

Charter Vision

Minnesota

May 2004

Bus Strike Hurts Charter Schools

Megan, 11th Grade, Avalon
 March 4, 2004, the Metro Transit bus drivers, mechanics, and schedulers went on strike over wages, health care, and retirement benefits. The strike greatly effected Twin City charter schools. Students in the Twin Cities depend on the busses to get to school, the mall, or their friend's houses, and without the busses, they could not go anywhere. Many students were not able to attend school because of the strike, and many students had to change their schedules or to find other ways to get to school, such as carpools, walking, or biking. Avalon School opened at 7:30 am and the doors closed at 6:00 pm, to allow for students whose parents needed to drop them off on their way to and from work. The teachers and students put in much longer hours. Some schools, such as Jennings Experiential High School and The High School for the Recording Arts, both in St. Paul, shared busses so their students could attend classes. A few students were actively involved in rallies for the bus drivers, in the picket lines, and donating money and food for the strike's food bank. The union and the Metropolitan Council reached an agreement Friday, April 18, and busses were back in service on Monday, April 20, 2004 making it much easier on students and staff at our charter schools.



Picture printed with permission of the Amalgamated Transit Union 1005

A History Maker Comes to Schoolcraft

By the Schoolcraft Eighth Grade Crew

Schoolcraft Learning Community, a K-8 Charter school near Bemidji, Minnesota was recently visited by Dennis Banks. In 1968, Mr. Banks helped to found the American Indian Movement (AIM) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Since that time AIM and Mr. Banks have been at the forefront of the battle for Native American rights in the United States. Our crew was incorporating our design principles into our work. We had to research a topic of our choice as long as it had something to do with the Black Hills, and teach about it for a week to our class. Each group had to teach for nine hours throughout the week and give out a certain amount of homework. Mr. Banks came to Schoolcraft at the invitation of Simone and Elaine,

Schoolcraft eighth graders. They invited Mr. Banks as part of the unit they were teaching titled: Wounded Knee 1973 and Surrounding Events. As a key figure in the 1973 events Mr. Banks brought firsthand knowledge and the under-reported Native American perspective to our classroom. "The morning started out like any other day. Kent Nerburn, Elaine Fleming and Scott Gill from E.L.O.B. had come to meet our visitor. We were sitting in circle waiting for Dennis Banks to show up. We were talking with Scott Gill when Dennis Banks came in the room. Every one was silent. Elaine finally broke the silence by saying 'Boozhoo' (Hello in Ojibwe). Elaine and Simone went up to Dennis to say 'Boozhoo'. Dennis gave Elaine wild rice and he gave Simone chokecherry syrup from his house/company in SugerPoint. Elaine and Simone gave him the gift of tobacco in an abalone shell because its their tradition. He thanked them and they thanked him and then sat down."-Jessica, 8th grade student

Four Directions Offers Innovation in Media Arts

By: Julie, Communications Director, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools

When leaders at Four Directions, an urban charter school located in North Minneapolis, asked a group of ten high school students to teach teachers and students from another urban charter school how to implement a successful media arts program through peer mentorship, they knew the idea was innovative-innovative enough to win them national recognition and a Federal Public Charter Schools Dissemination Grant.



Four Directions students, pictured above, are among those sharing their knowledge of media arts with peers at High School for the Recording Arts.

Playing as a Team at the Legislature

Nell, ARTech, 11th Grade

This winter many charter school supporters have been working to make it a law that all charter school students can participate in extra-curricular activities at the local schools. Bills like the one that are in the process now have been to the capitol three times before and has passed in both the Senate and the House, just not with in the same year. (A bill must pass in both the Senate and the House in the same session before being signed by the governor to become a law.) This year at the House the bill was heard three times by the education finance committee. Two charter school students, a parent, and Steve Dess testified for this portion of the bill. There were also people who testified against the bill, including a man from the MSHL. One of the bigger issues had nothing to do with student right but more on politics. The house has a republican majority and some of the democrats were angry at the fact that the bill is headed up by republicans. This is one way the matter gets

pulled away from the students, most students do not affiliate with a political party, and that is not the issue. The committee voted the bill into the K-12 Omnibus bill, and the support is there. The bill was a little more controversial for the Senate education committee. They were not happy how long the bill took in the House, and how the House handled certain problems that arose. Most of the same people spoke and the Senate asked testifiers more questions that seemed to work for our benefit. We seemed to have the support but the bill got voted down 3-4 and the bill was not put into the K-12 Omnibus bill. This means that now the issue has to be negotiated in the conference committee. We have the house support and we have support from Governor Tim Pawlenty, all we need is for the Senate to change their mind in negotiation. What you can do is contact your Senators and let them know how important it is give all students that chance to participate and be included. The legislatures do listen to the voices of the people and the more contacts we have the more they can see that this does affect all of us.

Education is Important

Ge, 12th Grade, Community of Peace
 I was born in Thailand. I lived there for eight years with my family. There were schools but my dad would not allow me to go. He would often say, "Who needs education? It's not like you are going to grow up to be doctors, lawyers or teachers." My dad was telling me; "You got better things to do then school." Even when I was little, I had to do chores to help my family. Chores included cutting down wood from the trees for fire and heat. Another activity was waking up early in the morning and going hunting with my dad until sun set. You can see I had lots of things to do when I was younger. In my family there was little or no education at all. My parent had not attended school.

In my family my dad wore the pants around the house. Whatever he said or did, you just had to follow it. You can't really say much because that was dad and you don't want to make it seem like you are not listening to him. As I grew older I questioned him whether I really didn't need an education. As time went on I would ask him, "How come you won't let me go to school like the other kids in the village." He said, "The reason was because we were moving to the U.S. and they don't teach Thai or speak Thai in the U.S. They are Americans and they speak and write in English only."

Two years later we finally moved to the U.S. and that was in the early 90s. We lived in California for about three months and then we decided to move to Minnesota. I was about nine years old when we moved to Minnesota, so they put me in second grade instead of third grade because I didn't speak a word of English. What the school didn't know was I had never been to a school in my life before and this was my first time. One of the hardest parts about school was understating what the teacher was saying to me. For example, when the teacher asked me to do something, I would just sit and nod my head "yes," but really she was telling me to get up and join the other kids. As time went on more problems came up that hurt my education. Continued on page, 5

INSIDE THIS ISSUE
Sections:
Charter School Happenings: page 2
 Rainforest Expedition, Project Sara Piqui, Students Study Their Passion
Creative writing: page 4
 Wingding Roads, My Dream for the Future
Government: page 5
 Student Art Used at the Capitol, Yellow Ribbon's Capitol Idea
What We Think: page 6
 Keeping the Struggle Alive, Ain't I a Working Woman

Student Thoughts

Ain't I a Working Woman: An Opinion on Inequality in the Workplace

By Caitlin, 12th Grade at Avalon

Sojourner Truth was a symbol of women's suffrage. She spoke out in the late 19th century about the inequality of women. One of her most publicized speeches, "Ain't I a Woman?", touched on the topic of being an African American woman, in a time when only white women received special treatment. Sojourner Truth seems like a faraway symbol of history. Property laws are more favorable to women than they were in Sojourner's time. Women are in a much better state of power. Yet, the inequality of women has worn a new mask; it hides in the pay checks and in the workplace, hidden behind the strength of the women workers of America.

Women of the 21st century are dealing with inequality in the work force. On average, women make 77% of the weekly earnings of men, according to the National Council of Women's Organizations (NCOW). African American women earn 67% of the weekly average of men, and Latino women get a whopping 55% of what men make. Asian/Pacific ladies on average take the cake with 87% of the weekly earnings of their male counterparts.

I witness first hand the madness of the smaller paycheck. My dad works at an unnamed college in the Twin Cities. His female co-worker doing the same job makes a couple thousand dollars a year less than he does, and she has worked for the school roughly a year and a half longer. Young women around the country will be facing the same injustices as my father's co-worker in the future. I will be part of that new generation of women in the work force someday, and I will have to fight to make sure that I am paid the same as my male co-workers.

But to the point, I am privileged, because of the color, or the lack of color in my skin. As a white woman, my battle for equal pay is nothing like that of Latino women or African American women. I will only represent a gender rather than representing women and an ethnicity. By realizing this, I am directly pointing out similar troubles that Sojourner Truth had. The same contempt for society that denies people of minority with the same rights, economic stature and representation that the CacAsian population has grown to take for granted. So the next time you tell me that women are equal, I want you to take a good look at who works in your office, represents you in the legislature, and finally who flips your burgers.

Keeping the Struggle Alive!!!

By Alysha, a 5th grader at Harvest Preparatory School in Minneapolis

Now that I've seen and heard the truth about the suffering of our people and what they went through during the Civil Rights Movement, this is what I'll do to keep the struggle going. I will make good grades and stay in school. I don't have to fight the same fight as my ancestors, but I will make sure their struggle was not in vain.

School will be a priority. I will listen to my teacher and follow directions. I will focus in school. I will read a variety of books and learn about everything. I will most of all be respectful to my parents and family. I will not talk back to them. I will make sure I always do the right things and make good choices in my life, so I can be a role model to my brother and sister and my community.

How to Build a Successful Democratic School

By Jesse, 12th Grade at Avalon School

A growing trend in charter schools is to promote independent and group-based learning that caters to the student's needs, rather than following a standardized curriculum. This trend has had mixed results, but for the most part it has been found that this mode of learning is not only a particular favorite to students, but it also has had marked effects in the retainment of knowledge acquired over the course of the student's educational career. As a result, more and more schools are converting to this format, oftentimes following very idealistic philosophies.

However, as such schools have begun to realize, the state and federal governments across the nation have designed their regulations to work with standardized curriculums, and thus are required to meet certain specifications that in truth do more than good. It often limits how much individual attention the school can provide to students, and this often crushes the initial idealistic motives with which the schools start.

To counteract this, schools that choose this program must be capable of taking laws and bending them or working around them in ways that can minimize the negative impact they have on the school. Although there is always a risk associated with rule-bending, it must be recognized by the school that these laws are hurtful to the program and that without a workaround, they will be unable to sustain such a program.

Perhaps I should clarify by expressing what I mean by a "hurtful" law. There was a law recently passed in Minnesota that required all high school students to meet a certain list of educational standards in order to graduate from the program. These lists, though made with the best of intentions, were too specific for schools to work with and cater to the student's individual needs as an independent learning.

However, even a law such as this could easily be molded to suit a student's needs, provided that you look at it in one of two ways: 1) as a guideline more than a requirement, in that not all sections are required to achieve the 'standard' so long as there is proof that the student has proficiency in that area; or 2) that the requirements stipulated in each standard do not specify any requirement on how much a student must

Oppression and Inequality Classism and College

By Caitlin, 12th Grade at Avalon

My editorial today will focus on Classism. I am reading a book for a college course I am taking. The chapter is called "Why Drove of Unqualified, Unprepared Kids are Getting into Our Top Colleges?" It discusses the admission policy of such prestigious schools are Harvard and Yale, focusing in on the term legacy. As used in this chapter, legacy symbolizes a student who had a parent or guardian who graduated from the same school. The argument was that these legacies weren't qualified to get into the school, but did, therefore taking up a spot that was denied to a qualified student. The undeniably classist argument was that the legacies were all rich and so the policy was discriminating based on economic status. It also was very likely for the qualified student to have a lower economic status.

I am frustrated with policies like this. The policy falls into the category of Systematic Classism; it could be changed, but it is practiced across the country. The culture tells us we must go to college to succeed. Inadvertently, it denies those whose parents didn't go to college the opportunity, when in fact those are the people who need it the most. A society that emphasizes the importance of education but then denies it? If a system continually creates an educational gap equivalent to the separation of classes, I don't think our culture will endure.

A prediction of what will happen of Americans will allow the admissions policies to slip: The rich will have computers and Masters Degrees, while the poor and working class will go to work. The new wealth will be knowledge and the cash will be technology. Our once literate country will have illiteracy running through it like a cancer of the class division. Most of the United States will be stricken for cash, while the other 15% will rule the world markets. The rich will literally ride to work on the backs of the underpaid, overworked people who are told they are too stupid to do anything.

If we allow the admissions policies of some of the top colleges to continue the practices of the legacy, we must also accept that not everyone is willing to hold two jobs flipping burgers for a living.

Last thoughts: My anger for the college admission policy is growing as I become more experienced with it. The importance of college to me is enormous. If people can't get into college because an unqualified legacy gets in instead, I don't know why they would have transcripts at all. As a student in the United States of America, I know that I will need some type of higher education to stay competitive in the working world. But if the elite continue to keep people like me left with only good grades and test scores to work with, the Classism that our country continues to ignore will suffocate our great nation.

Editor's Note: Caitlin wrote these for a class that she is taking through PSEO at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul.

Tears of Love

By Cindy, Grade 6, New Spirit Charter School

With my tears, I will always love you.
Through all the days I have been with you.
Now I only have tears in my eyes and
dreams that I will see you again.
Through all the pain and sadness,
I will always have my heart and soul for you.
My eyes will always fill with tears of love.

What Will You Do Because of Dr. King

By Dafina, a 5th grader at Harvest Preparatory School in Minneapolis

Because of Dr. King, I will use his dream to continue my education. I'm blessed to know that somebody tried to make a better life for themselves and their African American future. Not only has Dr. King's dream come true, but also others who strived during the Civil Rights Movement to make a better life. Now I have the opportunity to accomplish my dreams for future generations.

I believe that because of Dr. King's dream, education is the only way to erase racism, sexism and all other prejudices people may have. By educating myself I help eliminate stereotypes and prejudices. By educating myself I can be whatever I want to be. I can work at one of the best jobs. I can have the best life that I can ever have.

I will use my advantages to be one of the many African Americans to go to college. Not just any college but one of the great historically black colleges or universities. My family and friends have strived to help me be where I am today. I keep that thought in my heart and brain to realize what I need to do to accomplish my dreams and goals in life.

Every year on January 15th, I feel more and more grateful to be a part of Dr. King's dream. I have the opportunity to gain an education as an African American woman. Dr. King's spirit and struggles stay in my heart. And because of their struggles, that strives me to remember that I'm not like everyone else. I'm a black woman who needs to do and be her best to achieve Dr. King's dream of excellence.

write, create, or demonstrate in order to fulfill that particular requirement (in other words, minimizing the work to a bare minimum for areas that would be considered 'hurtful'). This is only one example of how a law could be manipulated to work in this school program.

Beyond laws and paperwork lies an even more crucial element to a self-driven school: a mutual agreement of trust between students, teachers, and guardians in that they are all considered peers and play an integral role in that school's continuance. Students must be accepted by the faculty as young adults that need to be trained how to become responsible, mature people that can handle the arduous duties that they will confront in the future. This can only happen if students get to experience responsibility and duty first-hand, and there is no better place to look than their very own school.

It is recommended that during the development of the school, a group of students be involved in all of the processes that lead to the administration and function of the school. These students can address and voice concerns regarding student rights, policies, curricular development, and administration. This is crucial to making a successful independent-learning school. Once the school is established, students, faculty, and guardians should convene and draft both a school Constitution and a multi-tiered administration system.

A Democratic school should promote quality amongst all three bodies of the school community (students, faculty, and guardians). The tiers should similarly be divided into three branches that revolve around these three bodies. Traditionally, the branches are called "Student Congress," "Faculty Board," and "Parent-Teacher Association," although these titles are archaic and may not accurately portray the functions of these branches (perhaps more suitable titles would simply be "Student Division," Faculty Division," and "Guardian Division,").

These branches would separately be responsible for discussing issues that they feel affects them or their relationships with people of other communities can make decisions on management within those communities only. To make changes that would affect two or more groups, the issue should be addressed by each branch separately, then taken to a school council with equal representation from all three groups to determine what course of action to take with the proposed changes. This would ensure that all sides of

the issue can be addressed and that the school functions with as little friction as possible.

Again, I must reiterate that just because a law says no to something does not mean that there isn't another way to do it. For example, legally no student under the age of eighteen may participate in any votes held in a quorum. This obviously significantly impairs the student body's ability to voice their opinions. There are several ways around this minor problem. For example, high schools could specifically assign or abdicate to students that are of legal age to vote to participate in such meetings, so that the student body can have a real vote. Another alternative is to take note of student votes separate from all other votes, and then a re-vote can be taken if the student body's votes would have altered the outcome, so that guardians and/or teachers would have the opportunity to decide whether or not to "count" the student body's votes by altering their own. Another suitable alternative would be assigning guardians or community members as the student body's representative's representatives, whom would be responsible of declaring the votes chosen by the students they are representing.

Needless to say, running a Democratic school is not only possible, it makes sense. In a country where the voting population is huge and yet political apathy is rampant, it is becoming more crucial than ever to teach students at young ages about the workings of Democracy and how to work cooperatively with others in environments that are receptive to their needs. Traditional school systems follow different values, and although these values serve well in some cases, their fail to teach students at a young age the true power of Democracy and of representation. Many schools are afraid to open up to such ideas because "today's youth would simply serve as a destructive body if integrated into a school's administration." If this holds any grain of truth, it is a fault that we have brought upon ourselves for not teaching children the duties of responsibility and Democracy.

To conclude this article, starting an independent-learning school is the new wave of the future and shows little signs of stopping. As more and more of these schools are erected, more and more problems will arise as this new and innovative school structure changes our own value system. If we are to teach our children and, in effect, our future how to be responsible and take action in their country, then we must begin when they are young and receptive to knowledge. Bring Democracy to our children today!



Creative Writing



When I Grow Up

By Missy, a 6th grader at Harvest Prep. in Minneapolis.

I might be a doctor and help the sick.
I might be a dancer of hip-hop and slick.
I might be a teacher and teach the school.
I might be the president, yeah that's cool.

I will be a person that learns, earns and gives.
I will be a person that helps the good will.
I will be a person that will give in order to receive.
I will be a person that never gives up and believes.

Untitled

By Freyja, 10th Grade, Avalon

Cold dark summer night
after morning, blue ice flies
would I know him like storms above?
No.

Winding Roads

Sheena, Lakes Area Charter School

Roughly turning here I go,
Down a road I will never know,
Winding fast speeding through I
Hope there's nothing around you.

Watching sharply as I turn
Looking forward past the sky
Seeing you kissing her
Had just put pain in my eyes
Knowing she'll be your next date,
I'll have to learn to appreciate
Those loving cards you have made.
Receiving the joy you've always given
I cry while praying up to heaven
I know God hears me

But the fear is overwhelming,
Sighing with relief when he sits on the balcony.
I know he's willing to help me with the
Feelings that I've lost
Taking my pain and pushing
It aside,
He softly says,
"My love for you will never Die!"

Informance Poem

Greta, An 8th grader at ARTech

Editors Note: Informance is a seminar offered at ARTech where the students finalize it by creating an extended monologue about themselves.

I am a teenager trying to be different
I am a child wanting to grow up
I am an actress waiting for a line to make everyone smile
I am the sun streaming through your fingers
I am the shadow dancing on the water
I am the happy dog basking in the morning sun
I am the time that seems to slip away
I am the caterpillar that envies every butterfly
I am a rock clinging to a cliff
I am a termite gnawing away at nothing

My Dream for the Future

By Stephanie, a 6th grader at Harvest Prep. School in Minneapolis

My dream, My reality, My way,
Will I have anytime to play?
I will work hard everyday...
To be a dancer in every way,
Hip Hop, Jazz, Modern, Tap,
Hmm, I bet nobody can top that!!!

Or maybe I'll be an actress or judge,
And when people think they're better,
They'll think twice to budge.

Or I could be a flight attendant,
Flying way up high,
Watching the birds go by and by.

But until then...
I'm planning on going to Spellman.
Before that...
I'm going to North High.
And that's a fact!!!

What Will I Be...

By Martina, a 6th grader at Harvest Preparatory School in Minneapolis, MN

I might be a preacher. I like to preach.
I might be a teacher. I like to teach.
I might be a model and take pictures on the beach.

I might be like Martin and say a speech.
I might be a singer. It's fun to sing.
I might be rich and buy a billion dollar ring.
I might be a doctor and help the ill.
I might make computers and hang with Bill.
I might be a lawyer and trust the law.
I might be constructive with a saw.
I might be a chef. I like to cook.
I might be an author and write a book.
I might be one of these great things.
You never know what reality will bring.

Dear Spiders.

Freyja, 10th Grade, Avalon

It appears that you are back on your yearly visit; however, this year there will be a new set of ground rules.

1. Stay on the ceiling where I can see you. I really don't mind if you're there as long as you're up high and I don't have to deal with you.
2. Please don't move when I am looking at you, it creeps me out
3. I'm totally cool with you living in my sister's room and in the living room and what not, just try as hard as you possibly can to stay out of my room.
4. Your rent checks will be due the first of every month, please try not to be late
5. I want you out by the end of October. Not like last year where some of you stuck around until late January and I had to keep dealing with those damn cocoons you make everywhere
6. Use nest control, because if you get even the slightest word you are mass reproducing in the house or on the grounds IT WILL MEAN WAR!!!!
7. If any of you pull that, hiding in the toilet paper, towels, washcloth, or folded clothes stuff, please just be aware that even though I'm trying so hard to use my "one with the universe" ways, if ANY of that stuff happens, you will be squashed.
8. Stay away from the bathroom in the morning. If you crawl around there when I'm groggy, it's pretty likely that I will pick up the first bottle of Clorox that's closest to me and spray you
9. Lastly, if you're inviting friends over, do it when I'm not home and only your buddy ants please. I know you don't hang out with roaches or anything, but I don't want them in my house

Literary Analysis by Krista at Riverbend

One of the main themes of the book "My Antonia" deals with the relationship between the friendships and events of our childhood and who we become later in life. This is reflected in the style of the book.

In the novel's original introduction we meet the protagonist Jim Burden as he travels with a friend. Their talk turns to the extraordinary friendship between Jim and an immigrant woman he grew up with in Nebraska. Right from the start, the reader is introduced to how important and influential Jim's relationship with Antonia Shimerda has been in shaping his life. Jim admits he has spent a lot of time throughout his life thinking about his childhood with Antonia. He and his companion plan to write down all they can remember about her and when they meet again in New York, Jim presents his friend with the novel "My Antonia". It is his account of his relationship with Antonia spanning thirty years, from the moment they met to the recent renewal of their friendship.

The novel opens with the orphaned Jim traveling

on the same train, to the same place, on the same night as Antonia. Right from the start, their stories intertwine. The book progresses through the years, recounting the story of Antonia in reference to Jim's life and his memories of her. We hear about the central character of the novel only through the memories and stories of the people around her. Actually, as the novel evolves, we hear less of Antonia and more of Jim, though in the most unexpected moments, she pops up in his narrative and we know she is never far from his thoughts.

Another important theme of the novel is that of the immigrant experience, especially how it affects women. Jim peppers his story of his and Antonia's life with those of other immigrant women he grew up with. It becomes obvious to the reader how much Jim admires and sympathizes with immigrant women. Perhaps this is because he too migrated to Nebraska, albeit from another state, leaving behind family and friends to live among unknown people in a completely new climate and culture.

The style of the novel also reflects this theme. It begins with Jim and Antonia's arrival in Nebraska and spans to the conclusion of the immigrant experience. It documents how all the immigrant women and men Jim mentions fail or flourish in the new land, the hardships endured and overcome, the eventual contentment and stability most enjoy, Antonia in particular.

The book records the trials Antonia endures early on (her father's suicide) and later in life (how she fell in love with a man who left her penniless and pregnant). Through each of the many hardships Antonia encounters, she maintains her buoyant spirits, quiet strength, sincerity, and an admirable fire for life. The book ends with Jim's recent visit to her home and his testimony to the endurance and vitality she retains, even in her forties. She has finally found her place and home in Nebraska, happily married to a Bohemian like herself, surrounded by numerous healthy children, and proprietor of a productive farm. Jim's account of Antonia's life exudes his love and admiration for her.

Steering Committee Members:

Kevin Byrne,
Director, MN Internship Academy
Steve Dess,
Executive Director, MACS
Leisa Irwin,
Operations Director, ARTech
Dianne Reibel,
Business Manager, Liberty High
Jon Schroeder,
Coordinator, Educaion Evolving
Larry Werner,
Reporter, Star Tribune

Thanks to everyone's hard work, including our new chief editors for ths edition - **Megan (Avalon) and Nell (ARTech)**

Editorial Board Member Schools:

ARTech
Avalon
City Academy
Community of Peace Academy
Great Expectations
Harvest Preparatory
Math and Science Academy
MN Business Academy
MN Transtions Charter School
RiverBend Academy
Schoolcraft Learning Community
Sojourner Truth Academy

School Happenings

MBA Expands Its Learning Community Through Service

By Caleb, Minnesota Business Academy

It seems that the main objective of most schools is to teach students the fundamentals of what is considered a basic education. Math, science and English are subjects that are undoubtedly vital to succeeding. Yet how often is the student taught "life-skills" that apply to the helping of others less fortunate, treating others with kindness and learning to be humble? At Minnesota Business Academy, it has always been a priority to teach students that to truly be successful in life, one must learn the importance of helping others. Twice a year the students and teachers embark on a week-long community service learning project. They participate in hands on activities and share their skills by giving back to the community. They accomplish this through programs like Habit for Humanity, volunteering at local food shelters, community cleaning services, in school construction and various environmental activities.

This biannual week-long service is called Interim. It is coordinated by the teachers and involves a good deal of fundraising that is facilitated by the students. The Habitat for Humanity group raised funds by allowing students to vote on a teacher of their choice to sleep in a box outside for an evening. "Teacher in a Box" was able to raise over \$300. The students found that this was appropriate due to the nature of the Habitat for Humanity program, which builds homes for low-income families. The fundraiser not only supports the students' Habitat for

Million Dollars

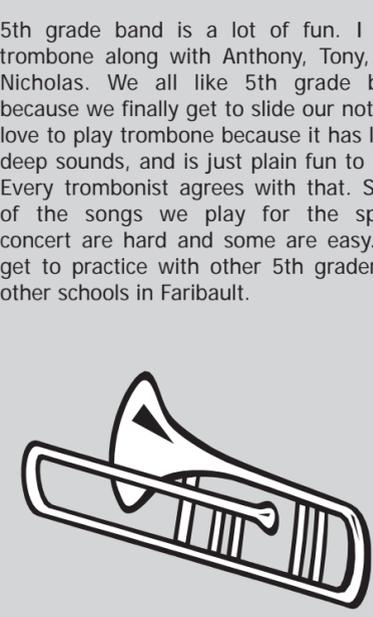
By Kayla, gr. 5, Nerstrand Elementary

How much is a million dollars? Well, all the 5th graders at our school had to spend \$1,000,000 for a project. Almost all of the 5th graders said that it is hard to spend that much money, but very fun to try. For my million-dollar project I chose to start up a homeless shelter called Kayla's House of Hope for women and children. It was a fun project and I learned a lot.

BAND

Dalton, Nerstrand Elementary, gr. 5

5th grade band is a lot of fun. I play trombone along with Anthony, Tony, and Nicholas. We all like 5th grade band because we finally get to slide our notes. I love to play trombone because it has loud, deep sounds, and is just plain fun to play. Every trombonist agrees with that. Some of the songs we play for the spring concert are hard and some are easy. We get to practice with other 5th graders at other schools in Faribault.



The Rainforest Expedition

By Naomi - a 1st grader at Schoolcraft Learning Community, a K-8 charter school in Bemidji, MN in their fourth year of operation. To see what other crews are doing, you can visit the website www.schoolcraft.org.

Melanie's crew is learning about the Rainforest. Rainforests can be in Australia, Central and South America, and Africa. Some people are cutting down the Rainforest-- I don't like that because it destroys the creatures' world. Some people are trying to save the Rainforest. We need to save it because it's beautiful and we get fruit from there. I can't wait to visit the Rainforest one day! If you want to learn more, I'll tell you some interesting facts about the Rainforest:

- * The macaw is the most colorful creature.
- * The giraffe is the biggest animal there.
- * The sloth is the slowest mammal there.
- * The Blue Morpho butterfly is the biggest butterfly.
- * The difference between monkeys and apes is that monkeys have tails and apes don't.
- * The jaguar is the most powerful creature and my favorit

Project Sarapiqui - A Student's Perspective

By Ali, 12th grade

Two teachers from my school recently went to Costa Rica. While they were there they visited one of the poorest regions of the country, Sarapiqui. They found a Conservation Learning Center, which is an open and free secondary school, similar to our school, the Coon Rapids Learning Center. There are high schools in Costa Rica that many students can't attend because of the cost of uniforms, books, and transportation. Once the kids in Costa Rica are twelve and have completed the sixth grade, they cannot attend high school unless they can pay the two-hundred and fifty dollars a year, for five years.

The students at Coon Rapids Learning Center believe that every one deserves an opportunity for education. So some of my classmates and I have started a fundraiser to sponsor one student to go to high school for five years. Our goal is to raise \$1250, that would provide all the materials needed for one student. So far we have raised over seven hundred dollars. We did that by putting together a day at our school, March 11th, where students could leave early if they donated two dollars. We also have a loose change jar located in our schools. In addition, we have sent letters to many businesses, and have contacted the Chamber of Commerce.

Not only are we trying to raise money, but we are also requesting donations of school supplies. This April eight students are going to Costa Rica, and we are trying to send at least fifty pounds of school supplies with each of them, to be donated to the Sarapiqui Conservation Learning Center.

We have received a lot of donations and hope to meet our goals. Some of my classmates and I intend on going to Costa Rica in the fall to meet the student we will sponsor. We are planning to keep this fundraiser going for years, and hopefully sponsor a student every year.



Project Sarapiqui: From Students For Students - an adult perspective

Coon Rapids Learning Center

Students at Coon Rapids Learning Center (CRLC), an alternative high school, are spearheading a service learning campaign to benefit the Sarapiqui Conservation Learning Center (SCLC) in Costa Rica, which is located in one of the country's poorest regions. This endeavor is being called Project Sarapiqui: From Students For Students and it will benefit students in Costa Rica who work with SCLC.

The Sarapiqui Conservation Learning Center is community outreach program, working with children and adults of Sarapiqui county. SCLC is a non-profit agency, in fact the staff there are fulltime volunteers from the US and Europe, that is always in need of supplies or money. So, students at CRLC have decided to help the Center in two ways. One way is donating school supplies that the Center is in desperate need of. The students are carrying this out by advertising the program at school and asking students to donate school supplies. The school supplies will then be brought to the Sarapiqui Conservation Learning Center when a group of students from CRLC take a class trip to Costa Rica at the end of April. The goal is to have the students collect over 350 pounds of school supplies.

The second way students are trying to help students of Sarapiqui county is to support the SCLC High School Scholarship Program. Students in the area often have to quit school after 6th grade because they cannot afford the cost of the education, which is \$250.00 a year for 5 years. Students at CRLC believe everyone deserves an opportunity for an education so students are raising money by asking for donations from students, parents, and businesses in the community. The goal is to raise enough money to support a Sarapiqui student through 5 years of school.

If you would like to help with Project Sarapiqui in any way, we are accepting cash or checks made payable to Coon Rapids Learning Center, and donations of either school supplies or money should be brought to Brandi Greer or Theresa Boisjolie, advisors at Coon Rapids Learning Center. Questions can be addressed at this number: 763-862-9223.

A Student's Perspective on MBA's Star Tracks Program

By David, Minnesota Business Academy

Star Tracks, at this juncture, is an incentive program and is used in motivating students to perform well on select behavioral competencies.

The behavioral competencies used in Star Tracks came from the Secretaries Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. These behaviors are foundational for an effective worker to have, and the Minnesota Business Academy is encouraging these valuable skills in the classroom.

The Skills that will be evaluated on are as follows:

- Listening – receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and cues
- Decision Making – specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risk and evaluates and chooses the best alternative.
- Problem Solving – recognizes problems and devices and implements plan of action
- Responsibility – exerts a high level of effort and preserves towards goal attainment
- Sociability – demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability and empathy
- Self-Management – assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress and exhibits self-control

Teachers have incorporated the use and evaluation of these skills into their regular classrooms as well as special projects. Students are evaluated by the teacher and rewarded for excellent demonstration of the above skills. The privileges include student council membership, dances, field trips, gift certificates, technology clearance, student lounge and open lunch.

There have been noticeable positive results since the initiation of Star Tracks. Students are working to improve their rating and obtain additional rewards. Common expectations of behavior make it easier for students to know what is expected in all classrooms. While still a new program at MBA, students and staff recognize the benefits to learning and helping students prepare for their future.

Talented and Gifted Program Implemented

By Chance, VEHS Student, 10th Grade

Voyageurs Expeditionary High School (VEHS), a new charter high school in Bemidji, opened this previous fall, is taking part in a renaissance of extended learning programs. One component that is helping fulfill this mission is the use of a Talented and Gifted (TAG) program. This academic extension provides students with focused interests and talents a chance to experience their passion in an alternative environment. VEHS, only seven months old, has been hard at work refining the TAG program so that the experience will extend to every student that has personal interests outside of the traditional school setting.

The person hired for spearheading this program is Mary Clemenson. Mary, a native of North Dakota, has lived in Bemidji for 16 years, with a brief stint in Boston. While in Boston she earned her Masters Degree in Musical Composition at the New England Conservatory, one of the top five music schools in the country. Her job includes exploring our community for student opportunities and supporting the staff in their efforts to provide new and interesting curriculum. She is energetic about her task; she has been busy coordinating a summer Writer's Workshop with Will Weaver, a renowned author, along with extended learning opportunities with local experts.

Mary Clemenson feels that "working with students at VEHS is a dream job. They are eager to learn and try new experiences. Their questions are insightful and they comprehend complex concepts. They are talented, intelligent and well motivated. What teacher could ask for more? It is a privilege to work in such a supportive environment." Mary's plans for next year are numerous. For starters, she will work closely with other members of the VEHS staff as the school intends to incorporate the TAG program more directly into the curriculum next year. We will be applying for a grant to host a photographer as an artist in residence, begin a yearbook, continue our supplemental music program, link up with the Headwaters Science Center, expand our National History Day experience, and many more as need arises. Voyageurs, because it is an ELOB (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound) school, strongly supports programs that provide a good opportunity for experiential learning and self-direction.

Jaime, a ninth grade student at VEHS says, "I think Mary really brought something new to Voyageurs that no one else could have offered us." Zach, another ninth grader says, "I think Mary is a brilliant and committed woman who shows a passion for what she does!" Mary Clemenson, through the TAG program, has set up a lot of exciting opportunities for VEHS students that are popular with the



Picture: Mary explains an intricate concept in music theory to VEHS student Jaime.

Government

YELLOW RIBBON'S CAPITAL IDEA

By: Laura
RiverBend Academy

March 30, 2004: Students from RiverBend Academy headed towards Minnesota's State Capitol with the standard trip slips in hand for a special day of awareness for suicide prevention and mental health accessibility.

Buses left many of Mankato's surrounding high schools at 7 a.m. to join other schools from all over Minnesota.

RBA students were excited to be a part of making a difference and helping others. As most would say, the trip opened their eyes to the seriousness of this issue and to



how awareness can be a big first step.

The day at the Capitol included an initial informational meeting followed by meetings with Sen. Hottinger and Rep. Dorn. The importance of suicide prevention and its funding were a major part of the discussions as was seen in the 3,000 letters delivered to Gov. Pawlenty and the attendance

Student Art Used at the Capital

Anna, 12th grade, Coon Rapids Learning Center

Anna, a senior at Coon Rapids Learning Center, loves drawing cartoons. She also loves a good joke. Anna put these interests to good use while designing an informational poster on Buckthorn, an invasive plant species, for an environmental class. Her instructor thought the poster was quite effective; it was an original drawing, humorous, and addressed the environmental impact of the plant. So, her instructor passed it on to some people involved with environmental issues. It ended up in the hands of some people at the state level. Anna's hard work and creativeness paid off. The poster was recently used at the state capital in a hearing on Buckthorn and the environmental impact of the plant species. Way to go Anna!

Left: Anna with her poster at the capitol. Right: Anna's poster.



of nearly 200 students from around the state. South-central Minnesota remains the organization's strongest region being based in Mankato and having 150 of the 200 students from Mankato, Mapleton and Winthrop.

The day was concluded with a press conference in the Capitol rotunda and group pictures on the Capitol steps. The message was clear that "its OK to ask for help and Yellow Ribbon is a place you can get it."

*** 24 Hour Toll Free Crisis Line:
1-800-865-0606 South Central MN
1-800-SUICIDE National crisis line



This is a public service announcement to all birds of Minnesota, DO NOT eat the berries of the Buck Thorn. You will be helping yourself and the environment!

Anna Harding, CRLC student

Proud of My Dad

Stephanie, 3rd Grader, Schoolcraft

I am really proud of my daddy. He is a Master Sergeant in the National Guard. He has been sent to Bosnia to serve our country. This is an interview I had with him.

Q: Why are you in Bosnia?

A: Our mission is to stabilize and consolidate the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and create conditions for the growth of civil authority. We were sent by the President of the United States.

Q: What do you do to serve the people there?

A: We provide Security and Humanitarian Aid.

Q: How is Bosnia the same or different than here?

A: It has a lot more mountains, warmer winters, but it is basically the same longitude as Minnesota. Bosnia is about 1/4 the size of Minnesota.

Q: Is Bosnia a safe place?

A: There is a lot of crime in Bosnia. It is not as safe as the US.

Q: What are the kids like in Bosnia?

A: The kids are great. Most of the kids don't have much. For example, they have to go sledding with cardboard. They have bad teeth because they don't have a toothbrush. They may live in house with just a blanket for a door, no electricity, and just one coal or wood stove to keep the house warm.

Q: What is the weather like?

A: The weather has been outstanding. We have had some snow but it is all gone. It is warmer than Minnesota, today, January 14, it is raining and will be about 45 degrees.

Q: What and where do you eat?

A: I eat very well, buffet every night. It is just like Bonanza or Old Country Buffet every night.

Q: Do you get a break? If you do, what do you do during your break?

behind other students.

Due to the two weeks of missing school, the school decided to put me in an all-day ESL class for six months. The ESL class was full of students whose second language was English. In my opinion the class didn't really help me because there were Hmong kids there and all day long we spoke in Hmong and there was little or no English, so I did not learn from that. In order for me to learn English I have to be around people who only speak English so I could work on it and become fluent in it.

I have worked hard to get my education but without two people I would have not made it. The first person is my mother who believed in me and told me never to give up no matter what. Even with little knowledge of English, she still helped me with my school work and my alphabet. She helped me pronounce the letters and helped me learn them. The other person is Ms.Fox who was my sixth grade teacher. She told me if I put my mind to studying I would learn. She was the first person outside of my family to have faith in me

A: I get Sundays off. Everybody here gets one day off a week. I take a nap, wash clothes, clean my room, and work out during my day off.

Q: What is your room like?

A: My room is about 12 feet by 12 feet and I share it with one other soldier.

Q: What's the best part about being in Bosnia?

A: You get to see how other people live. Americans are very lucky.

Q: What's the worst part about being in Bosnia?

A: Being away from my family.

Q: What do you look forward to when you get home?

A: Spending time with my family, going fishing, and walking somewhere without a weapon.

I am excited for my dad to come home. I miss him a lot. He left home in June and will come back at the end of February. I can't wait to give him a great big hug and tell him I love him!

and that meant a lot to me. She made me want to learn and know more and I truly thank her for that. She was really the first person to introduce me to books. She read to me, read along with me, and picked books at my reading level. I would like to thank her for helping me.

Getting to where I am I have had to deal with a lot of things in my life. Getting the education I wanted has really changed my life for the better and I am happy. At the start, doing the simplest thing like watching TV, listening to the radio, and looking at books I did not understand a word. Now, I know and understand what I see and read. I have come a long way in my education.

One thing I do know and will not do in the future is telling my kids that education is not important. Yes, my dad did tell me that education will not get me anywhere and look at me now and where I am. I never want to be like my dad and bring my kids down and not give them the education they want and need. Education has done nothing but good things for me.

Continued from front page: **Education is important**

A student started by asking him about his life. We learned; Dennis Banks was born on the Leech Lake Reservation on April 12, 1937. His mother was full Chippewa. When Dennis was four years old, he was taken from his family to one of the many boarding schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.). In these boarding schools almost everything Native American (including their native languages), were forbidden. Dennis tried to escape from his boarding school six times and was punished for each attempt. He finally succeeded in escaping and returned to his parents eleven years after being taken to the school."

After my first four months of school, my dad decided to leave the family and that was the last time I saw or heard from him. Due to his leaving my education suffered. I did not go to school for about two weeks. I had to stay home and help my mom get over my dad's leaving. Moving to the U.S I didn't know English so I was behind on that, and now I had lost two weeks of school and was

School Happenings

Continued

MBA Seminar – Where Students Study Their Passion

By Nathan, MN Business Academy

The way that students have been taught has been linear for many years. The most common method is to introduce the topic, present the lecture, have a discussion or 'question and answer' session, give an assignment, and finally an exam. This has worked for some students, but it is a very strict skeleton and it may not be the best way for everyone to learn.

The Minnesota Business Academy seminar program works in a different way. In this program each student chooses a topic and a project related to the topic and then sets a goal. From then on students work almost completely on their own while completing projects. They push themselves to accomplish the goals. This can be a very efficient learning alternative for people that the traditional method does not work the best for. The projects in the current seminar vary from writing a novella based on the integration of Viking culture into Native American culture to

Fitness for All at Schoolcraft Learning Community

Tessa, Grade 2, School Craft

This is an Interview with Linda, the Physical Education teacher and coach of the "Streaks" jump rope club at Schoolcraft Learning Community. Linda is striving to get everyone at Schoolcraft to pursue fitness goals and activities.

Tessa: Why do you want everyone to do a fitness program?

Linda: I would love to see every Schoolcraft person achieve a fitness goal for several reasons: our school is a crew and we'd all be doing this project together, and I'd like to see each person "feel" the success and exhilaration that goes along with setting and reaching a goal.

Tessa: What do you do for fitness?

Linda: You build "activity" into your daily life. You walk, run, bike, etcetera, instead of getting a ride when possible. No matter what your job is, you consciously think and make a variety of "movements" possible. I like to swim; others play volleyball or basketball or work out in a gym. Basically you should think about regular exercises and movement that promote endurance, strength, and flexibility. You do not smoke as smoking is

designing an online course. Many projects involve original qualitative research, while others such as world trade policies with China involve more traditional research.

As the students work on their projects, they will come out with more knowledge of the subject than if an instructor was just telling the information. Students' instructors are there to help them complete their research and project. They lecture on topics that help them reach their goals.

In the seminar, students find their knowledge themselves. They gain a larger respect for what is being researched because they are doing the work to learn it, instead of someone else researching then regurgitating the information to the class. Also, by participating in a program that is as self directed as this one, students will be able to come out with better time management and responsibility skills. As students work toward their project goal, they are learning how necessary time management really is.

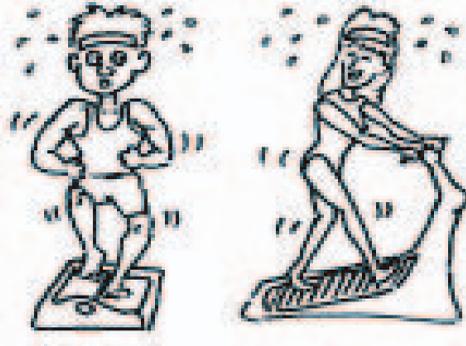
directly linked to the development of serious diseases.

Tessa: Why is fitness important for kids?

Linda: Being physically fit means having your body working as efficiently as possible and this helps to keep your mind sharp. Kids need to establish an active lifestyle pattern because active kids usually become active adults.

Tessa: Why is physical fitness important for adults?

Linda: Establishing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can avoid many of today's illnesses and health problems. Diseases like diabetes and heart problems and even cancer are thought to be linked to the lack of a healthy lifestyle. Fit people are much less likely to develop diseases.



A History Maker Comes to Schoolcraft: Continued from front page:

In later years Mr. Banks enlisted in the Air Force. Dennis enjoyed the military and had ambitions of being a five star general. The structure of military reminded him of the boarding school life he grew up in. A demonstration to protest the expansion of his airbase contributed to Dennis's change of heart about the Air Force. His commanding Officer had given them orders to shoot to kill any protesters that got out of control. Doing this was against his morals; he refused to shoot, and resigned from the Air Force the day after he witnessed this protest.

After leaving the military, Dennis got in trouble with the law and was jailed for burglary. Specifically he was charged with stealing groceries from a local store. He told us that, stupidly, he had driven home in the freshly fallen snow and the police only had to follow his tracks to find him.

Among the AIM activities Mr. Banks participated in were the 1968 Alcatraz occupation, the 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties caravan to Washington D.C., and the Wounded Knee Occupation of 1973. It was the illegal 71-day occupation at Wounded Knee where the F.B.I. were called in and besieged

the town, that caused felony charges to be brought against Mr. Banks and the AIM co-founder Russell Means. These charges were later dropped. In 1975, Banks was convicted on riot charges related to the Custer Courthouse Incident that led to Wounded Knee (1973). In response to these charges, Dennis Banks went underground, but returned in 1984 to serve over a year in jail.

Dennis Banks also had small roles in a few movies, including War Party (1988), The Last of the Mohicans (1992), and Thunderheart (1992).

The students of the Schoolcraft Eighth Grade found Mr. Banks' visit to be a truly moving classroom experience. The impact of a visit from and discussion with such a significant firsthand-witness to historical events proved to be a high impact event in the student's lives. Some students felt a daylong tension, hoping that nothing would be said to offend Mr. Banks. The existence of this of this tension points out the fact that there remains a distance to go, to achieve true reconciliation between Native Americans and the white population. This event was a giant step in that direction for the Schoolcraft Eighth Grade.

The seminar gives students an insight to what the real world is really like. It takes away the shelter of the high school environment and puts students into the harsher real world environment. This gives them a jump-start in performing in the work world where they will probably not have a person dictating what they should be doing at every given moment.

The seminar shows students what they are able to do when given the chance. It will show them where guidance is needed while still being able to simulate a real world working experience.

The seminar is a great learning experience on both ends of the education field. It gives students a chance to prove themselves and it gives them a chance to see what life will really be like outside of the protection of high school doors. It gives educators a chance to observe what students are capable of doing. It gives educators more insight on the various ways of presenting information as well as insight on what will motivate high school students.

Service Week

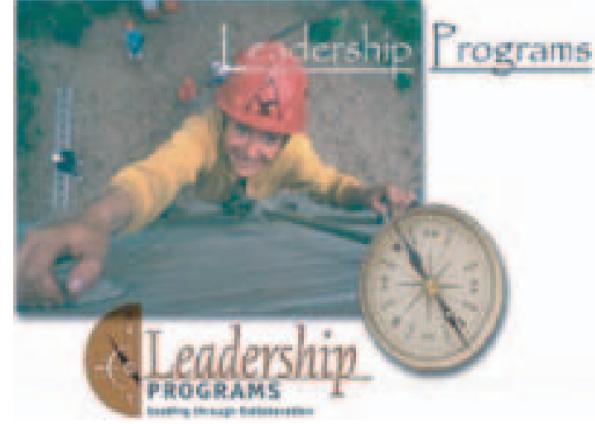
Megan, 11th Grade, Avalon

Recently, Avalon School in St. Paul had Service Learning Week. For five days, students had no classes, and instead did group projects that were focused on service learning. Some students did things such as; volunteered at the Jeremiah Project in downtown Minneapolis, helped build a house for Habitat for Humanity, cleaned up the Mississippi River, trained as Peer Mediators, and worked for the Big Brothers Big Sisters program with an elementary school. Students also had the option of designing their own independent service week projects, such as working at an animal shelter.

Students had mixed feelings on Service Learning Week. Some did not enjoy service week because it was "mandatory volunteering", or they were forced to do something that they did not enjoy. Others felt that service learning week was a good experience and they had a lasting relationship or understanding with the community around them. This is one

ARTech Goes To Manito-Wish

Nick, 12th Grade, ARTech



Picture courtesy of <http://www.manito-wish.org>

Learning to be a leader takes practice. It is necessary, then, to provide young people with opportunities to lead. Barriers to efficient communication must be toppled and foundations of mutual trust and respect need to be built. April 28th thru the 30th, ARTech will be taking a group of 15-20 high school students to Manito-wish, a Leadership program in Wisconsin. The Manito-wish Collaborative Leadership model has four stages of development:

*Trust

*Try

*Test

*Transfer

It begins with group building and trust. Once a group has a sense of cohesion, they practice the Seven Qualities of a Collaborative Leader through the use of problem-solving initiatives.

Seven Qualities of a Manito-wish Collaborative Leader:

*Builds a shared vision

*Builds models...tries it, changes it, tries it again

*Shares a common space with others

*Lets others amplify their abilities

*Knows that follower ship and leadership go together

*Doesn't collaborate to turn out the lights

*Celebrates successful collaborations

Be a writer Be an editor Be a designer Be a leader

Be apart of Charter Vision

Pay attention next fall in your charter school for a chance be apart of the Charter Vision newspaper. There will be opportunities to be on the editors board, write stories and articles, help with lay out, help with other logistics and more.

O d d s a n d E n d s

Continued from Front Page:

FOUR DIRECTIONS CHARTER SCHOOL INNOVATION

In November, Four Directions' Director Ron Buckanaga, Media Artist Kristine Sorensen, and two students presented their successful media arts program at the National Indian Education Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. The school has also been invited to share their program and student artwork at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

Through the Federal Dissemination Grant, Four Directions has been working with High School for the Recording Arts (HSRA) in a peer mentorship program. According to Four Directions student Shawnesha, "We aren't scared or shy to be the teachers. We are excited. We've practiced our presentation, and we really know how to use the equipment and software. This project will help prepare us for our future. Many of us want to be teachers or leaders in our community."

The media arts program gives students the opportunity to learn about photography and video production. Students utilize equipment and software to create photographs and videos around particular topics ranging from family history to social activism to culture.

The Federal Dissemination Grant has given students and teachers from Four Directions the opportunity to go to HSRA and teach them how to implement their own media arts program. Ten students were paid \$10 per hour to teach teachers and approximately twenty students at HSRA about camera operation, sound production, project planning, critical viewing, editing, critiquing, and presentation. Through the teaching and learning process, the ten students at Four Directions had the opportunity to mentor their peers in creating media arts.

Four Directions began its media arts program in 1991, even before Four Directions was a charter school. Director Ron Buckanaga attributes the success of many students to the media arts program. "This program is really making a difference for students. Through the media arts

Fitness for All at Schoolcraft Learning Community

By Tessa, Grade 2, Schoolcraft Learning Community

This is an Interview with Linda, Physical Education teacher and coach of the "Streaks" jump rope club at Schoolcraft Learning Community. Linda is striving to get everyone at Schoolcraft to pursue fitness goals and activities.

Tessa: Why do you want everyone to do a fitness program?

Linda: I would love to see every Schoolcraft person achieve a fitness goal for several reasons: our school is a crew and we'd all be doing this project together, and I'd like to see each person "feel" the success and exhilaration that goes along with setting and reaching a goal.

Tessa: What do you do for fitness?

Linda: You build "activity" into your daily life. You walk, run, bike, etcetera instead of getting a ride when possible. No matter what your job is, you consciously think and make a variety of "movements" possible. I like to swim; others play volleyball or basketball or work out in a gym. Basically you should think about regular exercises and movement that promote endurance, strength, and flexibility. You do not smoke as smoking is directly linked to the development of serious diseases.

Tessa: Why is fitness important for kids?

Linda: Being physically fit means having your body working as efficiently as possible and this helps to keep your mind sharp. Kids need to establish an active lifestyle pattern because active kids usually become active adults.

Tessa: Why is physical fitness important for adults?

Linda: Establishing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can avoid many of today's illnesses and health problems. Diseases like diabetes and heart problems and even cancer are thought to be linked to the lack of a healthy lifestyle. Fit people are much less likely to develop diseases.

program students are becoming engaged in school and improving their academic achievement. Fifty percent of our graduates are going on for college, and we're dealing with one of the most challenged populations. We are proud of the work we are doing." Buckanaga, who founded the school, received the 2004 Minnesota Charter School Educator Hall of Fame Award for his leadership at Four Directions.

Wolves

By Chip, Community of Peace

Minnesota is one of the few states where wolves still exist in the wild. The timber wolf, also known as the eastern gray wolf, lives in the northern part of the state. Wolves are so important to many Minnesotans that our professional basketball team is named the Timberwolves. Recent studies show that there are between 2,000 and 2,300 wolves in Minnesota.



Picture courtesy of www.dawninggrace.com/

There hasn't always been this many wolves in Minnesota. By 1970, the timber wolf was almost extinct. They were put under the protection of the Endangered Species Act. Since then, they have been protected by law and their numbers have increased.

Some people want to take them off the endangered species list. If this happens, they will be hunted again. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering taking the timber wolf off the endangered species list.

The Minnesota Wolf Alliance is a group that protects wolves. This group does not want the wolf to be de-listed. They say that humans must learn to coexist with wolves.

There are many myths about wolves. One myth is that wolves are vicious animals that attack anything and everything. The fact is that no person in the U.S. has ever been attacked or killed by a wolf. Another myth about wolves is that they will soon overpopulate the state. This is not true. Wolves are very territorial. They limit their own numbers.

My opinion is that wolves should continue to be protected. Wolves are peaceful and do not harm humans. Wolves are reclusive and avoid contact with humans whenever they can. The wolf population would decrease rapidly if they were delisted.

There is no such thing as "the big, bad wolf." These stories are called fairy tales for a reason.

OFF TO SEATTLE

ELOB National Conference

By Jenn - a 6th grader at Schoolcraft Learning Community

The 6/7 teachers of Schoolcraft Learning Community traveled to Seattle, Washington, to present a Master Class about how to introduce an expedition by using Building Background Knowledge (BBK) workshops with students. The reason Marilyn, Jim, and Sara were chosen to be presenters is because in the fall of 2003, the 6/7 crews did a Holocaust re-enactment. At the time of the re-enactment, the school was full of visitors for the Demonstration Site Seminar. The visitors that chose to watch the Holocaust re-enactment were impressed at the impact it had on the students that they told the National Conference committee about their experience. The National Conference leaders called the school and invited the 6/7 teachers (Marilyn, Jim, and Sara) to apply to be presenters at the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound National Conference.

The teachers started to write the Master Class proposal for the conference, it submitted for approval. After a couple of weeks, they received a notification that they were accepted as presenters.

Some of the preparations that needed to be done prior to the presentation were to finalize the movie that was shown of the 6/7 expedition, and to figure out what each of the team would present. There was an estimated number of 500 people at the National Conference.

Five Things in Buying a Guitar

By Tim, 10th Grade, Community of Peace

Buying a guitar isn't easy at all. You need to know what to look for in a guitar, like how it sounds or how it feels. Here are five things you should look for in a guitar:

1. What kind of sound board does the guitar have? Nothing is more important, and nothing affects the sound of the guitar more than the soundboard. The two most important qualities of the soundboard to consider are 1) solid or laminated-top, and 2) type of wood.

"Solid-Top" means the guitar is made from two solid pieces of wood, one for each half of the soundboard. Laminated soundboards have layers of multiple pieces of wood on either side of the soundboard, which are laminated together on top of each other. A solid-top soundboard offers a much better vibration, and a more pure, acoustic tone. Solid-top soundboards also produce a better sound for a longer time, since the lamination loosens over time.

2. What kind of wood is the guitar made of? That will determine sound, durability, and appearance. The top of the guitar is where 90% of the tone quality and sound comes from. Cedar and spruce are typically used for the soundboard in higher quality acoustic guitars. Both are durable, and produce high quality sound. The side of the guitar and the back aren't as important as long as they are made out of real wood.

3. How high are the strings from the frets? The height at which the strings rest above the frets is also referred to as the "action" of the guitar. Guitars with low action are easier on the fingers, and overall easier to play. However, you do not want the strings too close to the frets, which will produce an undesirable buzzing or rattling while playing. Since it can be a fine balance between having the strings too high or too low, you definitely want to make sure that you choose a guitar that offers a way to adjust the "action." Acoustic guitars with an adjustable truss rod will allow you to modify the "action" to your liking. A comfortable "action" will result in fewer blisters, less frustration, and enjoyment.

4. Is the fret-board easy to play? A fretboard made from rosewood will be strong, while giving extra comfort to the fingers. A cutaway body style will make it possible to easily play the fret-board all the way down to the sound hole.

5. And finally, the price. Well-made acoustic guitars are notorious for surprisingly steep prices. The most important factors that determine the price are the type and quality of wood used on the guitar, and the brand name.

If you think the guitar has something wrong with it, then ask for help from the store. Also, don't be afraid to ask questions or bargain. Enjoy guitar shopping!

Sara's favorite part of the trip to Seattle was being a member on a panel discussing "School Culture". She had to tell the 100 people in the room of Schoolcraft's philosophy. Later, after all four of the panel members, including Sara, introduced their schools, the audience asked the panel members questions about their schools. "The audience was so interested in what I had to say about Schoolcraft," said Sara, "that I was asked more questions than any other panel member. I was funny and serious when I talked about Schoolcraft. Many people talked to me later at the National Conference because they remembered me as one of the panel members."

The most fun part of the trip, according to Jim and Marilyn, was going to the Space Needle to see the view, and Marilyn also said that it was fun to go to the Fish Market to see where they made the famous video called "Fish", which is all about attitude.

The 6/7 teachers put a lot of work into preparing to go to Seattle, and I think that they should have a lot of honor for what they did.



From left to right: Sara, Jim, and Marilyn

Minnesota Public Charter Schools



In over a decade, Minnesota charter schools have grown to 88 operating schools serving over 14,000 students across Minnesota. For those interested in enrolling in a charter school, applications are received year round if space is available. Charter schools are extremely diverse in the populations they serve and the programs they offer.

Charter schools are K-12 public schools that provide choice for parents and students within the public school system. Charter schools are:

- mission driven—focused around a particular approach to education,
- free and open to all students,
- funded on a per-pupil basis by the State of Minnesota,
- chartered under a performance contract with a sponsor, (Sponsors include school districts, colleges, nonprofit organizations, and foundations.)
- independently managed by an elected school board.

The Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) is a membership organization representing 85 of the 88 charter schools in Minnesota. MACS provides support services and technical assistance to new and existing charter schools. Through MACS, member schools work to advance quality and choice in public education.

“When considering a charter school, please don’t hesitate to call the school to talk to the director or to set up a time to visit. Thank you.”

... schools of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools

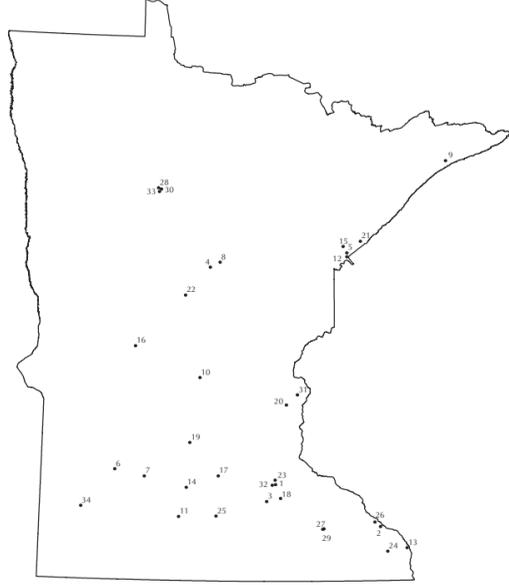
1295 Bandana Blvd. N., Suite 165,
Saint Paul, MN 55108, 651-644-0432
www.mncharterschools.org

Currently Open Charter Schools By Area

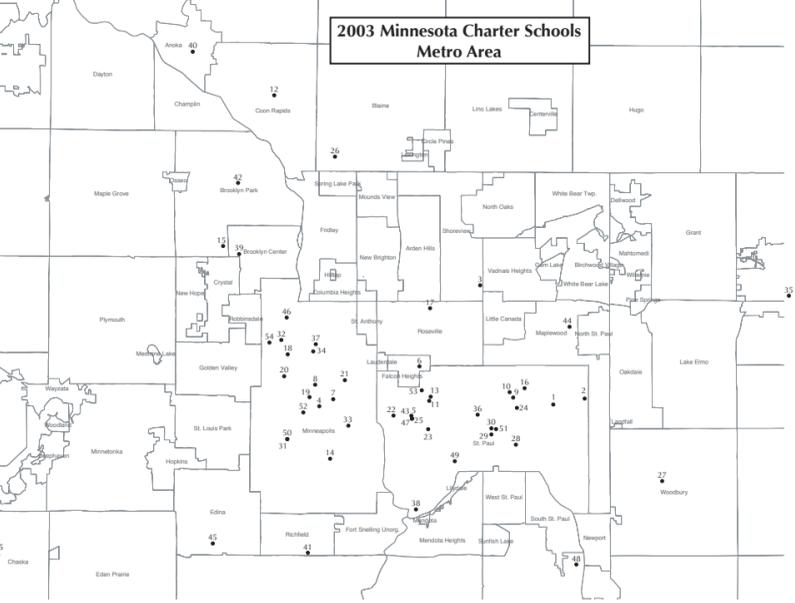
Area	School Name	Location	Grades	Phone
Greater Minnesota	ARTech	Northfield	6 - 12	(507) 663-8806
	Bluffview Montessori School	Winona	PreK - 8	(507) 452-2807
	Covenant Academy of Minnesota	Faribault	7 - 12	(507) 333-1320
	Crosslake Community School	Cross Lake	K - 8	(218) 692-5437
	DPSA - Kenwood Edison Charter School	Duluth	K - 8	(218) 728-9556
	E.C.H.O. Charter School	Echo	K - 12	(507) 925-4143
	Eci'Nompa Woonspe' Charter School	Morton	K - 12	(507) 697-9055
	Emily Charter School	Emily	PreK - 6	(218) 763-3401
	Great Expectations School	Grand Marais	K - 8	(218) 387-9322
	Great River Education Center	Waite Park	7 - 12	(320) 258-3117
	Hanska Community School	Hanska	K - 6	(507) 439-6225
	Harbor City International School	Duluth	9 - 12	(218) 722-7574
	LaCrescent Montessori Academy	LaCrescent	PreK - 8	(507) 895-4054
	Lafayette Charter School	Lafayette	K - 8	(507) 228-8943
	Lake Superior High School	Duluth	7 - 12	(218) 529-2468
	Lakes Area Charter School	Osakis	9 - 12	(320) 859-5302
	Minnesota New Country School	Henderson	7 - 12	(507) 248-3353
	Nerstrand Elementary School	Nerstrand	K - 5	(507) 333-6850
	New Century Charter School	Hutchinson	7 - 11	(320) 234-3660
	North Lakes Academy	Forest Lake	6 - 9	(651) 982-2773
	North Shore Community School	Duluth	PreK - 6	(218) 525-0663
	Pillager Area Charter School	Pillager	9 - 12	(218) 746-3875
	Prairie Creek Community School	Castle Rock	K - 5	(507) 645-9640
	Ridgeway Community School	Houston	PreK - 5	(507) 454-9566
	RiverBend Academy Charter School	Mankato	7 - 12	(507) 387-5524
	Riverway Learning Community	Minnesota City	PreK - 12	(507) 689-2844
	Rochester Off-Campus Charter School	Rochester	9 - 12	(507) 282-3325
	Schoolcraft Learning Community	Bemidji	K - 8	(218) 586-3284
	Studio Academy	Rochester	9 - 12	(507) 529-1662
	TrekNorth High School	Bemidji	9 - 12	(218) 444-1888
	TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School	Lindstrom	9 - 12	(651) 213-2017
	Village School of Northfield	Northfield	K - 12	(507) 663-8990
	Voyageurs Expeditionary School	Bemidji	9 - 10	(218) 586-8347
	Yankton Country School	Balaton	9 - 12	(507) 734-2677

2003 Minnesota Charter Schools Statewide

- 1 ARTech
- 2 Bluffview Montessori School
- 3 Covenant Academy of Minnesota
- 4 Crosslake Community School
- 5 DPSA - Kenwood Edison Charter School
- 6 E.C.H.O. Charter School
- 7 Eci'Nompa Woonspe' Charter School
- 8 Emily Charter School
- 9 Great Expectations School
- 10 Great River Education Center
- 11 Hanska Community School
- 12 Harbor City International School
- 13 LaCrescent Montessori Academy
- 14 Lafayette Charter School
- 15 Lake Superior High School
- 16 Lakes Area Charter School
- 17 Minnesota New Country School
- 18 Nerstrand Elementary School
- 19 New Century Charter School
- 20 North Lakes Academy
- 21 North Shore Community School
- 22 Pillager Area Charter School
- 23 Prairie Creek Community School
- 24 Ridgeway Community School
- 25 RiverBend Academy Charter School
- 26 Riverway Learning Community
- 27 Rochester Off-Campus Charter School
- 28 Schoolcraft Learning Community
- 29 Studio Academy
- 30 TrekNorth High School
- 31 TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School
- 32 Village School of Northfield
- 33 Voyageurs Expeditionary School
- 34 Yankton Country School



Area	School Name	Location	Grades	Phone
Metro Area	Agricultural & Food Sciences Academy	Little Canada	9 - 12	(651) 415-5370
	Coon Rapids Learning Center	Coon Rapids	Ages 16 - 21	(763) 862-9223
	Excell Academy for Higher Learning	Brooklyn Park	K - 6	(763) 533-0500
	Family Academy	Roseville	PreK - 9	(651) 697-1740
	Liberty High Charter School	Blaine	Ages 16 - 21	(763) 786-4799
	Math and Science Academy	Woodbury	6 - 12	(651) 578-7507
	New Heights School	Stillwater	K - 12	(651) 439-1962
	Odyssey Charter School	Brooklyn Center	K - 9	(763) 971-8200
	PACT Charter School	Anoka	K - 12	(763) 421-8475
	Partnership Academy	Richfield	K - 6	(612) 866-3630
	SAGE Academy Charter School	Brooklyn Park	9 - 12	(763) 315-4020
	Sobriety High (East Campus)	Maplewood	9 - 12	(651) 773-8378
	Sobriety High (Southeast Campus)	Burnsville	9 - 12	(612) 328-0706
	Sobriety High (West Campus)	Edina	9 - 12	(952) 831-7212
	Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy	Inver Grove Heights	K - 5	(651) 457-7072
World Learner School of Chaska	Chaska	1 - 6	(952) 368-7398	



2003 Minnesota Charter Schools Metro Area

Area	School Name	Location	Grades	Phone
Minneapolis	Aurora Charter School	Minneapolis	PreK - 4	(612) 870-3891
	Cedar Riverside Community School	Minneapolis	K - 8	(612) 339-5767
	Chiron Downtown Middle School	Minneapolis	6 - 8	(612) 341-7306
	El Colegio Charter School	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 728-5728
	Four Directions	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 588-0183
	Friendship Academy of Fine Arts	Minneapolis	K - 4	(612) 879-6703
	Harvest Preparatory School	Minneapolis	K - 6	(612) 381-9743
	Heart of the Earth Charter School	Minneapolis	K - 12	(612) 331-8862
	Minnesota International Middle School	Minneapolis	5 - 8	(612) 821-6470
	Minnesota Internship Center Charter School	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 722-5470
	Minnesota Transitions Charter School	Minneapolis	K - 12	(612) 722-9013
	New City School	Minneapolis	K - 6	(612) 623-3309
	New Visions School	Minneapolis	K - 6	(612) 706-5566
	Sojourner Truth Academy	Minneapolis	K - 6	(612) 588-3599
	Twin Cities International Elementary School	Minneapolis	PreK - 4	(612) 821-6470
	Watershed High School	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 871-4363
	Woodson Institute for Student Excellence (WISE)	Minneapolis	K - 4	(612) 522-4022

Area	School Name	Location	Grades	Phone
Saint Paul	Academia Cesar Chavez	Saint Paul	K - 7	(651) 778-2940
	Achieve Language Academy	Saint Paul	K - 8	(651) 738-4875
	Avalon Charter School	Saint Paul	9 - 12	(651) 649-5495
	BlueSky Charter School	Saint Paul	7 - 12	(651) 642-0888
	City Academy	Saint Paul	9 - 12	(651) 298-4624
	Community of Peace Academy	Saint Paul	K - 12	(651) 776-5151
	Concordia Creative Learning Academy	Saint Paul	K - 6	(651) 649-5795
	Cyber Village Academy	Saint Paul	4 - 8	(651) 523-7170
	Face to Face Academy	Saint Paul	9 - 12	(651) 772-5555
	High School for Recording Arts	Saint Paul	9 - 12	(651) 287-0890
	Higher Ground Academy	Saint Paul	K - 12	(651) 645-1000
	HOPE Academy	Saint Paul	K - 6	(651) 796-4500
	Jennings Experiential High School	Saint Paul	9 - 12	(651) 649-5403
	Metro Deaf School	Saint Paul	PreK - 8	(651) 224-3995
	Minnesota Academy for Technology	Saint Paul	9 - 12	(651) 389-0654
	Minnesota Business Academy	Saint Paul	9 - 12	(651) 726-2100
	New Spirit School	Saint Paul	K - 8	(651) 225-9177
	Nova Classical Academy	Saint Paul	K - 6	(651) 227-8622
	Skills for Tomorrow High School	Saint Paul	9 - 12	(651) 647-6000
	St. Paul Family Learning Center	Saint Paul	K - 7	(651) 649-5402
	Twin Cities Academy	Saint Paul	6 - 8	(651) 205-4797
	Urban Academy	Saint Paul	K - 3	(651) 215-9419
	William E. McGee Institute of Technology (MIT)	Saint Paul	K - 6	(651) 659-0734

- 1 Academia Cesar Chavez
- 2 Achieve Language Academy
- 3 Agricultural & Food Sciences Academy
- 4 Aurora Charter School
- 5 Avalon Charter School
- 6 BlueSky Charter School
- 7 Cedar Riverside Community School
- 8 Chiron Downtown Middle School
- 9 City Academy
- 10 Community of Peace Academy
- 11 Concordia Creative Learning Academy
- 12 Coon Rapids Learning Center
- 13 Cyber Village Academy
- 14 El Colegio Charter School
- 15 Excell Academy for Higher Learning
- 16 Face to Face Academy
- 17 Family Academy
- 18 Four Directions
- 19 Friendship Academy of Fine Arts
- 20 Harvest Preparatory School
- 21 Heart of the Earth Charter School
- 22 High School for Recording Arts
- 23 Higher Ground Academy
- 24 HOPE Academy
- 25 Jennings Experiential High School
- 26 Liberty High Charter School
- 27 Math and Science Academy
- 28 Metro Deaf School
- 29 Minnesota Academy for Technology
- 30 Minnesota Business Academy
- 31 Minnesota International Middle School
- 32 Minnesota Internship Center Charter School
- 33 Minnesota Transitions Charter School
- 34 New City School
- 35 New Heights School
- 36 New Spirit School
- 37 Nova Classical Academy
- 38 Nova Classical Academy
- 39 Odyssey Charter School
- 40 PACT Charter School
- 41 Partnership Academy
- 42 SAGE Academy Charter School
- 43 Skills for Tomorrow High School
- 44 Sobriety High (East Campus)
- 45 Sobriety High (West Campus)
- 46 Sojourner Truth Academy
- 47 St. Paul Family Learning Center
- 48 Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy
- 49 Twin Cities Academy
- 50 Twin Cities International Elementary School
- 51 Urban Academy
- 52 Watershed High School
- 53 William E. McGee Institute of Technology (MIT)
- 54 Woodson Institute for Student Excellence (WISE)
- 55 World Learner School of Chaska

Schools Approved but Not Yet Open

School Name	Location	Grades	Phone
Ascension Academy	Minneapolis	6-12	(612) 521-3609
Augsburg Academy	Minneapolis	9-12	(612) 722-4862
Beacon Academy	Plymouth	K-8	(763) 546-9999
Central School	Minneapolis	K-8	(612) 870-4416
Civic Leadership Academy	Brooklyn Park	9-12	(612) 419-8409
Colonel Charles D. Young Military Academy	Saint Paul	5-8	(651) 603-1911
Dakota Area Community School	Dakota	K-5	(507) 643-6787
Eagle Ridge Academy	Edina	6-12	(952) 215-8730
Early Literacy Academy	Saint Paul	PreK-5	(651) 690-2929
Fraser Academy	Richfield	PreK-3	(612) 798-8349
General John Vessey Jr. Leadership Academy	Saint Paul	9-12	(651) 206-2980
Great River High School	Roseville	7-12	(651) 636-5341
Hmong Academy	Minneapolis	9-12	(612) 377-0221
Kaleidoscope Charter School	Rogers	K-8	(952) 882-6633
Lakes International Language Academy	Forest Lake	K-6	(651) 464-0771
Main Street School of Performing Arts	Hopkins	9-12	(952) 979-1126
Minneapolis Academy	Minneapolis	5-8	(612) 270-2598
Minnesota North Star Academy	Saint Paul	9-11	(651) 771-2112 TTY
Prairie Seed Academy	Minneapolis	K-8	(651) 649-5402
River Heights School	West Saint Paul	9-12	(651) 457-7427
Saint Croix Preparatory School	Stillwater	K-12	(651) 439-3885
Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists	Saint Paul	9-12	(651) 266-8521
TEAM Academy	Waseca	K-6	(507) 835-3000
Twin Cities Academy High School	Saint Paul	9-12	(651) 205-4798
Ubah Medical Academy	Minneapolis	9-12	(612) 821-6470
Veritas Academy	Plymouth	6-12	(612) 669-1124
Worthington Area Language Academy	Worthington	K-8	(507) 376-6782

These charter schools have been approved to open by the Minnesota Department of Education. Many of them will open in the fall of 2004, but some are not planning to open until the fall of 2005. If you are interested in learning more about these schools, please contact them directly, or visit the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools web site at www.mncharterschools.org. Please note that some telephone numbers may change in the coming months as schools locate permanent sites. Current numbers are always available on the web site.