National School
Reform Faculty
Harmony Education Center

New Format for Connections!

Starting with this issue, Connections is in a newsletter format. This will allow us to send out Connections to you once every six weeks instead of only three times a year. Dave Lehman will remain as the editor of Connections. In the next issue, you'll see features such as:

- Articles of Interest
- "From our Members"—Stories from CFG coaches, experienced or fresh from their 5 day training sessions
- Book Reviews
- Coaching Tips
- "Reports from the Road"—Highlights from contributing National Facilitators
- "Ask the Director"—Questions from members about CFGs, trainings, facilitation, materials, etc..
- New Protocols
- New Education Legislation
- Upcoming Events
- Training Opportunities

We would like to hear from you—our experts in the field who do the work everyday! Please contact us at nsrf@nsrfharmony.org if you:

- Have a question about any aspect of NSRF
- Would like to write up an experience you had as a coach, facilitator or member of a CFG Group
- Wrote an article you would like to share
- Created a new protocol

Thanks and have a great summer!

Michele Mattoon, NSRF director

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May 2011

CONNECTIONS

NATIONAL SCHOOL REFORM FACULTY

National School Reform Faculty
Harmony Education Center www.nsrfharmony.org

"IN SEARCH OF GOOD THINGS PEOPLE WORLD-WIDE HAVE DONE, ARE DOING, AND CAN DO"

By Dave Lehman, Connections Editor, National Facilitator

There is so much bad news bom-barding us every day from all the forms of media – radio, internet, television, newspapers, magazines, and even billboards - that it's a wonder how one holds on to hope for the future. It is important for us and particularly for our young people to see that there are other truths – a world full of promise and hope. What I want to share with you in this article is a sampling of the good things that are happening, that are being done by all kinds of people all over the world, particularly young people. These things have lifted me up and helped me retain a balance in experiencing the world. There are at least three publications devoted to telling these kinds of stories, of adults and children, ordinary people, including teachers and students, who every day are doing good things, helping others, changing their communities, indeed changing the world, one step, one action, one day at a time – the tabloid newspaper, Positive News; and two magazines - *Yes!: Powerful Ideas, Practical Actions*; and *Ode: for Intelligent Optimists*. Here is a sampling, of the kinds of stories you will read in each issue of these publications.

> "THESE THINGS HAVE LIFTED ME UP AND HELPED ME RETAIN A BALANCE IN EXPERIENCING THE WORLD."

To begin with the Spring 2011 issue, No. 31, of *Positive News* (go to the U.S. issue at www.positivenewsus.org or www.positivenewsuk.org for the British edition) and this story of "Victory for Ecuador's Indigenous People." Between 1972 and 1990 Texaco (since purchased by Chevron) released some 18.5 billions of

The five-day New Coaches Training, from July 11th to the 15th in Bloomington Indiana, is still open with limited availability! Visit our website to reserve your spot!

Inside this Issue:

- "In search of good thing people world-wide have done, are doing and can do." By Dave Lehman Pages 1- 5
- Book Review: ¡Si Se Puede! Learning From a High School that Beat the odds." By Michele Mattoon Pages 5-6.
- Book Review: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, By Dave Lehman Pages 6-7.
- Media Literacy Resources Pages 8-9
- An Introduction to EdSteps Page 10

gallons of toxic waste into the rivers and water resources of the indigenous people of Ecuador. Recently a court in Lago Agrio, Ecuador levied a fine of $8.6 billion on Chevron on behalf of 30,000 people negatively impacted by the environmental catastrophe. This is one of several stories in this issue of *Positive News* about positive things being done to address various environmental issues – not just describing in detail the problems, but highlighting positive things being done – from "Cape Verde on the Rise" (in the ten-island Republic of Cape Verde off the coast of West Africa) to "Carsharing Is Good for the Planet" (in my own town of Ithaca, New York) to "Café in Cameron helps young people join global sustainability effort" (started in Yaounde, Cameron and being spread by the Sweden-based "Open World Foundation" to Brazin, India, Spain, and Sweden).

Also, from the current issue of *Positive News* is the simple story of six-year old Dylan Stock who, with the help of his mother, had become concerned about what was happening to the wildlife in the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. He created a website – <onestartsmany.com> - with ideas about how to protect the oceans. At a fundraiser, he collected over $1,145 to go to two Gulf charities – "Kids in Need During Disaster" which provides clothing for children in a fishing town hard hit by hurricane Katrina, and to the Audubon Institute in New Orleans to help treat stranded and injured marine life. Then, with support from "WitKids" (go to www.witkids.org) - a program that supports kid-based projects - he went to New Orleans to see first-hand the damage done, and came home inspired to create the new Ocean Club at his school, which cleaned-up a local creek as one of their first projects. One is never too young!

Continuing the theme of positive things being done at the grassroots level comes this story from the Spring 2011 issue of *Yes!* magazine – "Public Pressure Saves 2,200 Mountain Acres" – the result of efforts by "Appalachian Voices," one of a network of activist organizations that have cultivated a nation-wide movement against mountaintop coal removal. This group was able to pressure the Environmental Protection Agency to use its authority under the Clean Water Act to veto a permit sought by Arch Coal's Spruce No. 1 Mine to dispose of coal-mine waste generated from blasting the tops off Appalachian mountains to excavate coal, in nearby streams (for more, go to <ilovemountains.org>). There's, also, the story of Mari Rose Taruc - whose parents are immigrants from the Philippines - and her passion for environmental justice. She works on behalf of low-income communities of color – the ones often affected the first and the worst by environmental injustice – as the director of the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (www.apen4ej.org) out of California, which, since 2003, has helped halt the expansion of a Chevron oil facility, defended the state's greenhouse gas reduction law, established multilingual emergency warnings, and pushed for public transit and walk-ability in neighborhood development. Most of the time it simply takes one person to get something started.

Then, too, there is the story in the current issue of *Yes!* of fifteen-year old Shannon McNamara who became concerned about the obstacles to education faced by Tanzanian girls. After initially organizing her friends to collect 500 pounds of books and education materials, she

created the organization SHARE (www.shareinafrica.org) which now serves more than 3,500 students and 656 teachers helping young women progress through elementary school to secondary school, and onto college with the assistance of a girls' scholarship program she created. Sharron recently received the United Nations Youth Achievement Award.

In the September 2010 issue of *Ode* magazine I was touched - as a person with moderate hearing loss - by the opening story giving kudos to the Starkey Hearing Foundation (www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org). The story begins by noting that there are more than 200 million people worldwide who have moderate to profound hearing loss. The Foundation has provided help for the hearing of over 400,000 since the Foundation began in 1983, including a smiling Malawian boy, who is pictured being fitted with a hearing aid, and who now attends the Mau School for the Deaf, the only deaf school in his country. Then, there is the story of the Green School in Bali, Indonesia, opened two years ago by the initiative of John and Cynthia Hardy who were inspired by Al Gore's An Inconvenient Truth. The pre-school through high school serving 130 students is designed and built with environmental sustainability throughout its structures as well as its curriculum, and includes a student run garden and classes in green studies.

Beyond these three publications are other similar positive, hopeful efforts available on the internet. One is an organization I previewed in a book review of Fires in the Mind in our last issue of Connections - "What Kids Can Do." Go to their website (www.wkcd.org) and connect with "Kids on the Wire," a state-by-state, or topic-by-topic listing of amazing "good things" being done by young people throughout the U.S. Or, go to one of their related websites, www.InOurVillage.org where for two years WKCD worked with students from the Awet Secondary School in the village of Kambi ya Simba to document the daily life in their village using digital cameras and tape recorders. Or go to another of the WKCD related websites – www.LifeInNewChina.org - where WKCD, with help from the Asia Society, worked for two weeks with Beijing No. 12 High School students to create a series of photo essays about life and school in New China.

> **"…AS IT TURNS, OUT WHAT THEY NEED IS EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED: EACH OHTER!"**

Also in a previous issue of Connections, in our "Protocols in Practice" section, I described a protocol – "Windows and Mirrors" – which uses a set of greeting cards, "Americans Who Tell the Truth" (see them all at the website: rshetterly@localnet.com) from paintings by Robert Shetterly. Among these cards is a portrait and story of Samantha Smith, an international spokesperson and peace activist at ten years of age. In 1982, Samatha was concerned about the all-too-real possibility of a nuclear war with the Soviet Union, and so she wrote a letter to then Premier, Yuri Andropov, asking if they intended to start a nuclear war. He wrote her back inviting her to come see for herself, which she did, coming to the conclusion that the Soviet Union did not intend to engage in nuclear. Thus inspired, Samantha became a highly effective and outspoken activist against the nuclear arms race.

And, one last resource - "Project Look Sharp" of Ithaca College in New York (www.ithaca.edu/looksharp) - has a number of great curriculum resources for helping young people become critical users of today's media, particularly television and the internet. I invite you to use the Project Look Sharp documents (all of their curricular resources are available free) provided at the end of this newsletter – tips about what "Media Literacy Involves," "Six Key Concepts in Media Analysis," and a set of "Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages."

I end with two stories – first is the story of Sebastian Ruth, a graduate of the public middle school and high school in Ithaca, New York which I founded and served as principal and teacher for thirty years. Sebastian Ruth, is now Founder and Artistic Director of "Community MusicWorks" (www.Community MusicWorks.org), Providence, Rhode Island. A violist, violinist, and music educator, Sebastian is a 2010 recipient of a prestigious Macarthur Fellowship., and here is what they had to say about him upon his receiving his Fellowship:

"Sebastian Ruth has turned a string quartet and a storefront space into a thriving and enriching force in the lives of urban youth and their families in Providence. After graduating from Brown University in 1997, he founded Community MusicWorks, a nonprofit organization based in Providence's West End, that offers frequent performances and free musical instruction led by its house ensemble, the Providence String Quartet. In contrast to many arts outreach programs, Ruth and his fellow quartet members have taken up residence within the inner-city community they serve, in keeping with their vision of music as a nurturing neighborhood necessity similar to a library, a church, or a health clinic. Equally focused on expanding their repertoire and their development as practicing artists, quartet members perform throughout the region and open their rehearsals to the community. Ruth's group provides all students—from elementary to high school—with an instrument on long-term loan, close mentoring relationships with instructors, and exposure to an expansive variety of music through workshops and field trips. In addition to these core activities, Ruth has broadened his original scope to include artists-in-residence from other musical disciplines, commissioning new works with themes that resonate powerfully with diverse, urban residents, and fellowships for conservatory-trained instrumentalists interested in embarking on nontraditional musical careers. As organizations inspired by Community MusicWorks take root in New Haven and Boston, Ruth is creating rewarding musical experiences for often-forgotten populations and forging a new, multifaceted role beyond the concert hall for the twenty-first-century musician."

And lastly is this story from Ode - a story of another school, in Mahiga, Kenya which has been transformed - from a situation where hundreds of kids were jammed into classrooms with no electricity, no water system, mud floors and cold wind and rain coming in – to one with clean water, electricity, new classrooms and a computer lab. This school is due to the effort of Turk Pipkin and his wife who founded The "Nobelity Project" (www.nobelity.org), a nonprofit that works "to make a lasting difference in the world." In the article, when asked the

question – "What can I do?" – Pipkin responded –

"….the answers are easy. Build a school. Make a loan. Buy a textbook. Drill a well. Reach out to the world and make new friends in faraway places. As it turns out, what they need is exactly what we need: each other!"

Which seems a pretty good way to end this article! - along with a strong recommendation that all schools subscribe to the three publications described above, from which the sample stories of good things and hope have been taken.

Questions/comments? Email davelehman@mac.com

BOOK REVIEW: ¡SI SE PUEDE! LEARNING FROM A HIGH SCHOOL THAT BEATS THE ODDS.

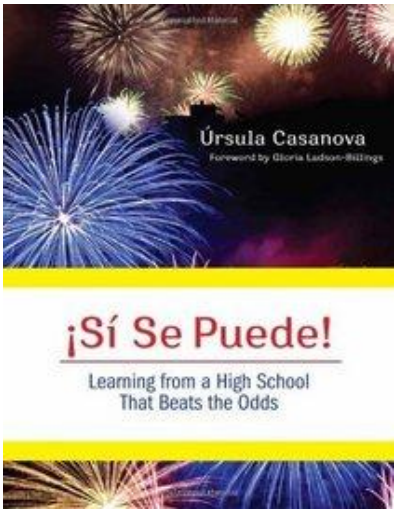
BY URSULA CASANOVA: NEW YORK: TEACHERS COLLEGE PRESS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, 2010

By Michele Mattoon, Director of NSRF

Because of my interest in school reform and changing school culture, I read with great interest - ¡Si Se Puede! Learning from a High School that Beats the Odds by Ursula Casanova, published by Teachers College Press. In this book, Casanova explores how Cibola High School in Arizona successfully prepares Latino students, not only to graduate high school, but to go onto to some kind of higher education experience. Although this book is short, it's jammed packed with insights into school reform that are relevant to educators everywhere.

How did this school raise the bar for their students? Having worked in education for nearly thirty years, I know that there is no magic wand when it comes to school change, particularly with regards to narrowing the achievement gap. Cibola High School was created with the intention of giving their students the same opportunities as their wealthier, white counterparts. They did this by forming a clear mission statement, hiring excellent teachers and counseling staff, developing an environment of trust and safety, regularly monitoring student achievement, developing authentic staff/student relationships and above all, having high expectations for all students.

Cibola High School's mission statement is: "Cibola is committed to success and to challenging students and staff to reach their highest potential." Everything that happens in the school is measured against that mission statement. If anything is being done that doesn't challenge



students and staff to reach their highest potential, it is discarded. Every new philosophy, action and assignment has to meet that expectation.

The founding principal of the school, Jon Walk, had two years to conceptualize the school, do research, find the best staff he could, and get parent buy-in before the school opened. He and his staff put in long hours designing a school that would lead to the success of this "at risk" population of students. Once school started, they had to forge relationships with the students, while dealing with tensions rising from the intermingling of two rival gangs—not an easy way to begin a school year! Now, twenty years later, armed with a lot of enthusiasm, focus, and a continuous push for excellence, they manage to graduate 95% of their seniors with most of them going onto some post-secondary education.

Throughout the book, author Casanova details how Cibola actually put into practice the five components that have led to their success: high expectations, leadership, counseling and guidance, the instruction of English learners, and the continuous search for improvement. I highly recommend to anyone involved in a school reform, and the process of restructuring their school culture to one of high expectations and excellence, to read this book.

Questions/comments? Email Michele@nsrfharmony.org.

BOOK REVIEW: THE IMMORTAL LIFE OF HENRIETTA LACKS

BY: REBECCA SKLOTT NEW YORK: BROADWAY PAPERBACKS, 2011

By Dave Lehman, Connections Editor, National Facilitator

First, a quick overview from the back cover of this totally captivating book – a "Best Book of the Year" on ten book lists including O, The Oprah Magazine, Publishers Weekly, and Kirkus Reviews as well as winner of ten other "book prize" or "critic's pick" or "must read" awards, including the Los Angeles Times, and the Times of U.K.

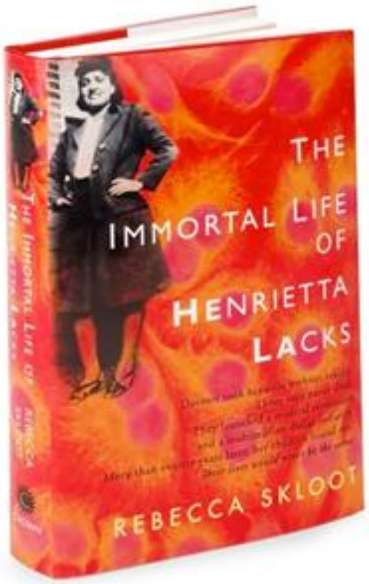
"Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells – taken without her knowledge in 1951 – became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning gene mapping, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance. This phenomenal New York Times bestseller tells a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew."

It's that phrase - "collision between ethics, race, and medicine"- that leads me to strongly recommend this book to all educators concerned about issues of equity and diversity, race, class and social justice. Although it reads like a novel, this is non-fiction at its best, involving a ten year quest by the author - the first book of this award winning science

writer - to understand the details of Henrietta's life and her legacy. This quest will take you back to the segregated south of the 1920s. - Henrietta was born in 1920, living in a small shack with her parents and seven siblings, outside Roanoke, Virginia, where the family still farmed tobacco as their slave ancestors had done. After her mother died in 1924 she was raised by her father's family in Clover, Virginia.

Rebecca Sklott will take you to Johns Hopkins Hospital on 5 February 1951 where and when Henrietta was diagnosed with cervical cancer, and Dr. Howard Jones taking a sample of those cancer cells for further investigation. You'll learn how these cells, labeled "HeLa," followed the history of the medical and pharmaceutical development of methods for culturing cells as it became a commercial enterprise. - essential not only to research on the causes and treatments of all kinds of cancers, but also to the development of drugs for treating herpes, leukemia, influenza, hemophilia, Parkinson's disease, and for study of such diverse interests as lactose digestion, sexually transmitted diseases, appendicitis, human longevity, and mosquito mating. In author Sklott's words, – "Like guinea pigs and mice, Henrietta's cells have become the standard laboratory workhorse." That statement is still true today, some sixty years later.

But you'll also learn of the black oral history dating back to the 1800s of white "night doctors" who kidnapped black slaves for medical research, - shades of Nazi Germany. You'll learn of Crownsville Hospital Center, formerly the Hospital for the Negro Insane, and Henrietta and Rebecca's efforts to learn about what happened to Henrietta's sister. It was in this hospital that research was conducted on patients without their consent, including "pneumo-encephalography" in which holes were drilled into the skulls of patients such that fluid surrounding the brain could be drained and air pumped in so X-rays could be taken of the brain through the skull. And you'll learn of how the family struggled through the days of segregation and into the present, never receiving compensation for the HeLa cells These are sold to research laboratories throughout the world, without any real laws to protect patients' rights. It's not a pretty picture, and one which Rebecca tells keeping faith to the dialogue of the native dialects. - as one of Henrietta's relatives told Sklott – "If you pretty up how people spoke and change the things they said, that's dishonest. It's taking away their lives, their experiences, and their selves."



Reading this book not only gave me as a former biology teacher enough of the details of the medical research and legal issues involved in the HeLa cells, but also a deep appreciation of yet another chapter in the history of African-Americans in this country. This is a history which as educators we need to understand if we are to fully engage in the education of young African-Americans in whatever school we're in, wherever it's located.

Questions/comments? Email davelehman@mac.com

Project Look Sharp
Ithaca College
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www.projectlooksharp.org

ITHACA

Division of Interdisciplinary & International Studies

Mission Statement:
Project Look Sharp provides materials, training and support for the effective integration of media literacy with critical thinking into classroom curricula at all education levels.

MEDIA LITERACY INVOLVES:

- Learning how to use media wisely and effectively
- Engaging in critical thinking when evaluating media messages
- Being able to evaluate the credibility of information from different sources
- Recognizing media's influence on beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, and the democratic process
- Encouraging participatory citizenship
- Achieving greater understanding and appreciating multiple perspectives
- Learning to produce communication and express oneself using different forms of media

6 KEY CONCEPTS IN MEDIA ANALYSIS:

1. All media messages are "constructed."

2. Each medium has different characteristics, strengths, and a unique "language" of construction.

3. Media messages are produced for particular purposes.

4. All media messages contain embedded values and points of view.

5. People use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.

6. Media and media messages can influence beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors and the democratic process.

Division of Interdisciplinar & International Studies at Ithaca College

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYZING MEDIA MESSAGES

www.projectlooksharp.org
www.namle.net

AUDIENCE & AUTHORSHIP	**AUTHORSHIP**	Who made this message?
	PURPOSE	Why was this made? Who is the target audience (and how do you know)?
	ECONOMICS	Who paid for this?
	IMPACT	Who might benefit from this message? Who might be harmed by it? Why might this message matter to me?
	RESPONSE	What kinds of actions might I take in response to this message?
MESSAGES & MEANINGS	**CONTENT**	What is this about (and what makes you think that)? What ideas, values, information, and/or points of view are overt? Implied? What is left out of this message that might be important to know?
	TECHNIQUES	What techniques are used? Why were those techniques used? How do they communicate the message?
	INTERPRETATIONS	How might different people understand this message differently? What is my interpretation of this and what do I learn about myself from my reaction or interpretation?
REPRESENTATIONS & REALITY	**CONTEXT**	When was this made? Where or how was it shared with the public?
	CREDIBILITY	Is this fact, opinion, or something else? How credible is this (and what makes you think that)? What are the sources of the information, ideas, or assertions?

YOU SHOULD KNOW!: AN INTRODUCTION TO EDSTEPS

What is EdSteps?

EdSteps is a grassroots effort to create a resource for teaching and assessment. Rather than a pre-set rubric, EdSteps uses authentic student work as the starting point. Its centerpiece will be a large, free online library of student work samples in five key skill areas. For each skill area, student work will be presented in a continuum — a gradual progression — from emerging to accomplished. This will create a tool to assess student performance and growth in skills that are traditionally difficult and costly to assess in schools, and demonstrate to educators concrete examples of what is possible for students of all ability levels.

Why Should I Participate?

For two reasons: One, you can win one of two $1,000 Visa gift cards – and you can enter as many times as you want! See our website at www.edsteps.org for details. Two, this is your chance to participate in developing a resource to improve student assessment for years to come. It's easy, and only takes a few minutes.

How Can I Get Involved?

You can upload it with a click at www.edsteps.org. It can be a word problem or a science report. It can be a painting or a musical composition. It can be a new approach to addressing a global issue or an invention. It is student work, and EdSteps is collecting it from every corner of the country and across the globe. Right now, the focus of EdSteps is on obtaining work samples in **Creativity and Problem Solving for Learning**. See our website for information on what we're looking for and how to contribute.