

# INTERCONNECTIONS 21

## Newsletter

Fall/ Early Winter 2004

### Mondialogo: Creating Intercultural Understanding Through School Partnerships



The “Mondialogo” project was launched jointly by UNESCO and the Daimler-Chrysler corporation in January 2004 to promote awareness, understanding and intercultural exchange among students aged 15-18. It pairs UNESCO Associated Schools from different continents to jointly develop a project on the theme of “intercultural dialogue.”

Students were encouraged to use a range of media in their projects. They could develop a game, compose a piece of music, make artwork, record a video film, compile a photographic documentary or a collage, print a newspaper, write a story, play or poem, create an Internet page or design an article of clothing or jewelry. Regardless of the media used, the joint projects were expected to demonstrate:

- ▶ Reflection on and appreciation of the cultures within one’s own group;
- ▶ Analysis and appreciation of other cultures; and
- ▶ Active dialogue with students from other countries and cultures.

More than 24,000 students from 126 countries participated, making Mondialogo the largest global school contest ever held. A web-based team area allowed schools to exchange ideas as their projects developed. Disposable cameras were made available so that stu-



Cambodian teacher Sam Sokha and student Un Sethea with U.S. partners, student Andrea Feuer and teacher Tobin Bechtel.

dents could exchange photos and document their projects. Schools also made use of phone, fax and postal mail to communicate.

#### The Mondialogo Symposium

Out of the 1460 teams that participated in the school contest, student representatives of 25 partner teams were nominated to

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### A Teacher Talks about Mondialogo



Fostering international friendships: Malaysian teacher Tuah Nurul with US teacher Nancy Schwartz

The Mondialogo project has been an amazing and heartening experience. We came together in Barcelona—people from diverse places on earth, a microcosm of the world. There, and in our dialogues, we learned of the colorful differences between us and of the threads that tie us together, the common love we feel for family and friends, and the desire for security.

Our partner school was from Pakistan and it was the one school unable to attend the Symposium because it could not obtain a visa. We felt fortunate to have been partnered with an Islamic culture so different from our own. New awareness was aroused in our students as our friendship developed. In our final report our USA students wrote about how spoiled they were, how much they take for granted, how much less they appreciate and respect parents and teachers and how like themselves is our Pakistani partner in its hopes for peace.

Our partner’s absence was a disappointment, but the only disappointment at the occasion where we were shown the greatest hospitality and privileged to listen to so many young people stand up and speak confidently and clearly that we are all one people and eager to work together with friendship and cooperation. It was exciting because this project really is a piece of the puzzle to world peace. It is helping to bring about the understanding and openness needed to move closer to peace and unity. Many thanks go to Daimler Chrysler and to UNESCO for sponsoring this project. It was a privilege and an honor to contribute to and be a part of this world-embracing effort.

—Nancy Schwartz, The Conserve School

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## News from the Associated Schools: New Members, Democracy Project



### Three Rivers Middle School

8575 Bridgetown Road, Cleves, Ohio 45002

Three Rivers Middle School (TRMS) joined ASPnet/USA in July 2004. For the past three years, the school has been a part of UNESCO's Transatlantic Slave Trade project. Their historical study of the slave trade is infused throughout the school year, and includes visits to Underground Railroad sites in the region. These serve as the basis for journaling, poetry-writing, drama, and graphic arts activities. The school has developed an approach that examines the roles of "victim", "oppressor", "bystander", and "liberator" in the slave trade. This framework is applied to the study of the Holocaust, contemporary slavery, and even to issues of bullying in the day-to-day life of students.

To encourage students to apply what they learn about diversity, TRMS has held events such as "Mix It Up Day", when teachers carry out activities to raise awareness of groups that exist in the school and inter-group attitudes. Students then make a commitment to sit with others they don't usually mix with in the cafeteria. Follow-up activities help them synthesize what they learn from the experience.

On October 8, 2004, the TRMS gymnasium was the setting for a naturalization ceremony at which seventy people from thirty-two different countries became citizens of the US. The entire TRMS student body witnessed the event. To help the students better understand this process, they were informed of immigration policies, citizenship, and the naturalization process prior to the ceremony. Students also took a "test" made up of questions used by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Students receiving 90% or better were permitted to become "new citizens" at a mock ceremony held before the actual event. Three Rivers Middle School is very proud to continue its tradition of educating students on the value of citizenship and multicultural awareness.

### The Bolles School

7400 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville, Florida 32217 ([www.Bolles.org](http://www.Bolles.org))

The Bolles School joined ASPnet/USA in May 2004. Bolles science teachers Piper Moyer and Amy Strasbaugh are implementing a newly-designed curriculum unit that focuses on the Galapagos Islands, which was designated a World Heritage site by UNESCO. Following a trip to the Galapagos this summer, the two teachers designed a series of lessons that will examine issues such as biodiversity, adaptation, conservation, and sustainable ecotourism. Students will compare the ecosystem of the Galapagos with that of

their local environment in Florida. Details of the teachers' trip will be documented through a Web site and digital journal, which will be available to other schools and teachers.

Ms. Moyer writes, "The Galapagos have weathered a 600% increase in tourism in the past three decades, all while trying to maintain the ecology of the area that attracts big money to a generally poor country. It was this conservation effort and the lure of evolution that drew Amy and me to this group of young volcanic islands. It is our hope that these young stewards see the amazing species and ecosystems, and realize that they can help mold the future of the planet they live on. This trip left Amy and me with a renewed belief in the ability of dedicated people to protect that which they hold valuable. Hopefully, we can impart the value of the Galapagos and the natural world to our students."

### Hawaii Institute for Human Rights

Pacific Peace Palace, 3524 Campbell Avenue,  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815 ([www.hihr.org](http://www.hihr.org))

In the Spring 2004 semester, the Hawaii Institute for Human Rights (HIHR) sponsored the Democracy Project to encourage students to be cognizant of political issues in the upcoming presidential election and, if of age, to register to vote. In addition, HIHR sponsored a video-conference on Hawaii's five main islands, during which representatives of the presidential hopefuls discussed their candidate's position on US foreign policy -- specifically international human rights law, global environmental standards and human security.

HIHR also held its fourth annual "Women's Rights Are Human Rights" conference in March. At the conference, students heard about the struggle for self-determination from Carrie Dann of the Western Shoshone. Incarcerated Hawaiian women shared stories of prison conditions, and described how learning about their indigenous culture and identity was a powerful tool for rehabilitation.

Students in a new HIHR course on "International Instruments and Institutions for Peace and Human Rights" were able to bring Hawaii's voice to the floor of the UN when they attended the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May. The Forum's theme was women's rights, and students put knowledge gained at the Women's Rights conference into practice by participating in the Indigenous Youth Caucus. From New York, the students traveled on to Washington D.C. for visits to the US State Department, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and their elected officials in Congress.

## IC 21 Hosts Interational Workshop to Launch World Heritage Education Program



On January 28-30, 2005, InterConnections 21 will host an international workshop on World Heritage Education at the American Philosophical Society's Benjamin Franklin Hall in Philadelphia, PA. The goals of the January workshop are to launch UNESCO's flagship "World Heritage in Young Hands" project in the United States and to encourage networking among member schools. Some 75 educators and student leaders from across the US are expected to participate in the workshop, for which the Longview and United Nations Foundations have provided generous support.

The World Heritage Program was established by UNESCO in 1972 when the international community adopted the World Heritage Convention. Through this Convention, UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of non-renewable cultural and natural heritage that is of outstanding and universal value to humanity. The convention is signed by 178 UN member states and to date, there are 788 cultural and natural sites in 134 countries, including the Taj Majal in India, the Great Barrier

Reef in Australia, and Serengeti National Park in Tanzania.

The United States has been a strong supporter of the World Heritage Program, and there are currently 20 sites in the US including Independence Hall in Philadelphia, which will be a focal point of the January conference.

In 1994, UNESCO developed the "World Heritage in Young Hands" educational resource kit to provide opportunities for young people to engage in the protection of local, national, and world heritage. These valuable materials have served to promote intercultural dialogue and synergy between educators, decision makers, heritage experts and other partners in many countries around the world. The Educational Resource Kit, which includes classroom activities, a World Heritage map, and full color photographs, has been pilot tested in 130 countries and is translated into 23 languages.

This is the first World Heritage workshop to be held in the US. It will raise awareness of the significance of the World Heritage Program both nationally and globally, and will promote teaching and learning about World Heritage in the United States.

For more information and to register for this conference, please

## ASPnet Schools Celebrate UN Day

United Nations Day is observed around the world on October 24, commemorating the date in 1945 when the UN charter was ratified, and the United Nations officially came into existence. Since its creation 59 years ago, the UN has grown from 51 to 191 member countries, the most recent additions being Switzerland and Timor-Leste in 2002. In September 2000, all United Nations member states (189 at the time) pledged to focus national and international agendas on eight goals, called the Millennium Development Goals, which seek to improve global living standards levels by 2015. With an eye toward furthering those goals, the United Nations Day theme for 2004 is Women's Rights and Empowerment: The Millennium Development Goals and Gender Equity.

ASPnet schools celebrated across the US with fun school-wide events. The Global Connections Club at Jackson Hole High School sponsored the 6th annual UN Day International lunch, at which students shared delicious food from countries like Kosovo, China, Turkey, Venezuela and Israel. Students at the United Nations International School in New York City took part in a 2-day celebration that featured a fashion show of traditional dress from UN nations, an international talent show and homeroom discussions on



United Nations International School students display traditional dress from around the world in the UN Day International Fashion Show.

UN-themed topics of the students' choice.

IC 21 also launched a UN Day unit as the first of our UN International Days teaching materials, which will be available throughout the school year for all ASPnet schools at [www.ic21.org](http://www.ic21.org).

## FLASH!

The 7th annual UN Student Human Rights Conference will be held at the UN International School and the UN General Assembly Hall in New York City December 2-3, 2004. Please visit the UNSHRC website at <http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/student/2004/about.asp> for more information or to register to participate in the interactive forum and conference web casting.

We have a new email address! Please email us at [info@ic21.org](mailto:info@ic21.org)

Mondialogo Symposium, continued from front page

attend the Mondialogo Symposium in Barcelona, Spain, from September 17-20, 2004, and their participation was generously funded by Daimler-Chrysler and UNESCO. Along with their faculty advisors, students exchanged experiences and presented their projects to the jury, the press and each other. They also participated in workshops on the arts and intercultural dialogue. In a festive closing ceremony, four particularly outstanding projects were awarded a cash donation to benefit their schools.

### Participation in Mondialogo: A View From The Schools

Three US schools attended the Mondialogo Symposium: Atlanta International School (AIS), Atlanta, GA; Beattie Technical School, Allison Park, PA; and the Conserve School, Land o' Lakes WI. Faculty advisor Tobin Bechtel from Atlanta International School writes, "Eight AIS students were paired with a rural Cambodian school. Their final product was a collage that celebrated the diversity and unity of their two cultures. Both groups learned a lot about each other and the difficulty of communication even in the 21st century."

AIS student Andrea Feuer, age 16, says, "Participating in the UNESCO ASPnet project taught me to appreciate and respect differences and to be patient and really help others in need, because if you don't help, who will? The school we were partnered with is extremely poor, and the students are also gripped by poverty. Thus, I became aware and extremely grateful to be part of the convenient society I live in; and at the same time to try my hardest to help the less privileged succeed."

Conserve School students were equally articulate about insights gained from the Mondialogo project. Sixteen-year-old Emma remarked, "It never really occurred to me that there were places in the world that had trouble just communicating due to lack of resources. And yet, the ironic part is that they were ahead of the game ... they spoke our language and we didn't even know what their language was called. It was one of the few moments in my life when I've felt truly ignorant—which is funny because I have

absolutely everything available to me." Ellie adds, "We all love to talk about how open and culturally in tune we are, but really, because we are rarely put on the spot and asked to step out of the mindset of mainstream American culture, this openness is more surface. I think the more we interact in positive, creative and constructive ways with other cultures, the more we will find our minds, imaginations and capacity to empathize with humans anywhere truly opening and expanding on a deeper level."

At the closing of the Mondialogo Symposium, it was announced that funding from Daimler-Chrysler and UNESCO will allow this project to continue for another year. ASPnet/USA looks forward to encouraging member schools to take advantage of this unique opportunity to build bridges between cultures.

For additional information about Mondialogo, visit [www.mondialogo.org](http://www.mondialogo.org).



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InterConnections 21 • (307) 733-0549 • fax (307) 733-4178 • [info@ic21.org](mailto:info@ic21.org) • [www.ic21.org](http://www.ic21.org)

**INTERCONNECTIONS 21**

PO Box 960 • 3705 West Canyon Road • Wilson, Wyoming USA 83014

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