

Philadelphia Center of Activity Report

Julio Feldman, Pennsylvania

Over the past two years there have been CFG coaches' trainings in Philadelphia, State College, and Upper Darby. These trainings were conducted by local NSRF coaches in partnership with local Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) centers. CFG coaches' seminars have also been organized in the Chesapeake area. As a result of these activities there are working CFGs in

practices are being introduced into the school's cabinet and academy structures as the school works to become a schoolwide learning community for all students and staff members. Veteran Critical Friends Groups are continuing to work and grow at Taylor Elementary and Central East Middle School. Our Center's most recent development is the creation of a Leadership CFG. In the fall I received an e-mail from Deb-

and has enabled me to become a more effective instructional leader.

At our first meeting, during Connections, those of us who knew Nancy took the opportunity to reflect on how she impacted on our lives, and afterward in true Nancy Mohr style we proceeded to do the work that she would want us to do.

A Hopes and Fears activity (What's your greatest hope for this group?...your biggest fear?) led to the development of our norms. This was followed by the development of a plan of action (Where do we imagine we'll be in June? Where are we now? How will we get there?). We are a group of twelve, and represent elementary, intermediate, high school and central office administrators across four school districts. We meet one Saturday morning a month.

At our second meeting we focused on collaborative leadership and how it can be sustained. Following our opening moves, we did a text rendering on Rick DuFour's article " 'Collaboration Lite' Puts Student Achievement on a Starvation Diet. " One of our members then presented a dilemma and we proceeded with the consultancy protocol. The assignment for our next meeting is to bring a dilemma and to share it within a triad. I'm ready to present my dilemma and can't wait to hear the feedback from my colleagues. The consultancy has always been one of my favorite protocols. Whether presenting or participating I always gain new ideas and perspectives. I first learned about consultancies, as well as many other practices, from Nancy Mohr.

I am rejuvenated, excited and look forward to what we can accomplish as individuals and as a group during the coming year. Nancy Mohr's legacy will force us to imagine and ask the hard questions. Our commitment will enable us to grow, to examine our practice and to facilitate change in our schools. ■

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a number of local elementary, middle and high schools throughout the region.

In addition to their CFGs, some of these schools have started to embed reflective, collaborative practices into their ongoing staff and leadership meetings as well as their classrooms. At C.W. Henry Elementary School in Mt. Airy, in addition to their CFG, weekly classroom meetings are held schoolwide. All team meetings are based on collectively developed agendas that are facilitated by team members in a shared leadership structure. At Mastbaum High School, there are now two CFGs, a veteran group that began last year and a new group that is being coached by teachers who participated in last spring's coaches' training. Collaborative, reflective

bie Bambino inviting me to join this group.

Prior to our first meeting we were saddened by Nancy Mohr's death. I first met Nancy during the 1995-'96 Annenberg Principals' Institute. I was a participant, she was a facilitator. Nancy came on as a facilitator during our second or third meeting that year. At first, I was not quite sure how it was going to work since we had already bonded as a group, and here was an "outsider." Well "this lady" proved me wrong, within a very short time she connected with us and became an integral part of the group. Since then I had many opportunities to be in her company and to learn from her. I would often take notes on her facilitation and marvel at her abilities. Nancy has been a significant force in my development