

Gov. Pawlenty Education Agenda Released at Press Conference

Charter Vision Editorial Board Member, Megan, an 11th grade student at Avalon in St. Paul, presented Governor Pawlenty the 1st Edition of the Charter Vision Newspaper during his press conference at the Govenor's Office on January 5, 2004.

At the press conference, Governor Pawlenty released his legislative agenda for 2004. Minnesota Association of Charter Schools Executive Director, Steve Dess attended the press conference with Megan.

Pawlenty's education agenda could have an impact on charter schools. Pawlenty's agenda includes support for charter school students' participation in extra-curricular activities at resident district schools and an increased number of charter schools.

Charter school leaders are watching closely as this legislative session addresses equal access to extra-curricular activities for charter school students. Similar legislation has been proposed in previous years, once passing in the House, and in a separate year, passing in the Senate. Dess believes that this could be the year for it to become law.

The House heard proposed legislation on February 18th. Students from Math and Science Academy and ARTech testified at the hearing committee meeting. According to DFL Representative Mindy Greiling, charter schools are a "non-partisan" issue, supported by both Democrats and Republicans.

Charter Vision Editorial Board Member, Megan, an 11th grade student at Avalon in St. Paul, presented Govenor Tim Pawlenty the 1st Edition of the Charter Vision



CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS BUMPER STICKER CONTEST

Deadline for submissions: March 22, 2004
Create a slogan for a bumper sticker using 7 words or less.
Slogan must include the words "charter school."

For more information check out the MACS Website:
www.mncharterschools.org

Proving Mom Wrong!!

By Angel, Skills for Tomorrow

I feel a great sense of accomplishment after moving from doing badly in school to doing great. A couple years ago I was at a school called South High. It is a big school, which means big trouble to me. I was a student that did not want to do anything or take any responsibility. I did not like the teachers there; therefore I did not go to class. My sister lived right across the street from the school so I would go there and "chill" with my friends when she was at work. I continued to do this until one day my school called my sister's house and told her that if I did not start coming to school, my mom was going to jail. Right then and there I knew I had to change. My first goal was to get out of that school because I knew I wasn't going to do anything at South. I went to my social worker for school options; he was going to send me to the Mall of Americas School. My friend Alisha told me about a school called Skills for Tomorrow. I told myself that when I started this school I was going to stay focused and be successful. I kept my promise because I am doing very well in school.

I took on this challenge originally so I wouldn't be responsible for my mother going to jail. But honestly, I also did it because my mother said I couldn't. My mother thought that I was going to come to this school and "get caught up with the boys." It kind of hurt me to know that my mother thought of me that way. This gave me encouragement, because I didn't want my mother to feel that way about me. I wanted to straighten up so badly, that I ignored every thing except what I had to do. In school I started out doing it for my mom, but after a while this school taught me that I have to do it for myself.

It was challenging because I was in a new environment. I am a shy person around new people because I don't know what they think of me. I stayed quiet and that was a problem for me. Teachers expect me to talk more. It was also hard getting to trust people. We have teamwork activities and I was kind of afraid to let people lead me and help me. After a while I started getting use to it and I started connecting more. What was also challenging was some of the work they gave me. It required lots of typing and I felt I was not going to get it done. I also had problems at home. My sister's house caught on fire and all my stuff was in there. I felt like giving up at that point. The school brought me things that I needed, for example clothes, which gave me, hope.

I made it through because I knew that I was important and that school is a pathway to my future. I just stayed focused and believed that I could do it. I kept my mind on my work and strived for better. I kept up with my assignments and I never gave up. I gave myself encouragement and I got some from my mom when she saw me doing well.

What I got out of this is a better life. A life that is going to fulfill its dreams and goals. I've made the honor roll every term since I have been at Skills for Tomorrow. I have also gotten the perfect attendance award each time. I now know that if I put my mind to it I can do anything I want. I've gotten support and encouragement, and I value my integrity. I am now continuing to do well so that I can stay on the honor roll, to make my mother happy and to know that I made the choice to change my life and fulfill my dream.

Student Reflects on Black History Month

By Archie, 5th grade, Harvest Preparatory School

Editors Note: Harvest Preparatory School is located in Minneapolis, MN and serves students in grades K-6.

Back History month is a very important event. It is held in February. A man named Dr. Carter G. Woodson created Black History Month. There are three reasons why Black History Month is important. First, Black History Month is a time to remember how African Americans have struggled through slavery and segregation. Secondly, Black History Month is a time to keep a sense of pride and identity of who you are. I also think that Black History Month is important because it helps us learn about our heritage.

A lot of Africans have been a victim of slavery and segregation. Black History Month is a time to remember those people who helped stop segregation and slavery. One of those people was Harriet Tubman. She was an African American woman who helped free more than 250 slaves. She was also a run away slave. Once slavery ended some slaves chose to continue to be slaves for their masters.

One can learn about African American History by reading books. One also can ask their relatives about their life experience. Other wise one can listen to the lyrics in certain songs. Sometimes the song explains their ancestor's life or culture. One of those songs is "I Know I Can" by Nas. That song explains that African American Children can be anything that they want to be if they work hard at it.

Black History Month helps us learn more about are heritage. Black History Month is an important event. It has been celebrated for over than 78 years. It's a period were you can spend time with your family and learn something. I'm glad that Dr. Woodson created Black History Month.

CPA Wins Another Award

By Adrian, 11th grade, CPA

Community of Peace Academy is a K-12 charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota

Community of Peace Academy (CPA), winner of the prestigious National School of Character Award among others, has won again. The US Department of Innovation and Improvement has chosen CPA as one of eight charter schools in America to feature in an upcoming publication. The booklet is part of a series of six booklets that include the study of the eight charter schools and what makes them successful in the "dog eat dog" world of public and private schools.

Dr. Karen Rusthoven, the founder and principal of CPA, nominated us after receiving an email on Friday, December 5th. About 250 schools were nominated and CPA was chosen as one of the eight to be featured.

On Friday, January 9th, Dr. Rusthoven received the call that we had won the honor. A site visit was scheduled for Tuesday, January 27th to gather information for the 15 page booklet about CPA.

Schools that were to be considered needed to have:

- shown achievement gains in the past three years
- met Adequate Yearly Progress in 2003 as measured by state accountability measures
- become a stable, reputable organization

This is yet another of CPA's great achievements. The achievements of our school have made the US Department of Education recognize CPA as one of the best charter schools in the nation. CPA is all of these things and more, as shown by the awards given to our school.

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Fourth and Fifth graders celebrate expedition at Schoolcraft Learning

By Heidi's Fourth and Fifth Grade Crew,
Schoolcraft Learning Community

The 4/5 crews from Schoolcraft Learning Community in Bemidji had an expedition on January 22 to showcase their hard work from their expedition A New World.

When our guests first arrived they entered into our ship, which we built based on the book To the Edge of the World by Michelle Torrey. We had read this book for literature circles during our expedition. The book was based on Magellan's journey around the world and was the backbone of our celebration. We made and served a meal to our guests similar to what the sailors ate on their voyage around the world. We served worm burgers, which squiggled down our guests throats, raw island turtle eggs (potatoes), deviled rats (eggs) complete with bones and fur, and maggot stew that wiggled away. Our beverage of the evening was three-month old barrel water (lemonade). Finally to end the meal we served slimy slug pudding, which left a slime trail across our guests' plates.

During the study of our expedition everyone researched an explorer. With the study of the explorers we did many projects. One of the projects was a song which each of the two crews made and sang after the dinner. Each song included instruments and a rhyme from each of us. After the songs, each crew split up to opposite sides of the ship to give individual presentations about the explorers. Every student also made a model head of their explorer out of paper mache and also a creative project having to do with their explorer. Some of the projects were model ships, display boards, games, and dioramas. All of our projects, along with our model heads, were on display at our exhibition. The exhibition was a lot of work, but it was a great success so it was all worth it.



Top: Schoolcraft students, teachers, and guests share a "sailor" meal.
Bottom: Schoolcraft student, Sominic, shows the guests the explorer's path.

Learning at the Urban Journalism Workshop

By LaNayia, 10th Grade, Community of Peace Academy

Last summer LaNayia, a sophomore at Community of Peace Academy, spent two weeks living on campus at the U. of St. Thomas taking part in the Urban Journalism Workshop. Community of Peace Academy is a K-12 charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota.

A learning experience that was important to me was the time that I spent at the University of Saint Thomas (UST) with the Urban Journalism Workshop (UJW). Fifteen students got to spend two weeks at UST studying journalism and I'm happy that I got a chance to be one of those people. I got a chance to learn so much about college students, journalism, and other teenagers like me, and that made my learning experience unique and memorable.

For two weeks we lived inside Brady Hall, one of the resident halls located on the St. Thomas campus. We received a key for our rooms, a student I.D., and a card to get into different places inside of the building. Before and after class we had a lot of time to meet and speak with college students. There was a student named Rex who spent a lot of time with members of our group and I later interviewed him for my article. I

spent a lot of time in the library on campus and in the computer lab in Brady Hall, so I got a chance to learn about many of the rules people at St. Thomas. I think that information will certainly be quite useful when I go to college a few years from now.

Taking classes at UST was so enjoyable because of the large variety of things to do. From 9am to 3pm we were learning something new. We visited the newsrooms of the Pioneer Press and the Star Tribune and got to attend their morning meetings. We traveled to the channel 5 news station and attended a live taping which gave us a view of how things work. I personally enjoyed making their meteorologist nervous and causing him to stumble over words. At the Guthrie Theater we went to see a play entitled 'Top Girls' and got to meet the actresses. Our class even made our own 3 minute broadcast which actually took my roommate and I about 3 hours to edit. UJW taught us a lot of fun things about the Journalism major at the University of St. Thomas that I still remember vivid details about.

I think the most important thing I learned at UJW came from the other teenagers there. In the beginning everybody felt they were so different. Nobody tried to come together which caused tension and conflict between people. Then our groups had a large group discussion. I remember it so well because I have never had such a serious discussion with other teenagers in a completely adult-free atmosphere. That discussion taught me a lot about the other people there with me. It was icing on the cake to know that we were all there because we wanted to be and not because we had to be. There were nights that I sat up past curfew in the lounge laughing and playing card games. During the two weeks we were there, we had maybe five or six pizza parties when we played games, watched movies and had fun for two or three hours at a time.

The time I spent at UST will always be important and memorable to me. I learned so much about so many people and I got a chance to enjoy myself. I learned about campus life and that makes me eager to go to college. Spending time in class doing activities, and being with such very different people, gave me a lot to remember for years to come.

Editorial Board Member Schools:

ARTech

Avalon

City Academy

Community of Peace Academy

Great Expectations

Harvest Preparatory

Math and Science Academy

MN Business Academy

MN Transtions Charter School

RiverBend Academy

Schoolcraft Learning Community

Sojourner Truth Academy

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Larry Werner,
Reporter, Star Tribune

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

TO Roger Buoen, Monica Moses and all the EDITORS at the STAR TRIBUNE for allowing the Charter Vision Editorial Board Members to attend your "Editor's Huddle" on February 12th. We learned a great deal during that meeting, and have already made changes to our paper based on your expertise. Thank you for your time and consideration. We admire the work that you do.

Liberty High Charter School Students Travel to Italy



Liberty High Director, Gary Knox, and students in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

By Diana, 11th grade, Liberty High

In January of 2004, students from Liberty High School in Blaine, Minnesota took a trip to Italy for 10 days. The students all saved up their money in order to take this once in a lifetime trip to a place none of them had ever seen before. Students were selected by the amount of interest they each showed in the opportunity and how responsible each individual was.

Liberty High Charter School takes several trips inside the United States and to Europe each year. In February, students will be in Germany, France, and Italy. Besides the other criteria, they are chosen on a first come first serve basis, but the amount of trips each year allows almost every student who wants it, the opportunity to travel.

In Italy, the students learned a lot about history, art, and culture. The students soaked it in wherever they went, even while gazing out the train windows while traveling from city to city. Liberty student Bill West said, "It was really enjoyable!" They were allowed the chance to see famous art up close and in person. They visited Pompeii and learned about its tragic history of being destroyed by a volcano in 79 A.D. The students also got to the Vatican. The students took gondola rides in Venice along with their teacher and his daughter, Gary Knox and Sara Knox. They also got to view the Sistine Chapel and see other art such as the famous statue of David that they had formerly only see in their schoolbooks. Besides that, they got to see the Leaning Tower of Pisa and walk

around by the ancient Coliseum where the gladiators used to fight. In addition to that, the students got to eat some real Italian food.

Throughout the whole trip they visited, Florence, Venice, Pisa, Naples, Pompeii and Rome. After the unforgettable trip, the students brought back memories and lessons that they will remember forever. All of the students were amazed that they got this opportunity and became even more stabilized in their sureness of choosing to go to a charter school. They got the chance to see places that most people will never get to see.

Do You Hear the Beat?

Learning Through Rhythms at Schoolcraft Learning Community

By Kelly Custer, Pioneer Staff Writer

Schoolcraft Learning Community is a K-8 charter school in Bemidji, Minnesota. This article was reprinted with the permission of the Bemidji Pioneer newspaper.

Conga and bongo drums, vase-shaped dumbbells and top-heavy djembe drums, resonated with the pressure of student hands on Wednesday, as 17 eighth grade students at Schoolcraft Learning Community learned to drum.

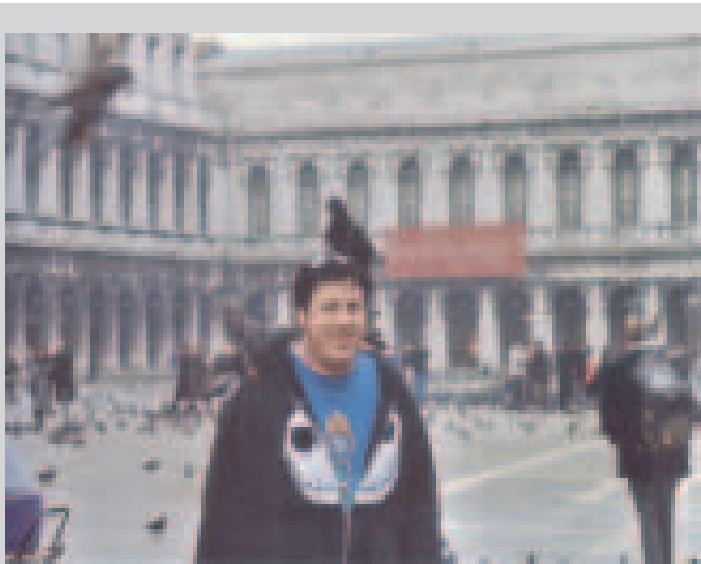
A State Arts Board K12 Challenge Grant enabled Schoolcraft to host professional musician Mick LaBriola for a week-long workshop. LaBriola, originally from Chicago, where he studied at American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, has lived in Minneapolis for the past 20 years. A skilled drummer, LaBriola works with a number of groups including Ensemble Espanol, a flamenco group, based out of NEIU (Northeastern Illinois University) in Chicago; the Maroons, a Caribbean group; Karibuni, a group with musicians from central and South Africa; and Maqam, an Arabic quartet. LaBriola brought his musical influences into the classroom, teaching the students a variety of rhythms.

Of the 17 eighth graders, fewer than one-third had experience playing a musical instrument.

The rest were able to pick up the rhythm by a call-and-repeat method. LaBriola would play, and the students, seated in a circle, would echo back the rhythm. Even the most rhythmically challenged of the group seemed to be picking up on the beat by Wednesday, the third day of practice. "His work here has been splendid," said Karen Bradley, teacher, "The kids are asking for more." Every student had an instrument to play. Aside from drums, there were percussion instruments such as the cowbell, triangle and shaker.

The rhythms they played together incorporate influences from Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, Bulgaria, Spain and the U.S. "Drumming isn't just about drumming, it's about a lot of things ... culture and music," LaBriola said. "It has a lot of profound implications other than music."

LaBriola said he is interested in teaching cultural awareness through his teaching workshops. "It's a way of sharing and breaking barriers that exist between cultures," he said. "It's also a way to exchange positive energy with each other. Art is a peaceful exchange between people. In order to play with people you have to have cooperation."



Liberty High student, Bill, experiences Italy's pigeons.



Liberty High students on their "trip of a lifetime."

Hand for Mother Earth

by Michael, 10th Grade, RiverBend Academy

If I had the strength to do what I please,
I would give a helping hand to mother earth.
Make the world right, how it's meant to be.
Instead of pollution there would be a great solution.
There would be no playing god; genetic engineering would d cease to exist.
There are those, who think they are wise and try to do good, but only cause harm.
Large corporations would not be, the environment is not a concern to them.
Atomic bombs would not be heard of.
Alternative energy sources would be realized.
Synthetic materials would not be made.

Nature would be a friend not an enemy.



8th grade drummers starting at top left: Ellen, Katie, Jeremiah, Jon, Jordan, Ben and Jessica

4LEGISLATIVE SHADOW DAY

By Jerritt, Skills For Tomorrow High School

On Thursday, December 11th, 1A students hosted the first Skills For Tomorrow Legislative Shadow Day. As a part of learning about state government, the students invited the state legislators from their districts to visit. Often adults believe it is students who need the opportunity to "shadow" an adult in the work setting, this time adults had the chance to learn what it is like to be a student at Skills for Tomorrow High School.

Each student from Phase 1A sent an invitation to his/her State Representative and Senator. Seven legislators were able to attend the 2-½ hour program. They were: Representative Neva Walker, Representative Cy Thao, Representative Jim Rhodes, Representative John Lesch, Senator Linda Berglin, Senator Lawrence Pogemiller, and Senator Julianne Ortman. Representative Matt Entenza sent a staff member to the event.

BIG FAT CAT VS. LITTLE BABY CAT

By Jon, Grade 5, Nerstrand Elementary

One day we were outside trying to put some things away before it snowed. I was in our shed and I heard something. I was not sure where it was coming from. Then I went to where the sound was but couldn't see anything. I heard the same sound again. I found what it was. It was a cat and he was huge. I have not seen that cat before.

So I was thinking and I said to myself, nope, that isn't our cat. I went into the barn to start my chores and then I realized that cat followed me in. I put that cat into a pail and put a lid over the top of it because I wanted to show that cat to my mom and my oldest brother, Ben. I went to the house and opened the door and Ben came right away, then my mom came over to the door.

I opened the lid and then my mom and my oldest brother Ben said that is not our cat and then it went into the garage and just

Before the event students were busy making welcome signs, buying supplies, setting up the room, and brainstorming things to talk about with the legislators. Many students showed up early on the morning of Shadow Day to help with final preparations and to meet their legislators. The students were very welcoming and many guided short tours of the school when the legislators arrived.

The legislators began the day by meeting the students from their district over a light breakfast. They then followed one of their students to Math class. Legislators sat with the students and participated in the math lesson. Many helped with the homework assignment and talked with the other students in the class about Skills for Tomorrow.

Next was Language! Students and legislators participated with teacher Amy

sat there. My mom said, "Don't touch him, he might have rabies." I said, "Yeah, he might. " I went back into the barn and went out of the feed room door and I saw that huge cat again and my baby cat was out there. Her name is Tippy. She was out there right by the big cat and then it happened.

I got closer to the big cat and it came running around the hut and tackled my baby cat. I went over to the big cat and kicked him because I was so mad at him. Then he ran away and Tippy didn't know where she was because the big cat rolled on her. I picked my baby cat up and brought her into the house and my mom looked at her and she said to bring her back into the barn and leave her alone. I said to my mom "She is hurt, can you help her?" My mom said to bring her outside. She healed in about a week. I don't know where the big cat went.

Skills for Tomorrow High Celebrates its 10th Year

Skills for Tomorrow High School is celebrating its ten year anniversary. March 4, 2004, 4 to 8 pm a reception is being held at 547 Wheeler, in St. Paul to celebrate this amazing milestone.

Tess Tiernan, Director, will be a speaker as well as parent representatives, students who currently attend Skills and our partners, the Teamsters, with out their support this would not be possible. The gathering is not only show casing our

Stedman in a typical lesson plan from the new curriculum. Finally, they wrapped up their day in Civics. They broke into small groups and talked with students about a variety of topics including education, charter schools, and careers. The groups also spent a lot of time talking about the bills the students had proposed for an assignment in Civics class.

This event was a great opportunity for state legislators to see what goes on at a charter school, and for the students to meet and talk to the person who represents them at the legislature. Hopefully, both student and legislator walked away having learned something new. Take a second to ask your student about Shadow Day, and don't be surprised if you actually get an answer.

-Me-

By Tia, Skills for Tomorrow
Phase 1A

Eyes the color of grass
Hair a light color brown
If this is a happy girl
Why on her face is a frown?

With the height of five feet eight
A body that's big and strong
Why does she have the feeling
That she will never belong

She goes to a good school
Where teens all act alike
Why does she suddenly feel
Like she is disliked?

Like all the other students
She always goes to class
But why is it that this girl
Finds it harder to pass

In this world
She knows just where she stands
She knows there is more to life
Than dating and holding hands

Simply, she is different
A person all her won
No longer a little girl
Still just not quite grown

Glory and Fame

By Sam, RiverBend Academy

The only thing people care about is glory
And fame
I know what I'm saying must sound kind
Of lame
But perfection and awards have become a
Tradition
People strive for worldwide recognition
There's more to life than popularity and
Money
Than being well known, well-liked, and
Funny
Wealth isn't defined by the size of your
Pocket book
By how well you can sing or how good
You look
Stars are showing off their fancy cares
And "bling-bling"
When there are people out there that don't
Have a thing
So if you only remember one thing,
Remember this rhyme
Think of the poor if you hit the big time

successful past, but also our bright future. Please support our literacy program by either bringing a new or used book.

COME CELEBRATE OUR SUCCESS!!

FOR MORE INFO OR RSVP CONTACT: Amy Stedman 651-647-6000 ext 40 Check out our website at:

<http://www.skillsfortomorrow.org>

-January-

By Bryan, Skills for Tomorrow, Service Learning B

Today is winter day of January 14th 2004.
There is white stuff outside on the ground.
When you look outside you see slushy roads.
There is hot coca waiting for you when you get cold.
When you go outside you should have on, a heavy coat, a claves on,
Snow boots on, hats on, you need these on to go out side.
Some kids will fall down and throw.
There are worm places to go into.
Your car will be frozen all night long.
You will see snowplows driving down the roads so that kids
Can get to school.
When winters comes there is gray skies out there.
Some cars will make black ice so people
Cannot see it at all.
On my home I will have a running Norse.
Have fun on the winter day on Wednesday January 14th 2004.

Seniors Affect Styrofoam Use

By Mai, 11th grade, CPA

Community of Peace Academy is a K-12 charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota.

A group of CPA seniors think recycling is important and that we should stop using Styrofoam products in the cafeteria. With Ms. Kersting's help, the students entered a national contest designed to increase environmental awareness.

Students across the country submitted proposals for making their schools more environmentally friendly. At CPA, the seniors concentrated on Styrofoam. Styrofoam is not good for the environment because it is not recyclable. Styrofoam also releases harmful chlorofluorocarbons into the ozone layer.

At breakfast, students are given Styrofoam trays. Oatmeal is served in Styrofoam bowls. Breakfast alone generates five large bags of trash every day. Sometimes we use

Styrofoam trays at lunch when the kitchen is short-staffed. Ms. Kersting's students think we should use plastic trays instead of Styrofoam.

The group made a video documentary about recycling in the school. They will be making educational presentations to individual classes. Ms. Kersting said, "The students would also like to replace plastic condiment containers and plastic yogurt containers." If the students win the contest CPA will be awarded \$10,000. The application materials were sent in on December 19th.

On January 15th, after the Styrofoam task force presented their project to the Community of Peace Academy school board, the Board of Directors approved the purchase of reusable trays for breakfast to eliminate the use of Styrofoam breakfast plates.

THE MEANING OF TRUE LOVE

By Victoria, RiverBend Academy

It is sharing and caring,
Giving and forgiving,
Loving and being loved,
Walking hand in hand,
Talking heart to heart.
Seeing through each others'eyes,
Laughing together weeping together,
And always trusting
And believing in one another.
For love that is shared
Is a beautiful thing.
It enriches the soul,
And makes the heart sing!

Snow

By Jessica, Grade 5, Nerstrand Elementary School

The chilly winter's breeze is starting to blow. The little white flakes are coming down as soft as the rain dripping from the sky. In a hurry the children put on their snowsuits. The grass is being covered by a blanket of whiteness. The river is a solid coat of ice that glistens with every move you make. Everything is still and quiet until...the children are outside.

A Hero In Our Midst

by Barbara Mahowald, Director of Odyssey

Editor's Note: Odyssey Charter School is a K-9 charter school in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota.

Kari Mitchell, office manager at Odyssey Charter School, donated one of her kidneys Friday, October 31, at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota to her brother-in-law, Cedric Cobb. This has been a three-year process for Kari and her family.

There were several times over the three years that Kari came close to donating the kidney, but because of her brother-in-law's health the surgery was put off. Cedric has been on dialysis for five years. Kari left on October 22 for the Mayo Clinic with a 95% chance that the surgery would proceed the next day. Cedric's antibodies to Kari's

Why I Like the E.C.H.O. Charter School

Editor's note: The following are Student Essays on why they like E.C.H.O. charter school, a K-12 charter school in Echo, MN established in 1997.

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

The E.C.H.O. Charter School means Every Child Has Opportunities. The great John Wooden, the most successful coach in college basketball history, said, "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail."

I believe this school will prepare us to succeed. Some good reasons for sending your kids here would be that E.C.H.O. has a great teacher to pupil ratio, less than 14:1. Also, not only do the teachers teach, they get to know the students and foster a respectful relationship with them.

If you're a kid you will love the "E.C.H.O. Student and Teacher Workdays" which happen about once per month. These are days students don't have to attend school unless you have incomplete work. So make sure and get your work done!

Another great thing is that every year students get to go on a big field trip to places like Chicago or Washington D.C. That is awesome!

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

Everyone seems to like the E.C.H.O. Charter School. I'm here to tell you my version of the story.

I like the E.C.H.O. Charter School; it is a wonderful school. The students generally get along very well. When you first come here, you are given a placement test for your personal math level. Depending on how well you do, you are placed in the appropriate class. Thus, you are neither bored out of your mind, nor in a class way over your head. We also help each other. We tutor, have teacher aides, and we sub for busy teachers. Everyone knows you can trust everyone else. The school works wonders!

This has been my point of view on why I like the E.C.H.O. Charter School.

-Winter-

By Nakita, Skills for Tomorrow Phase 1A

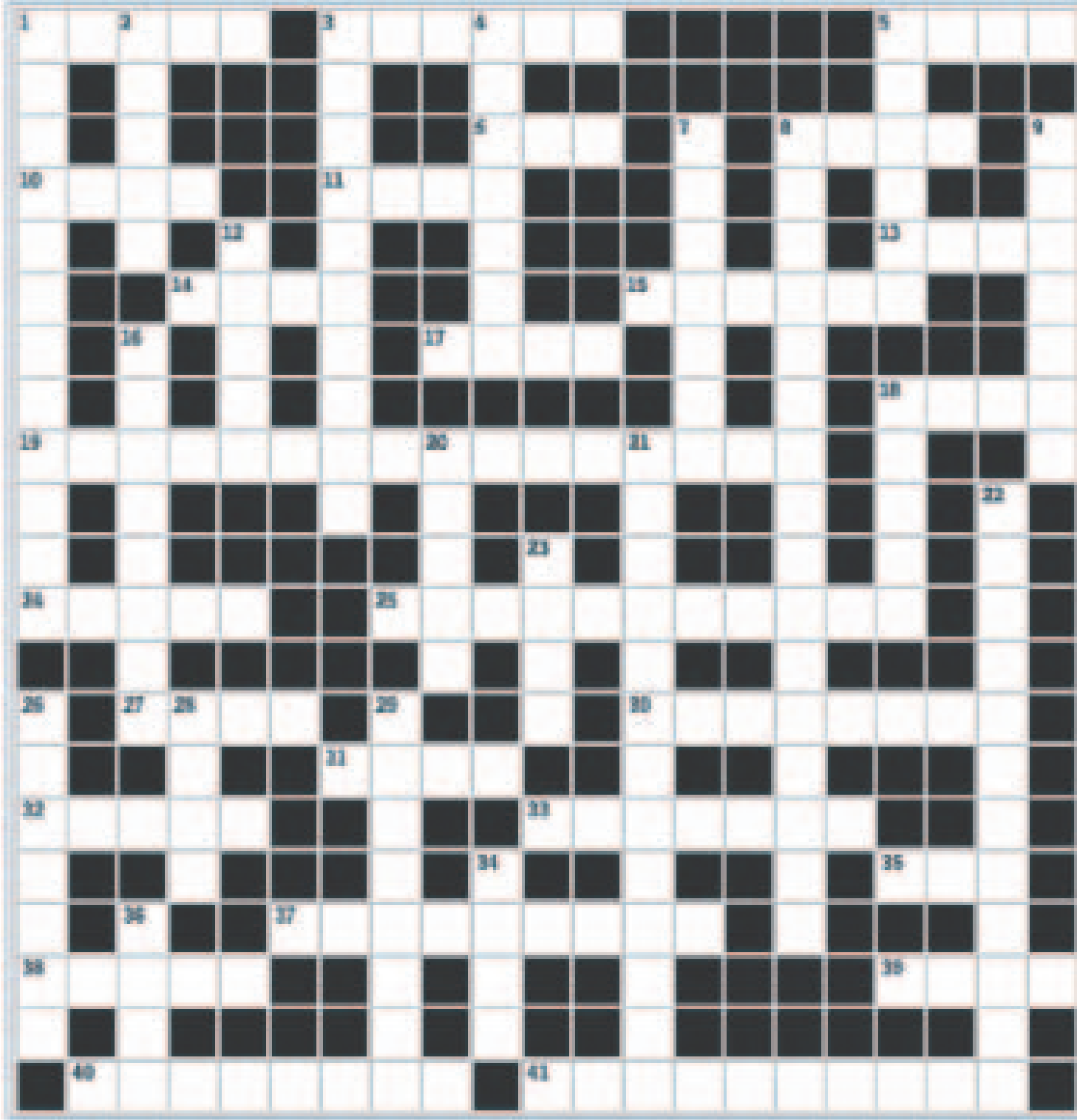
Today is the day the slushy snow will melt
From the sun shining far above
The cold ice will cool, and the windy wind will slow
All wet and crunchy outside the door
The sad faces from the flaky snow
And at dark it would be all foggy outside
But the white snow will show me the way
The ice is crispy, flaky and wet
And the wind is blowing as fast as a jet
As I walk in the house from the cold world outside

Black History Month Crossword

Test your knowledge of these great Americans

- Across:
- 1. She would not sit in the back of the bus
 - 3. Famous author Alice, writer of the acclaimed novel 'The Color Purple'
 - 5. Music Louis Armstrong played
 - 6. Boxing legend called 'The Greatest'
 - 8. American educator ___ McLeod Bethune
 - 10. Harlem or New York, for example
 - 11. Wynton Marsalis blows one
 - 13. Tennis great Arthur ___
 - 14. Abolitionist ___ Brown
 - 15. Actor Lawrence of Hollywood films
 - 17. Poet ___ Angelou
 - 18. Jackie Robinson's first position, second ___
 - 19. First African-American Supreme Court Justice
 - 24. Kweisi Mfume is the leader of this organization
 - 25. Reason for many marches
 - 27. Basketball star O'Neal, to fans
 - 30. First name of the black leader who wrote 'Soul on Ice'
 - 31. Nickname for musical legend Charlie Parker
 - 32. Music legend ___ Basie
 - 33. Place where Motown Records was founded
 - 35. TV star Bernie ___
 - 37. Comedian who had a hit show playing father Cliff Huxtable
 - 38. Popular black magazine
 - 39 . First name of 1-across
 - 40. Black History month
 - 41. Baseball's all-time home run champion

- Down:
- 1. Emancipation
 - 2. Famous TV mini-series and Alex Haley book
 - 3. George ___ Carver
 - 4. Festival featuring African-American culture
 - 5. Basketball superstar Michael ___
 - 7. Legendary gospel singer ___ Jackson



- 8. Speaker who said, 'I Have a Dream'
- 9. Last name of 30-across
- 12. Former ambassador to the United Nations and mayor of Atlanta
- 16. Abolitionist who escaped from slavery, Frederick ___
- 18. Player with a record 73 home runs in one season. Barry ___
- 20. Basketball legend and businessman ___ Johnson
- 21. She led slaves to the Underground Railroad
- 22. Founder of the Rainbow Coalition
- 23. Name for a female opera star, such as Leontyne Price
- 26. Best-selling musical artist ___ Jackson
- 28. Nickname for 41-across

- 29. It matched the Union against the Confederates
- 34. What Halle Berry does
- 36. Basketball superstar ___ Bryant
- 37.



6

Celebrating Community Elders

Annika, 11th Grade, ARTEch

ARTEch Charter School and Prairie Creek Community School have been hosting an Artist in Residence: Larry Long. He is part of the "Larry Long Project", as it has come to be known. The Project is funded by a collaborative grant from the MN State Arts Board.

Larry Long worked as an artist in resident with Prairie Creek this past month and is working with ARTEch now. His job is to utilize his artistic talents to create songs and presentation that honor and celebrate American heroes. He has performed his songs at many major celebrations throughout The U.S., Europe and other countries. He has received many awards, which include; In The Spirit of Crazy Horse Award, and LIN Fellowship.

In the Larry Long Project, elders were interviewed about their younger days. Larry Long then helped to compose and perform songs about their commmemorable lives. The final presentation included many arts-music, dance, and painting- and many forms of technology-such as lighting, video compellations, and building- to let the town know about their elders.

The community celebration at Prairie Creek Community School was a resounding success. And what made it so? The music was well-sung, the show flowed, the audience joined in. But the real success came in the heart- felt appreciation we witnessed between a younger generation and their elders.

What will ARTEch's community celebration look and sound like? That's a good question according to Bob Gregory-Bjorklund, ARTEch Arts Coordinator. Certainly there'll be great music, wonderful singers and one-of-a-kind lyrics created by artist-in- residence Larry Long and ARTEch students about three elders of our community. And there'll be a strong video and photography component to support the "Tech" in ARTEch. But the most important part of this celebration will be that same connection with and respect for our community and its revered elders.



Prairie Creek students celebrate elders from the community of Castle Rock through song.

Summer Days

By Lauren, Grade 5, Nerstrand Elementary School

Summer Days, Summer Days

Spending a day at the pool

Just trying to keep cool

Summer Day, Summer Days

Thinking cold thoughts like snow

Come on, don't hesitate, let's go, go, go,

Summer Days, Summer Days.

"ERAGON" Book Review

By Hallie, Grade 5, Nerstrand Elementary School

I finished a very exciting book over Thanksgiving break. It is called Eragon. It is about a boy named Eragon, who finds a stone. Well, he soon finds out it is not just any stone. It is a dragon's egg. Eragon is frightened at first, but after a while Eragon gets attached to the little dragon. It is so tiny and cute. What harm could it possibly do? Lots. What really amazes me about this book is, it is written by a fifteen year old. If this book sounds interesting to you, they have it at most libraries and bookstores. The author is Christopher Paolini.

RiverBend Acadmey Celebrates Presentation Night

Editors note: Riverbend Academy is a project-based school located in Mankato, MN serving students in grades 6-12. Project-based education is a specific learning model where students pursue projects based on their interests. Through those projects, students earn credits which are applied to the state's graduation standards.

RiverBend Academy Presentation night was Feb. 12, 2004. There was a lot going on at this Presentation Night. We had our very first play of the year here. It was called "

Blessings" and it was directed by Carey Martin- McLaughlin. There were seven students performing in it, they're as followed Claire Stoltman-Hamilton who played Rene, a freshmen in high school with severe dyslexia; Aubrey Stoltman-Hamilton who played Maggie, Rene's mother; Matt Croce who played Randy, Maggie's Brother; Zachary Redfield who played Charlie, Randy's best friend from High School; Coley Deegan who played Angela, Charlie's girlfriend; Catlin Kloss who played Katie, Charlie's daughter; Tom Will who played Jesse, a twenty-nine year old craftsman. It was performed as a Talk

Radio play. Out of 5 stars I would give them 4 stars on their performance.

There was also award given to students from the staff members, the following got the awards, Bryan Croce for Academic Achievement (9th grade), April Edwards for Best Effort Shown (12th grade), Laura Saari for Best Effort (10th grade), Jeff Stevens for Academic Achievement (8th grade), Jenni Stevens for Project Completion (10th grade) and Tom Will for Academic Achievement (12th grade).

Also before the presenting started there was a GREAT performance by Lucid Dreams, which played two songs for us. The members of that band are Sarah Bush on Bass, Matt Croce on Guitar, Zach Redfield on Keyboard & Vocals, and Caitlin Kloss on Vocals.

There were about thirty projects that were presented last night. The projects were as original as the students. Projects range from Pearl Harbor by Tyler Anderson to Jerry Garcia by Cody Ybarra.

All readers are invited to join us at the next presentation night on April 1, 2004. There will be a potluck and lots of fun and entertainment and another chance to see all the RBA students' creativity!

JOIN CHARTER VISION

Become a WRITER

Become an EDITOR

MAKE HISTORY

Submission Deadline for the next edition of CHARTER VISION is APRIL 2nd, 5 p.m.

The Editorial Board meets the 2nd Thursday of each month from 11:30 - 1:00 at the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools. If you'd like to attend call Leisa Irwin at 651-644-0432 or send an email to newspaper@artech.k12.mn.us.



"Blessings" by Mary Hall Surface! The cast includes from left to right; in front, Caitlin and Coley; behind from left to right, Aubrey, Claire, Zachary, Matt, and Tom ...directed by advisor Carey Martin-McLaughlin(not pictured)

One Second More

By Chris, 7th Grade, New Century Charter School

Just one second more, one more minute in the day, is the thoughts I have when I see your face.
I say hello as you walk by, but you say nothing for you are shy. The same thoughts come back that I can't ignore as I think to myself "Just one second more."
I want you back, 'cause I miss you so much, I miss the feeling of your gentle touch. The look of my hand when it's held tight in yours, then the thought comes back just one second more.
Just one second more, only a few minutes to go. If someone asked if you missed me would you say yes or no? If I were to cry would you wrap me tight in your arms? If I were scared would you guard me from harm? Yet still the thought arrives again, how many minutes will I have to spend?
I just got off the phone with your mom. She said you're hurt, and they aren't sure you'll live long. I rush to the room that read, EMERGENCY on the door. When I hear the Doctor say, "He hasn't got but one second more."
We walk into the room to say our goodbyes. Your mom whispers, "Hurry, you don't have much time." My mouth goes dry, my heart starts to pound! I try to speak with your family gathered 'round.
I spit out the words "I love you so much," as my eyes fill with tears and my heart is crushed. I try to be strong I try not to shout, "What does God want you for!" Then the thought makes me freeze.....just one second more.
I think about what life is worth, as I lay flowers on the fresh mound of earth. I go back and think about the times that we had, when the thought hit me why I shouldn't be sad.
For if God hadn't given me that one second in time I wouldn't have gotten to say

The Road

By Bryan, 11th Grade, ARTech Charter School

The road we travel is long
We don't know where ours leads
All we can do is try to stay on the path and not stray

The gravel can be sharp, and the dirt can be smooth
Wind can be harsh, and breeze can revive
We must go through the blizzard to reach the sun
If we do stray from our road we can ask for the way
People have walked your road before
And they know the path to take

Each corner and bend in the road will show us new things
Once we round a turn we cannot go back and do it again
We must keep our eyes open so we don't miss a minute of the journey

Cooperation Makes Us Unique

By Joy, 11th Grade and Bethany, 11th Grade, PACT Charter School

Editors Note: PACT charter school is a K-12 charter school in Anoka, Minnesota.

We feel that PACT Charter School holds special meaning to a lot of people. PACT stands for Parents Allied with Children and Teachers. If you would sit in on a steering committee meeting, you would see parents, teachers, and students all voting on changes and improvements to the school. Everyone here has a voice.

Parents form the foundation of our school; they make up the boards, oversee the curriculum, manage the teachers that are hired, and are involved in many other

aspects of our education.

PACT Charter School is a small school, with about 150 students attending the secondary (7-12th grade) school. Because of the size, each student receives a lot of personal attention from teachers, most of whom could name every student in the school and know them personally. Teachers work side by side with parents and students to best achieve each student's personal goals.

The students at our school are encouraged to achieve a higher level of academics. The teachers are very willing to help us

with anything, even if it means having students contact them at home. They also come up with creative motivations such as games and award systems. As students, we feel we are not only being educated, but are building life skills and lasting memories.

Overall, our school is very unique. The cooperation between parents, teachers, and students is very special because it combines all of our ideas and opinions to best meet our needs and to achieve a greater goal. PACT Charter School is true to its name: Parents Allied with Children and Teachers.

Chance

By Ben, 10th Grade, ARTech Charter School

Chance told me I was trapped
Chance told me it was true
Chance didn't tell me what was this or what was that
Chance left that to you

an opportune glance showed me the walls
and showed me the hands that were building them
a lucky guess found the window, and that guess showed me more there, stuck to the bars, were the hands I had seen before.

luck showed me the prison I'd found
Chance showed me how I'd built it
Opportunity knocked once or twice but the hands that locked
The door wouldn't get it

Chance told me I was trapped
Chance told me it was true
It didn't tell me what was this or what was that
Chance left that to you.

She wondered if there was somebody home,
She figured that someone was there
She realized that someone was all on their own
And found the bars that chance knew were there

I saw the hands reach out through the bars
I saw the hands that reached from the cold
The hands and the body attached to it
Dying for somebody to hold

Chance told me I was trapped
Chance told me it was true
Now I know that that's this and this is that
And I'm all alone with this baneful view.

You who know nothing, you who wish more
I can show you your truth, but first
Tell me this, who is the lucky one...
Me? Or you?

Friend for Eternity

By Adam, New Century Charter School

Friend for Eternity
You are my friend for eternity,
You are the chosen one.
You are the sanctified,
So live life and have fun.

You are the Holy Creator,
The one who created earth.
The great one to save us,
That Mary gave birth.

if

By Maddie, 11th Grade, ARTech Charter School

if happiness was forever
and money grew on trees
if everyone found true love
and everyone said please

if roses weren't red
then violets couldn't be blue
but if you could say you loved me
then i could say it too

gentle morning breeze
to drift away the pain
wash away the hurt
with a quiet drop of rain
kiss away the tears
a night light to calm your fears
happiness and love
and heavenly thoughts
of angels above

In His Eyes

By Samuel, RiverBend Academy

While all the other kids point and laugh at Him
I wonder what it would be like if the World were so dim
Just once I wish they could see through His eyes
Being picked on and made fun of until he Cries
They push him down and steal his glasses
He falls victim to daily recess bashes
While we're hanging out at games and Malls
He sits in his room alone and bawls
The jocks steal his money
And they think its funny
If only they weren't so mean if only they were wise
Maybe they could have seen life in his Eyes
He finally stuck up for himself which I Think is fine
I just never imagined he'd reenact Columbine

PARENTS

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!

Check out our online survey...

at

www.mncharterschools.org

after March 5, 2004

Let us know that youthink.

Representative from Matt Entenza's Office Visits Sojourner Truth

By Varneisha and Jasmine, 5th grade, Sojourner Truth

On February 2, 2004, a representative from Matt Entenza's office visited Sojourner Truth Academy. The representative, Ann Miller, agreed to grant an interview.

Ms. Miller really likes her job, she thinks it is rewarding. She believes academics are important, and she supports charter schools. She thinks they give students more freedom to choose. She said they are trying to develop bills to help charter

schools get more money.

Ms. Miller has worked for Matt Entenza for two years. When she started working, she worked on campaigns to help people become elected. She would like to focus on education and help kids succeed. She believes uniforms and learning a second language are important. Ann Miller says she likes working for Matt Entenza and states that her hero is Eleanor Roosevelt.

Minnesota Public Charter Schools



**“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

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

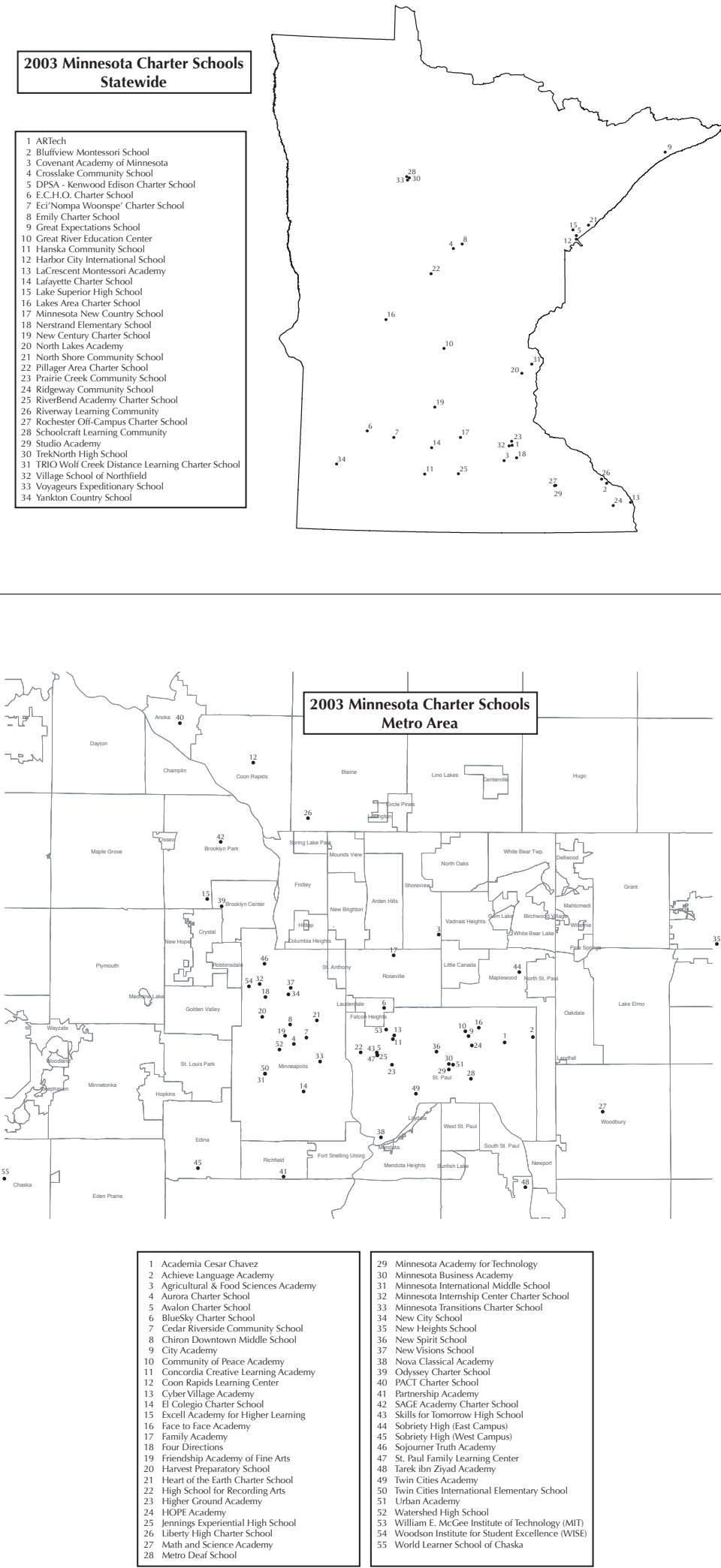
In over a decade, Minnesota charter schools have grown to 88 operating schools serving over 14,000 students across Minnesota. For those interested in enrolling in a charter school, applications are received year round if space is available. Charter schools are extremely diverse in the populations they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

- Charter schools are K-12 public schools that provide choice for parents and students within the public school system. Charter schools are:
- mission driven—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,
(Sponsors include school districts, colleges, nonprofit organizations, and foundations.)
 - independently managed by an elected school board.

The Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) is a membership organization representing 84 of the 88 charter schools in Minnesota. MACS provides support services and technical assistance to new and existing charter schools. Through MACS, member schools work to advance quality and choice in public education.

Minnesota Charter Schools By Area

Greater Minnesota	ARTech Bluffview Montessori School Covenant Academy of Minnesota Crosslake Community School DPSA - Kenwood Edison Charter School E.C.H.O. Charter School Eci’Nompa Woonspe’ Charter School Emily Charter School Great Expectations School Great River Education Center Hanska Community School Harbor City International School LaCrescent Montessori Academy Lafayette Charter School Lake Superior High School Lakes Area Charter School Minnesota New Country School Nerstrand Elementary School New Century Charter School North Lakes Academy North Shore Community School Pillager Area Charter School Prairie Creek Community School Ridgeway Community School RiverBend Academy Charter School Riverway Learning Community Rochester Off-Campus Charter School Schoolcraft Learning Community Studio Academy TrekNorth High School TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School Village School of Northfield Voyageurs Expeditionary School Yankton Country School	Northfield Winona Faribault Cross Lake Duluth Echo Morton Emily Grand Marais Waite Park Hanska Duluth LaCrescent Lafayette Duluth Osakis Henderson Nerstrand Hutchinson Forest Lake Duluth Pillager Castle Rock Houston Mankato Minnesota City Rochester Bemidji Rochester Bemidji Lindstrom Northfield Bemidji Balaton	6 - 12 PreK - 8 7 - 12 K - 8 K - 12 K - 12 K - 12 PreK - 6 K - 8 7 - 12 K - 6 9 - 12 PreK - 8 K - 8 7 - 12 9 - 12 7 - 12 K - 5 7 - 11 6 - 9 PreK - 6 9 - 12 K - 5 PreK - 5 7 - 12 PreK - 12 9 - 12 K - 8 Ages 15 - 21 9 - 12 9 - 12 K - 12 9 - 10 9 - 12	(507) 663-8806 (507) 452-2807 (507) 333-5482 (218) 692-5437 (218) 728-9556 (507) 925-4143 (507) 697-9055 (218) 763-3401 (218) 370-1700 (320) 258-3117 (507) 439-6225 (218) 722-7574 (507) 895-4054 (507) 228-8943 (218) 529-2468 (320) 859-5302 (507) 248-3353 (507) 333-6850 (320) 234-3660 (651) 982-2773 (218) 525-0663 (218) 746-3875 (507) 645-9640 (507) 454-9566 (507) 387-5524 (507) 689-2844 (507) 282-3325 (218) 586-3284 (507) 529-1662 (218) 444-1888 (651) 213-2017 (507) 663-8990 (218) 586-8347 (507) 734-2677
Metro Area	Agricultural & Food Sciences Academy Coon Rapids Learning Center Excell Academy for Higher Learning Family Academy Liberty High Charter School Math and Science Academy New Heights School Odyssey Charter School PACT Charter School Partnership Academy SAGE Academy Charter School Sobriety High (East Campus) Sobriety High (West Campus) Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy World Learner School of Chaska	Little Canada Coon Rapids Brooklyn Park Roseville Blaine Woodbury Stillwater Brooklyn Center Anoka Richfield Brooklyn Park Maplewood Edina Inver Grove Heights Chaska	9 - 12 Ages 16 - 21 K - 6 PreK - 9 Ages 16 - 21 6 - 12 K - 12 K - 9 K - 12 K - 6 9 - 12 K - 5 1 - 6	(651) 415-5370 (763) 862-9223 (763) 533-0500 (651) 697-1740 (763) 786-4799 (651) 578-7507 (651) 439-1962 (763) 971-8200 (763) 421-8475 (612) 866-3630 (763) 315-4020 (651) 748-5256 (952) 831-7138 (651) 457-7072 (952) 368-7398
Minneapolis	Aurora Charter School Cedar Riverside Community School Chiron Downtown Middle School El Colegio Charter School Four Directions Friendship Academy of Fine Arts Harvest Preparatory School Heart of the Earth Charter School Minnesota International Middle School Minnesota Internship Center Charter School Minnesota Transitions Charter School New City School New Visions School Sojourner Truth Academy Twin Cities International Elementary School Watershed High School Woodson Institute for Student Excellence (WISE)	Minneapolis Minneapolis	PreK - 4 K - 8 6 - 8 9 - 12 9 - 12 K - 4 K - 6 K - 12 5 - 8 9 - 12 K - 12 K - 6 K - 6 K - 6 K - 6 PreK - 4 9 - 12 K - 4	(612) 870 -3891 (612) 339-5767 (612) 341-7306 (612) 728-5728 (612) 588-0183 (612) 879-6703 (612) 381-9743 (612) 331-8862 (612) 821-6470 (612) 722-5470 (612) 722-9013 (612) 623-3309 (612) 706-5566 (612) 588-3599 (612) 821-6470 (612) 871-4363 (612) 522-4022
Saint Paul	Academia Cesar Chavez Achieve Language Academy Avalon Charter School BlueSky Charter School City Academy Community of Peace Academy Concordia Creative Learning Academy Cyber Village Academy Face to Face Academy High School for Recording Arts Higher Ground Academy HOPE Academy Jennings Experiential High School Metro Deaf School Minnesota Academy for Technology Minnesota Business Academy New Spirit School Nova Classical Academy Skills for Tomorrow High School St. Paul Family Learning Center Twin Cities Academy Urban Academy William E. McGee Institute of Technology (MIT)	Saint Paul Saint Paul	K - 7 K - 8 9 - 12 7 - 12 9 - 12 K - 12 K - 6 4 - 8 9 - 12 9 - 12 K - 12 K - 6 9 - 12 PreK - 8 9 - 12 9 - 12 K - 8 K - 6 9 - 12 K - 7 6 - 8 K - 3 K - 6	(651) 778-2940 (651) 738-4875 (651) 649-5495 (651) 642-0888 (651) 298-4624 (651) 776-5151 (651) 649-5795 (651) 523-7170 (651) 772-5555 (651) 287-0890 (651) 645-1000 (651) 796-4500 (651) 649-5403 (651) 224-3995 (651) 389-0654 (651) 726-2100 (651) 225-9177 (651) 227-8622 (651) 647-6000 (651) 649-5402 (651) 205-4797 (651) 215-9419 (651) 659-0734



Upcoming Charter School Events

LEARN ABOUT MINNESOTA’S CHARTER SCHOOLS: Schools of Opportunity, Innovation, and Growth

Wednesday, April 7, 2004 & Wednesday, May 5, 2004
3:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Bandana Square Conference Center, 1021 Bandana Blvd. E., Saint Paul, MN

Schools will share **approaches to education, potential for students, and opportunities for employment.**



CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK:
Join Minnesota Charter Schools in Celebration
Friday, April 30, 2004 (evening) - Saturday, May 1, 2004 (all day)
3rd Annual **Mall of America** Event