



COPC CENTRAL

Engaged Colleges Are Central to Strong Communities

Innovative High School Magnet Opens in El Paso

The Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) has long worked with public schools, especially in neighborhoods to which the school districts paid little attention, according to Kathleen Staudt, CCE's director. Under its new COPC grant, CCE is working with the Academy of International Business and Public Affairs, a magnet school located within Bowie High School in El Paso. The magnet school's mission is to develop future leaders in international business, government, and law.

The University of Texas at El Paso, located near the U.S.-Mexico border, has approximately 18,000 students, two-thirds of whom are Hispanic. El Paso has a population of 700,000. It sits across the border from the 1.5 million people of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. CCE works with nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and public schools in economically distressed parts of the El Paso metropolitan area.

Innovative Magnet School

The magnet school will utilize service-learning principles similar to those that are used by the UTEP COPC. The

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Reopened School Returns to Indianapolis Community

"The George Washington Community School (GWCS) was once a hub of neighborhood activity and pride. Now, with the help of COPC and other community partners, the school is returning to that important position," states Meg Easter-Dawson, director of Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis Office of Neighborhood Partnerships (IUPUI-ONP). In the fall of 2000 George Washington Community School—a former neighborhood high school—reopened its doors to welcome 700 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students back to its hallways and classrooms but now as a community school that embraced students and encouraged parental involvement. The revived community school is important to the neighborhood and the school system sees the parents as vital partners in education, relates Easter-Dawson.

In 1998 the Westside Educational Task Force formed to advocate for educational change in the community. Education was the founding principle of the organization under the leadership of Daniel Fugate, past president of the organization. The development of the Westside Education Task Force was one of the first major projects undertaken by the IUPUI COPC in partnership with its community partner, the Westside Cooperative Organization (WESCO).

The participation of IUPUI was a key to

bringing clout to the organization and increasing its legitimacy with the city and the Indianapolis Public School District (IPS). The task force made initial contact with the school board to convey its desire to reopen the school for students and families in the neighborhood. "Fugate and the



GWCS students engage in community activities.

Westside Education Task Force really articulated their community education vision and the desire to form a strong and lasting partnership between the community and its educational partners," relates Easter-Dawson.

A community school is not only a physical building but also an important set of local partnerships. The partners of the school are primarily community members that are

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first class of 35 students enrolled in fall 2003. Thirty-five students enrolled in the fall 2004 freshman class. Incoming students must demonstrate an aptitude for business, politics, and law; pass standard tests for reading, writing, math, and science; score 80 or above on the 8th-grade statewide math test; and have a GPA of 85 or higher for the past 2 academic years.

The magnet school offers a focused and enriched curriculum to help students reach college. During the first year at the Academy, students take business law, business communications, advanced math, science, English, and computer information systems classes. During their junior and senior years, students will work in paid internships at banks; city, county, and state governments; and businesses in the El Paso area. Students will receive a Distinguished High School diploma in international business, public affairs, or law when they graduate.

The magnet school students participated in a Martin Luther King Service-Learning Day in January 2004. A week before the event, representatives from the community and UTEP talked about the event with a group of approximately 200 students. Approximately 150 students and faculty from around the city volunteered to paint rooms inside the Salvation Army's homeless shelter.

Thirty-two magnet school students were involved in a community-based research course during summer 2004. Students researched local/regional public policy and business issues. UTEP serves on the magnet advisory committee and assisted in

planning and implementing the summer course. Representatives from public and nonprofits sectors participated in panels for the program. Students began working this fall on a project to register voters.

"Magnet schools get students focused on their future professions in high school, thus grounding them for what can be an alienating and fragmented experience for them after middle school," Staudt says. "Service-learning approaches help to develop leadership among young people, who develop commitments to and knowledge about their own communities."

The COPC is involved in many ways with Bowie High School. UTEP conducted teacher in-service workshops focused on service learning. Staudt did a 2-hour workshop on local policy research. A UTEP student worked as a teaching assistant to the Bowie summer enrichment teachers, helping to design field trips, including one to a COPC partner with a policy roundtable on the US-VISIT border program.

Alliance Schools

UTEP faculty also served as mentor professors for eight Alliance Schools in El Paso in the late 1990s. The Alliance Schools worked with parents and teachers to improve schools, raise standards, and promote academic success that can lead to success in higher education.

The Texas legislature allocated funds in 1992 for schools that worked with Industrial Area Foundation (IAF) faith-based organizations in the state. The IAF organizations worked with working class, low-income, or minority populations that previously had no voice in the political process.

"IAF style is known for being assertive and nonpartisan and demanding accountability," says Staudt. "In the early 1980s IAF was viewed as a group of outside radicals. By the early 1990s IAF had become a mainstream community-based organization recognized for its leadership and allied with powerful forces in the community."

The Alliance Schools worked with organized parents in meetings at schools, in homes, at parent academies, and at leadership retreats. UTEP leadership and community partnership coordinator Staudt spent

many hours at meetings at both the public schools and the university. "The partnership evolved through relationship building, rather than through formal contracts and written agreements," Staudt notes. "Each Alliance School replicated a miniature version of the overall partnership, often complex because all major stakeholders had to be present."

Initial expectations about the collaboration sometimes changed. "A middle school in the Alliance asked for support from a social studies faculty member to help improve teacher and student performance on accountability tests," Staudt says. "I spent nearly a year working to support parent academies before the social studies work could begin."

Staudt adds that this school has attracted as many as 150 parents to its parent academies, far more than schools in economically privileged neighborhoods. Staudt and her students researched and prepared a handbook for parents on their children's pathways to higher education. The school currently operates a community-based Gear Up program that has solidified students' preparation for higher education both at the middle school and the high school in its feeder pattern.

Staudt sees both challenges and benefits to the university-school partnerships. "Collaboration involves long-term relationships of trust that take time to build through face-to-face meetings best held at the public schools," she says. "Electronic communication may not be as common at schools as it is at universities. Schools are enmeshed in district, school board, and state policies that must be recognized and understood, for these factors add time and complexity to change strategies. Parents and students are the economic and civic futures in a community. Voices from all of these stakeholders add depth and strength to change strategies."

For additional information about the Center for Civic Engagement at the University of Texas at El Paso, contact Kathleen Staudt, CCE director, at (915) 747-7975, or e-mail: kstaudt@utep.edu. ✱

Old Factory Becomes New School

Since 1997 a group of dedicated parents and community leaders have worked to build and expand a unique community-based, dual language school. The Cypress Hills Community School in Brooklyn, New York, is about to move to a new home in a converted factory thanks to the help of the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC), the New York City Council Speaker's Initiative Fund, and the advocacy architects at the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED).

Since its founding in 1997, the school has lacked a home of its own. During this period the community school has operated within other school buildings to provide educational and social services to local students and families. "After 3 years of hard work by parents, community members, and CHLDC, the team secured \$20 million from the New York City Council Speaker's Initiative Fund to purchase an underutilized factory building and convert it into a permanent, high-quality school and community facility," states Perry Winston, PICCED architectural director.

The new 52,000-square-foot space is designed to support the community school's educational approach. Winston and PICCED alumni are working with CHLDC to create a space that will be a center for lifelong learning for the children, their families, and the entire community. When it is completed in 2006 the building will contain more than 20 classrooms and create a place where children can thrive in a nurturing, learning environment. The dual language school (English and Spanish) is respectful of the families' cultural heritage and encourages each child and their family to become active members in the community. "Refurbishing the space is likely to be a catalyst for additional community economic development," adds Winston. Organizations like CHLDC are able to translate the

desires of the community into projects that are responsive to the area's needs. Involving teachers, parents, students, and other community members is a vital key to designing a space that is conducive to everybody's needs. "CBOs have demonstrated their capacity to rebuild neighborhoods. They have untapped capacity to develop school facilities in a timely, cost-effective, accountable, and sensitive fashion. The challenge is persuading educational authorities to think outside of the box," states Michelle Neugebauer, CHLDC's director.

The design of the space will be responsive to the needs of its new residents and also be sensitive to growing environmental concerns. The green building techniques that Winston is incorporating into the design will include sustainable features such as an underfloor air conditioning and displacement ventilation system. "This type of system will help provide cleaner air more efficiently than a conventional system," adds Winston. In addition, other environmentally sensitive materials will be used in the design. The use of daylighting in all of the classrooms and common spaces will reduce energy costs and ensure that occupants remain connected with the outside environment. "Most importantly, converting an existing building in a densely built location will allow many students and staff to walk to school," states Winston.

When the school opens for the 2006–07 school year, 150 kindergarten to sixth-grade students will have a permanent home with a gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium that will help the school fulfill its community mission.

For additional information about the Cypress Hills Community School and the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development contact: Perry Winston, PICCED architectural director at (718) 636–3486, ext. 6452 or e-mail cel.win@ix.netcom.com. *

Cityscape Highlights Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant Program

The upcoming issue of *Cityscape*, a journal of policy development and research, showcases research by scholars in the Office of University Partnership's Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant (DDRG) program.

Cityscape, published by HUD's office of Policy Development and Research, promotes research in the field of housing policy and other housing-related issues. This special issue highlights the DDRG program and its housing-related research through topics such as:

- ★ "Neighborhood Jump-Starting: A Los Angeles Case Study."
- ★ "Valuation of Metropolitan Quality of Life in Wages and Rents."
- ★ "Positive Attitudes, Behavior, and Neighborhood Ties in Poor Urban Neighborhoods: The Impact of Neighborhood Poverty, Household Economics, and Demographic Variables."
- ★ "Moving Over or Moving Up? Short-term Gains and Losses for Relocated HOPE VI Families."
- ★ "Aging in Place in Multifamily Housing."
- ★ "The Work of Cities: Underemployment and Urban Change in Late Century America."
- ★ "The Struggle for Housing Equality: The Impact of Fair Housing and Community Reinvestment Laws on Local Advocacy."
- ★ "Knowledge Production and Use in Community-based Organizations: Examining the Impacts and Influence of Information Technologies."

To order a free copy of this special issue of *Cityscape* (Volume 7, Issue 1) contact the University Partnerships Clearinghouse at 1 (800) 245-29691, option 1.

interested in the education process of the neighborhood children and their parents as they all strive to build and sustain healthy families. The services and service providers at community schools often include youth and early childhood development, family support, physical and mental health information, and family and community engagement. Services at GWCS include a teen health clinic, an onsite dentist, tutoring services, and GED courses for residents and parents to attend while their children are in classes. The school is open to the community for meetings, community activities, and for indispensable services designed to help children and their parents remain physically healthy, active learners in the community.

GWCS is a Bridges to Success (BTS) school that uses the following principles to define a successful community learning center:

- ❖ Strong collaboration and shared decisionmaking.
- ❖ Site teams meet regularly.
- ❖ Sustainable resources are created for children.
- ❖ Sustainable resources are created for families and residents.
- ❖ Extended hours.
- ❖ Annual assessment.

The neighborhoods of Haughville, Stringtown, Hawthorne, Hill, Mary Rigg, and the Valley are the primary areas that the school serves.

Despite the area's low economic status, community leaders and parents see education as the means for improving their lives and the lives of their families and neighbors. "Fugate and the Westside Education Task Forces played a pivotal role in translating the desires of the community and leading the way to reopen the community school," adds Easter-Dawson.

The school currently has more than 46 community groups and service providers that it works with to provide a broad range of education and social services. The school meets with the service provider representatives, area business leaders, parents, and educators monthly to identify barriers to academic achievement. They work to identify and find the resources to collectively address the needs of the students and families. In 2003 the community partners provided an estimated \$4.2 million in onsite services including GED and English Language Learner classes, parent and community programs, tutoring services, and a comprehensive afterschool program, according to IPS.



GWCS students celebrate the opening of the new school.

In order to accommodate the 60 support services offered in collaboration with its 46 community partners, the school is open beyond the traditional school day—6:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and weekends from noon to 4 p.m. The school relies on the expertise of its partners to operate and staff the majority of its support services. The school holds monthly family/neighbor nights that include dinner and entertainment. These events are especially popular and average about 250 guests per event.

Many of the spaces within the school are used by the community organizations, including the cafeteria, auditorium, community room, parent center, classrooms, and office space. A full-time community school coordinator, funded through support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, helps coordinate the scheduling of the spaces.

"One of the important aspect of the school is its proximity to the students' homes," relates Easter-Dawson. Because the school is

close, parents are more likely to take an active role in their child's education and perhaps use the other resources to improve their own skills. "The local businesses know the children and are really supportive of their education," adds Easter-Dawson.

The task force, under the current leadership of WESCO Community Organizer Ed Tangman, is currently working with IPS and IUPUI-ONP to reopen an elementary school in the neighborhood. "The group learned a great deal during the last project that increased the

district's perception of them and the benefit of community schools," states Easter-Dawson. The group developed a clear vision that drove the project and was always open to anyone who wanted to participate. "The collaborative role was not adversarial. They simply stated their goal, asked how all of the organizations could work together, and showed a willingness to compromise. This was the key to making the project a success for all of the partners," concludes Easter-Dawson.

For additional information about the Indiana University/Purdue University Office of Neighborhood Partnerships and the George Washington Community School contact Meg Easter-Dawson at (317) 278-3474 or e-mail measter@iupui.edu. ✱

★ *Congratulations to the COPC 2004 Grantees* ★

Community Outreach Partnership Centers Program (COPC) grantees use their grant funds to establish and operate a COPC to address the problems of urban areas. In addition, New Directions grantees use their funds to build upon their existing COPC programs and expand focus on issues such as healthcare and community development and revitalization. The following colleges and universities are the 2004 COPC New Grants and New Directions grantees:

COPC New Grants

- + Florida Community College at Jacksonville (FCCJ) **\$392,615**
- + Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia **\$400,000**
- + University of Kansas Center for Research **\$400,000**
- + Southern University at Shreveport **\$391,490**
- + University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMA) **\$398,573**
- + Mott Community College, Flint, Michigan **\$398,936**
- + Regents of The University of Minnesota, Morris Campus (UMM) **\$399,494**
- + University of Akron **\$400,000**
- + Xavier University **\$392,754**
- + Edinboro University of Pennsylvania **\$311,392**
- + Pennsylvania State University **\$287,191**
- + University of Puerto Rico (UPR) **\$399,997**
- + Rhodes College, Memphis Tennessee **\$399,978**
- + University of Utah **\$399,702**

COPC New Directions Grantees

- + Los Angeles Trade Technical College **\$200,000**
- + The Regents of the University of California **\$200,000**
- + University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) **\$200,000**
- + University of Maryland, Baltimore **\$199,710**
- + University of Pittsburgh **\$200,000**
- + University of Tennessee at Chattanooga **\$149,811**
- + Medical College of Wisconsin **\$199,970**

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