

FRESNO STATE

Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

ANNUAL REPORT: 2008

Purpose of the Bonner Center

The KSOEHD's Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship was formed in 1997 to promote character education in the Central Valley through providing nationally recognized speakers for the Fresno area, forums on character education and professional ethics, materials and other professional resources for review, and coordination for a variety of character award programs.

Administrative Housing of Ancillary Unit

The Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship is an authorized Ancillary Unit of the CSU Fresno and the KSOEHD. Dr. Jacques Benninga is its director and Dr. Pam Lane-Garon is its Associate Director. The Center's activities are guided by an Advisory Board composed of KSOEHD faculty, public school personnel from Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Madera counties and a representative of the Bonner Family Foundation.

Major Accomplishments for 2007-2008

1. Twelve new scripts were written for the 5th year of the KVPR series, "The Moral is..." narrated by Kaye Cummings. The program will air between May and July 2008.
2. The class, Principles of Character Education was offered in November 2007 and again in April 2008. Dr. Hal Urban conducted both sessions in conjunction with Jack Benninga and assisted by Jane Moosoolian. Approximately 62 attended in November and over 170 in April 2008. A new course proposal for the class has been written and the class is now a permanent listing for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. From now on it will be called CI 124: Principles of Character Education. We expect the class to be offered twice per year.
3. The 24th Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education was held in April 2008. Fresno Pacific students and faculty joined our CSU Fresno students and faculty. Well over 50 KSOEHD faculty and staff participated in the planning or delivery of the conference and approximately 600 people attended. Dr. James Comer of Yale University was our keynote speaker. During his visit to Fresno Dr. Comer spent time with FUSD administrators and community leaders and it is hoped his visit will spark further involvement of his ideas within Fresno schools.
4. The 21st Annual Virtues and Character Recognition Program (2008) recognized 25 outstanding elementary schools for exemplary character education programs, including three Tulare County schools, one Madera County school, and 21 Fresno County schools (representing Central Unified, Clovis Unified, Fresno Unified and Sanger Unified):

BURTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Burton School District

OAK GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Burton School District

JAMES K. POLK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Central Unified School District

TEAGUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Central Unified School District

CEDARWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Clovis Unified School District

FUGMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Clovis Unified School District

GARFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Clovis Unified School District

HAROLD L. WOODS ELEM SCHOOL

Clovis Unified School District

RED BANK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Clovis Unified School District

RIVERVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Clovis Unified School District

GIBSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District

HOMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District

KRATT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FRESNO

Unified School District

SIERRA VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Golden Valley Unified School District

MONTE VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Porterville Unified School District

CENTERVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

JOHN WASH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

LONE STAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

MADISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

QUAIL LAKE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

REAGAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

SANGER ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Sanger Unified School District

5. Both Jack and Pam have been asked to do a lot of public speaking about character education/professional ethics/peer mediation. One example: Pam organized a two-day meeting of preschool teachers in Fresno County (sponsored by the Fresno County Office of Education, October 2007) on professional ethics. Jack was the keynote speaker, and the teachers, under Pam's guidance, spent two days discussing related issues.
6. Jack continues his work on a national level. He was asked by the Josephson Institute to write a conceptual foundation statement for Character Counts!, and he continues to serve on the Academic Advisory Panel at Stanford University's Center on Adolescence, on the moral education sub-committee of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), and on the editorial board of the Journal for Research in Character Education. As well, Jack has been asked to speak to various classes and groups on campus about professional ethics. Pam has been at work enhancing the public awareness for her Mediator Mentor Program. She has engaged the Fresno Falcons and the Fresno Grizzlies and both teams hosted events this year that highlighted her program. The Fresno Grizzlies event in May 2008 raised approximately \$20,000 for the Mediator Mentor Program.
7. Jack authored three sections in the recently published Moral Education Handbook (Praeger Publishing, 2008), an encyclopedia for moral education edited by Clark Power, Ronald Nucci, Darcia Narvaez, Daniel Lapsley and Thomas Hunt of the University of Notre Dame. The selections were titled, Edward A. Wynne, James S. Leming, and Cultural Transmission.
8. The Bonner Center continues its work on two major research grants. The Fresno Unified grant is in the final year of a four-year project to implement character education-professional ethics-peer mediation in its elementary schools. Pamela lane-Garon, Rich Firpo and Dick Sparks are the other Bonner Center team members on this project. The Tulare County Office of Education grant is in the second of its four-year project to evaluate the overall effectiveness of its Character Counts! program. A third grant proposal was written, but not funded.
9. Fresno State has now (finally) institutionalized its Honor Code. It is only the second of the 23 -campuses to have such a code (although almost all of the UCs have them). A committee, chaired by Jack in 2003 wrote the Fresno State Honor Code. But only in 2008 have all faculty been required to inform students and to include a statement on each syllabus. The Fresno State Honor Code has separate statements of expectations for students, faculty and administrators. Jack was appointed to the University's Honor Code Committee (chaired by Dean of Students Dr. Paul Oliaro) and both Pam and Jack serve on the University's Ethics Center Committee (chaired by philosophy professor Dr. Andrew Fiala).
10. Finally, letter-writing efforts continue with the purpose of encouraging the State of California to infuse character education criteria into its exemplary schools award. The Bonner Center has been working on advocacy for this. Although Jack was appointed as an "outside expert" to review and comment on the wording for the 2008 award, little emphasis was given in the final product to the importance of character education in California's best schools. This effort will continue.

Goals and Objectives for 2008-2009

Several areas will receive primary attention by the Bonner Center in 2008-09. These include:

- Research. Our FUSD Partnerships in Character Education research team has spent the bulk of 2007-08 implementing peer mediation programs and preparing assessments, testing teachers and implementing professional ethics discussions in target schools. 2007-08 was the final year for this project, and time will be spent during the 2008-09 year to analyze our data and write about our experiences.
- Research. Our TCOE Partnerships in Character Education research team has spent the bulk of 2007-2008 identifying schools and instruments. The first year of this grant is the planning year. 2008-2009 was the first year of the program during which assessments were administered and interventions begun.
- The 2009 Conference on Character and Civic Education. The 25th conference is scheduled for April 1, 2009. It is hoped that this significant milestone (our Silver Anniversary) will be a cause for celebration by the KSOEHD and the University. Dr. William Damon of Stanford University will be our keynote speaker, and planning for the conference is already underway. The 22nd Annual Virtues and Character Recognition Award applications (middle schools) will be due in February 2009. Additional character education workshops will be planned.
- The Bonner Center continues to advocate with the California Department of Education to emphasize character education as a more significant component of the distinguished schools nomination.
- Other areas. Other areas to receive attention in 2008-09 include the materials collection in the Bonner Center, consultation with schools, speaking engagements, and instructional programs, and a framework for an evaluation of character education at the high school.