (\$17.99), Pam Muñoz Ryan shares an enlightening—and at times sad—story of a young Chilean boy, Neftalí Reyes (aka Pablo Neruda), whose passion

was to write poetry and explore the adventures of his imagination. His father, however, adamantly disapproved of these passions. He considered them impractical and useless. Peter Sís complements the story with delightful artwork that joins your own imagination with Neftalí’s.

ISBN 978-0-4392-6970-4

Scholastic Press

(800) 724-6527

amazon.com



Rosa Sat... Martin Walked... Barack Ran... (\$15), a new poster designed by Gene

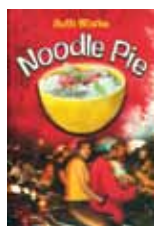
Pendon, highlights how direct actions paved the way for our first African-American president. It depicts Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Barack Obama and portrays the Selma-to-Montgomery march. The poster is an eye-catching teaching resource for civil rights and social justice.

It depicts Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Barack Obama and portrays the Selma-to-Montgomery march. The poster is an eye-catching teaching resource for civil rights and social justice.

Syracuse Cultural Workers

(800) 949-5139

syracuseculturalworkers.com



Noodle Pie (\$15.99), by Ruth Starke, tells the story of a Vietnamese father who returns to his home country for the first time since emigrating to Australia. Andy, his 11-year-old Australian-born son,

accompanies him. The experience opens Andy’s eyes. He learns about his Vietnamese culture, about respect for elders, and about family obligation. He experiences the true meaning of *Viet Kieu*, or “helping others in family who are not so fortunate.” *Noodle Pie* is a fun and enlightening story.

ISBN 978-1-9352-7925-9

Kane Miller

(800) 475-4522

kanemiller.com



I Go to the Ruined Place: Contemporary Poems in Defense of Global Human Rights (\$18), edited by Melissa Kwasny and M. L. Smoker, is filled with moving poems. One describes

how indigenous families in Guatemala lovingly rebury their loved ones who were killed during the country’s 36-year civil war. Others reveal injustices in U.S. prisons and the violations faced by American Indians. The range of topics and the diversity of the poets is guaranteed to awaken the reader.

ISBN 978-0-9800-2897-3

Lost Horse Press

(208) 255-4410

losthorsepress.org



Beyond the Station Lies the Sea (\$14), by Jutta Richter, is the story of true friendship between Cosmos, a homeless man, and Niner, a 9-year-old boy. The two want to live by the sea. But they have only one thing

to barter to raise money for the trip—Niner’s guardian angel. Unfortunately, Niner’s life takes a turn for the worse and Cosmos has to try to get the guardian angel back.

ISBN 978-1-5713-1690-5

Milkweed Editions

(800) 520-6455, Ext. 560

milkweed.org



Cursing Columbus (\$16.95), by Eve Tal, shares the story of a family of Jewish immigrants to the United States in the early 1900s. Raizel and Lemmel, siblings, tell their stories, giving us a look at the

Jewish immigration experience. The

dilemmas immigrants faced then are similar to today's problems. The author encourages us to think about the tradeoff involved in assimilating in American society and giving up traditional customs. The book also comes with a handy glossary and recommended reading.

ISBN 978-1-9336-9359-0
Cinco Puntos Press
(800) 566-9072
cincopuntos.com



The biography *Jessie De La Cruz: A Profile of a United Farm Worker* (\$9.95), by Gary Soto, tells the life story of a Mexican-American field worker. A child of migrant workers, Jessie understood the meaning of injustice from an early age. Through her work as a field laborer she relentlessly fought and defended the rights of farm workers. This is a poignant and moving story, which not only teaches the history of *la Causa* but also teaches the importance of determination and persistence. The book is a perfect complement to Teaching Tolerance's documentary film *Viva La Causa*, which tells the story of César Chávez and the movement for social justice.

ISBN 978-0-8925-5285-6
Persea Books
(212) 260-9256
perseabooks.com



The dedication to the book *Am I Blue?: Coming Out From the Silence* (\$7.99), edited by Marion Dane Bauer, starts off with a dedication that reads "for all young people in their search for themselves." The book is a collection of stories about growing up gay or lesbian. At the end of each story, the writer provides a short personal biography and some reflective background notes on the creation of the story.

ISBN 978-0-0644-0587-4
HarperCollins Publishers
(800) 242-7737
amazon.com



Outside Rules: Short Stories About Nonconformist Youth (\$9.95), edited by Claire Robson, is a collection of 14 fictional stories filled with strong characters who don't fit the norm. The relevant themes ex-

plored—racism, grief, creativity, compassion, limitations, courage, acceptance, individualism—are as diverse and true-to-life as the characters. The stories remind us that there is much more to other people's lives than what we see on the outside.

ISBN 978-0-8925-5316-7
Persea Books
(212) 260-9256
perseabooks.com



The \$66 Summer: A Novel of the Segregated South (\$8), by John Armistead, vividly portrays the endearing friendship of three teenagers—two black siblings, Esther and Bennett, and one white boy, George—during the summer of 1955 in southern Alabama. While their wholesome friendship grows, inequality, racism and hate stir all around them. This historical novel engages us with realistic characters and events.

ISBN 978-1-5713-1663-9
Milkweek Editions
(800) 520-6455, Ext. 560
milkweed.org ♦

FREE STUFF

Looking for a social network for teachers that want to know more about the web and social media? Join Classroom 2.0 for free. Sign up at **www.classroom20.com** and participate in great discussions, receive event notifications, and connect with supportive, web-savvy colleagues.

Make mobile learning work for you and your students. Apple's iTunes U offers a great collection of free video and audio educational content. You can access iTunes over both cellular and Wi-Fi and distribute lessons to your students digitally.

To learn more, go to **www.apple.com/support/itunes_u/**

Need help teaching the people's history of the United States? Thanks to our friends at Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change, the work of Howard Zinn will continue to lead and inspire us. They've created an incredible free online resource designed to help you tell the stories left out of most middle and high school textbooks. Connect with the Zinn Education Project at **www.zinnedproject.org/**

FREE: Federal Resources for Educational Excellence **www.free.ed.gov/index.cfm** hosts thousands of federally supported teaching and learning resources. The U.S. Department of Education will send you information on free resources when you sign up for its RSS feed.

Doing its part to help improve student achievement, the Verizon Foundation created a unique website, **www.thinkfinity.org**, offering over 55,000 free discipline-specific and standards-based lessons and student materials. You'll also find

resources to support teacher professional development and parent engagement.

Yes! magazine describes itself as "an award-winning, ad-free nonprofit publication that supports people's active engagement in building a just and sustainable world." *Yes!* offers a free one-year subscription to classroom teachers. The subscription comes with a monthly newsletter. Go to **www.yesmagazine.org/for-teachers**.





A War on the Peaceful

The Hutterites are a German-speaking religious group. Their branch of Christianity began in Europe around the 1500s. From the start, the Hutterites had an unusual way of living. They wore only plain clothes. And they lived in large groups off by themselves. They also did not believe in private property. Instead, they shared everything. And the Hutterites were pacifists—they refused to take up arms during wartime.

For 300 years, Hutterites faced hatred and bigotry in Europe. That is because some other people disliked their beliefs. In the 1870s, several Hutterite groups came to the United States. Like many immigrants coming at that time, the Hutterites sought religious freedom. Many of them settled in South Dakota and Montana. The Hutterites found the freedom they wanted. But they still faced hatred from people who found them strange.

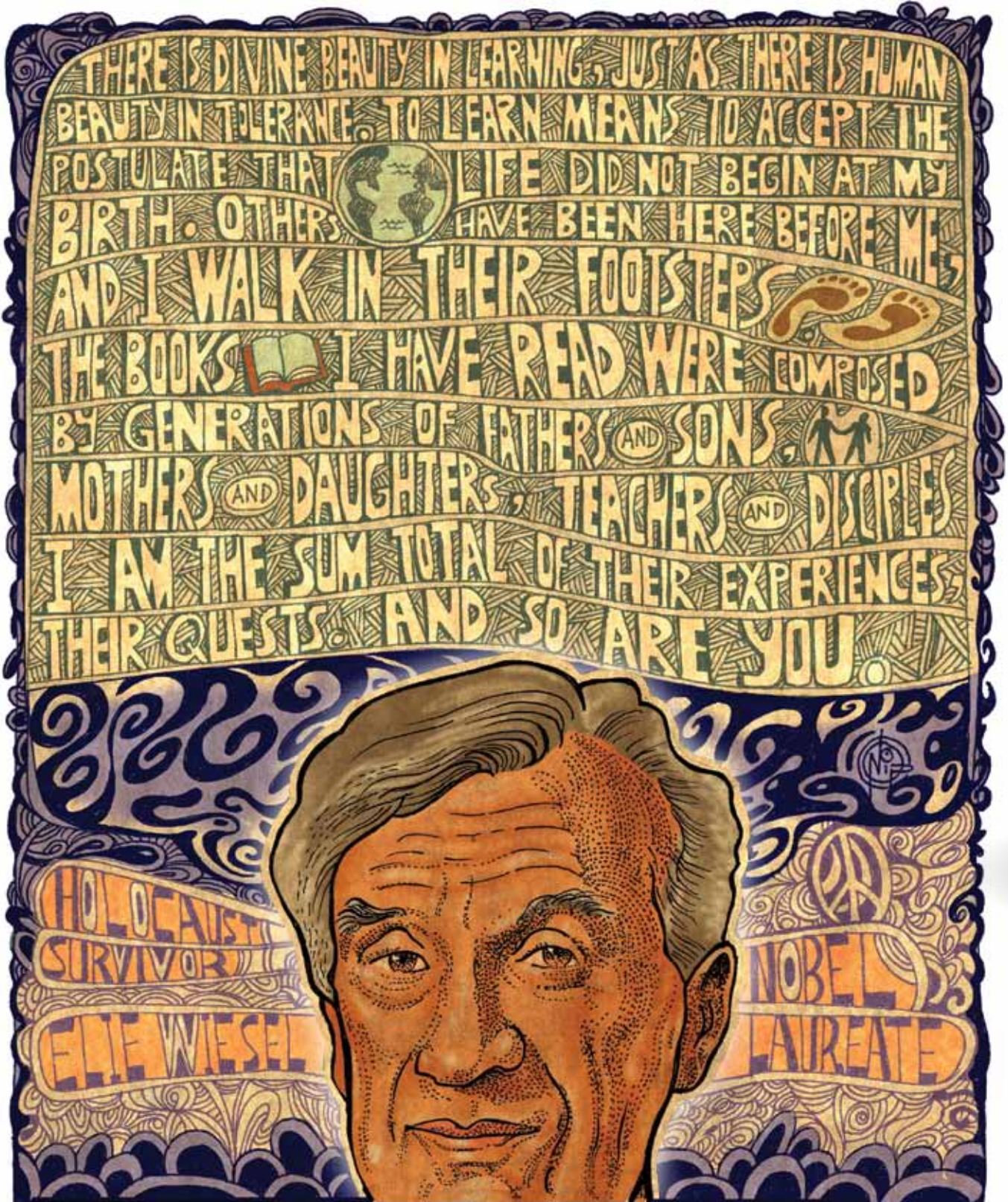
Even so, the Hutterites did well until 1914, when war began in Europe. The United States joined World War I against Germany in 1917. Many Americans back home disliked anything German. They became angry at the Hutterites because they spoke German among themselves. Also, Hutterite young men refused to become U.S. soldiers. They did not believe in fighting. Many people believed that Hutterites favored Germany over the United States in the war.

Some people who lived near the Hutterites began to harass them. They stole from Hutterite herds. They vandalized Hutterite farms. Some towns passed new laws aimed at the Hutterites. These laws forbade people to speak German on the telephone or at school. Military service became mandatory for all young men who were physically fit. Since service was required, Hutterites sent their young men to military training camps. But Hutterite men held tightly to their pacifist beliefs. They refused to obey military orders or wear uniforms.

Some people believed that the Hutterites were cowards, not pacifists. As a result, soldiers treated the Hutterite men terribly. They were dragged by their hair. They were beaten. They were chased by motorcycles until they dropped from being so tired. A few Hutterite men were sent to prison for not obeying military orders. Two of them died because they were so badly treated.

The state of South Dakota also harassed the Hutterites. A special committee declared that they were “un-American.” It said that the Hutterite settlements, or “colonies,” should be banned. This forced the Hutterites to move. Most Hutterites left South Dakota and settled in Canada. Tensions did not ease until after the war. Years later, Hutterites once again set up new colonies in South Dakota.

Today, most Hutterites live in western Canada and the northern United States. Many outsiders still find Hutterite ways strange. Growing up Hutterite means that you have few personal possessions and little privacy. Everyone lives together and works hard. Yet all Hutterites are taken care of and made to feel like they belong. That lifestyle clearly appeals to many Hutterite young people. The Hutterites do not encourage outsiders to join. Even so, their numbers continue to grow. ♦



Teaching Tolerance and participating artists encourage educators to clip the One World page to hang on a classroom wall. It is created with just that purpose in mind. Enjoy!

ILLUSTRATION BY NIP ROGERS



VIVA LA CAUSA

THE STORY of
CÉSAR CHÁVEZ
and A GREAT MOVEMENT
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



A Documentary Film
about the Delano Strike
and Grape Boycott
Led by César Chávez
and Dolores Huerta



FREE
TO SCHOOLS
GRADES 7 AND UP

KIT INCLUDES

- » 39-MINUTE FILM ON DVD
- » TEACHER'S GUIDE WITH STANDARDS-BASED LESSON PLANS

MEETS CONTENT STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES AND LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADES 7-12.

Order Viva La Causa Today!

To receive a FREE copy of Viva La Causa, complete and return the order card on page 1
or download an order form at www.tolerance.org/kit/viva-la-causa

TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
400 Washington Avenue • Montgomery, AL 36104

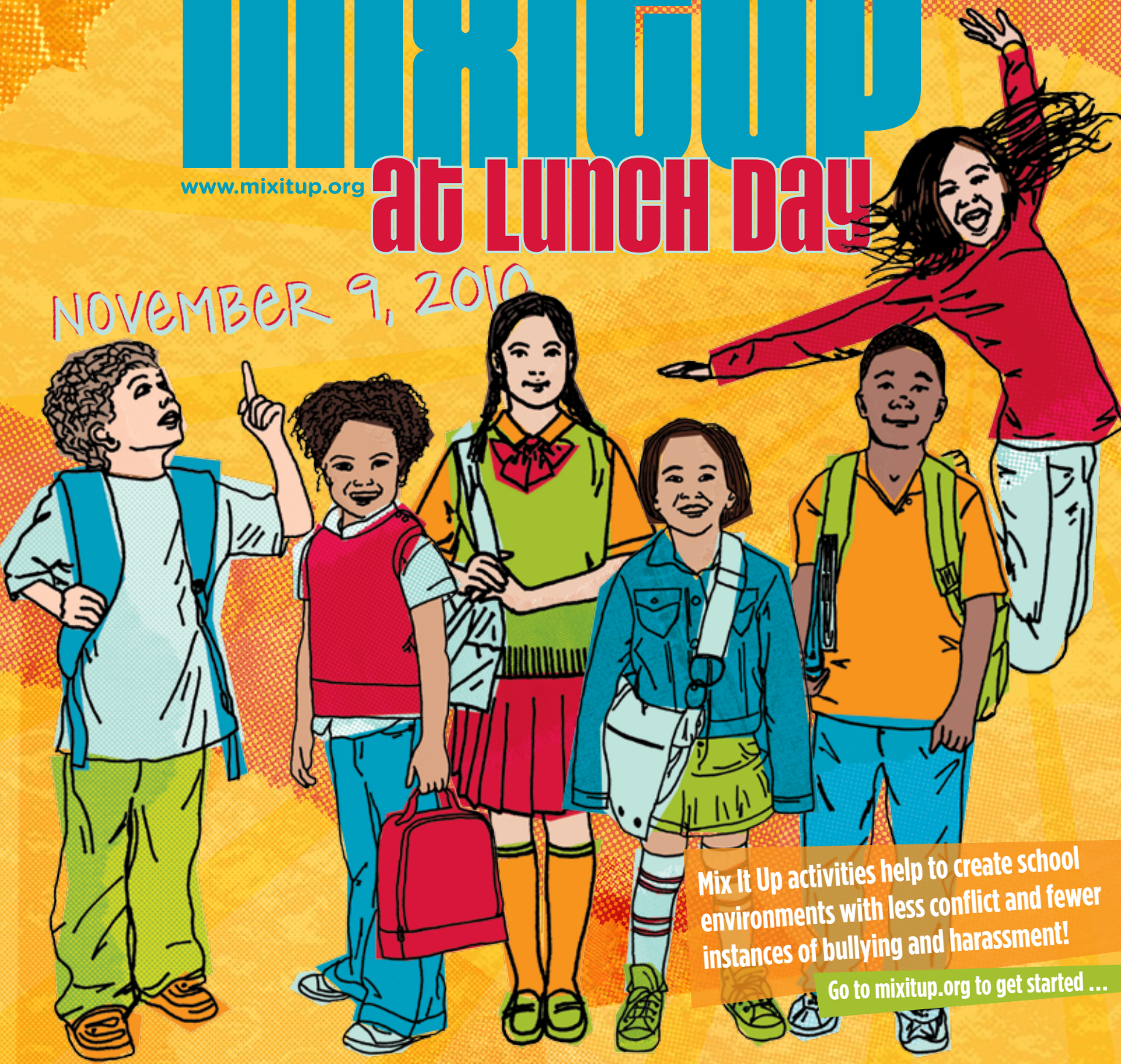
Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Southern Poverty
Law Center

MIXITUP

www.mixitup.org

at LUNCH DAY

NOVEMBER 9, 2010



Mix It Up activities help to create school environments with less conflict and fewer instances of bullying and harassment!

Go to mixitup.org to get started ...