

IC 21 Sends Delegation to Student Conference at the United Nations, December 11, 1998

The celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was in full swing. Ambassadors from far places, such as Asia, Russia, and China, spoke on the stage, about the significant contribution that the UN had made to promoting human rights over the past half century and the importance of youth speaking out on the subject in the future. Their voices echoed into the microphones, and we—600 students— sat by them, taking flash pictures, making speeches and recording high points of the conference.

Our little team from Minnesota was made up of Cecilia Bardy-Gagner, Hannah Hauberg and myself, Isaac Holter, eighth grader from Anne Sullivan Communications Center in Minneapolis, and a group from the neighboring Friends School of Minnesota. Ms. Pamela Girod led us on our journey to New York City. Kids from all over the

world gathered there, and we made lots of little connections, seeing that kids from Canada shared many of the same thoughts and fears about human rights as kids from China and ourselves!

I was the writer and helped redraft the declaration to express kids' concerns about war, discrimination, persecution and child labor. Hannah was the spokesperson and stood on the stage leading the group; and Cecilia was the photographer.

The ambassadors were pleased to hear from us. When it was time for myself and other kids from all across the world to present a new version of the Declaration of Human Rights, they clapped enthusiastically. One of them was the Oscar-winning songwriter Isaac Hayes.

Weeks and months of hard work and studying went into that day-long student conference. After it wound up, participants were pleased yet exhausted, judging from the looks on their faces. But that wasn't the end of the fun, learning and awe that we experienced in New York. We stayed two more days there and visited incredible sites that we only knew about from books before, such as the Statue of Liberty and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Now, months after, talk still hasn't died down about our big trip to the Big Apple. The kids from our school and Ms. Girod, who were lucky enough to go, still reminisce about their 2000 mile journey whenever we meet!

Isaac Holter
Eighth Grade
Anne Sullivan Communications
Center
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P. Girod photo

President's Message

With the rapid spread of the new information technology over the last decade, the world has become increasingly interdependent. Thinking globally and acting locally is no longer a high-minded abstract principle for a vanguard of activists, but a matter of daily concern and self-interest for us all, if we are to survive and lead productive and balanced lives in the 21st century. To help promote learning and grass-roots involvement about pressing issues with both local and global implications for schools and communities around the USA, I launched InterConnections 21 (IC 21), a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization based in Jackson Hole, in 1997.

Recent events in the Balkans and at Columbine High School have confirmed this need for greater citizen involvement in the complex events that are unfolding at home and abroad. While perhaps tempting for some to try shut them out and for others to "over-hype" them, I believe it is important for us all to learn about and reflect on them. However disconcerting the process may be, and regardless of how busy we are, we need to wrestle with possible explanations of their causes and weigh approaches to dealing with the underlying phenomena that produced them if we are to avoid similar future tragedies.

Currently IC 21 is focused on contributing to this process through two programs. First, we are working to expand the Associated Schools Project (ASPnet), established and managed by UNESCO at the international level, in the USA. Comprised of over 5200 members in 154 countries, ASPnet is the

world's largest and oldest international network of education institutions, involving preschools through graduate teacher education programs. Our activities focus on the promotion of human rights, peace and democracy; teaching about the United Nations system and current world issues; cross-cultural training; and preservation of the World Heritage (both cultural and natural sites). The second program is the Jackson Hole Forum. Launched in March, 1999, the forum will provide speakers and related activities about current issues of local and global importance for the community in Jackson Hole.

IC 21's working methods are collaborative, and we strive to run a lean operation with the funding we raise from foundations, individuals, businesses and intergovernmental agencies. While undertaking clearly identifiable projects of our own, we also seek out partner organizations with solid work and timely messages that we may help diffuse in the schools and communities where we work. Since committed educators are at the heart of our endeavor and offer most of their time and services on a pro-bono basis, our overhead and staff costs are minimal. Finally, though we exploit the new information technology for management and communication purposes, we are convinced that there is no substitute for face-to-face contact and human connections when it comes to understanding and reconciling divergent viewpoints and cultures. We aim to make a world of difference and would welcome your support and involvement in this enterprise.

Susie Rauch

For more information about IC 21 projects, visit our website:
www.aspnet-usa.org (soon to become www.ic21.org)

News from the Associated Schools

Currently sixteen education institutions are members of the U.S. chapter of the Associated Schools Project (ASPnet/USA), and another fifteen are in the process of joining. They range in type, size and location from public institutions such as the two-room Moran Elementary School in rural Wyoming and the multi-ethnic Davidson Middle

School in the San Francisco Bay Area to private institutions such as Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire and the Miami International Waldorf School in Florida. To become a member, an institution must show commitment to developing a global dimension in its program, undertake a two-year project related to one of the four priority

ASPnet themes, and agree to participate actively in the network and report quarterly on its own activities.

During the last eighteen months, IC 21 has organized, with generous support from UNESCO and the Wellspring Foundation, two weekend workshops in Washington D.C. and Fort Lauderdale. The 15–20 teacher educators from around the country who participated in each of these workshops evaluated their usefulness very highly (4.6. out of a possible 5). Their main outcomes were a work plan and the identification of a number of group projects for ASPnet/USA. Participants also reported on their schools' on-going global education activities and interests.

In July, 1998, IC 21 organized a Summer Institute for 15 teacher educators involved in ASPnet/USA. The focus of this three-day workshop, which included visits to the United Nations and to the Brooklyn Children's Museum, was teaching about the United Nations. The Summer Institute also spawned the ASPnet/USA Human Rights Trip to New York in December, 1998 for a student conference organized by the United Nations to commemorate

the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thirty-five students, teachers and parents from ASPnet/USA schools were involved in the New York trip which included visits to the Statue of Liberty and the Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as the student conference. The trip was funded by a generous grant from the Engelhard Foundation and some local fund-raising activities.

Two major initiatives of ASPnet/USA in the coming months will be the international student fresco contest being organized by Art Child in Paris for the millennium and a follow-up trip to New York for the second Human Rights Day Student Conference at the UN in December, 1999. This year's conference will focus on how children can promote human rights for older persons; conflict resolution at the local level with emphasis on measures to prevent school violence, stereotyping and exclusion; and the effects of war on children, with particular attention devoted to refugee issues and land mines. The Department of Public Information of the UN has invited IC 21 to be one of four co-sponsors of this student conference.

FLASH!

ASPnet/USA was just invited by the French National Assembly and UNESCO to send a teacher and two students to Paris for international youth parliament meeting in October, 1999!

Participating Educators Speak About ASPnet/USA

Since joining ASPnet/USA in early 1998, the Waldorf International School in Miami has experienced many positive changes. First, the kids are thinking more globally. They tend to connect events and have a better understanding of interrelationships. Last year's trip to the UN still has them talking, not only about the sights, but about what happened there. This was an invaluable experience!

The Global Shoes project, inspired by the exhibition that has just opened at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, and that we learned about during the ASPnet/USA Summer Institute in New Jersey last year, has affected the whole school. Through this project we've been able to make contact with other schools both in the USA and abroad, and it has served as a useful vehicle for learning about different cultures, languages, religions and philosophical beliefs. When we start to walk in the shoes of others,

we find out where they feel good and where they pinch. Better, we find out why our feet just won't fit into some shoes and why that's OK.

The Associated Schools Project is of interest to our peers and prospective parents. Waldorf schools around the U. S. have expressed interest in joining, as have several other schools in Florida. Finally, ASPnet/USA has opened new vistas, created new professional contacts and energized those of us at the school who have been lucky enough to participate directly in the network's activities. The national workshops have been great—professionally stimulating and fun! We've returned from these meetings to the school with our batteries recharged and fired up to help our children get connected to the larger world.

Yvonne and Richard Cumming
Co-directors
Waldorf International School
Miami, Florida

The Jackson Hole Forum

The Jackson Hole Forum (JHF) is a new lecture series that aims to encourage active community interest in issues of domestic and international importance such as tolerance, justice and peace, international cooperation, as well as the preservation of the world's natural and cultural heritage. In addition to evening sessions, forum speakers, depending on their expertise, may also participate in local school activities.

The forum's maiden event took place at the Teton County Library on March 23, 1999, when Jim Williams, a world renowned mountain guide and adventure traveler based in Jackson, made a presentation entitled "Eco-tourism: How Green? How Clean?" The turnout was good for this pilot activity, with a representative cross-section from the Jackson Hole community in terms of age, occupation and place of residence in the valley. The evening started with refreshments, and discussion and debate followed the brief presentation by Mr. Williams. A survey of participant opinion after the presentation showed strong support for continuing the speaker series and for supporting it with a bibliography on the IC 21 home page with indications for preparatory or follow-up work that participants might be interested in pursuing in connection with the presentations.

Currently, plans are in hand for a second JHF event in the fall of 1999. William Pfaff, a Paris-based

syndicated columnist for the Los Angeles Times whose work on contemporary politics and history appears twice-weekly on the op-ed page of the International Herald Tribune, will speak to the forum in September. Author of several books about nationalism and a frequent speaker at major international meetings and conferences, Mr. Pfaff will talk about NATO's involvement in the Balkans and America's reputation at the dawn of the 21st century.

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