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Friday began with seventy energetic voices of the **Kendall Elementary School Choir *United We Sing!*** The students encouraged everyone to "Keep Reaching and Keep Trying" for positive character.

The choir's performance preceded the first seven breakout workshops. Workshop presenters shared their unique experiences from successful school and community character initiatives. The workshops covered a wide spectrum of topics including: running a morning meeting, integrating character education into school curriculum, conflict resolution programs, implementing a character education program throughout a school district, assessing a character education program, and focusing on character development during service-learning. Both elementary and secondary school students were co-presenters in several sessions, and many participants especially enjoyed the student dramas and interactive workshops.

Dr. Thomas Lickona's keynote address followed the first breakout session. He shared his unique combination of experience and vision

for comprehensive character education with conference attendees. The audience received him warmly and many noted they would have enjoyed the opportunity to hear more from this national leader.

See **Students** on pg. 2



*Students and Educators  
Celebrate Character*

By Kinsey Wangaard

Connecticut's **Assets-Based Character Education Conference** held March 4 and 5 in New Britain brought together over three hundred students and educators with the goal to celebrate positive character. The sold-out event featured **Dr. Thomas Lickona**, the author of *Educating for Character* and Director for The Center for the Fourth and Fifth Rs (Cortland, NY) as the keynote speaker. Fourteen workshops were also presented in two breakout sessions along with inspirational entertainment from two school-based youth choirs.

The conference was launched Thursday night with a leadership reception at Central Connecticut State University Conference Center. The reception introduced the theme of the conference and welcomed Dr. Lickona. The extremely talented **New Britain High School Show Choir** provided entertainment as they danced and sang to a creative selection of songs.



**Sam Shepard from Saxe Middle School in New Caanan gets dramatic to make a point during a conference breakout session. Students from the fourth and fifth grade performed skits they had written during their language arts classes. The skits provided material for student reflection about character choices.**

1999 CALENDAR

- May 6, 1999 Community Forum at Wolcott High School, 7:00 pm
- May 14, 1999 Character Assets & Resiliency Education (C.A.R.E.) Learning Community at SCSU, New Haven
- May 24, 1999 Manson Youth Correctional Facility, Cheshire, CT
- June 14, 1999 Service Learning Seminar team applications due
- June 23 & 24 Character Education for Student Resiliency, a Professional Development Workshop at ACES, Hamden, CT
- June 29 - July 1 International Character Education Conference, San Diego, CA
- August 16 - 18 Character Education Summer Seminar, Olivet College, Olivet, MI

## Director's Dialogue

by David B. Wangaard, Ed.D.

**M**odern character education is maturing! What justifies this statement? The attention of critics and grant funding at the national level provide some evidence. Critics will always be attracted to a growing grass-roots movement, and national funding typically requires evidence of local success.

Like many grassroots efforts, modern character education began with the vision and energy of practitioners. Professional development often occurs through the services of private consultants, homegrown experts and conferences. One sign of the growing maturity for character education is the critics who are springing up to challenge character education programs. Author and speaker Alfie Kohn is one of character education's most vocal challengers. In recent *Phi Delta Kappan* (February 1998) articles, a debate continues between Mr. Kohn and advocates of modern character education. The definition of good practice for modern character education can only mature as this discussion continues.

Simultaneously, there are national efforts to fund assessments and guidelines for character education programs. The **John Templeton Foundation** is funding a number of initiatives to promote good practice and document what is working under the banner of modern character education. The Templeton Foundation's work in higher education and K-12 schools is a catalyst for maturing character education programs.

One initiative funded by Templeton involves a collaborative project with the **Character Education Partnership** (CEP) in Washington, DC and the **Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character** (CAEC) at Boston University. Their project is called, **The National Schools of Character Awards Program**. The project's goals include the identification and recognition of schools with comprehensive character education initiatives. Award guidelines request school staff to present a self-assessment of their program based on CEP's **11 Principles of Effective Character Education**. These principles include: 1.Character education that promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character, and 2.Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.

CAEC and CEP staff are currently involved in evaluating 100 applications, visiting school sites and making recommendations for a group of finalists to be chosen. Names and stories of these finalists will be published next fall.

This is a challenging process for the schools involved. It is also a healthy exercise for the national character education movement. The Templeton Foundation, CEP and CAEC are to be commended for their work to advance good practice and help mature modern character education. Contact the CEP office (800) 988-8081 if you believe your school should apply for this award in 1999-2000.

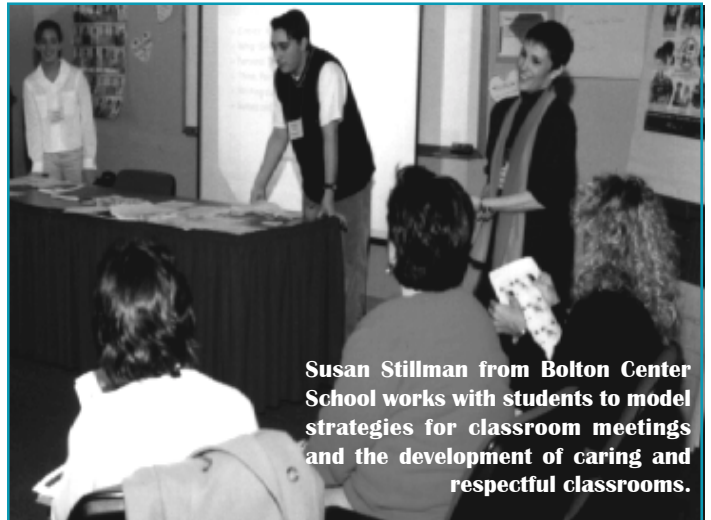
**"Be on guard against; science without humanity, politics without principle, knowledge without character, wealth without work, commerce without morality, pleasure without conscience, worship without sacrifice."**

*Mahatma Gandhi*



### Students continued from pg.1

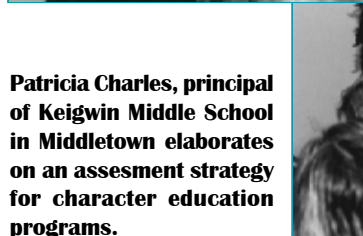
A great lunch proceeded the afternoon breakout session. At the end of the day, many participants commented on the excellent quality of presentations. One observer wrote, "The presentations were both informative and fun." Another noted the conference had helped spark the commitment for further expansion of a pilot character-education



**Susan Stillman from Bolton Center School works with students to model strategies for classroom meetings and the development of caring and respectful classrooms.**



**Dr. Francis Harris, principal of Hockanum School in East Hartford explains the comprehensive character plan used in her elementary school which emphasizes peer mediation.**



**Patricia Charles, principal of Keigwin Middle School in Middletown elaborates on an assessment strategy for character education programs.**



initiative. Presenters and participants enthusiastically agreed that Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference was a great success. The conference united educators, community leaders, school officials, and students from all areas of Connecticut to celebrate positive character.

Conference organizers were encouraged by the response to this first event and are working to plan Connecticut's Second Assets-Based Character Education Conference for the spring of 2000. Contact **The School for Ethical Education** if you have ideas for a workshop. In the mean time, let's keep our *ethics in action* throughout our schools and communities.

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**For further information about SEE visit our website at [www.ethicsed.org](http://www.ethicsed.org).**

From our website you may also subscribe to this newsletter, learn more about the comprehensive approach to character education, identify character education publishers and consultants and stay informed about upcoming events.



## CHARACTER IN PRINT

Titles referenced by *Books that Build Character: A Guide to Teaching Your Child Moral Values Through Stories* by William Kilpatrick and Gregory and Suzanne M. Wolfe, Simon & Schuster: New York (1994).

Grades 5-12

### Jane Eyre

**C. Bronte**, (Signet, 1960)

Jane, a young girl who experiences ridicule and rejection as a child, grows up to be a kind and virtuous woman. When she falls in love with her employer Mr. Rochester, she must choose between her passionate love and her moral beliefs. On her wedding day, she discovers that Mr. Rochester is already married to an insane woman. She relies on all of her moral strength to resist his pressure to immediately proceed with the wedding. In the end, Jane is rewarded with a clear conscious and a joyful marriage because of her moral choice.

**Traits: courage, love, forgiveness, self-discipline**

### The Call of the Wild

**J. London**, (Puffin, 1988)

Buck, a half-German shepherd, half-Saint Bernard dog, is kidnapped from his home in California and sold to gold-crazed owners. He is brought North and experiences life in the Klondike during the gold rush. Through his experiences with both kind and cruel owners, he learns about love and loyalty. In everything, he possesses a dignity and wisdom that contrasts with the selfish and inhumane behavior of the humans around him.

**Traits: loyalty, strength, respect**

### Robinson Crusoe

**D. Defoe**, (Charles Scribner and Sons, 1983)

Robinson Crusoe rejects conventional life and sets sail on a voyage that leads to the greatest adventure of his life. When he is shipwrecked on a Caribbean Island, he is forced to provide for himself. This tale describes his unique and challenging experiences as he tries to establish a fulfilling life in isolation from mankind.

**Traits: hard work, self-discipline, creativity, courage**

## Character Educators Suggest . . .

Three hundred character educators and students were asked the following question at the end of Connecticut's First Character Conference (4/5/99), "**What can I do to immediately begin or enhance the implementation of a character initiative at my school?**" Here are some of their responses:

- ⇒ Discuss the character traits of heroes and other main characters in literature/history/current events and include them in the curriculum.
- ⇒ Have students write and produce skits which include character themes for English, history and health class.
- ⇒ Help the students plan service-learning projects with a focus on character development and academic learning.
- ⇒ Work with the students to focus homeroom time with the inclusion of character quotes, goal setting and team building.
- ⇒ Recruit colleagues and students to form a team of collaborators for the promotion of character in our school.
- ⇒ With interested partners, draft an action plan to begin a character initiative.
- ⇒ Assist students to create a school newsletter which emphasizes student projects, school/community contributions and character recognition.



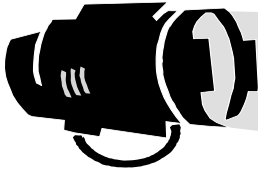
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- Character Ed. Comm.
- Health Teacher
- Counselor/Social Worker



*Character Spotlight*  
**Gina Vance**



**Gina Vance**

**Gina Vance** is an elementary school principal at **Hebron Avenue School** in Glastonbury, Connecticut. Ms. Vance and her staff have initiated a number of ideas to promote positive character development in their school. The six pillars of character, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Fairness, and Citizenship, are located in the main lobby of the school. They greet every student, teacher, and visitor who enters the building and a vocabulary of character surrounds the school community throughout the day. There is a mailbox in front of Gina's office, and it is used to encourage students, staff, and parents to recognize one another for portraying the pillars of character. Every Friday afternoon Gina uses the public address system to share the names of people who were recognized through the mail. Gina also reads books or student's original stories with her students on a regular basis. This personal attention to students fosters an atmosphere of caring and respect. Ms. Vance uses the six character pillars in conflict resolution. Instead of focusing on a specific incident, she reminds the students to set positive character goals. This focuses students on respectful and caring behavior rather than who "wins" in the conflict. The constant repetition of the six pillars has improved morale, discipline, and created a caring attitude in this school. We applaud Ms. Vance and the staff and students at **Hebron Avenue School** for their efforts to put "Ethics in Action".

**CHARACTER EDUCATION RESOURCES**

**Character Education Partnership**  
918 16th St. NW, Suite 501  
Washington, DC 20006  
(800) 988-8081

**National Professional Resources**  
25 South Regent Street  
Port Chester, NY 10573  
(800) 453-7461

**Educators for Social Responsibility**  
23 Garden Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 492-1764

**National Service-Learning Clearinghouse**  
R-290 Vo-Tech Building, 1954 Buford Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
(800) 808-7378

SEE STAFF

**David B. Wangaard, Ed.D.**  
Executive Director

**Kinsey Wangaard**  
Administrative Assistant

The School for Ethical Education (SEE) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, post-secondary school located at:  
1000 Lafayette Blvd., Bridgeport, CT 06604  
203-330-5052, Fax 203-330-5036  
www.ethicsed.org  
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