



Annual Report

September 1, 2000 - August 31, 2001

The School for Ethical Education

Ethics in Action Creates Character

440 Wheelers Farms Road
Milford, CT 06460

The School for Ethical Education is grateful for the support of donors and grant funders to our vital mission. We thank the following organizations who have helped put ethics in action in 2000-2001:

Donors and Grant Funders

Wright Investors' Service

The Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation

State of Connecticut Department of Education

Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium

The Louis Calder Foundation

Webster Bank

The Community Foundation of Greater New Haven

SNET

W.T. Grant Foundation

Connecticut Assets Network

John Templeton Foundation

SEE Staff

David Wangaard, Ed.D., Director

Ellen Almeida, Program Assistant

Anika Knox, Building Ethical Communities Project Leader

Sandi Michaelson Warren, Laws of Life Project Leader

Introduction

The School for Ethical Education (SEE) has concluded its sixth year of activity anchored by four program strategies to put ethics in action. SEE continues to (1) teach and consult to advance comprehensive character education, (2) administer Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference, (3) administer the Building Ethical Communities Through Service-Learning program and (4) coordinate Connecticut's Laws of Life Essay Contest. This report provides a summary of these programs and SEE's goals for 2001-2002.

History

John Winthrop Wright founded SEE in 1995. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization recognized as tax-exempt by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, SEE provides courses and seminars for teachers, parents, and students to advance ethical behavior in schools and communities. SEE is not affiliated with any religious organization and does not espouse or represent a specific religious belief through its programs. Mr. Wright's vision for school improvement focused on expanding opportunities for teachers and students to learn how "ethics in action creates character." This phrase, which became the school's motto, recognizes the power of positive ethics in the creation of character. The core ethical concepts or virtues Mr. Wright desired to promote include respect, responsibility, caring, justice, honesty, truthfulness, courtesy, citizenship, and the principles of the Golden Rule.

Mr. Wright's timely initiation of this program coincides with the education reform movement's recognition that success in any academic program rests on the existence of positive student character. The goal of

positive character development is integrated into all programs offered by SEE.

Vision

SEE teaches strategies to put ethics in action. We encourage learning experiences that foster positive character and advance responsible and caring communities.

Mission

SEE affirms the need for an increased focus on ethical behavior for the 21st century. We also recognize the contribution of sound ethical reasoning for the advancement of positive character. To teach ethical reasoning for positive character development, SEE provides courses and seminars for teachers, parents, children, and community leaders in collaboration with school districts, parent organizations, day care centers, professional education centers, institutions of higher and continuing education, and other like-minded organizations. SEE instructors will teach, write, speak, host events and meetings, and consult with relevant education organizations as primary methods of disseminating strategies to promote ethics in action for the creation of character.

Teaching and Consulting

SEE continues to focus on teaching strategies to put ethics in action. Since its inception, SEE has had more than 12,500 contacts (not including the Laws of Life program). SEE directly served over 3,100 participants during the 2000-2001 school year through teaching, consulting, and its Building Ethical Communities program.

SEE's teaching mission is anchored by its ongoing relationship with the University of Bridgeport. In collaboration with the University, SEE Director Dr. David Wangaard teaches graduate-level courses related to comprehensive character education. Courses are regularly offered on character education, conflict resolution, service-learning, and ethical leadership at the university's Bridgeport, Stamford, and Waterbury campuses. Dr. Wangaard has also been a guest lecturer in the university's Department of Education. More than 330 graduate students were enrolled in his classes in the past year. Dr. Wangaard also served on the doctoral-dissertation committee for a University of Bridgeport student in the Division of Educational Leadership. The dissertation study focused on strategies to teach moral education.

During the summer of 2001, SEE's director was also invited to participate as a guest lecturer for a graduate level character-education class at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). This pilot course was initiated by Dr. Edward DeRoche, dean of the School of Education at the University of San Diego in collaboration with a SCSU adjunct

instructor. The course was well received by the students, and Dr. Wangaard is conferring with SCSU about teaching the course again in July 2002.

Other teaching highlights for 2000-2001 include offering a character-education class, "Character, Assets, and Resiliency Education," offered in collaboration with RYASAP, a prevention agency in Bridgeport; presenting workshops on SEE's Building Ethical

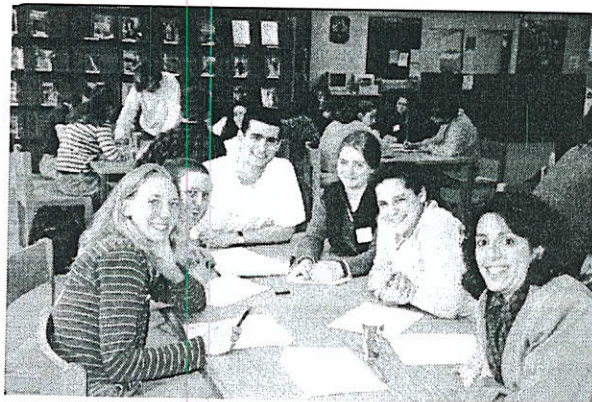
Communities Through Service-Learning at two national conferences; and hosting SEE's first summer institute as a follow-up to Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference.

The summer institute was held June 28, 2001, at the retreat facilities of the Mercy

Center in Madison, Connecticut. Dr. Karen Bohlin, director of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University, was invited as the guest lecturer. Twenty-eight participants from Connecticut and New Jersey attended the institute. The intensive one-day session outlined essential components to keep character-education meaningful to students, integrated into the school curriculum, and a vital part of the school life.

This first SEE summer institute was considered a success and a model for future programs. A 2002 summer institute is being planned. Dr. Philip Vincent of the Character Development Group and author of multiple character-education texts has agreed to participate as the guest speaker.

SEE contracted with 18 different schools, districts, and organizations to provide



Student leadership team, Old Lyme High School

consulting services during the previous school year. Consulting services included introducing school staff to character-education strategies during teacher and staff development meetings, providing strategic guidance to character- education committees, serving as a guest speaker for parent and community groups, and completing evaluation visits to schools implementing character programs. For the past three years, Dr. Wangaard has also participated on the Character Education Partnership's assessment team, which evaluates schools that have applied for the National Schools of Character Award. This experience has connected SEE to examples of excellent practice in character education across the country.

With the growth of SEE's grant-funded programs, the capacity to increase teaching and consulting contacts has declined. As a function of SEE's ongoing strategic plan, the staff works to balance the required teaching component of SEE's mission with the administrative and implementative requirements of grant programs.

Building Ethical Communities Through Service-Learning

SEE has developed Building Ethical Communities Through Service-Learning (BEC) as a student program to put ethics in action. BEC is designed to achieve four goals that support the reduction of student conflict and the promotion of respectful and caring behavior. BEC goals specify that students will (1) discover shared community values; (2) develop reflection skills anchored by shared values and the concept of the Golden Rule (treat others as you would like to be treated); (3) practice ethical leadership and cooperative work skills; and (4) apply shared values, reflection, and ethical leadership during the planning and implementation of service-

learning projects. SEE collaborates with the Albert Schweitzer Institute (ASI) at Quinnipiac University to implement BEC.

The program begins with one-day workshops designed to teach skills and strategies for ethical leadership and service-learning. Participating teams select a project idea and learn concrete steps for successful planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation of their projects. BEC staff contacts each service team monthly via phone calls and site visits. In addition, school teams are invited to present their projects at Connecticut's Asset-Based Character Education Conference. The year culminates with an evaluation and team celebrations.

Approximately 400 students and 50 educators completed more than 15,000 hours of service from October 2000 to May 2001. All teams implemented at least one service project during the year. There was a range of projects, all of which met community needs, from the creation of peer mediation teams to working with and visiting the elderly. More than 70% of the students at all schools agreed that their service projects helped them become more caring and responsible and better able to practice teamwork. Outside evaluators concluded that BEC is a useful program that provided positive experiences



Fifth graders plan their recycling project during a BEC workshop at Choate Rosemary Hall, fall 2000.

and skill development to the students, teachers, and community members who participated.

In collaboration with outside evaluators, BEC staff identified the following characteristics of successful projects: it meets a meaningful need in the community; it focuses on people as recipients of service; it is implemented with an entire class as part of the stated curriculum; it is designed by the students and the teacher; reflection time is frequent, consistent, and planned; and celebration is incorporated into the project.

Evaluations over the past two years suggest that BEC is an important program that has the ability to be integrated directly into academic programs while teaching the principles of ethical reflection, teamwork, and community service.

SEE and ASI are grateful for funding from the following organizations to put *ethics in action* through BEC: The Louis Calder Foundation, Wright Investors' Service, State of Connecticut Department of Education, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, The Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation, and the W.T. Grant Foundation.

Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference

Connecticut's third Assets-Based Character Education Conference was successfully held on the campus of Central Connecticut State University March 19 and 20, 2001. More than 500 participants from 89 Connecticut towns attended (refer to the table on page 5). Additionally, participants from Canada, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Ohio attended the conference. "Outstanding!" "Excellent to include youth," "I feel invigorated!" and

"Excellent practical activities integrating character education" were some of the comments received on evaluations. More than 96% of the responses on conference evaluations noted agreement or strong agreement with the following two statements: *I will be able to apply skills/information from this conference in my school, community, or home;* and *I am pleased that I attended this conference.*

Theodore Sergi, Connecticut's Commissioner of Education, welcomed participants at the opening session of the conference and at the evening reception held for educational leaders before the conference. Dr. Sergi challenged the audiences to consider how character education can be integrated into daily academic instruction at schools. Peter Yarrow, of Peter, Paul and Mary was the keynote speaker for the 2001 conference. Mr. Yarrow encouraged teachers, parents, youth, and youth workers to collaborate in support of strategies that teach the value of respect and help build caring and responsible communities. These goals are consistent with Mr. Yarrow's *Project Respect* that he is disseminating nationally to address bullying in schools.

Thirty workshops were presented during two conference breakout sessions. Presenters



Jan Nigro and the Vitamin I Chorus used music to teach character during a conference workshop at Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference.

provided workshops for elementary, middle, high school, and community participants. Dr. Karen Bohlin, director of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University, led a well-received morning session that focused on integrating character lessons into academic subjects. Larry Dieringer, executive director of Educators for Social Responsibility, led a morning and afternoon session that described strategies to reduce conflicts in schools. A sample of conference workshop titles included "Internalizing Virtue: An Instructional and Schoolwide Framework;" "The Importance of Play in the Development of Youth and Community;" "Building Ethical Communities Through Service-Learning;" "The Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program;" and "Class Meetings: Vehicles for Social Emotional Learning and Character Education." Of the 212 evaluations collected after workshop sessions, participant responses averaged 1.4 (scale of 1 to 5; 1 = strongly agree) to the statement *I would recommend this presentation for future conferences.*

The School for Ethical Education would like to thank the following collaborators and sponsors: Wright Investors' Service, Connecticut Department of Education, SNET, Webster Bank, Central Connecticut State University Department of Continuing Education, Connecticut Assets Network, and the Albert Schweitzer Institute.

Connecticut's Laws of Life Essay Contest

During the 2000-2001 school year, more than 2,500 Connecticut students celebrated their laws of life in the first statewide Laws of Life Essay Contest. The Laws of Life Essay Contest began in 1987 when Sir John

Templeton created the contest in his hometown of Winchester, Tennessee. Over the years, the contest has grown and been held throughout the United States and around the world. Each year over 60,000 students write a Laws of Life essay. Many school districts, the YMCA, the Girl Scout Council, local chambers of commerce, the Kiwanis, and Rotary Clubs have supported the contest.

The Templeton Foundation has historically supported local essay contests administered in schools, school districts, or youth organizations. SEE facilitated local contests in Connecticut as well as in a statewide essay contest as a second tier. The top two essay writers from each local contest were invited to participate in a second round of statewide essay judging. The top ten essay writers from the statewide competition (as determined by a panel of judges) were honored at an awards reception in conjunction with the leadership reception for Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference.

SEE was awarded a project grant from the John Templeton Foundation to pilot Connecticut's Laws of Life Essay Contest. The contest provided young people with an opportunity to reflect on and write about their own values. There was almost unanimous agreement among the adult and student participants regarding the positive outcomes from contest involvement. The contest encouraged conversations about personal values between student essayists, teachers, parents, and other adults in the school and the community.

Templeton funding supported prize money for student awards, stipends for local contest coordinators, and the administration of the statewide contest. Fifteen contest grants were awarded, and three schools participated in the contest but chose to decline grant support.

Communication

SEE has employed two strategies to communicate our vision of putting ethics in action. SEE publishes a newsletter, *SEE News*, three times a year and maintains its own Web site.

The newsletter highlights successful character-education initiatives, current SEE program offerings, and resources for those implementing comprehensive character education.

SEE News is circulated to more than 3,000 subscribers without a fee. Most of the subscribers are schools and teachers in Connecticut, and approximately five percent of subscribers are from other states. Publication expenses are approximately \$1,900 per issue and include charges for printing and bulk mailing. One goal for 2001-2002 is to continue publication to market SEE programs, and another goal is to sell advertising space in the newsletter to help defray publication costs.

The Web site offers visitors background information and a history of SEE; a description of our program offerings, including SEE consulting services; resource links to character-education publishers, a relevant bibliography; and a growing file of activities for use by teachers and youth workers. The SEE Web site is hosted by the Wright Investors'



Statewide Essay Winners Celebrate
March 19, 2001

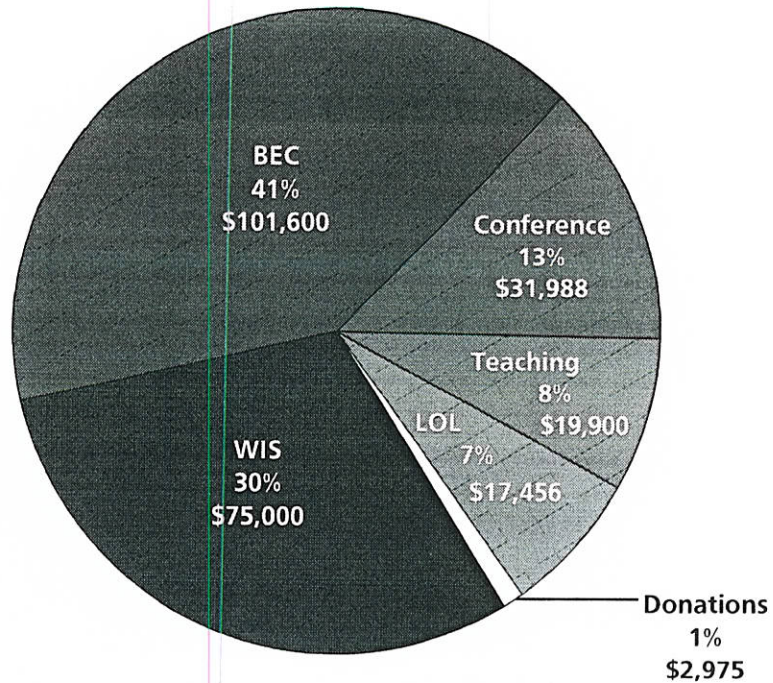
Service computer server and is maintained by a private webmaster. SEE pays an annual maintenance fee of \$912 to the webmaster for updates and modifications. The goal of SEE's Web site is to provide visitors an overview of SEE's mission and resources to assist in the implementation of comprehensive character education.

A major thrust for 2001-2002 is the development of an expanding resource library of curricular activities and service-learning ideas that support student character development. A long-term goal is to provide certified professional development activities via SEE's Web site. Recently, SEE applied to the State of Connecticut to obtain authorization to provide Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to teachers who complete SEE courses and workshops. SEE will explore how this authorization might be used through distance learning activities hosted through our website.

SEE Financials

The mission of The School for Ethical Education has expanded with the receipt of grant support and registration funds to administer Building Ethical Communities Through Service-Learning (BEC), Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference (Conference), and the Laws of Life Essay Contest (LOL). Thirty percent of SEE's budget in 2000-2001 came from the generous gifts of Wright Investors' Services (WIS). A specific goal for the next year is to reduce the WIS contribution by 10 percent. A detailed Profit and Loss Statement for each SEE program in 2000-2001 is provided on page 8. Other income (\$60,738) noted in the Profit and Loss Statement represents an increase in the value of WIS stock held by the School for Ethical Education. The increase in stock value is not shown within the income summary on page 8.

Summary of SEE Income 2000-2001.



The School for Ethical Education
Profit and Loss Statement
For the Fiscal Year ended August 31, 2001

	Consolidated	Connecticut Assets Conference (110)	Service Learning (130)	Laws of Life (140)	Institute (150)	Non-Cash Charges	Other
INCOME							
Grant Income	136,114.53	17,058.49	101,600.00	17,456.04			
Registration	14,280.00	14,280.00					
Vendor Income	650.00	650.00					
Tuition Income	19,900.00				4,200.00		15,700.00
Donations - TWC	75,000.00	33,289.14	14,906.56			(16,125.00)	42,929.30
Donations - Others	2,975.00						2,975.00
Other Income	60,738.65						60,738.65
TOTAL INCOME	309,658.18	65,277.63	116,506.56	17,456.04	4,200.00	(16,125.00)	122,342.95
EXPENSES							
Personnel Expenses	180,526.15	36,000.00	60,713.45	6,720.34	689.00		76,403.36
Office Expenses	24,721.44	11,994.49	13,363.47	2,016.71		(16,125.00)	13,471.77
Travel Expenses	7,885.04	1,291.54	4,772.13	250.00	90.00		1,481.37
Outside Services	31,214.81	15,991.60	9,024.38	564.79	3,421.00		2,213.04
Albert Schweitzer Institute	16,005.19		16,005.19				0.00
Other Expenses	2,252.15		230.00	154.20			1,867.95
Project Grants	21,647.94		12,397.94	7,750.00			1,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	284,252.72	65,277.63	116,506.56	17,456.04	4,200.00	(16,125.00)	96,937.49
NET SURPLUS (SHORTFALL)	25,405.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25,405.46

Goals for 2001-2002

SEE anticipates positive outcomes for its programs as the new school year is underway. Given current staffing and budget, SEE must focus strategically on its vision and mission and work to network with others to advance its key programs.

Teaching and Consulting

Goals for this year include the strengthening of current university relationships and developing new teaching opportunities with local universities. With the anticipated shortage of certified teachers in Connecticut and beyond, local universities are providing alternative pathways for professionals from outside the education field to obtain their teaching certification. These alternative programs, in addition to the traditional undergraduate and graduate teacher-education programs, create opportunities to integrate instruction on character education. SEE's goal is to provide direct instructional services and/or to encourage the integration of the principles of comprehensive character education into teacher-education coursework.

SEE will host character-education summer institutes as an additional strategy to provide teacher-education classes. To support these institutes, SEE has completed its application to serve as a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) provider for the State of Connecticut. With final approval from the State of Connecticut, teachers will be able to earn required CEUs after participating in SEE's summer institute. Additionally, SEE's long-term teaching goal is to develop an instructional curriculum that can be disseminated through distance learning strategies implemented via the Internet.

SEE staff will continue to offer consulting services on a time-available basis. Although short-term consulting does bring a useful income stream to SEE, its long-term benefits, as determined by the implementation of comprehensive character education, have not been observed. Whenever possible, SEE staff will attempt to give priority to the number of consulting schools and communities that implement comprehensive character-education strategies. Typically, these schools and communities utilize a committee of decision makers to plan and implement character initiatives.

Building Ethical Communities Through Service-Learning

With the support of the Louis Calder Foundation and a grant from the State of Connecticut Learn and Serve, Building Ethical Communities Through Service-Learning (BEC) is celebrating an outstanding first year as a fully funded and staffed program. BEC now has the capacity to design, implement, and assess the integration of ethical reflection and service-learning. After two years of pilot programming, BEC staff is now able to reflect and to address program evaluation and plan modifications to improve the BEC process.

Meaningful progress has been made in the past three years. Service projects have improved each year and have a greater chance of sustainability. BEC staff have begun piloting train-the-trainer workshops with school districts and teacher education programs as they plan their own service-learning projects. BEC has sponsored 42 service teams, and the diversity of projects has provided BEC staff with the experience to design standards to guide future service-learning projects that include ethical reflection.

A third-party evaluation of BEC during 2000-2001 noted that the projects meeting BEC program-implementation standards appeared to promote understanding, practice, and application of ethical reflection during service-learning. As a result of its interviews, site visits, focus groups, and questionnaires, program evaluators concluded that when meaningfully implemented, BEC is a useful program to promote the recognition of shared values, respectful and caring behavior, and the completion of service-learning projects.

Based on the recommendations of this third-party evaluation, BEC has established the following project goals for 2001-2002:

- (1) Create a BEC program section on the SEE Web site to post stories about student projects.
- (2) Provide clear strategies for teachers and students to help them link shared values, ethical reflection, and cooperative work skills to service activities and classroom work.
- (3) Limit the amount of reporting paperwork for team coordinators.
- (4) Provide preworkshop planning guidelines for teams enrolled in BEC.
- (5) Continue to refine the evaluation process and instruments for BEC.
- (6) Create an assessment tool to allow students to report on their service experiences during the year.

BEC begins its second fully funded year with great expectations about the progress of school teams with regards to the integration of ethical reflection and service-learning.

BEC encourages students to apply their shared values to the planning and implementation of service projects and recognize and practice the prosocial value of ethical reflection. The Albert Schweitzer Institute continues to collaborate with SEE to advance BEC. Additional funding will be sought in the up-

coming year to sustain the program's current progress, increase funding for program assessment, and develop a BEC train-the trainer program.

Assets-Based Character Education Conference

Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference has five goals (1) Expand the awareness and definitions of comprehensive-character education to include asset-based strategies and the advancement of social-emotional learning; (2) Provide an opportunity to develop a network of educators, youth workers, parents, and youth committed to comprehensive-character education; (3) Offer participants an opportunity to hear a nationally recognized leader in comprehensive-character education; (4) Disseminate excellent practices through workshop presentations that encourage the inclusion of youth; and (5) Encourage leaders to integrate asset-based character education and social-emotional learning into the curriculum and development of organizational climate of K-12 schools and community-youth programs.

The planning and organization of Connecticut's fourth Assets-Based Character Education Conference is well underway. The following four goals have been established for the development of the 2002 conference: (1) Recruit workshop presenters with national and/or regional expertise regarding research-based strategies, (2) Improve conference facilities and food service, (3) Increase grant support, and (4) Increase the communication and size of the network of character educators in Connecticut.

The conference is scheduled for May 1 and 2, 2002, at the Sheraton Waterbury Hotel. Although the move from the campus of



BEC students display their enthusiasm at the Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference.

Central Connecticut State University increases the overhead costs of the conference, this step was taken to improve conference logistics and sustain future participant registration. The conference has also obtained letters of commitment from several nationally recognized speakers. Grant proposals have been submitted to a variety of government and corporate entities along with regional foundations. The conference requires a minimum of \$10,000 to fund administrative costs of the event.

Conference planning and implementation require a significant contribution of time and resources from SEE staff. However, this is seen as a strategic investment to continue to build awareness of character education and a network of professionals committed to character education in Connecticut and surrounding states. The conference is the only statewide infrastructure for the advancement of character education topics. SEE is working to create and enlarge the network of K-12 educators, parents, and youth workers who will advocate inclusion of character-building strategies within their schools, organizations, and agencies.

Laws of Life Essay Contest

With the continued generous support from the John Templeton Foundation, SEE will

administer a second year of the Laws of Life Essay Contest in Connecticut. The contest provides a wonderful link for SEE as it encourages students in grades 6-12 to reflect on and write about their values while promoting the academic goal of excellent essay writing. SEE and the Templeton Foundation encourage Laws of Life to be integrated into a school's curriculum. Although this project has value as an extracurricular contest, more positive outcomes can be realized if teachers use Laws of Life as a tool for a comprehensive writing process that includes reflection, discussion, drafting, editing, and final writing.

SEE has identified three main goals for its implementation of Laws of Life in 2001-2002. The first goal is to increase the number of schools and essay writers participating in the contest to 6,000 students. The second goal is to encourage Laws of Life to be integrated into the writing process at the local school level and increase the number of local schools that include community members during the recognition of student participants. The third goal is to identify funding sources to support of the Laws of Life in 2002-2003.

Looking Forward

Reflecting on the past year and looking forward to 2002, SEE staff is enthusiastic about meeting the positive and clear goals that lay ahead. The recent tragic events in New York City and Washington, D.C. are sobering reminders that our mission is of critical importance in the 21st century. The development of personal character and the application of the Golden Rule are extraordinarily simple concepts yet are profoundly challenging to implement in the cosmopolitan culture of the United States. SEE welcomes this challenge and invites others to join us with their time, talent, and treasure to put *ethics in action*.