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MAY 2008

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I hear, and I forget. I see, and I remember.
I do, and I understand.

CHINESE PROVERB

IF THE WORLD WERE A VILLAGE

HELPING US GAIN SOME PERSPECTIVE



By Betsy Prueter

Some of you may have seen this but I found it to be enlightening exercise. Imagine if the entire population of the world were reduced to a village of 100 people. With all existing ratios kept the same, the demographics would look something like this:

60 Asians
12 Europeans
5 US Americans and Canadians
8 Latin Americans
14 Africans
49 would be female
51 would be male
82 would be non-white
18 would be white
33 would be Christian
67 would be non-Christian
5 would control 32% of the world's wealth
80 would live in substandard housing

24 would not have any electricity

67 would be unable to read

1 would have a college education

50 would be malnourished

1 dying of starvation

33 would be without access to safe water

7 people would have access to the Internet

Did anything surprise you about this list? Did anything jump out at you? This exercise might be worth sharing with your Action Teams, your community partners, students, and staff at your site. It's a good way to start a conversation about social justice, race, or poverty.

Can you believe that only 5 people would control almost 1/3 of the world's wealth? And what's more, every one of them would be from the United States.

Also, although 76 people would have electricity, most of them would only use it at night for light.

I think something like this more than anything makes us grateful for what we have and perhaps more cognizant of the disparity that exists not only in our own communities, but in our state, in our country, and around the world.

I share this not to depress you or to overwhelm you but instead to empower you. There are steps we can take every day to eliminate poverty and foster equality. Remember, though to the world you may just be one person, to one person, you just may be the world.

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Be sure to send some birthday wishes!

Michael Castaneda (5/30)

m.castaneda@parentspluswi.org



3. Be friendly
Great parents with a smile when they visit the school. First impressions are important!
4. Be welcoming to new and excited volunteers
Look for new parents to invite as volunteers and look for new things for them to do. Be specific in your ask for help!
5. Be connected
Family centers, food pantries, taxis, community health services, and park and recreation programs are all important resources for families. Share these family friendly resources.

TIPS FROM WSPRA

WISCONSIN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS
ASSOCIATION



These tips are generated from the February 2008 WSPRA (the Wisconsin School Public Relations Association) gram. February's focus was *No-Cost Activities Produce Big Returns*.

Visit www.wspra.org for more information.

NO-COST ACTIVITIES FOR REACHING FAMILIES

By Dorreen Dembski, West Bend School District

1. Be easy to contact
Have a fact sheet about your school ready to give to all parents. Include all critical contact info for the school, principals, teachers, guidance counselors, etc.
2. Be a communicator
Write down what you want parents to know. Don't depend on students to tell them important dates and times. Remember, technology doesn't replace good old-fashioned person-to-person contact.
3. Ask questions often. By asking questions, you will be able to gauge quickly whether the parents understand the information you are sharing.
4. Create a plan of action with the parents. If the action plan that you think is best for the child doesn't work with the family's schedule or doesn't have the parents' buy-in, the plan will likely not lead to the student's success. Ask parents for their suggestions, question if your ideas will work for them, and determine a schedule for you to reconnect to determine if goals are being met or revise the plan.



WANT GREAT PARTNERSHIPS NEXT YEAR? EVALUATE THIS YEAR!



By Ruth Anne Landsverk

Evaluating your Action Team’s progress is a valuable way to begin to set goals and strategies for improving partnerships next year. Review your team’s One-Year Action Plan or Three-Year Outline to see which goals have been achieved, which need to be discarded, and which could be “tweaked,” or done differently for better results in 2008-09.

Your team might want to answer these general questions as it considers how partnership efforts made a difference for students, families, and staff:

- Which partnership **practices** are presently strong? Which are weak? Which should continue? Expand to other grade levels or subject areas? Which should be dropped?
- Did partnership practices address **families’** interests and needs about keeping informed and involved in children’s learning?
- Did partnership practices strengthen the learning goals that **teachers** had for students?
- Which **families** did you reach and which are not yet involved? How might all families be involved?
- What did **students** expect their families to do to help them with school life and homework? What do students want the school to do to inform and involve their families?

- What **relationships** among families, teachers, students, and other school staff have been strengthened by partnerships this year? What relationships could be improved next year?
- Was your partnership **budget** adequate? Was it used to support your Action Team’s goals?
- Were the **contributions and skills** of families and the community used to support your Action Team goals? Could they be used more effectively next year?

The major goals here are to reach families who might not have been involved this year, to better connect partnerships to school goals, and to strengthen the work of the Action Team and partnerships, in general.

Remember, good partnerships take time – at least three years to really approach being comprehensive. Taking the time to review will help your school lay the groundwork for continual improvement and sustainability.



INTERVIEW WITH A VISTA



CATHY ANSWERS KELLY'S QUESTIONS

KELLY: Best concert you ever went to, describe?

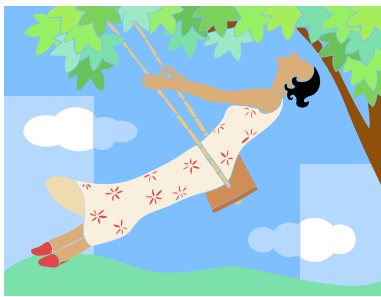
CATHY: Trans Siberian Orchestra – Jan 2008 in Madison, WI. I had been bummed out that the budget would not allow me to buy tickets to go to this concert as a family. But, my husband and I were able to go because my youngest daughter surprised me with two tickets for Christmas 2007!

KELLY: Secret talent that no one would ever guess?

CATHY: Not sure about this one. I have been told that I can hear what people are saying to me without really acknowledging that I am listening to them. One friend use to say “Are you listening to me?” I would say yes and repeat every thing back to them word for word.

KELLY: Tell us your favorite way to relax?

CATHY: In the summer time it would be sitting or lying on a yard swing listening to the sounds of the country outdoors. In the wintertime it would be a skein of yarn and a crochet hook with my feet propped up on a stool.



KELLY: What did you want to be in High School?

CATHY: Unfortunately, I was not thinking about what I wanted to be or do after High School. Being a teenager in the early 70's, an only child with a single parent and no close family in the area, I made some wrong choices that veered my life in a direction that I wish could be re-lived. Truthfully, at 50 years old I am still trying to figure out what to do with life. One thing I do know is this – I want to do

the best I can with what I have, when I can, where I can for who I can.

KELLY: If you were stranded on an island with one other individual who would that be (husband excluded)?

CATHY: Larry the Cable guy. I figure he would be able to keep my spirits up and make me laugh till someone came to rescue us. LOL.

KELLY: What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?

CATHY: In 5 years I will be eligible for the senior citizens menu and will probably join AARP to tap into all the bennies it gives. LOL. By then I will have completed an IT-Programming/Analyst Associates and have found a work/business opportunity. After being a VISTA working with youth, I hope to involve myself in programs for youth or establish a mentoring program.

KELLY: Absolute best movie you have ever seen, why?

CATHY: Well, I don't know for sure if this is my best movie, but it is one that after watching it, my family came home and I watched it over again with them. I normally DON'T watch movies over twice – SO, I guess this is my best movie. *16 Blocks* starring Bruce Willis. I love action movies!



KELLY: What is your favorite comfort food?

CATHY: Buttered popcorn. I love it! Even after a big meal, there is always room for buttered popcorn. If I am down and out – buttered popcorn. If I am happy – buttered popcorn. It is the winter, spring, summer, and fall food!

KELLY: What will you take away from your VISTA experiences?

CATHY: I have developed a few close relationships with staff members and students alike.

KELLY: What was your first car you owned yourself?

CATHY: A dark green 1973 Volvo.



KELLY ANSWERS CATHY'S QUESTIONS

CATHY: If you knew that every person would take your word of wisdom to heart, what would it be?

KELLY: Care.

CATHY: How many states and countries have you traveled through/to? Which state or country would you like to live in? Why?

KELLY: Was a truck driver so I have been to all 48 continental states, and the countries of Canada and Mexico. I like the openness of some parts of Canada (and the fishing).

C: Smoothie or shake? **K:** smoothie! **C:** Fly or drive? **K:** I am not a good flyer so that is easy.

C: Sit down restaurant or home cooked? **K:** Home cooked any time. **C:** Football or basketball? **K:** I am addicted to playing basketball and I have the

knees to show for it. **C:** Cake or pie? **K:** Cake, though I am trying to be good lately. **C:** E-news or newspaper? **K:** Still a newspaper guy though I do like to research stories further online. **C:** Soda or



water? **K:** It would have to be bad water for me to prefer soda. **C:** Northern winters or southern summers? **K:** I grew up in Florida so I will take the southern summers anytime. **C:** Chicken or beef? **K:** I have a son who is a vegetarian so we have cut way down on both (prefer chicken).

CATHY: Do you garden? Do you have any gardening tips to share?

KELLY: Yes, we do both (by we I mean I do what my wife tells me to do). Organic please and we turn cell phones off around the house since there is

mounting evidence there is a link with the nation wide bee decline.

CATHY: What is your favorite summertime activity?

KELLY: I could easily spend the rest of my life fishing, although any activity or outdoor sport will do.

CATHY: If you could be/have been a shadow of any person (alive or dead), who would it be?

KELLY: Einstein; it would be great to be that far ahead of the learning curve (in old interviews comes across as a down to earth guy).



CATHY: What type of music genre do you like best? Least?

KELLY: I have gone through my Indie phase, my oldies phase, (there is some evidence of a disco phase), but probably classic album rock anthems is what I enjoy most. I didn't get the punk rock wave at all.

CATHY: Did you have to relocate for your VISTA position?

KELLY: I did not have to relocate, though that would have been fun if we didn't still have our youngest still at home. Being a local has also made it easier to talk to businesses and organizations. I know most of these folks already and have worked with many of them in the past.

CATHY: What are your thoughts on the parent/teacher relationship now that you have served as a VISTA?

KELLY: I think good teachers are worth their weight in gold. It is also such a tough job with all the things going on in some homes. I have always thought it critical for the educational process for families and students to have a buy in with what is going on at school. If there is a disconnect, all the best intentions are for naught.

CATHY: What are you plans after this year's VISTA commitment is over?

KELLY: I will be back in grad school at the tender age of 50! I would like eventually to be in a classroom of my own (have been a substitute for 5 years).

SHARE FOOD BUYING CLUB

BRINGING US TOGETHER FOR FOOD AND
COMMUNITY



<http://www.sharewi.org/>

SHARE is a nonprofit food buying club that offers good, nutritious products at reduced cost through a volunteer-run, community-based distribution system. SHARE's mission is to build and strengthen community through volunteer service. Anyone who wants to save money on food and help their community can be a member of SHARE. There are no membership fees or eligibility requirements.

As a member of SHARE, you can save 30-50% on many of the same products you would find in a supermarket. SHARE can offer amazing savings because SHARE volunteers help sort, package and distribute the food that SHARE buys in bulk for over 20,000 people.

SHARE offers a wide variety of frozen meats, fresh produce, other grocery items and club-size packages. You pick the food you want every month from SHARE's monthly order form.

SHARE serves over 200 communities throughout Wisconsin, northern Illinois and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Most likely, SHARE delivers good, nutritious food directly to your community.

Visit the SHARE website to find out more information!

RECRUITMENT

HELP US FIND NEW VISTAS



We are currently recruiting for the following sites:

Milwaukee
Janesville
Madison
Appleton
Wisconsin Rapids
Dodgeville
Oshkosh
Wausau
Green Bay

HOW TO APPLY:

1. Visit <https://my.americorps.gov>
2. Create an account
3. Fill out your application
4. Send your application to the DPI VISTA Project
 - a. Find us using the following search criteria:
 - i. Program Type: AmeriCorps *VISTA
 - ii. Program State: WI
 - iii. Program Name: WI DPI
5. For more information visit:
<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/fscp/index.html>
6. Direct link to program posting:

<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?id=1835&SID=c0a8020e30d7bf9e6349f7ce4ee49c4489a375609522>



Save the Dates

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FAIR

May 10, Pulaski High School, Milwaukee
11am-3pm

GOVERNOR DOYLE'S SERVICE AWARD LUNCHEON

May 13, Edgewater Hotel, Madison
12noon

AMERICORPS CLOSING CEREMONY

May 14, Devil's Lake, Baraboo
8:30am-3pm

PARENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

May 15, Olympia Resort, Oconomowoc
8:30am-3pm

VISTA CHECK IN

May 28th, Wisline Web
1pm-2pm



Congratulations to Michael Castaneda of Parents Plus, recently named the winner of the Governor's AmeriCorps*VISTA Participant of the Year Award for Wisconsin!

Congratulations also to Jane Eaton, Principal of Spooner Elementary School, for receiving the Marty Stein Friend of National Service Exemplary Supporter Award for the state!



THE "HEY! THAT'S A GOOD IDEA" CORNER

BY BETSY PRUETER

Each month I try to highlight some of the successes our VISTAs are having. This gives us a chance to celebrate and share promising practices! As a new feature, I am now suggesting what "Key" each practice might address.

1. **Lacey Donatell** and the Spooner Elementary Action Team organized a Family Math Day for parents and students. The day centered around interactive math stations, food, and child care for young siblings. **[Volunteering]**
2. **Casey Gauthier** organized a district-wide Pajama Party in Rhinelander where each student received a book to read at home with their families. This event was possible with donations from local businesses. **[Collaborating with the Community]**
3. **Lauren Jakubowksi and Jen Gaul** have been recruiting students to serve on the ATP of Pulaski High School in Milwaukee in order to incorporate another perspective and develop strong student leaders. They are marketing this experiences as a resume builder and soliciting local businesses for food donations. **[Decision-Making]**
4. **Carolyn Wood** utilized several techniques in advertising the Family Game Night at Adams-Friendship Middle School. Not only were letters sent home with the school newsletter to all of the parents, but postcards were created and mailed out and announcements were made daily at school. **[Communicating]**

7 DEADLY SINS OF RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS



By Thomas W. McKee
author of *Volunteer Power*

This tips are from a session I recently attended at the Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators Training Institute in Stevens Point.

1. EXPECT ANNOUNCEMENTS TO GET VOLUNTEERS

Just simply stating the fact that you need volunteers won't do the trick. The #1 reason people give for why they volunteer is because they were asked personally!

2. GO IT ALONE!

The entire staff or team at your school or site should be committed to recruiting and supporting volunteers. It should be a group effort!

3. RECRUITING LIFETIME VOLUNTEERS

Get them in the door first with a short term commitment, and then slowly ask if they're interested in volunteering longer. People can get intimidated if asked to volunteer

4. ASSUMING NO MEANS NEVER

Just because someone says "no" to volunteering once, doesn't mean you shouldn't ask again later. Maybe it was the timing, or the position, but don't give up!

5. BIC TRAP

McKee refers to this as the "butt in the chair" trap-meaning you're so desperate for volunteers, you take anyone who walks in the door. Remember, it's worth it to find the right person for the position.

6. BE PEOPLE DRIVEN RATHER THAN POSITION DRIVEN

Focus on the position; what will the experience be like? What kind of work will this job entail? Is it a good match with the volunteer?

7. GIVE THE POSITION THE WRONG TITLE

What exactly will the volunteer be doing? Think carefully how you market your volunteer needs!

RECIPES OF THE MONTH

STRAWBERRY SOUP



Submitted by Betsy Prueter

This is a great spring and summer dish; easy to make and good for a snack or a dessert!

Combine in saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat:

1 c apple juice
3/4 c water
2/3 c sugar
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/8 tsp ground cloves

Remove from heat and cool.

In blender, puree until smooth:

3 c strawberries
1/4 c water

Add to apple juice mixture.

In a separate bowl combine 2 c plain yogurt and 1 tsp vanilla.

Add to apple juice and pureed strawberries. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate.

Garnish with strawberries halves before serving.

Interested in contributing to the **June** newsletter? Email your articles, recipes, or reflections to [Betsy](#) by the end of May.