

ARTech SPEARHEADS NEW CHARTER SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

By T McKinley, ARTech

Welcome to the premier issue of Charter Vision, a quarterly newspaper by and for the students, families, staff, and friends of charter schools. Spearheaded by the ARTech Charter School in Northfield, Minnesota, this first run has a circulation of 50,000 and may soon be available in a monthly edition online. This newspaper is supported by private foundation grants and the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS).

In these pages, you will find news, information, perspectives, and literary art from charter schools around Minnesota. As many of you know, charter schools are an incredibly diverse bunch, in both the students they serve and the programs they offer. There are charter schools for Somalis, Hmong, Native Americans, African Americans and those seeking Spanish immersion. Programs vary as well, from traditional, back-to-basics, core knowledge, business, college prep, direct instruction, project-based, special needs and charter schools for at-risk students. It is the mission of this newspaper to provide a common forum for charter schools of all kinds, to celebrate our diversity, and to rejuvenate our collective commitment to the ideal of educational choice.

This issue of Charter Vision is only the beginning, a template for grander ambitions. The stories in these pages only hint at the enormous potential for dialogue this newspaper presents. In terms of news, we hope to build this quarterly into a clearing house for timely and useful information on charter schools throughout the region.

We also want Charter Vision to be a place for students, parents, and staff to articulate what charter schools mean to them, their educational passions, and their larger goals. In this edition, an ARTech student articulates his concerns about bullying; a parent/board member of Great Expectations Charter School (Grand Marais) expresses her admiration for a school community in transition; a student from the Minnesota New Country School (Henderson) describes his part-time job on a dairy farm. As we move forward, we hope that anyone connected to the charter school community will feel encouraged to share their charter school experience(s).

Community service and “real world” applications of what we teach and learn together is a cornerstone of the charter movement. We expect Charter Vision to chronicle the interaction between charter schools and their wider communities, the mutual exchange of time, resources, and experiences that enriches all our lives. In this issue, we learn of a two-week partnership between the award-winning Community of Peace Academy (St. Paul) and Habitat for Humanity.

Further, we hope to provide a calendar of significant goings-on at charter schools, along with contact information. Avalon’s first theatrical production and Hanska’s winter program are advertised in this issue. And last but not least, throughout these pages you will find poetry submitted by charter school students of all ages. As we grow, we hope to publish a broader variety of both student literature and visual art.

The mystic and poet Kahlil Gibran said that “to understand the heart and mind of a person, look not at what he has already achieved, but at what he aspires to.” In that spirit, we hope you enjoy Charter Visions – and that you will help us make it as dynamic, celebratory, and relevant as our charter schools themselves.

STARTING A CHARTER SCHOOL

Editors’ note: Kent Nerburn is a writer who lives in Bemidji, Minnesota. He has participated in the founding of Schoolcraft Learning Community and TrekNorth High School. He served as board chairperson of Schoolcraft for two years, and remains on their board as the last founding member.

As a grizzled veteran of the charter school movement – parent, board member, board chair, founder of two charter schools and unwilling participant in a “Hatfield and McCoy” breakup that resulted in a third -- I thought I might offer a report from the trenches for those of you just embarking upon this exciting, but taxing, educational adventure.

I began by making a list of the five or six most important lessons I had learned. But as the list progressed, “five or six” became “twelve” became “twenty,” with no end in sight. Finally, I had to pick an arbitrary number and reach in among my many thoughts like a blindfolded man choosing from a bowl of jelly beans.

The result is, in no particular order, nine lessons learned in the front lines of charter school development. It could be twenty, it could be fifty. But “nine” is what fits. So, I offer them to those of you who are thinking of starting a school, or who have just begun the task of bringing one into being.

- 1.) Keep your heart on the dream but your eyes on the money. Bad fiscal planning and management will destroy you. If you do not have a money person, find one. Balancing a household budget is not training enough to keep track of school-level finances. You need a real money geek who loves budgets and numbers. No exceptions.
- 2.) You have no enemies, only friends with whom you disagree. When passions run high, it is easy to perceive those with whom you disagree as the enemy. They may be officials of your local district or other people on your planning or governing committee. But remember, you are only fighting with each other because you all care so much. In a year, two years, ten years, what you fought over will not matter. If your anger overcomes you, walk away. When adults fight, children get wounded.
- 3.) Remember the carpenter’s adage: measure twice, cut once, especially regarding email. The immediacy of that medium is pernicious; it is like a literary gun, too easily shot, too readily available, and, once fired, impossible to take back. The entanglements and intrigues it creates have sapped the energy of many a founding and governing group. Do not let yours be among them.
- 4.) Establish a culture of cooperation, not conflict. How you get along from the very first day – how you respect each other, how you deal with differing ideas, how you argue, disagree, and resolve differences – will shape the culture of your school long after you have left. This, beyond ensuring that the school survives financially and legally, is the most important legacy you will leave. (continued on page 6)

For the best staff ever-  
If there was one wish in my heart,  
It would be that we never have to part.  
When I look up at the starry night sky  
I think of you shining and in happiness I cry.

By Dawn, New Century

This experience to nothing does compare,  
Like a family you really love and care.  
This school has truly survived its first test,  
Thank you all for making it the best.

By Hannah, New Century

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CPA and Habitat for Humanity; MNCS beefs up Main Street; Liberty High’s monumental graduation; Great Expectations gets less ice time; an Avalon student finds a home; the top five punk albums of all time; the Norwegian ambassador’s wife visits Hanska; news and poetry from Sojourner Truth, E.C.H.O., and a whole lot more!



Inside: As PACT breaks ground on a new building, a long-time student reminisces about the classrooms she knows so well.

PLAYING AS A TEAM

By Nell, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, ARTech

Editors’ note: The Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) recently approved a cooperative agreement between ARTech (Northfield) and Northfield High School, an arrangement that allows ARTech students to participate in the NHS athletic program. A great many charter schools in Minnesota are struggling to forge similar agreements with their local districts. In this piece, Nell, an 11th grade student at ARTech, addresses this complex issue and gives her perspective on the process by which this cooperative agreement was established.

I have lived in Northfield all my life. I attended Northfield High School for two years, but the only thing I really loved there was sports. Soccer and softball gave me something to look forward to. Last summer, my teammates and I prepared for the approaching athletic season. Kids started training and attending captain practices in their free time. But I had even more on my mind: I was looking ARTech, a new charter school opening in my town. Could I attend ARTech and continue with my team at the high school?

At the time, I was told the two schools were working out a “cooperative agreement” through the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). While the logistics of this agreement had not yet been sorted out, I went ahead and signed up for high school soccer, attended tryouts, was named a tri-captain of the JV team, and played in a few games. Just before the start of the school year, I decided to attend ARTech while participating in high school soccer after school.

I was much happier being at ARTech then I had been at the high school. I was learning at one and having a great time with my team at the other.

Then, after one week at ARTech, my advisor told me that the high school activities office had called to say that I would not be able to participate in soccer for a while. I would have to miss Friday’s practice; after three weeks with the team, I suddenly couldn’t play. I had a game that Saturday – my birthday – and my brother was coming home for the weekend to watch me play. What’s more, there was a team rule that said if I missed Friday, I wouldn’t be able to play in the Saturday game I had looked forward to.

It turned out that more ARTech students wanted to participate in Northfield Middle and High School activities then anyone had expected. There was concern that we would be taking playing time from high school students. The MSHSL cooperative agreement ARTech had hoped for was on hold, and the high school activities director told my coach that I couldn’t practice or play in Saturday’s game until the problem was resolved. My coach and the head coach couldn’t do anything about it. In two short hours a giant pin had popped my balloon and the joy I had for my new school was gone. (continued on page 2)



After that, strategizing: we had school board meetings to attend, people to call, and MSHSL rules to figure out. In the meantime, the deadline passed for filing a cooperative agreement with the MSHSL. ARTech’s operations director, the Northfield School District Superintendent, and the high school activities director met, talked things out, and wrote a letter asking the MSHSL for an extension. Once that was approved, the school board added their support. Things were looking good, and I was able to reenroll at ARTech.

I finished the soccer season, getting moved up to varsity for sections. I looked forward to the spring softball season, and I was going to start lifting in the winter to stay in shape. All was well, until a few weeks later when the high school decided to reevaluate their policy of entering into cooperative agreements with charter schools altogether. Once again, my participation in high school sports was in jeopardy.

So, there were more strategy meetings. Along with other ARTech representatives, I attended a meeting of the Northfield High School Activities Advisory Council – made up of high school teachers, coaches, and parents – to plead our case. I was told by one of the Council members that I would be allowed to speak if I made my case in an “adult manner.” It was hard to prepare

and deliver a statement without becoming too emotional.

At the meeting, we stated our side, answered some questions, and left. Afterwards, I wasn’t sure how well things had gone. It was obvious that there were some who did not favor ARTech students participating in high school sports. It didn’t seem to matter that I had lived here all my life, or that I had played on Northfield teams since I was old enough to participate. It was as if, because I attended ARTech, I was no longer a “Northfield kid.” Fortunately, the school board subsequently approved a policy that allows ARTech students to participate in Middle and high school sports for the next two years, when the policy will be reviewed again. This is a start, although there is more work to be done.

Both schools are wonderful and meet different needs for different students, but I worry that there will be constant struggle between them. If they could work together, great things could happen and the whole community would gain. But some people believe that ARTech is competing with the high school, and a major problem is a lack of communication.

People are starting to address this conflict and do something about it. I am just happy that I can play softball this spring, and that more people are working to establish good relations between these two schools.

# A SPECIAL THANK YOU

to all the schools and students that have made contributions to this very first charter school newspaper, to the steering committee, whose vision and determination made this possible, and to T McKinley at ARTech, for the many hours he spent editing and working on the layout.

## Steering Committee Members:

- Kevin Byrne, Director, MN Internship Academy
- Steve Dess, Exectutive Director, MACS
- Leisa Irwin, Operations Director, ARTech
- Dianne Reibel, Business Manager, Liberty High
- Jon Schroeder, Coordinator, Education Evolving
- Larry Werner, Reporter, Star Tribune

Thank You!

## HANSKA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

What I like best at Hanska Community School is the art class. Ms. Thompson teaches us how to make stained glass, pottery, mosaics, and we also made a quilt. We got to sew it by ourselves. We made a kiln to put our pottery in. We do lots of fun subjects here.

-- Michelle, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Hanska

# PACT GROUNDBREAKING BRINGS BACK MEMORIES

By Bethany, 12th Grade, PACT Charter School

I am presently a senior at PACT; this is my seventh year at this school. Everything that has been happening lately, leading up to and after the groundbreaking, has caused me to look back on all the history in our old building. I love to reminisce about all the memories that are held in those old, slanted walls. I can only imagine what wonderful memories those who come after me will have in the new building.

Many of the seniors and I have been around for a lot of firsts at PACT, and have watched it grow and change over the years. I remember everything from being on the first safety patrol in sixth grade, to the first newspaper in ninth grade.

I was also on the first volleyball team the last couple of years. And though I was never a part of it, I remember when the first mention of a student council was made. Our first symposium, which is now a yearly tradition, started with a bang four years ago, and has been building momentum ever since. And with every passing year, our sports teams improve drastically.

I went to the groundbreaking; and even though I will never personally set foot in the new building as a student, I felt like I should still be a part of its beginning. In one respect, it was much like I expected: PACT is a small school until you try to get us all parked. There have been very few events where the school has come together outside of school but it does happen. Every time the scene is the same: one can expect a long walk back to the car. Students, teachers, parents, everyone showed up, and sure enough a couple other seniors hauled themselves out of bed on our weekend to join in this important event (the cake was also a good incentive). I was told that something like this Ramsey Town Center project has never been done before, where they start building residential, commercial, and educational buildings all at once. I am proud of the fact that my school can take part in such a project.



Justina, pact SENIOR, spoke at the PACT groundbreaking ceremony

I guess it is only fair that I should graduate from the old building, because over last couple of years watching the endless battle trying to find a new home for our school I often doubted that anyone would ever open their arms to us. And much like a doubting Thomas I didn’t believe it could really be true, until I was standing there on that dirt where soon my own friends will be walking down a real hallway. Going to class rooms where they won’t have to climb over and around desks to get to their seats, and where the future drama students will have to learn how to project to a real full house not just a small class room stuffed from wall to wall. Many of us have plans to come back next year if for no other reason than to get our feet on that stage we’ve been dreaming of for years. Our make-shift stage at the moment consists of four wooden boxes we push together, that raise the actor about a foot off the ground.

Even though I won’t really be a part of the hallway shuffle, or the bathroom gossip, I can’t help but get excited. The possibilities are endless. Things that only months ago were beyond our reach are now on their way to becoming a reality. I only hope that the environment of our school never changes. Justina Coons said it well in her speech at the ground breaking; we are a community, kind of like a large, loving family. I enjoy the fact that on any given day I can walk from one end of the school to the other and name every person I pass by.

Lastly, how many people can say they stayed in contact with their sixth-grade teacher all through high school? Well I can, and so can many of my classmates. Of course, many wish they didn’t, since their fifth and sixth-grade teacher is now our principal. At least we don’t have to listen to the "see spot run" jokes anymore.

But all bad jokes and strange inside jokes put aside, by inviting our community into the Ramsey community, the Town Center has ensured a united environment. By helping our school to grow we can help the community to grow and so the cycle is complete. I am excited to see what is in store for the next few years. PACT is not perfect - I can be one of the first to tell you that. But as schools go, you couldn’t ask for better.



Students and staff at PACT celebrate breaking ground on a new facility.

# NEVER GIVE UP – EVEN IF OTHERS GIVE UP ON YOU

By Abby, Trek North High School

At this very moment, I feel very frustrated. There is a fly buzzing around my face, my head is pulsing with pain, and I have a lot to do in very little time. If this was last year, I would have given up by now; my car would be running and I would have raced out of the icy Bemidji High School parking lot. But, as we all know, it is 2003 and I am actually in school, though a different one. And I haven’t given up.

The problem I had with my former school was the fact that it gave up on me. This wasn’t due to my failure to produce the grades needed to give the school a good name. In fact, I got straight A’s since the day I entered kindergarten. Their failure was due to my medical problems. Okay, I realize that pseudo-seizures are “weird.” Trust me, it’s strange enough to have them, not to mention having to explain to the district school district nurse that 1) no, I do not have epilepsy, and 2) yes, I still have seizures. I was told that I was “disturbing” the other students. I was told that I “should consider alternative forms of education.” I was told that I should leave. So I did.

Because the school never gave me any answers as to where I should go, I decided to simply go home. I went home every day and worked on math or Spanish or sleeping skills. This seems like a student’s dream, but it’s not. It’s lonely and depressing. Hey made me feel that I had no purpose in the educational community.

After working this way for a couple of months, I found out that a charter school was opening. I figured that anything would be better than feeling like I was worthless, so I decided to attend. As soon as I started school, I knew it would be different this year. The teachers all wanted to teach, the hierarchy of administration was nonexistent, and the first time I had a seizure, no one told me I was disturbing them. Finally I have been accepted for what I am, what I am capable of, and what I cannot help. To put it simply, I haven’t given up at TrekNorth because no one who works here has given up on me. There is no need to hide and no need to be afraid that I might be a liability. In fact, the only reason I wrote this is because Dan McKeon thought enough of me to ask me to do it, to even guilt me into it. It’s nice to know that I am useful. That has never happened before.



# OPEN CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

Charter Vision is requesting submissions for the future editions. If you are interested in contributing to this paper please send an email to Charter Visions News Staff at [newspaper@artech.k12.mn.us](mailto:newspaper@artech.k12.mn.us)

**Deadlines:**  
Winter Issue - Feb. 6th, 5 p.m.  
Spring Issue - April 2nd, 5 p.m.

We would love to hear from you! We are looking for feature articles, reflection pieces, poetry, (very) short fiction, photos, drawings, cartoons, or announcements of upcoming special events.

All submissions should be saved as .txt, .rtf, or .doc, or be in the body of the email message. Graphics should be saved as .jpg, .bmp, or .eps and should be 300 dpi. Please be sure to include the contributor's name, grade (if applicable), school, and any relevant background information that will help us place your piece in its proper context. If the author is a minor, we will print first name only, and we reserve the right to edit for space and clarity.

There will be a student editorial meeting 12/11 in St. Paul. Anyone interested in attending should contact us for more details.

## OUTCAST STUDENT FINDS HOME AT AVALON

Editors' note: Gretchen Sage-Martinson, an advisor at Avalon High School submitted this article by one of her students who was responding to the prompt, "How does going to Avalon affect you as a student?" The writer wished to remain anonymous.

Going to school used to feel comparable to walking into a hospital waiting room. The smell of death and fear and illness hovering in the air. A faint musky odor that will simply not leave your senses alone. To say the people made up for it would be a lie, frankly. The people who didn't despise me basically just tolerated my existence. Of course, it doesn't mean I didn't trek off to the library to get on a computer nearly every day at lunch. If the computers were taken, I'd camp out in the history section and read, or sleep, or write a letter to one of my three best friends, all of whom lived out of state. These letters usually turned out babbly and rarely did I ever send them out. A lot of times, the librarian would catch me back there, but after a while he stopped asking me to go to a table. I think he understood the pain of being alone all too well. That library was my solitude.

On top of being a complete and utter outcast, my only strong subjects tended to be science and English. I'm not dumb by any means, but I had a very hard time concentrating. My math classes turned into 'create calculator programs without anyone seeing' classes. Or naptime. Again, my teacher finally gave up on the idea of asking me to work, because even he knew that I had no interest in it whatsoever. That's not to say I didn't care. I did. Very much. I just couldn't get myself to concentrate on it long enough to figure it out.

The minute I heard about Avalon, I was intrigued. I decided to shadow my acquaintance's ex girlfriend. I had so much fun, and I could already sense that Avalon might be the perfect place for me. I wrote my essay, filled out my papers and waited. And waited. And waited... Finally I got the beautiful piece of mail 'We're happy to inform you...'

I immediately talked to my best friend, who promptly screamed when I told her I'd gotten in. She, if no one else, understood what this new school meant to me.

So the first day of school came, along with the nervousness and solitude that comes with being the 'new kid,' which seems to have a higher meaning in such a small school. For the first couple of weeks, it seemed as if I were still at my old school. No one really talked to me, and I didn't blame them. It's hard to approach someone who's got their nose poked in a book, with a pissed-off look on their face. If it weren't for someone coming up to me on the bus, I may have spoken to no one. It's hard for me to take the first step, especially socially. Through the person I spoke to on the bus, I've met others, who are turning out to be very good friends indeed. I'm lucky. I could have continued to be alone had it not been for their willingness to say hello.

As for the academic side... I'm doing well. I'm seeing myself branching out more, completing the goals I set, instead of simply saying that I will. I've started setting higher unconscious standards of myself. I'm expecting more of myself, and I have more confidence. The lonely, scared kid sitting behind the A220 row in the high school library seems like only a faint dream, even though it was only half a year ago. Avalon is working for me. I just hope I can conduct myself in a way that will allow it to continue working. I think I can.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS NO LONGER SKATING ON THIN ICE

By Patty Nordahl

Editors' note: Patty Nordahl is the mother of two girls, 12 and 24 years old, and a grandma of one with a second on the way. She works as the Child Facilitator of an ECFE program and does consulting and training for child care providers. She is also active in Violence Prevention and Literacy work in her community.

I am a parent and board member of a new charter school, Great Expectations, in Grand Marais. As I observed our students and staff in action in our temporary facility (an ice arena) the first three months of school, I was moved to write this. I shared it with fellow board members who asked me to read it to the students on behalf of the board. I spoke to the younger students as well, with the same sentiment. I also expressed our appreciation of our wonderful, dedicated and gifted teachers and other staff whose incredible amount of time and energy "above and beyond the call of duty" made what seemed an insurmountable hurdle a pleasant memory for all of us.

Dear Middle School Students,

Over 16 months ago, as we sat around a kitchen table dreaming of this new school, our design team had many hopes and aspirations for our students. We envisioned students who were excited to come to school each day, who were eager to learn, who would treat each other with dignity and respect, and who would make this world a better place to live in. We named our school Great Expectations because that is what we have for each and every one of you.

Little did we know that we would end up spending our first learning block of school in an ice arena. Then after just one week having to move everything and hold classes at the Park and Recreation building, a tent and the great outdoors for the next week, and back again to the arena. By working together with our talented teachers, other staff and many volunteers, we made the best of what we had, and transformed these spaces into wonderful places of learning. It wouldn't have been that way without your optimism and flexibility. You put up with noise and distractions, quilts for walls, and crates for desks. Some day we will look back on these days with amazement.

Since you are the oldest group, you have an awesome responsibility. By example, your behavior will set the stage for the students who follow you. What we have seen surpasses our wildest hopes. We have seen students working hard on academics, but what impresses us the most is how you are with each other, with the younger students and with the adults who work and volunteer at the school. We have seen kindness and respect in action.

We have seen appreciation of differences in age and ability, encouragement, honesty and openness in discussing differences of opinion. We have seen students who are able to work together cooperatively, and students who work diligently on their own despite many distractions. We have seen active, energetic people who are also reflective, insightful and incredibly creative. We have seen students who are eager to help out whenever they can, be it packing and hauling boxes, putting furniture together, sweeping the floor or cleaning up after an art project. We have seen middle school students with younger students in their laps reading books, holding their hands out to the playground, and having long conversations with them at lunch time. We have seen a lot of happy faces looking up to you.

Life is never 100% easy, and it is inevitable that each one of you will have his or her own struggles with friends, school, and life outside of school. But seeing the way you interact gives us hope that you will all feel supported no matter what comes your way.

And it renews our Great Expectations for the future of our school. As we enter into our next learning block in a brand new building, we are proud to have been a part of this dream. It is you who will pave the way for the future of Great Expectations, and because of you the future looks bright indeed!

I like Hanska Community School because on Fridays we get to work on a school web page. The person who teaches my class is Mr. Scott. We are making the web page to make money for the school.

– Kyle, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Hanska

## Stars

By Ger, New Spirit Middle School

A star fell to earth  
And kept shining in somebody's life  
As it grew  
Creating a marvelous sparkle of joy  
In the beautiful heart  
Creating you

### Our Time Here Together

We began our friendships here  
and we learned to trust each other.  
We had fun when we were together here.  
Now we care about each other  
and understand each other.  
We all learn from each other.  
and we can all get things done when we work together.  
We help each other  
but we do not judge each other's work.  
We laugh together  
and we struggle together.  
We are all there for each other.  
We are happy together  
and silly together.  
We listen to each other  
and we know how the other feels.  
We talk together  
and care if one is hurt..  
We spent time together.  
We were all here together.  
And now we're all friends.

Marie, Great Expectations School

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

HANSKA: Dec. 12: Winter Music Program

# Diversity in the School Zone, Personalities in a High School Charter School

By Ginger, Lake Superior High School

We as humans should get t-shirts that read , "Diverse. Period." For that is what we are: diverse.

We can't help it. It's been that way since the beginning of time. Enough of that, though. What I want to talk about is charter school student diversity. In most schools, we are the people who have been labeled as "Rejects, Losers, Freaks, and Unpopular." We are the students who could not function normally in a "mainstream" hig school. We are diverse.

Most of the people who have come to our charter school in Rice Lake have led very rough lives. I am one of them. I transferred here from Two Harbors, where I could not concentrate, wanted to be outside, and daydreamed most of the day away. I was in a deep hole with no way out. I got into trouble, was put on probation, and failed school (never dropped out, just failed miserably). Then, with help from my parents, I discovered a tiny school in the middle of nowhere, originally called "PEAKS." At first sight I wondered whether my parents had lost their minds. But knowing them and facing the alternative of dropping out of High School, "no" was not an option.

So three years ago, on September 4th, 2001. I started school at PEAKS. I wandered into the computer lab, scared and alone. I put on a face like I couldn't care less what happened, and then I saw what was truly in front of me: Others. Just. Like. Me.

My second year, I began traveling back and forth over 20 miles to school from my home in Two Harbors to the newly named "Lake Superior High School." I worked every day, Monday through Thursday, on the AEOA Headstart Bus for Gnesen. This experience taught me so much about myself, it is incredible. However, nothing taught me as much about myself as dealing and interacting with other people who have the same problems as me. The teachers here work with all eighty-five of us. They take all our woes and make us focus on our bigger goals, including graduation and college The teachers even go so far as to let some of us stay at their houses when we can't make it to school for special events.

I hung around with more A.D.D. people then I can even imagine, and I loved the experience. It taught me about respecting all of the different people there are. It taught me to be unafraid of the diversity that so often I was hoping to avoid. Sure, not all of my journey through the years has been peachy, but coming here and understanding what others are going through and feeling is an experience and a skill I can never stop appreciating.

So: diverse? Oh, yes.



Ryan, Cassie, Gary Knox, and Trina of Liberty High commemorate the class of 2003 at the Statue of Liberty

## Tears of Love

By Cindy, New Spirit Middle School

With my tears, I will always love you.  
Through all the days I have been with you.  
Now I only have tears in my eyes and  
dreams that I will see you again.  
Through all the pain and sadness,  
I will always have my heart and soul for you.  
My eyes will always fill with tears of love.

## LIBERTY HIGH CELEBRATES A MONUMENTAL GRADUATION

I never expected I'd get my diploma in front of the Statue of Liberty. It's all thanks to Mr. Knox that I did. If it wasn't for his dedication and kindness to help out students as much as he does, I'm sure I would have given up on getting that diploma altogether. I want to thank Mr. Knox for the fun time and very educational trip to New York City. I was taught things I would have never known about New York and its history. It was one experience I will never forget. Thanks again to Mr. Knox for everything. -- Cassie, Liberty High graduate, 2003

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I was about a year 1/2 behind schedule. I wanted to quit so badly. Now I am very glad that I stuck with it because the way I felt when I received my diploma was awesome. Especially getting it in New York. How many people do you know who can say that? It was an experience that I will never forget. The things that I saw and the history of New York is so incredible. Words can't explain it. Not very many kids have the opportunities we do at this school.

I am glad that Mr. Knox talked me into going on the trip. I would have regretted not going. If it weren't for Mr. Knox, I know that I wouldn't have graduated; I would have dropped out a long time ago. He saved my life and my future. Mr. Knox is the greatest teacher I have ever had. He did anything he could to help me. He always made me smile. His stories are one of a kind – just like him. I wish there were more teachers out there like him. Then every kid would love school. THANK YOU MR. KNOX!!!!!! I will miss you much. -- Trina, Liberty High graduate 2003



Gary Knox and the Liberty High gang are bullish on the future.

## SCHOOLCRAFT LEARNING COMMUNITY REENACTS THE HOLOCAUST

By Jenn, 6th Grade, SLC



The author dressed as a young Jewish woman for the Schoolcraft Learning Community's Auschwitz reenactment.

On Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, Sara's, Jim's, and Marilyn's crews got together for a re-enactment of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz. The reason for this re-enactment was to remember what happened to the Jews and to live and feel what they had to live through. The character I portrayed was that of a young Jewish woman. Here's the experience:

All of the Jews were ordered to sit down. When everybody was sitting, we received a Star of David (which is a tag that all Jews had to wear stating their names and ages). After receiving our tags, we remained seated until the Nazi guards came. They called off the names of women, children, husbands and wives. All these innocent people were going to a labor camp to face their fate: slavery or death. As the Jews marched off to be transported on a train to Auschwitz (the labor camp), my name was called, so I also marched past the armed Nazi guards.

When I got in line for the transport train, all of the Jews had to be facing straight and there was no talking.

Someone in front of me had a terrible cough, so I bent over, slyly, and whispered "Try not to cough so much", for if the Nazis found out you were sick and could possibly not labor, they would either shoot or gas you. After I warned the man not to cough, we ran to get in the transport train. The Nazi guards were pushing and shoving to get us in the train. When everyone was finally in, the Nazis slammed the big metal doors closed. We were squished. The train was so crowded that we could hardly breathe.

Suddenly, the train started to rock back and forth, side to side, very, very, roughly. We were screaming and moaning, and we all thought this was terrible. But really, this was just the beginning! Suddenly, the rocking stopped. The big metal doors opened, and we were in a new place. But, the new place was not pleasant; in fact it was worse. The Nazi guards were again pushing and shoving us, this time to get off the train. We had to line up again. Almost as soon as we got in line we were again marching into the unknown ... Auschwitz.

(continued on page 5)



# “AND THE WINNER IS ...”

## Community of Peace Academy Declared National School of Character

By Adrian, CPA

In the spring of last year, Dr. Karen Rusthoven, the founder and principal of our school, the Community of Peace Academy, got a call. With a committee of teachers, Dr. Rusthoven had applied months earlier for the National Schools of Character Award. And, after years of hard work, CPA had won.

Dr. Rusthoven visited a journalism class at CPA to speak about the award, her current goals for the school, and what she still hopes to achieve. She told us what sets Community of Peace Academy apart from public schools and why our philosophy is not wholly based on test scores.

Dr. Rusthoven first talked about how the government is pushing for higher test scores with its ‘no child left behind’ legislation, and how she disagrees with that way of thinking. She said, “Character doesn’t seem to be as important as testing. We need to pay more attention to character-building such as CPA is doing. Kids will do better academically as well.”

# NO "BULL" WHEN IT COMES TO HELPING THE COMMUNITY

By Tabitha, 11th Grade, MNCS

Every time I walk down Main Street in Henderson, I marvel at the historic brick buildings that line it. Sometimes I can almost see the blacktop turn to dust under my feet and horses roped to hitching posts outside the buildings. No doubt things have changed in Henderson, and the passage of time is becoming even more evident on these sturdy brick structures. Many of the buildings have recently been through extensive restoration and repair. Staff and students from MNCS were given the opportunity to help in these preservation efforts.

They took some time out of their summer to repaint the mural that's on the west side of what's now the post office. To some, it's just another tobacco advertisement, but to many it's yet another character mark on the old building that now defines Henderson.

The Bull Durham tobacco ad was painted on what was then a saloon owned by John Gerken in 1895. The year the mural was painted is unknown, but Doug Thomas, current owner, thinks it may have been in the early 1920's. Around this time, the popular Durham, North Carolina-based tobacco company was painting these murals all across the country in a massive promotional campaign.

Even though it was restored in 1990, the faded lettering and chipped paint suggested it was due for a touch-up, which MNCS advisor Jim Wartman, Career Facilitator Jenn Studer, and students Seth, Brittany, were happy to do. It took wire brushes, TSP and high-pressure washing to finally take off the layers of peeling paint before they could begin the painting process. The job took about a week, and Seth says that helping restore even a small part of Henderson's history makes him feel like a winner.

\* \* \* \*

As part of Henderson's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a restoration project is taking place along Main Street. The object is to rejuvenate Henderson to the state it was in when the 20<sup>th</sup> century first dawned. The bulk of the work has been done by the real estate owners themselves, one of whom is Douglas Thomas, who recently received a Fred C. Cords Memorial and Preservation Foundation award for his work on Henderson's Edvisions building. As far as I can tell, the work is coming along quite nicely, and I am sure every other member of the community of Henderson would agree. - Paul, 10th Grade, MNCS

Lakes Area Charter School is a charter school in Osakis. Its charm is immeasurable. Several students wrote their thoughts and feelings on their school. The following are their opinions:

“Lakes Area Charter School is like no school I have ever been to or heard of. It’s a school that actually cares about the students. It is a school that uses time wisely and doesn’t expel the wise guy.” - Tylor, 11th Grade

“Lakes Area Charter School is better than my other school. The people here are really nice. I will be sure to be back next year.” - Jenny, 10th Grade

If you ever find yourself in Osakis, Minnesota, please come and visit. But make sure it is before noon, or you will miss these brilliant students in action.

It seems that the site-visitors who came last spring, Mathew Davidson and Barbara Luther agree.

When asked about the goals for the school, Dr. Rusthoven said, “When the majority of the students here graduate as whole people, having found peace inside and found direction for life’s happiness, that would be my goal.”

It seems she’s well on her way—at least the National Schools of Character organization think so.

“When the majority of the students here graduate as whole people, having found peace inside and found direction for life’s happiness, that would be my goal.”  
-- Dr. Karen Rusthoven, founder and Principal,  
Community for Peace Academy

School of Character is an annual awards program that recognizes K-12 schools demonstrating exemplary character education initiatives and yielding positive results in student behavior, school climate and academic performance. The program is sponsored by the Character Education Partnership (CEP), a national nonprofit coalition based in Washington, DC CEP administers the program in collaboration with Boston University's Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character.

CEP is not affiliated with any party or creed. Its members hold that core ethical values such as respect, responsibility, and honesty can both be a matter of consensus and a model for our youth. They are committed to the practical implementation of character education throughout the learning process.



MNCS advisors and students aren't cowed by the task of renovating historic Henderson



## CHARTER VISION SEEKING EDITORS

**If you are interested in becoming a student editor,  
please contact  
Leisa Irwin at ARTEch  
(507) 663-8806 x202**

**newspaper@artech.k12.mn.us**

**The first student editorial meeting  
is scheduled for  
December 11th, 11:30 - 1:00  
at MACS  
1295 Bandana Blvd. N, Ste. 165, St. Paul**

**Lunch will be provided**

### AUSCHWITZ continued

Ah, but this place was not as bad as I thought. I heard beautiful music played by an orchestra and saw reassuring signs like “Work means Freedom ” and “Only the Righteous Shall Enter Through This Gate.” We hoped these signs told the truth, we wanted to believe this. Once again, we lined up. Except this time, the women were separated from the men. People had to be separate from their husbands, including me. Now, my hope faded away. Again, people's names were read off and they had to walk past the doctor, who was calling names. People then had to go over to a Nazi. The Nazi was doing something, but I could not see what. I didn't dare move to see, for Nazis were guarding us with guns. Finally, all the women had been called ... except for me.

The Doctor walked over to me and looked me hard in the eye. He started circling me. Why was he doing this? He was studying me for some reason. Then he walked off, away from me. Was I in trouble? Was something wrong with me? As I was becoming more worried thinking about this, the Doctor yelled out my name, “Anne Dittman!” I was startled and jumped a little, but walked straight to the Nazi. He had a little tool in his hand that looked sharp, very sharp. He took my arm and drew up my sleeve and right then, before I know what was happening, I felt a sharp surge in my arm. How could they be so cruel! Engraving your new name into your arm!

When he was done, I walked to where the other women were standing, and once again we got in line. We were right in front of the gate that said, “Only the Righteous Shall Enter Through This Gate.” But by now, I knew – I think we all knew – this was not true from what they did to us.

But, still, we wanted to believe it was something good because of everything that happened to us that was bad. Bad seemed to terribly overpower the good, lately. We walked through the gate and into a strange room where a Nazi (and Jews who helped the Nazis in order to get more food) stood next to another metal door. He said, “Please undress and put your clothes on a hook. Remember which hook is yours, for you will need to get your clothes after your shower. Also, after your shower, you will get some nice hot soup and bread. So please, undress, take off any jewelry, and you may enter the showers.”

We did as we were told. The Jews who helped the Nazis handed out bars of soap to each and every one of us. For some reason, they looked sad. Oh well. We were going to have a shower. Alleluia! As we entered the showers, the Nazi yelled something in a language we could not understand. When he yelled, all these pellets came into the shower. We didn't know what to do, or what was happening, until we were choking and could not breathe. We started to scream. This was a trick! This was the gas chamber! As soon as I thought that, I was laying on the ground, motionless, as were my fellow Jewish friends.

What happened when we were dead? The same Nazi who told us the lie that we were taking a shower came in with a gun. He made sure we were dead by lifting up our arms. Then we were taken out of the showers with wheelbarrows to the crematory. We were brought to a stinky room and, one by one, were put into a crematory. When we came out we were nothing but ashes. We were never buried.

STARTING A CHARTER SCHOOL - FROM PAGE 1

5.) Trust each other to make decisions. A successful charter school results not from people being of common mind so much as from people of complementary skills trusting each other to make decisions. Where there is expertise, defer to it, even if it runs contrary to your own opinions on a matter.

6.) You are not starting a school for your child, but for all children. All parents dream of a safe, nurturing, caring environment where their own children, the children they love above all others, can grow and reach their potential. Simply because you are a founder or a board member, what you want for your child cannot, must not, take precedence over what is needed for other children. Be aware of your own child's needs, but neither design nor vote from your child's desk.

7.) Empowering others is the most effective form of leadership. The best and most valuable board members and founders are those who welcome and empower others. The worst are those who see other board members or founders as their unpaid laborers or impediments to the implementation of their own ideas. Don't let yourself fall into this trap. Share the responsibilities, share the heartaches, share the credit, and share the joys.

8.) Good teachers cannot make up for poor design. We all know that teachers are the heartbeat of a school, and that without good teachers no worthy education will take place. But the sad truth is that poor design will hamper good teachers. Beware of believing that a group of good teachers, with good skills and good hearts, can overcome the chaos and confusion that results from unclear curricular design. They cannot. You need a shared educational method, philosophy, or curricular model. If you don't have one, stop until you get one.

9.) Know when to leave. When you have invested a great deal of passion in a project, it is hard not to identify yourself with it. But, at some point, if you have been successful, the school will move beyond you. Among the most difficult challenges a founder or board member must face is knowing when to leave and how to leave gracefully. If the children are happy and learning, you have done your part. Be thankful for your chance to have been of service, and gently move on.

There are more – many more. But these are enough for now. Starting and running a charter school is not easy. But if you struggle together with mutual respect, are slow to judge and quick to forgive, and keep in mind some of these battle tested lessons, you will find that something magical can take place. When you see that six year old getting off the bus with a smile on her face, or that senior that no one believed in grinning while he waves his diploma, you will know what it is. Until then, take it from one who has been there. For all the struggles, the journey is worth it.

FRIENDS

By Kilev, 10th Grade,  
E.C.H.O. Charter School

The kind of person everybody  
Wants to call their friend  
When you talk they look into  
Your eyes and listen with  
Their whole heart.

When they hug, they hug tight  
As if they were giving you a circle  
Of safety, and you know that  
Somehow everything is going to be  
okay.

ARTech’s FIRST SCHOOL  
DANCE A SUCCESS

By Chris and Andrew, ARTech

ARTech is a project-based charter school, so the students have to do projects for credit. Friends Kyle and Chris put together a disc-jockey project at the beginning of the school year. They wanted to learn about disc jockeys and Chris’ uncle, Dennis Johnson, is a DJ, so it worked out perfectly. In this project, they proposed planning a middle-school dance, being the DJs, and performing in front of a crowd. Kyle and Chris had to put everything together for the dance, including refreshments, chaperones, advertising, and keeping track of the money.

We interviewed middle-schoolers before the dance and found out that most of them were just expecting fun and food. This was a new experience for most of them, because the majority had not been to a school dance before. As for money, they were generally planning to spend between five and ten dollars.

Lots of people showed up the night of the dance, October 24th, and that surprised us. When asked about the dance, Kyle said, “I was amazed that we had such a good turnout.” Approximately fifty people came to the dance, about twice what we expected. Students from ARTech weren’t the only ones who came; they invited friends from the nearby Northfield Middle School as well.

Door prizes, some donated, were given away every half-hour. They also hosted a limbo contest, in which everyone participated. The hardest part of the dance was the music requests, because it was hard to remember what songs everybody wanted, and the DJ’s had to keep a balance of what the kids liked and what was acceptable to the parents.

The profit from the concessions and the admission, totaling \$144, was donated to ARTech for buying new books for the library. When interviewed after the dance, most people said that they had a lot of fun and the dance met their expectations. Kyle and Chris earned .7 credits for this project, equivalent to 70 hours of work. They also completed numerous grad standards. They both would want to do this again, “because it was fun!”



SOJOURNER TRUTH ACADEMY CELEBRATES  
FALL FESTIVAL

By Tayvon, 6th Grade, STA

Editors’ note: this piece was submitted by Julie Guy, Director of Sojourner Truth Academy in Minneapolis. The Sojourner Truth Academy Fall Festival was made possible by a grant from the Cargill Foundation.

Last October, Halloween came in with a gigantic boom. Students from Sojourner Truth Academy came in the evening to play math games to get candy. Teachers gave out two or three pieces of candy to each student who played the game, even if a student did not finish it. One popular game was golfing to see how many pieces of candy you would get.

Several people were interviewed during the gathering. Teachers and parents agree that it was safer than going door to door. One student commented to the reporter that he was having a great time. Teacher, Ms. Roseboro, said she enjoyed seeing all the different costumes. The other teachers loved the costumes as well. Students were seen dressed as Scream, a bumblebee, a ninja, and a ballerina. Teachers themselves put on costumes for the event. Mr. Rosiaro, the Spanish teacher, dressed as Mickey Mouse. The question came up whether Halloween should be about scary stuff or simply dressing up in any kind of costume.

It was a great success!!! The candy was good, the games were exciting, and it seemed like everyone had a good time.

BULLYING: ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

By Sean, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, ARTech

Two years ago, I first started middle school. I, like almost everyone else, was pretty nervous. Things went well at first, but after a couple of months everything changed. By spring, I totally dreaded school. I can’t pinpoint when things changed, but I can say why. The teachers and staff were either indifferent to bullying or told me to just ignore it.

Then I spent a year in Oslo, Norway. At the school I was attending, Tåsen Skole, they were using the Dan Olweus Anti-Bullying program. If I were to describe it in one word that word would probably be, “success.” I was not bullied once.

This sparked my interest, so I did some research on the Dan Olweus Program. It was started in 1983, when three teenage boys in northern Norway committed suicide as a result of bullying. After that, the Norwegian Department of Education realized that bullying was a real issue. They hired Dan Olweus to develop an anti-bullying program. Today that same program is practiced all over the world. The schools in the US that began the program saw a 30-70% **drop** in bullying. Most schools on the program also have higher grade averages and less truancy.

By now you’re probably wondering how this program works. Teachers participate in an anti-bullying seminar to learn how to deal with these issues. Every fall and spring surveys are given to every student. The staff can use the results to see how to deal with bullying. Another reason this program works is that there is a zero-tolerance on bullying. Losing the “boys will be boys” attitude really can make a difference.

My question is: Are our schools doing enough to prevent bullying? Are we doing enough?

If you’re interested in learning more about the Dan Olweus Bullying Prevention Program visit: [modelprograms.samhsa.gov/template\\_cf.cfm?page=model&pkProgramID=20](http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov/template_cf.cfm?page=model&pkProgramID=20), or view the site in PDF format at: [modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/FactSheets/Olweus%20Bully.pdf](http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/FactSheets/Olweus%20Bully.pdf)



HANSKA CHARTER SCHOOL GREETES  
NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR’S WIFE

At the Hanska Community School we met the ambassador's wife from Norway. Each student gave her flowers. She visited our school and asked questions about what we do. She talks in a different way. -- Alyssa, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Hanska



# TOP FIVE PUNK ALBUMS

7

By Kyle, 10th Grade, ARTECH

Hello fellow punks out there. This is a little article about my top five albums of all time. Anyone who disagrees can email complaints and suggestions to me at [misfit\\_the\\_punk@hotmail.com](mailto:misfit_the_punk@hotmail.com).

Number one on my list is the Dead Kennedys' infamous debut album, "Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables," released in 1978 on the Cherry Red label, now reissued by Jello Biafra's Alternative Tentacles label. This album is number one simply because of great tracks like "Holiday in Cambodia" and "Kill the Poor," two of the biggest songs in the underground. Lesser-known songs include "When You Get Drafted" and "California Uber Alles." If you don't already have this music, I recommend you get to the record store as fast as you can.

A close second is a classic album from one of the greatest bands ever: the Misfits' "Legacy of Brutality." Here are all the tracks that made me into a fiend: "Hybrid Moments," "Some Kinda Hate," "Halloween," "She," "TV Casualty," "Where Eagles Dare," "American Nightmare," plus a few other good songs. The album was released on Plan 9 records in 1985 and is another must-have for anyone who claims to like punk rock. If you like the old AFI or the Necromantics, you'll love the Misfits – the first and best in the horror punk scene.

Number three on the list is Operation Ivy with their 1989 release "Energy" on Lookout Records. Op Ivy was only around for a short time, but includes RANCID members Tim Armstrong (aka Lint) and Matt Freeman, and features both the vocals of Jessie Michaels and the pounding drum solos of Dave Mello. This is for anyone who deeply likes hardcore punk and ska. They sound like Sublime meets NOFX, with unique vocals. The CD has the classic 7" "Hectic" with my favorite song, "Hoboken."

Coming in fourth is the Ramones, a classic band that everyone should know whether they are punkers or not. Their "Ramones Mania," released in 1988 on Sire Records, is a greatest hits collection, but the tracks come together perfectly. I'm pretty sure almost everyone knows at least some of their work, like "I Wanna Be Sedated" and "Beat on the Brats." The Ramones are probably the biggest influence on punk – you can hear their music in Operation Ivy and Rancid.

And last but definitely not least, you can't have a conversation about punk rock without talking about the Sex Pistols, one of the pioneer bands that started it all. They only released one album, "Never Mind the Bullocks, Here's the Sex Pistols," featuring the anarchic themes you love: "Anarchy in the U.K." and "God Save the Queen." While this album is great, I feel it's overrated. All the vocals sound the same. If you could have only one CD, I wouldn't make this the one.

So there are my top five albums of all time. Once again, if you think differently or just like complaining, then please email your questions and comments to me.

## COMMUNITY OF PEACE ACADEMY BUILDS COMMUNITY WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

By Adrian, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, CPA

Look out, Jimmy Carter. The Community of Peace Academy juniors are here! Over a two week period, CPAs 11<sup>th</sup> grade went to Newport, Minnesota to work on a Habitat for Humanity house, emulating the former president.

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, the class traveled the 20 minutes to Newport to spend the day putting up siding and putting down sod to help the less fortunate. The class was split into two groups, which alternated so that some school work could still get done. Each group worked with a professional crew chief named David, who explained the procedures and answered any questions about J-channeling and other aspects of construction.

The house CPA worked on, a duplex, is known as the 'house that Cher built' because the singer's friends raised money to have the house built for her birthday. Cher herself even pounded in some nails. The house is part of a seventeen-unit section of St. Paul Habitat for Humanity.

David told us that the house would probably be on the market for about \$70,000 and, judging from how nice the house was, that's a really decent price.

At the end of the eight days, more than half of the siding was done, one of the houses had a new yard of sod, and the 11<sup>th</sup> graders had a sense of pride in a job well done.

And the free donuts from Byerly's for helping out didn't hurt, either.



CPA Students work on Habitat for Humanity House

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, nondenominational Christian housing organization. Since 1976, Habitat has built more than 150,000 houses in more than 89 countries, including some 50,000 houses across the United States. ([www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org))

Adam, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, CPA: "We arrived at the site at 9:30 and started at 9:45. We started putting up siding while Kang Bao, Sundus, Houa and Tou Shoua were trained how to put up "J," the plastic channeling around electrical boxes, by David, the site supervisor. The rest of us, Yeng, Adrian, Mr. Fleming, Ricardo, and I put up the first vinyl siding panel. We got the first two panels up and then we ate. It was 12:00 and we had bag lunches with a cooler full of milk and water. The washrooms were two outhouses, or we could use the church restroom if we wanted... We started the siding again at 12:30. Ricardo and I worked on the third panel, and it took us four tries to it right. We finally got the measurements, but it was too low. We took it off and pulled the third one up and renailed it, put the fourth one up, and finally got it to look straight. That's the most important rule: make sure it looks straight. We got it right, cleaned up, and got back to school at 3:00."

Chue, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, CPA: "Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that builds houses. 75% of their labor is done by volunteers. During the two weeks that I worked with them, I learned many things, including how to put siding on houses. Before I went, I figured that it would be another boring volunteer job. But, to my surprise, it was actually very enjoyable. I would honestly prefer working for Habitat for Humanity over going to school. During the whole time, I had a lot of fun. We put up the siding for the houses and put the sod in place. I also learned a lot in those four days. The best part for me was when I got to dig four big holes. Each was 5 feet deep; it was tiring but very fun. Hope the class next year has as much fun as we did."

Ricardo, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, CPA: "Early in October, our 11<sup>th</sup> grade class worked on a house. It was for our Ethics class. Doing this project for 11<sup>th</sup> grade is essential for you to graduate. We did this project for people who could not afford housing. This was a nice experience... The first day that we were there, we did not know much, but we at least figured out how to "J" channel and put on siding. I've had some experience doing siding. The only difference from this experience is that, previously, I got paid for my services. Other than knowing what each person was capable of doing, we all got to know each other outside our school environment. Overall, it was a great experience."

Houa, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, CPA: "Well, I'm sad to say we are done with the Habitat for Humanity project. It was the best experience of my life. I learned some new skills, like "J" channeling, siding, leveling basements, putting on plaster, and laying sod. When my dad is fixing our house and needs help, I cannot wait to show him what I can do. We were not done with fixing the house, but I'm sure when the house is done the owners will love it... On October 8, 2003, when we got to the site, we all got started working on the house right away. I stared working on the base stripping because I was done with "J" channeling. Base strip is when you nail this piece of metal on the bottom of the house. That was the easy part; I got that done in only about thirty minutes. So after I was done with that, I decided to take a little break. I went inside the house. It looked empty."

## A DAY ON THE RICE LAKE ORGANIC FARMS

By Randy, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, MNCS

Editors' note: Randy is a senior at Minnesota New Country School (Henderson). He works full-time, part of the time at two dairy farms in Le Sueur and Norseland. This doesn't leave much time for socializing, and, besides, his pal One-Eyed Sally hates movies.

I come to school and the first words out of some kid's mouth are, "Aww, pew. What's that smell?" Well, the smell is me, and you have no clue what I did this morning.

I got up at 5:30 and went to the wagon. No feed. So, I had to warm up the tractor, back the feed mill out of the shed—shoot, the tractor quit—warm up tractor, again. No, it's not the tractor; it's the battery terminal. Looks like it's corroded. Fix terminal. Start tractor again. Golly. Now the auger, which runs the feed into the mill, broke last week. Shoot, forgot about that. Where was I? Tractor – fixed. Auger -- not fixed. Cows—bellowing ferociously outside the barn.

I find the nearest five-gallon bucket. Lucky for me, we have more than enough buckets. So, I bucket the corn into the feed mill. Thank you: this works. Got the corn grinding in the mill. Add the buffer – that's oats and barley for the rest of ya. Fill up twelve five-gallon buckets with feed. By the way, this is a labor-intensive job, not a very high-tech operation. I carry the buckets over to the barn, two in each hand. I'm careful not to drop them, watching out for my clumsy duck feet so I don't trip over something stupid. Like our wonderful baling twine which, by the way, can fix anything – except for the auger. But it does hold the auger up.

Where was I? Oh yes, carrying seventy-five pounds of feed at 6:30 in the morning. I get the buckets to the barn and...where are the cows? I forgot the cows. Set the feed down. Go get cows and let them into the barn. They'll get fed once the cleaning's done, so they are calm.

Now it's time to sanitize the milk machines and pipeline. This is more difficult than just wiping them down. I fill up jars with pipeline acid. If you aren't careful, you can lose a couple of fingers with that stuff. I screw the jars on and hit the switch to wash and – RRNNNGRRRRN – it's a cleanin'. Now I feed and tie in our lovely cows. Have I mentioned that they are all named? Almost every one: Ma, One-eyed Sally (who is a darling and she asked me to put that in), Crystal, Mary, Claire, Maddy, Mindowa, Inga, Dorothy, Fran, Swirly, Freckle – I could go on forever, but you get the idea.

As we tie them in, I pet and massage them. I rub their faces and their heads, let them know that I'm there. With some of the new ones, we have another guy rub the top of their tails. By the way, it's not just me up with the cows; there are two more of us. These cows get special treatment at this farm. They are not only organic dairy cows, but they get treated better than the owner's wife. Almost every one gets some sort of conversation while they are being milked or fed; because the cows don't talk back or argue it is usually a one-ended conversation. Sometimes, though, I'll get a lap with a cow tongue. Loosely translated it usually means, "I agree with you, Randy, and I'm glad you are here. And I want more feed." Every morning, the three of us milk eighty cows. We have a thirty-two-tie stall barn, so we do two shifts of milking' in the morning and at night. That means I get to see my sweet girls twice a day. What can I say? I get around. And while getting around, I step in cow manure, which is why I sometimes smell different than some city folk are used too. But, I've done more before 8:30 than most people.

One-Eyed Sally will vouch for me.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

AVALON: January 30th and 31st: Avalon High School presents its first ever theatrical production. Students will perform "Our Town" at 7:30 pm both evenings at Crosswinds Middle School in Woodbury. For information on ticket prices and availability please email [kward@avalonschool.org](mailto:kward@avalonschool.org)

# Minnesota Public Charter Schools

In over a decade, Minnesota charter schools have grown to 88 operating schools serving over 14,000 students across Minnesota. For those interested in enrolling in a charter school, applications are received year round if space is available. Charter schools are extremely diverse in the populations they serve and the programs they offer.

**"When considering a charter school, please don't hesitate to call the school to talk to the director or to set up a time to visit. Thank you."**

... schools of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS)

1295 Bandana Blvd. N., Suite 165, Saint Paul, MN 55108, 651-644-0432

[www.mncharterschools.org](http://www.mncharterschools.org)

Charter schools are K-12 public schools that provide choice for parents and students within the public school system. Charter schools are:

- mission driven, or focused around a particular approach to education,
- free and open to all students,
- funded on a per-pupil basis by the state of Minnesota,
- chartered under a performance contract with a sponsor (ex. school district, college, nonprofit organization, or foundation),
- independently managed by an elected school board.

Upcoming charter school events include:

- Minnesota Association of Charter Schools Winter Conference will be held February 26-28, 2004, in St. Paul.
- Charter Schools' Week will be celebrated again this year May 2-7, 2004. A Minnesota Charter Schools' Celebration will take place at the Mall of America.

## Minnesota Charter Schools By Area

Greater Minnesota	ARTech	Northfield	6 - 12	(507) 663-8806
	Bluffview Montessori School	Winona	PreK - 8	(507) 452-2807
	Covenant Academy of Minnesota	Faribault	7 - 12	(507) 333-5482
	Crosslake Community School	Cross Lake	K - 8	(218) 692-5437
	DPSA - Kenwood Edison Charter School	Duluth	K - 8	(218) 728-9556
	E.C.H.O. Charter School	Echo	K - 12	(507) 925-4143
	Eci'Nompa Woonspe' Charter School	Morton	K - 12	(507) 697-9055
	Emily Charter School	Emily	PreK - 6	(218) 763-3401
	Great Expectations School	Grand Marais	K - 8	(218) 370-1700
	Great River Education Center	Waite Park	7 - 12	(320) 258-3117
	Hanska Community School	Hanska	K - 6	(507) 439-6225
	Harbor City International School	Duluth	9 - 12	(218) 722-7574
	LaCrescent Montessori Academy	LaCrescent	PreK - 8	(507) 895-4054
	Lafayette Charter School	Lafayette	K - 8	(507) 228-8943
	Lake Superior High School	Duluth	7 - 12	(218) 529-2468
	Lakes Area Charter School	Osakis	9 - 12	(320) 859-5302
	Minnesota New Country School	Henderson	7 - 12	(507) 248-3353
	Nerstrand Elementary School	Nerstrand	K - 5	(507) 333-6850
	New Century Charter School	Hutchinson	7 - 11	(320) 234-3660
	North Lakes Academy	Forest Lake	6 - 9	(651) 982-2773
	North Shore Community School	Duluth	PreK - 6	(218) 525-0663
	Pillager Area Charter School	Pillager	9 - 12	(218) 746-3875
	Prairie Creek Community School	Castle Rock	K - 5	(507) 645-9640
	Ridgeway Community School	Houston	PreK - 5	(507) 454-9566
	RiverBend Academy Charter School	Mankato	7 - 12	(507) 387-5524
	Riverway Learning Community	Minnesota City	PreK - 12	(507) 689-2844
	Rochester Off-Campus Charter School	Rochester	9 - 12	(507) 282-3325
	Schoolcraft Learning Community	Bemidji	K - 8	(218) 586-3284
	Studio Academy	Rochester	Ages 15 - 21	(507) 529-1662
	TrekNorth High School	Bemidji	9 - 12	(218) 444-1888
	TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School	Lindstrom	9 - 12	(651) 213-2017
	Village School of Northfield	Northfield	K - 12	(507) 663-8990
	Voyageurs Expeditionary School	Bemidji	9 - 10	(218) 586-8347
	Yankton Country School	Balaton	9 - 12	(507) 734-2677

Metro Area	Agricultural & Food Sciences Academy	Little Canada	9 - 12	(651) 415-5370
	Coon Rapids Learning Center	Coon Rapids	Ages 16 - 21	(763) 862-9223
	Excell Academy for Higher Learning	Brooklyn Park	K - 6	(763) 533-0500
	Family Academy	Roseville	Prek - 9	(651) 697-1740
	Liberty High Charter School	Blaine	Ages 16 - 21	(763) 786-4799
	Math and Science Academy	Woodbury	6 - 12	(651) 578-7507
	New Heights School	Stillwater	K - 12	(651) 439-1962
	Odyssey Charter School	Brooklyn Center	K - 9	(763) 971-8200
	PACT Charter School	Anoka	K - 12	(763) 421-8475
	Partnership Academy	Richfield	K - 6	(612) 866-3630
	SAGE Academy Charter School	Brooklyn Park	9 - 12	(763) 315-4020
	Sobriety High (East Campus)	Maplewood	9-12	(651) 748-5256
	Sobriety High (West Campus)	Edina	9-12	(952) 831-7138
Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy	Inver Grove Heights	K - 5	(651) 457-7072	
World Learner School of Chaska	Chaska	1 - 6	(952) 368-7398	

Minneapolis	Aurora Charter School	Minneapolis	PreK - 4	(612) 870 -3891
	Cedar Riverside Community School	Minneapolis	K - 8	(612) 339-5767
	Chiron Downtown Middle School	Minneapolis	6 - 8	(612) 341-7306
	El Colegio Charter School	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 728-5728
	Four Directions	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 588-0183
	Friendship Academy of Fine Arts	Minneapolis	K - 4	(612) 879-6703
	Harvest Preparatory School	Minneapolis	K - 6	(612) 381-9743
	Heart of the Earth Charter School	Minneapolis	K - 12	(612) 331-8862
	Minnesota International Middle School	Minneapolis	5 - 8	(612) 821-6470
	Minnesota Internship Center Charter School	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 722-5470
	Minnesota Transitions Charter School	Minneapolis	K - 12	(612) 722-9013
	Native Arts High School	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 870-1723
	New City School	Minneapolis	K - 6	(612) 623-3309
	New Visions School	Minneapolis	K - 6	(612) 706-5566
Sojourner Truth Academy	Minneapolis	K - 6	(612) 588-3599	
Twin Cities International Elementary School	Minneapolis	PreK - 4	(612) 821-6470	
Watershed High School	Minneapolis	9 - 12	(612) 871-4363	
Woodson Institute for Student Excellence (WISE)	Minneapolis	K - 4	(612) 522-4022	

St. Paul	Academia Cesar Chavez	St. Paul	K - 7	(651) 778-2940
	Achieve Language Academy	St. Paul	K - 8	(651) 738-4875
	Avalon Charter School	St. Paul	9 - 12	(651) 649-5495
	BlueSky Charter School	St. Paul	7 - 12	(651) 642-0888
	City Academy	St. Paul	9 - 12	(651) 298-4624
	Community of Peace Academy	St. Paul	K - 12	(651) 776-5151
	Concordia Creative Learning Academy	St. Paul	K - 6	(651) 649-5795
	Cyber Village Academy	St. Paul	4 - 8	(651) 523-7170
	Face to Face Academy	St. Paul	9 - 12	(651) 772-5555
	High School for Recording Arts	St. Paul	9 - 12	(651) 287-0890
	Higher Ground Academy	St. Paul	K - 12	(651) 645-1000
	HOPE Academy	St. Paul	K - 6	(651) 796-4500
	Jennings Experiential High School	St. Paul	9 - 12	(651) 649-5403
	Metro Deaf School	St. Paul	PreK - 8	(651) 224-3995
	Minnesota Academy for Technology	St. Paul	9 - 12	(651) 389-0654
	Minnesota Business Academy	St. Paul	9 - 12	(651) 726-2100
	New Spirit School	St. Paul	K - 8	(651) 225-9177
	Nova Classical Academy	St. Paul	K - 6	(651) 227-8622
	Skills for Tomorrow High School	St. Paul	9 - 12	(651) 647-6000
	St. Paul Family Learning Center	St. Paul	K - 7	(651) 649-5402
Twin Cities Academy	St. Paul	6 - 8	(651) 205-4797	
Urban Academy	St. Paul	K - 3	(651) 215-9419	
William E. McGee Institute of Technology (MIT)	St. Paul	K - 6	(651) 659-0734	

