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Tyl's Tiggers Keep Bouncing Ahead

By Stefanie Hall
 Teacher/Club Advisor Tyl Middle School

T EAM TIGGER, the resiliency club at Tyl Middle School, Montville, Connecticut, is thriving in its second year of existence. Resiliency is recognized to define the ability of people to bounce back from challenges. Combining the asset goals of the Search Institute and the explicit recognition of positive character, **TEAM TIGGER** is providing student leadership and role model opportunities for resilient living. "In this time in my life, this club is the best place for me to be," shared Anthony, a 7th grade boy.

The Resiliency Initiative at Tyl Middle School continues to grow as new programs are being implemented and existing ones improved. One of the main factors responsible for the success of the program is the children's commitment to and involvement in the planning and implementing of productive activities. Student members of the **TEAM TIGGER** Board of Directors and students involved in the Service-Learning Committee are taking the responsibility to provide positive leadership for their peers. These student-led initiatives help cultivate youth assets which are factors the Search Institute has described to promote successful or resilient living. Some of the 40 assets described by Search include— positive adult relationships, caring school climate, youth involved in service, the establishment of clear rules and consequences and the cultivation of positive values such as honesty, responsibility and respect. These last values are widely recognized as core elements of modern character education.

TEAM TIGGER is an after-school club which focuses on activities that nurture youth assets. **TEAM TIGGER** provides meaningful participation for all of its members as the youth gather for weekly meetings. As trust and co-operation are developed, the members learn in a safe and fun environment. After each game or activity, a debriefing session takes place. The discussion helps the children pro-

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*Service-Learning is Catalyst
 for Character*

Connecticut Middle School Service-Learning Teams at
 Choate Rosemary Hall, Wallingford, CT, October 16, 1998

S ervice-learning is gaining recognition as a powerful teaching tool for schools that support experiential learning and positive character development. **SEE** is working in collaboration with the **Albert Schweitzer Institute for the Humanities (ASIH)** to offer youth seminars focused on service-learning. This fall, two successful seminars were held on the campus of **Choate Rosemary Hall** in Wallingford, CT. Seminars were attended by seven middle school teams in October and four high school teams in November. The teams included five to six students, school staff member(s) and parent volunteers. A total of 79 students and adults from Norwalk to New Britain and East Lyme participated in the first two events.

Participants came to the seminar to learn team work and ethical decision making skills to support their design of service-learning

See **Service-learning** on pg.2

1999 CALENDAR

Jan 15	C.A.R.E. (Character Assets & Resiliency Education), Learning Community at SCSU, New Haven, CT
Jan 22	Character Ed. Workshop, New Britain Public Schools, New Britain, CT
Jan 29 & 30	Character Ed. Workshop, University of Bridgeport, Stamford, CT (1 credit graduate course)
Feb 5 & 6	Conflict Resolution, University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT (1 credit graduate course)
March 4 & 5	Assets-Based Character Education Conference, CCSU Conference Center, New Britain, CT
April 9	Character Ed. Workshop, Education Connection, Litchfield, CT
April 30	Character Ed. Workshop, CREC, Hartford, CT
May 14	C.A.R.E., Learning Community at SCSU, New Haven, CT

Director's Dialogue

by David B. Wangaard, Ed.D.

Educators across the country are recognizing the positive results from connecting students, schools and communities to their assets. What are assets? Is this just more education jargon? The use of the term assets is a reapplication of a well known word in finance. Social assets are widely recognized as those factors which support students in living successful and resilient lives. As reported by the **Search Institute**, 40 assets have been identified which include: positive adult relationships, caring school climate, school and home setting clear rules and consequences, positive values such as care, honesty, responsibility and the development of social competencies. Most of these assets look familiar to those of us working in the field of modern character education. The values identified by the Search Institute correspond to core values emphasized in character education (know the good). The social competencies are behavioral goals (do the good) of modern character education. And the creation of positive adult relationships in caring school climates is critical to building the affective community (love the good) which motivates good character. **Stefanie Hall**, the author of this issue's lead article, describes one excellent school-based strategy to connect students to assets with an explicit emphasis on positive character.

New England residents have two great opportunities to learn more about the connection between assets and character education in 1999. The **Connecticut Assets Network** is hosting a seminar series entitled **C.A.R.E.** for *character, assets and resiliency education*. Meetings will be held January 15, March 5 and May 5. The January and May meetings will be located on the campus of **Southern Connecticut State University** in New Haven. The March meeting will be a combined event with the **Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference** at the downtown conference facilities of **Central Connecticut State University** in New Britain. **C.A.R.E.** is designed to create a learning community with a focus on assets and character for resilient youth. Participants will be given the opportunity to discuss readings from leaders in each field and design **C.A.R.E.** strategies to be implemented in their settings. To obtain more information and enroll in the **C.A.R.E.** Learning Community contact Greg Ryan, Director of the Connecticut Assets Network at (800) 991-8463.

The **Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference** (March 5) is designed to present successful strategies to promote assets and character and create a professional network. Teachers and students will collaborate in breakout presentations and **Dr. Thomas Lickona**, author of *Educating for Character* will be the conference keynote speaker. For more information or registration paperwork for the conference you may contact Cathy Uzarski at (203) 330-5340. This is a great semester for us to put "**ethics in action**". I look forward to meeting some of you at these upcoming events.

"Character, not education is man's greatest need and man's greatest safeguard. For character is higher than intellect. The real difference between men is in their character and in their energy..."

Vince Lombardi



Tyl's Tiggers continued from pg.1

cess and focus on the assets that were needed for the successful accomplishment of the task that day.

The Student Board of Directors meet monthly to set policy, establish rules and set the agenda for the following month. With guidance from the adult advisors, the directors run the meetings and conduct the debriefing sessions. Megan, a 7th grade member of the **TIGGER** Board of Directors said, "We want to help make **Tyl** a positive and nice place to be."

All students are welcome to join **TEAM TIGGER**. Reputations and past mistakes are left behind as students work side by side with positive peer role models to accomplish tasks and activities set up as group challenges. We play, we learn, we trust, as youth and adults work together to gain strategies for "bouncing back" with **TEAM TIGGER**.

Service-learning continued from pg.1

projects. Service learning (as opposed to community service) is defined by several criteria which include: 1. inclusion of students within project planning, 2. integration of academic objectives within the service project goals, 3. reflection by participants during the project and after project completion, 4. meaningful contribution to the community resulting from project work, and 5. social connection within the community increases due to project activity.

Team building exercises which focused on ethical decision making were completed in the morning of each seminar. The students discussed real-life dilemmas and how a team might solve them. After the process, several students reflected how useful it was to hear the perspective of others in seeking dilemma solutions. These exercises also introduced service-learning project ideas and the criteria to qualify for a well implemented project. Teams began brainstorming project ideas before lunch, and returned in the afternoon to draft a strategic plan for service-learning.

The student and adult enthusiasm was contagious as plans developed for each school. One student noted, "Everyone seems excited to be involved and complete the project we designed." Team project reports were summarized at the end of the day and included ideas such as: completion of a descriptive nature trail near the school, publication of a newsletter for a local senior center, mentoring elementary students, support projects for a local homeless shelter and inventorying resources and needs for future service-learning projects.

Student and adult responses were extremely positive at the end of each event. Students commented, "During our brainstorming we came up with some great ideas." "I learned that I have the power to help others and really make a difference." "This was a great seminar and a great lunch!" We at **SEE** and **ASIH** celebrate the students' success in planning and hope to report the positive outcomes of these projects in future newsletters. Let's keep those ethics in action!

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SEE, 1000 Lafayette Blvd., Bridgeport, CT 06604-4725, or fax to 203-330-5036, Attention: Cathy Uzarski

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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

Book recommendations from
Character Building Resources

Grades 4-6

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

E. Speare, (Dell, 1978)

Kit, a young woman from Barbados, comes to Colonial New England to live with her relatives. Coming from a warm, flexible environment she is challenged by the ways of this Puritan community. She learns duty and responsibility. Through the example of intolerance by some of the community, Kit learns the importance of understanding and tolerance.

Traits: understanding, tolerance, responsibility

Shades of Gray

C. Reeder, (Macmillan, 1989)

A Civil War orphan goes to live with an uncle who chose to remain neutral during the conflict. Will feels animosity towards his uncle, but over time, is able to love and understand his adopted family.

Traits: understanding

The Princess and the Goblin

G. MacDonald, (Morrow, 1986)

A strong, loving, mysterious woman fosters courage and self-discipline in her great-great-granddaughter as the girl strives to save her kingdom.

Traits: courage, self-discipline

Heidi

J. Spyri, (Puffin, 1981)

Happy by nature, Heidi thinks of others and is optimistic. This book, written over a hundred years ago, is very accessible, with many examples of service to others.

Traits: service, happiness

Character Educators Suggest . . .

Over two hundred character educators have been asked to respond to the question **“What will I see in and around the school building that Supports the Character Education (CE) mission?”** Here are some of their responses:

- ⇒ Student recognition board
- ⇒ Pictures/posters of ongoing projects (student activities)
- ⇒ Welcoming signs
- ⇒ Posters with CE messages
- ⇒ Current school calendar on public bulletin board
- ⇒ Information for homework hotline for parents
- ⇒ Multi “cultural” heritage events celebrate shared values
- ⇒ Mission statement with CE theme in every classroom
- ⇒ Exhibits for school service projects/awards/trophies
- ⇒ Flowers inside and well maintained landscaping outside
- ⇒ School motto
- ⇒ Resource library with CE material
- ⇒ A list of community service opportunities
- ⇒ Parents, community members, volunteers visible on campus
- ⇒ Plaques recognizing students, teachers, and community achievements
- ⇒ Parking spaces for visitors
- ⇒ Announcements, newsletter



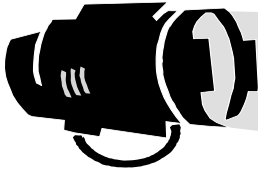
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Character Spotlight
Eileen Reed

Eileen Reed is a science teacher at **Wolcott High School**. Ms. Reed has taken an active role in the development and implementation of the district-wide character education initiative. Her care and concern for students has also motivated her to lead a four-member character education team at the high school. Their efforts have resulted in special projects to emphasize positive character which have included the student council sponsorship of character recognition programs, a character newsletter, and a display case focused on character awards. Wolcott High School is also participating in a youth-led service learning initiative which promotes ethical decision making. Students have drafted a plan to support a local soup kitchen for needy families. With student leadership, the service-learning project is designed to broaden student involvement in service, encourage positive outreach to the community, connect service to relevant academic courses and put into action the shared values of the community.



While the initiative is young, teachers have commented on improved attitudes and behavior at school. The staff in the school kitchen have even noted more respectful behavior in the lunchroom!!!! We applaud Ms. Reed, and the staff and students at Wolcott High for their efforts to put "*Ethics in Action*".

CHARACTER EDUCATION RESOURCES

Character Education Institute
8918 Tesoro Drive, Suite 575
San Antonio, TX 78217
(800) 284-0499

Live Wire Media
3450 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA 94118
(800) 359-KIDS

Heartwood Institute
425 N. Craig Street, Suite 302
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412) 688-8570

Institute for Global Ethics
P.O. Box 563
Camden, Maine 04843
(800) 729-2615

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