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## CHARACTER\_EDUCATION\_NETWORK

### Online e-Newsletter

### September 2009

Welcome to the **CHARACTER\_EDUCATION\_NETWORK** online e-newsletter. The purpose of **The Network** is to encourage the adoption of social-emotional and character education programs and strategies by providing a forum for sharing information, research and promising practices. The Network will offer educators access to national and state character education and social and emotional learning experts and programs through conferences, workshops, and e-mails.

**The Network** will be bringing you news from the national, state and local levels; best practices; announcements of events, conferences, workshops; and professional development opportunities throughout the state and at the national level; grant and funding opportunities; program and assessment resources and links to other useful websites.

Three Rutgers University projects operating in a partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education provide the content for **The Network**. The Center for Social and Character Development ([www.rucharakter.org](http://www.rucharakter.org)) edits and publishes the Network in collaboration with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project (<http://sdfsc.rutgers.edu>) and the Developing Safe and Civil Schools Project (<http://www.teachsecd.com>). All three projects operate under the Center for Applied Psychology at Rutgers University.

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The Center for Social and Character Development at Rutgers University is funded under Title V, Part D, Subpart 3, Sec. 5431 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Funds for both the Developing Safe and Civil Schools: A Coordinated Approach for Social-Emotional and Character Development project and the Title IV-A and Unsafe School Choice Option Training and Technical Assistance Project were provided in full by a grant to the New Jersey Department of Education from the United States Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the New Jersey Department of Education. No official endorsement by the New Jersey Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned herein is intended or should be inferred.

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### In this issue:

- [A New Credential in Social-Emotional and Character Development](#)
- [Student and Teacher Voices](#)

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## FROM THE CSCD DIRECTOR

Welcome back to school and this year's first edition of the *Network*. On behalf of our three partners, the Developing Safe and Civil Schools (DSACS), the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSCA) projects and the Center for Social and Character Development (CSCD) and our sponsoring agency, the New Jersey Department of Education, we look forward to continuing this year to use the *Network* as a way to provide you with current information, resources and state-of-the-art suggestions for creating prosocial schools where both students and teachers thrive.

The big news this month is the announcement of the availability of the [first course for a new credential in Social-Emotional and Character Development](#). Members of state professional associations as well as national experts and practitioners, including NETWORK readers, contributed to the development and review of the credential and this first course, which is also a first for the country, led by the DSACS project. See just below this message in the NEWS FROM THE FIELD section.

I want to draw your attention to two resources reflecting our interest in promoting student voice, and another resource on the CSCD website that underscores our interest in promoting the voice of teachers:

- Jerri Asaro, a seventh grade teacher at Pequannock Valley School, has provided us with a substantive article with many practical suggestions in: *Character Education: The Backbone of Your Classroom* which you can access in the Teaching for Character section of the CSCD website; please see: [http://www.rucharakter.org/page/teaching\\_for\\_character\\_voices/](http://www.rucharakter.org/page/teaching_for_character_voices/).
- An essential part of New Jersey's Secondary School Reform initiative is the personalization of learning, and a key element of that is promoting positive student voice and engagement in school and community activities and governance. Among a number of outstanding opportunities, we would like to bring to your attention two that are taking place through the DSACS project and its collaborators. See [Promoting Student Voice and Engagement: Outstanding Opportunities](#) in the CHARACTER IN ACTION section.

Those of you who read the summer edition of *Network* may have noted our request for you to send us examples of reading or resources you found over the summer that you felt were worth sharing with other educators. Here is a response we received from Carol Bender, a teacher at Franklin High School:

*(The book) The Engaged Spiritual Life, is a Buddhist approach to transforming ourselves as well as the world. It is written by Donald Rothberg. It is a book about a way of being in the world. It teaches you to look at yourself from all angles of life. Some of the parts of the book that have really penetrated my thinking are "skillful speech can open hearts and "every word we speak has spirit". The book encompasses much more than the way we speak. It addresses the way we act and behave towards others and creatures in this world. I think most people will want to read and reread this book if they have any interest in humankind.*

We are always open to your sharing with us resources that you have found particularly meaningful and helpful in seeking ways to enrich the lives of your students and colleagues.

## NEWS FROM THE FIELD

### **Social-Emotional and Character Development Coursework and Credentialing Program**

Rutgers University is pleased to announce the implementation of a series of courses in social-emotional and character development that can be taken individually or combined as part of a credentialing program. This unique program is intended to give all educational staff and mental health professionals working with schools or in after-school programs the opportunity to enhance their professional development skills in the field of social emotional and character development and to earn a credential in Social Emotional and Character Development. For more detailed information about the credential and all courses, go to [www.teachSECD.org](http://www.teachSECD.org).

Course #1: Instruction in Social-Emotional and Character Development and Related Education and Prevention/School Mental Health Programs in Classrooms and Small Groups, for both in-school and after-school contexts: Theory and Research

Course #1 focuses on SECD Theory and Research. Participants get an overview of the importance of having a theory behind their SECD work, an update on the latest research findings, and how SECD applies to classroom management and improvement of students' academic performance. Those taking this course will be well grounded in current knowledge of the theory and research underlying a broad range of social-emotional and character development interventions and interventions in related course areas.

Related Course Areas: character education, social-emotional learning, school mental health programming, after-school programming, school-based prevention programming, group guidance, in-classroom counseling, counseling groups, substance abuse prevention groups, psychoeducational groups, school-based prevention groups, social skills, life skills, evidence-based prevention, violence prevention, bully prevention, school safety, school climate improvement

#### Course #1 Timing, Tuition, and CE Credits

Course #1 will begin on October 19 and conclude on December 28, 2009.

Cost is \$225, with a discounted cost of \$175 for NJ residents. Veterans of military service will receive a 15% discount for all course tuition fees. Those successfully completing the course will receive 1 CEU.

How do I enroll in a single level or in the full credentialing in Social-Emotional and Character Development?

To enroll in Course #1, all you need to do is:

- confirm with us that you have computer capabilities to access our eCollege.Rutgers site;
- if you are requesting a NJ and/or veteran's discount, provide confirmation via fax or email as part of the registration process.

#### **Register by going to:**

**<https://rutgers.catalog.cerkit.rutgers.edu/course/display/9756>**

To be eligible for the Credential, prior to taking the Practice and Intervention Practicum Course, you would additionally need to send us documentation verifying your present employment and position and that you have permission to carry out the practicum in your work setting. We have found that the vast majority of settings are agreeable to having a supervised intervention procedure take place.

The Office of Continuing Education staff will determine your eligibility for admission to the program and contact you via email. Should you have any questions call them at 732-932-4700 x4215, or email us at [reg@dceo.rutgers.edu](mailto:reg@dceo.rutgers.edu)

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### **Rutgers University Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project**

#### Conducting Practical Needs Assessments

Date:	Location:
Wednesday, October 14, 2009	Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Clayton, NJ
Tuesday, October 20, 2009	Rutgers SDFSC Office, Piscataway, NJ
Thursday, October 29, 2009	Livingston Public Library, Livingston, NJ

*All workshops will be held from 9a.m. to 1p.m., registration begins at 8:30a.m. (8:45a.m. for Livingston Library).*

This workshop will help you understand the purpose and benefits of conducting a needs assessment in the development of comprehensive alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse and violence prevention planning. We will provide you with the components of a needs assessment plan and discuss how to prioritize your needs. Participants will have the opportunity to create their own needs assessment plan.

**Participants must pre-register to attend. Register online at: [http://sdfsc.rutgers.edu/page/course.php?course\\_id=32](http://sdfsc.rutgers.edu/page/course.php?course_id=32).**

**There is no registration fee for this event.**

For more information or assistance with registration, please contact us at:

732-445-6173 or [sdfsc@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:sdfsc@rci.rutgers.edu).

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## NATIONAL CHARACTER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

- **16th National Forum on Character Education**

"Citizens of Character - the Foundation of Democracy"

October 29-31, 2009

Hilton Alexandria Mark Center

Alexandria, Virginia

The Character Education Partnership's fall conference will provide attendees the opportunity to explore effective practices that can transform school climate and help students develop their social-emotional skills and good character. Come be inspired and network with fellow educators passionate about character education. Four great keynotes; more than 70 practitioner-led breakout sessions and more. Go to [www.character.org](http://www.character.org) for agenda details, hotel information, and [online registration](#), and click [here](#) to see the registration brochure.

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## CHARACTER IN ACTION

- **Opportunity to become involved in a bullying research project**

Two prominent researchers in the bullying prevention field are beginning a research project which will help young people have a voice in defining what <http://tinyurl.com/mttqng>

- **The Willow Tree Teen Institute: Prehab ... Not Rehab!**

November 5 – 8 (Teacher's Convention weekend) is the launch of the Teen Summit, a 4-day in-residence conference conducted by Willow Tree Teen Institute to prevent teens from disengaging and acting out with alcohol, drugs, violence, and other high-risk behaviors. WTTI works with schools to assemble teams that are representative of their school's population. At the Summit, WTTI staff members create a space of emotional safety for teams of youth to develop healthy social relationships with peers and adults from different cultures, cliques and backgrounds. Post conference, WTTI remains involved to support teachers and youth teams to accomplish their goals. There are conference call meetings for a school's WTTI Teacher/Advisors every other month for collegial support, two natural high events for students to reconnect with their new friends from around the state, unlimited support from the WTTI office staff and participation in a research project so that we may substantiate our outcomes and achieve science-based status. This is not a stand-alone program but one that would have a place on your DSACS team to insure cohesion and integration with your other SECD efforts.

WTTI is based on the research of Hawkins & Catalano and The Search Institute on Risk & Protective Factors and on Developmental Assets. Their point of view is that it's not so much that our Nation's youth need to be empowered to cope in healthy ways and to creatively problem-solve appropriate means to get their very human, very normal needs met. That's a large part but not all of what WTTI does.

It is not too late to sign on for 2009, or inquire about future years. For more information, go: [www.willowtree.org](http://www.willowtree.org), click on youth programs and then on the WTTI home page. Scroll down to see all links on the left. There you will find all the materials needed to register or to volunteer as staff. You can also call the Willow Tree Center at 973-682-TREE (8733) and ask to speak with Sue Nobleman, Charlie Berman or Angela Falzarano.

- **Personalization and Secondary School Reform via SECD: A DSACS/NJASCD Workshop**

On October 19, at the FEA Conference Center, 12 Centre Drive in Monroe, NJ, DSACS is offering *Essential Elements for Secondary School Transformation: Pathways to Personalization via Social-Emotional and Character Development*, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Among the most powerful factors in transforming secondary schools is personalization of student learning in schools with a safe and civil culture. This workshop will provide an overview and specific take-home approaches designed to help students "lead productive and fulfilling lives" and "gain the requisite academic knowledge and technical and critical thinking skills for life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (NJ STEPS- Redesigning Education in NJ Policy Report). Specifically, it will address key personalization dimensions such as creating a safe and welcoming environment, extending learning opportunities beyond traditional classroom instruction, creating a pervasive culture of respect and mutual help, student-family advocacy, and increasing student engagement and student voice through social-emotional and character development (SECD).

Participants will attend a keynote and then two breakout sessions operationalizing the personalization dimensions described above. Breakouts are designed to introduce participants to evidence-based approaches with a highly successful track record of implementation in New Jersey and provide take-home information that can be immediately useful at the classroom and school-wide levels. DSACS Liaison Staff members will provide follow-back consultation to school that are attending from current DSACS districts and will designate a staff member to do follow-back on all other attending schools, to ensure that support is given for the implementation of the approaches presented.

To register or for more information, go to [www.NJASCD.org](http://www.NJASCD.org) or call 609-860-8991.

### • **Connecting Learning to Service, Service to Learning, and Social-Emotional & Character Development**

On December 9, learn how service-learning (SL) enhances student performance and academic achievement; discuss how SL enhances civic and citizenship education; identify the four evidence-based elements of successful SL projects; discover the difference between SL, volunteerism and community service; and develop a plan for integrating SL experiences into various subject areas in the school curriculum to enhance students' SECD and academic performance.

This all-day workshop is conducted by leaders from Lions-Quest, frequent visitors to New Jersey and recognized national experts in the area of school-based service learning. To register or for more information, call 800-446-2700.

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## GRANTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### • **Do Something Disaster Grants**

Deadline: December 31, 2009

Maximum Award: \$500

Do Something Disaster Grants fund project ideas and existing projects that assist people in emergency situations – everything from disaster preparedness to first responders to those who are still working hard to rebuild months or years later. Great projects include those that do something about food insecurity, help soldiers returning from active duty, rebuild communities after natural disasters, or provide resources for those afflicted by a crisis.

For more information: [jwells@DoSomething.org](mailto:jwells@DoSomething.org) or visit: <http://www.dosomething.org/grants/disaster>

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## WEBSITE NEWS, RESOURCES AND RESEARCH

### • **Ten Steps to Better Student Engagement**

*Project-learning teaching strategies can also improve your everyday classroom experience.*

By Tristan de Frondeville

Edutopia, the website of the George Lucas Education Foundation <http://www.edutopia.org/project-learning-teaching-strategies/>

This former classroom teacher talks about ten strategies for creating and managing high-quality project-learning environments that are productive in any classroom, whether project learning is a central part of the curriculum or not.

Visit the Edutopia website to read more about these strategies, and add your comments or questions.

1. Create an Emotionally Safe Classroom
2. Create an Intellectually Safe Classroom
3. Cultivate Your Engagement Meter
4. Create Appropriate Intermediate Steps
5. Practice Journal or Blog Writing to Communicate with Students
6. Create a Culture of Explanation Instead of a Culture of the Right Answer
7. Teach Self-Awareness About Knowledge
8. Use Questioning Strategies That Make All Students Think and Answer
9. Practice Using the Design Process to Increase the Quality of Work
10. Market Your Projects

You can also check out these related resources.

Articles:

- Emotional Engagement in Education, Part One: Should Teachers Care About Student Apathy?
- Engaging Tweens and Teens: Dealing with Teenage Learning Fatigue
- Why Teach With Project Learning?: Providing Students With a Well-Rounded Classroom Experience

Videos:

- Students Learn to Make a Difference
- Cooperative Arithmetic: How to Teach Math as a Social Activity
- Student Body: Classroom Exercise Makes Learning Lively

This Inside Story originally published on 3/11/2009 in the What Works in Public Education section on Edutopia, the website of the George Lucas Education Foundation. <http://www.edutopia.org/project-learning-teaching-strategies/>

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