

The ESC Community Connection



The Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County
The Bridge to Educational Excellence

Ohio-Ontario Cultural Exchange Project

Richmond Heights students develop global collaborations with Ontario students

During Spring term, **Richmond Heights Secondary School** art students and their teacher Mary Nichols-Bronfield enhanced literary and artistic skills in a cultural exchange project with students and teacher Kevin Locke from the Walkerville Collegiate Academy for the Arts in Windsor, Ontario. The goal was to demonstrate to students the necessity of international connectivity.

Richmond Heights students became authors and illustrators as they created handmade books about the topics of diversity and equity. First they learned the process of making Western-style and Eastern-style handmade papers at the Morgan Art of Papermaking Conservatory and Educational Foundation in Cleveland, and they then learned to bind their books. Their essays, poetry and illustrations provided personal statements about the themes. Students from Ontario, Canada, created drawings that illustrated their personal cultural identities. The teachers exchanged the students' work for exhibits in Ohio and Ontario that were shared with community members on May 15th. A reception

of foods from different countries added to the cultural sharing. The project was funded by a mini-grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, a Cleveland-based educational organization, through the Kent State University Gerald H. Read Center for International and Intercultural Education. The grant completely funded the project for 40 students. The students were able to communicate with each other through email and Skype sessions. "This program created a greater understanding and appreciation of cultural differences through literacy and visual arts," said Bronfield.

The students also presented a poster session about their cultural exchange project at the Flip Your World! Conference at Baldwin Wallace University to an audience of business and community leaders, educators and students interested in developing students' global competency skills. Their project demonstrates the students' knowledge of diversity and intercultural literacy skills.



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ESC Honors Students with Humanitarian Award

The ESC of Cuyahoga County named several area students as recipients of their annual Humanitarian Awards. Recipients were nominated by administrators in their schools for showing leadership and community service as well as possessing great character during the 2012-2013 school year.

One student from each middle and high school in the communities of Cuyahoga Heights, Independence and Richmond Heights received the scholarships and award.

Recipients from Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools

Amanda Keller, eighth-grader at Cuyahoga Heights Middle School

It was stated that Amanda shows positive attitude towards many people including her classmates, school, and community. "Many of the students she associates with model her kind of behavior. Amanda is generous and compassionate; she is somebody who seeks to improve the lives of other people." ESC board member Frank Mahnic, Jr. presented the award.



The awards were presented by ESC board members during their individual schools' award assemblies during the months of May and June.

In addition to a cash award, students received a personalized plaque, starfish pin and starfish keychain. The starfish is the symbol of a story of the impact one person can make in a community.

This year's ESC Humanitarians include:

Veronica Zelinski, graduating senior at Cuyahoga Heights High School

It was stated in her entry that "Veronica is a woman of great character, strong leadership, unyielding integrity and purposefulness.

What her resume cannot convey is the gentle, caring nature that she brings to everything she does. She is a wonderful young lady." Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools board member Holly Thacker presented the award.



Recipients from Independence Local Schools

Maria Sagi, eighth-grader at Independence Middle School

Maria's entry commented on how she takes interest in multiple clubs and tries to look for any opportunities to help out others. "She is leaving us a legacy of humanitarianism and school spirit that will inspire others for years to come. Our school is a better place today because of Maria Sagi." ESC board president Christine Krol presented the award.



Alyssa Synek, graduating senior at Independence High School

It was stated in her entry that "Alyssa has demonstrated her positive concern for others through completing five times the required community service hours." She has volunteered for the Independence United Methodist's Youth mission trips, the Volleyball Summer Camp, "The Summer Scurry" race, among many other activities. ESC board member Carol Fortlage presented the award.



Recipients from Richmond Heights Schools

Javier Hinton, eighth-grader at Richmond Heights Middle School

Javier's entry stated, "He is a positive, motivated, and confident young man, who always seems to see the good in everything—a true optimist." It also said that "He shows tremendous character in turning the other cheek to those who treat him poorly, and displays patience and understanding to those students who need extra assistance and understanding." ESC board vice president Tony Miceli presented the award.



Ieshia Hodge, graduating senior at Richmond Heights High School

Ieshia's entry stated, "Ieshia Hodge is personable, mature, and a caring young woman. She has participated in Student Council and as a sixth grade camp counselor. She plans on pursuing a career in nursing after graduation." ESC board member Tony Hocesvar presented the award.



Thirty-Five Youth Graduate from North Coast Academy Three Earn College Scholarships

Simon Youth North Coast Academy at Richmond Town Square Sears held a graduation and scholarship presentation on Tuesday, June 11th to honor the perseverance and accomplishments of 35 teens. The ceremony was held at the Richmond Town Square – Macy’s Corridor. North Coast Academy is run by the ESC of Cuyahoga County, which supervises the educational efforts and purchases the computers, on-line curriculum and other materials used in the daily instruction of the students.

Three of the students have also been selected as Simon Youth Foundation (SYF) Academy Scholarship recipients.

Grace Thompson has received a SYF Academy Scholarship valued at \$7,700 over two years. She also received a scholarship from College Now of Greater Cleveland.

Alexander Frazier has received a SYF Academy Scholarship valued at \$31,000 over four years. Alexander’s scholarship was donated by the Warren and Zoanne Dusenbury Fund of the Cleveland Foundation.

Nathan Simon has received a SYF ‘Best in Class’ Scholarship valued at \$40,000 over four years.

The scholarships are awarded to individuals who have worked tirelessly to earn their diplomas, and seek to pursue their dreams in post-secondary education. SYF is a national non-profit dedicated to providing educational and career development opportunities to youth.

“We are so excited to honor these amazing kids,” said Kate Miller, area director of marketing and business development. “Their dedication to their future inspires all of us.”

“The partnership between the ESC of Cuyahoga County and the SYF has been critical to helping students at-risk of dropping out of high school achieve the credits for their diploma in a setting that meets their needs in a smaller school computer-based environment,” said Rena Wertheim, North Coast Academy director. “Simon Youth Foundation has added to the experiences of these students by providing funding to the school for such things as field trips to local colleges. This partnership has helped 470 students graduate over the years.”

The graduate speakers who shared their personal, inspiring stories included Tyah Higbee and Laurynn Roebuck of Shaker Heights Schools and Nathan Simon of Beachwood Schools. Heidi Solomon, coordinator of Youth Ability, a division of Jewish Family Services delivered the address to the graduates.

The following school districts participate in the Simon Youth North Coast Academy: Beachwood, Chagrin Falls, Euclid, Garfield Heights, Mayfield, Nardonina, Orange, Richmond Heights, Shaker Heights, Solon, South Euclid/Lyndhurst, Twinsburg and Warrensville Heights.

“Anything is possible with education, and Simon Youth Foundation is committed to igniting this kind of hope in students,” says J. Michael Durnil, Ph.D., President and CEO of SYF.

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Fall 2013



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Believe It To Achieve It! 35th Annual Recognizing Excellence in Education for Students with Disabilities Awards



Congratulations to Shawn Widzinski of Independence Local Schools for being one of the Outstanding Student Achievement award winners at the spring "Believe It To Achieve It" Students with Disabilities recognition program. The award was established as a means of acknowledging achievements of school-age children and youth with disabilities in Cuyahoga County.

Chamber State of the Schools Luncheon Features Superintendents

The Cuyahoga Valley Chamber of Commerce held its annual State of the Schools luncheon on May 15th at the Holiday Inn in Independence. More than 150 business, civic, school and community leaders attended. Superintendents from Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools, Independence Local Schools, Cuyahoga Valley Career Center, and the ESC of Cuyahoga County spoke to the audience. They discussed the importance of working with local businesses to help educate the workforce of tomorrow. The chamber also presented three \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors from Independence High School, Cuyahoga Heights High School, and Walsh Jesuit High School.



L-R: Independence Local Schools Superintendent Steve Marlow; Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools Superintendent Edwin Holland; Cuyahoga Valley Career Center Superintendent Celena Roebuck; and ESC of Cuyahoga County Superintendent Bob Mengerink.