

## **CAS PROGRAM RECOGNITION BANQUET PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS**

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### **Six to Six Interdistrict Magnet School, Bridgeport**

Program Title: Classroom Walkthrough Team

Program Description:

The Six to Six Interdistrict Magnet School Classroom Walkthrough Initiative is one that is teacher directed. A group of staff members have worked to ensure that monthly walkthroughs occur so that staff can walk into each others classrooms with a focused eye on instructional practices and student learning. Because of the diligence of the team, the school has been able to have every classroom and all staff members participate and be able to have meaningful discussions regarding literacy, mathematics, and responsive classroom effectiveness. Through their leadership, all staff members are now open to this initiative and are having valuable discussions centered on teaching and student achievement and UCLA's School Management Program has now included their work as a chapter in a new book they are publishing regarding CWTs.

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### **Columbus School, Bridgeport**

Program Title: Columbus School Spanish & Portuguese Bilingual and ESL Program

Program Description:

Columbus School is comprised of approximately 840 students whereby 70% speak a language other than English at home. Our Bilingual program is composed of 20% of our school student body. The program provides instruction to students in their respective native languages that include Spanish and Portuguese. The lessons presented are designed to enable students to incorporate their heritage, language, and traditions while acquiring the English language. The Bilingual and ESL program is a program designed to be sensitive to the student's overall needs and strives to minimize the "culture shock" that immigrant children experience by providing skilled teachers who are able to speak and instruct in the students' native language. We take every opportunity to incorporate the student's culture and traditions to our curriculum. Our goal has been to establish a sense of pride and community among all of our students. As our students acclimate to their school environment, the staff and School Education Plan takes every opportunity to meet each student's individual needs. As a result of our successful Bilingual/ESL program, the English Language Learner (ELL) subgroup of students has achieved an exigent target. According to the Connecticut Mastery Test and No Child Left Behind Act, our ELL subgroup has been highlighted for achieving "Adequately Yearly Progress" this year on the Connecticut Mastery Test. We are confident that our students are receiving optimal instruction in an environment that fosters rich cultural and language experiences. Columbus School strongly feels that the Bilingual/ESL program greatly contributes to the success of our entire community and we are proud to celebrate our success!

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### **Burnham School, Bridgewater**

Program Title: Burnham School Student Council

#### Program Description:

In an effort to promote positive school culture and to provide interaction among our K-5 students, a student council was formed under the leadership of our fourth and fifth grade teachers: Mrs. Niesobecki and Mrs. Immohr. The democratic process was modeled as students nominated, campaigned, and voted for students who exemplified good leadership qualities, creative solutions to school problems, and an interest in serving the greater community.

Among the projects undertaken in the 2006-2007 school year were:

Town-wide UNICEF drive, collecting over \$1,700;

Thanksgiving food drive to benefit the local Loaves and Fishes program;

Adoption of a single-parent family, providing holiday cheer and needed items;

School wide project creating Valentines for veterans in state hospitals;

Pencil sale during lunch to foster school spirit;

Production and performance of an Earth Day play for the entire school population.

The student council members provided leadership while encouraging the participation by all members of the school community. Plans are being made this year to include the above activities, as well as school beautification in conjunction with our town Garden Club, correspondence/boxes to our military in Iraq, and extending the Student Council membership to representatives in grades K-3, in addition to our fourth and fifth graders.

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### **Ivy Drive School, Bristol**

Program Title: Just The Facts, Ma'am

#### Program Description:

Several years ago, Ivy Drive teachers realized that our students understood the concepts of mathematics, but struggled to solve problems quickly and accurately because they didn't know their math facts. Based on Joe Friday's famous line from "Dragnet", students need to know "Just the Facts, Ma'am" to beat their scores from the day before when they do their Mad Minute Math tests, and to beat our special Mystery Guest each Friday. Dr. Vojtek, principal, gets on the intercom at 1:15 p.m. on Friday's during several targeted months (i.e., October, January, February, May). She begins by playing about 30 seconds of the Dragnet theme song and then asks the Mystery Guest 3 questions: (1) What are 3 clues so students can guess who you are? (We have had guests from the Mayor, to the Superintendent, to scout masters, teachers, and parent volunteers); (2) What have you been doing to get ready for this big event? and, (3) What makes you think you can beat the Ivy Drive Math Champs? Then the Mystery Guest tells who he/she is and any last words of wisdom before everyone takes the test. After 15 minutes, Dr. Vojtek and the Mystery Guest get back on the intercom and announce the Mystery Guest's scores. The Mystery Guests talk about why he or she got each grade level score (e.g., didn't pay attention to the signs; should have realized that  $2+3$  is the same as  $3+2$  because they

belong to the same number family). Often, we can hear the students who beat the Mystery Guests yelling through the halls of the school when the scores are announced. Teachers send down the names of the students who beat the Mystery Guest, and certificates are presented to the students who beat the Mystery Guest. We have found this to be a fun way to help student practice their math facts.

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### **King Street Primary School, Danbury**

Program Title: Character Counts at King Street Primary School

#### Program Description:

Character Counts at King Street Primary School is a school-wide initiative focusing on character traits. Each week a different character trait is explained and discussed in all classes. The students participate in reading and writing lessons focusing on a character trait. We have a weekly schedule and will do them in the following order --- Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Citizenship, Fairness, Caring, Friendship, Perseverance, Self-Discipline, Acceptance, Compassion, and Cooperation. The Principal introduces the trait on Monday over the intercom and on Tuesday grade two students read examples over the intercom. Grade one students read examples of the trait on Wednesday and on Thursday Kindergarten students take their turn. Every Friday a Celebrity Staff Member reviews the character trait over the intercom. There is a Character Counts bulletin board display located in the main hallway.

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### **Memorial Elementary School, East Hampton**

Program Title: Responsive Classroom at Memorial Elementary School

#### Program Description:

The Responsive Classroom program at Memorial School is one that the entire school uses. The program helps us to create a safe, stimulating, challenging and enjoyable experience for everyone at Memorial School. The students participate in Morning Meeting and they have RC activities in the lunch room and out at recess. It is a proactive program that allows the students to learn what is expected of them and each behavior is modeled. The program also helps parents understand child development so they can best support their children's learning at home and at school.

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### **Thomas S. O'Connell School, East Hartford**

Program Title: Targeted Assisted Growth in Reading

#### Program Description:

K-2 classroom teachers, along with tutors, paraeducators, and special education staff, provide daily small group instruction for all children based on their greatest area of weakness. Students receive targeted assistance in one of the five key areas of reading instruction as defined by the National Reading Panel, Put Reading First (CIERA).

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**Robert J. O'Brien School, East Hartford**

Program Title: Cross Age Peer Tutoring through EIP

**Program Description:**

Through the program we identify students in the upper grades to receive training on effective tutoring strategies. Once trained, the students are assigned through our Early Intervention Process (EIP) to work with an identified student on a specific skill as part of their intervention plan. Tutor availability and times to work with students on a particular skill are cross referenced to allow for curricular cohesion for both parties.

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**Lillie B. Haynes School, East Lyme**

Program Title: School Improvement Process (SIP) Team

**Program Description:**

The School Improvement Process (SIP) Team was created to guide our staff toward the mission of continuously improving student learning for all children. Our SIP Team consists of a first grade teacher, a fourth grade teacher, a special education teacher, the language arts consultant, and the principal. Over the past three years, this Team has met with experts on school improvement process, analyzed student performance, researched "best practices", planned and implemented an action plan, organized professional development activities for staff, and evaluated the success of the action plan. As a result of the SIP Team's efforts, our entire staff has engaged in the process of sharing "best practices" as well as used clearly defined benchmarks to measure student performance by grade level. The SIP Team's action plan outlines the steps which provide teachers with formal opportunities to discuss the planning and implementation for sharing these "best practices", observe each other teach, and reflect and debrief on the practices employed during the observations. Further, as part of the action plan, teachers have collaborated with paraprofessionals individually and during staff meetings to share successful instructional practices which have contributed to improved student learning. Using clearly defined benchmarks has helped to focus our efforts on specific areas to improve and the degree of improvement needed. Since the creation of the SIP Team in 2004, our students have significantly improved both their literacy and math skills as measured by district grade level assessments and the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT).

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**Prudence Crandall School, Enfield**

Program Title: Memorial Day Recognition Program for Veterans

**Program Description:**

1. Prudence Crandall honored as many as 40+ local veterans. Children sang patriotic songs, created posters and banners, read poems and books as well as wrote personal thank you notes to veterans. Chorus and band performed; taps were played. Almost everyone wore red, white & blue and carried a small American Flag. An Honor Guard began and ended the ceremonies and the Scouts led the Pledge. Fighter jets flew over during the program and each Veteran came up to say their name and branch of service. Some of the

people had just come back home from Iraq. Also, students wrote letters to soldiers presently serving our country in Afganistan which were given to Congressman Courtney to be delivered.

2. We feel our program was exceptional! Feedback from the Veterans, PTO, staff, students and the community were all very positive. Several Veterans said that they had NEVER been to such a wonderful program in which they were honored. Our school received many complimentary phone calls and visits from families about the impact of the program. Prudence Crandall received a letter of appreciation form the Enfield Veterans' Council thanking Mrs. Joanne Pedro whom organized the program and the Veteran's requested that we conduct another program next year. They also noted that our program was fantastic and some tears were shed by some of the Veterans that attended.

3. Other schools have the ability to easily implement such a program by first discussing it with their school principal and staff. The next step would then be to contact your local Veteran Posts to coordinate with them. Involve the PTO as well as all of the teaching staff and students. We did also submit an article in our local newspaper inviting Veterans that provided the necessary information to attend the Memorial Day Program.

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### **Prudence Crandall School, Enfield**

Program Title: Partnership with the Mark Twain Adult Day Care Center of Enfield

#### Program Description:

In order to reach out into our community, we have paired our students up with senior citizens from the Mark Twain Adult Day Care Center to build literacy and strong character skills. Monthly, the students travel to the adult day care center to read stories, play learning games, sing, dance, and interview and write about their senior buddy. As a culmination activity, the students use their interview questions to write a creative, detailed biography of their senior buddy's life. They present and read this gift of writing to their buddy at the last meeting in June. The students certainly bring smiles to all of the seniors at this center. The students love learning about their lives, getting to know their buddy, and enriching their literacy skills.

Students are taught that it is great to become involved in the community that they live in. As a result, this community program does more than just teach skills. The students have made an active and social commitment by getting to know the members of our society and form lasting and life-long relationships.

Any school could replicate this program by finding a senior center in their community that would like the opportunity to have students come in to build their learning and social skills. This program continues to enhance our school goals of kindness, respect and responsibility.

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## **Burr Elementary School, Fairfield, Connecticut**

Program Title: The Music Program

### Program Description:

The vocal music program at Burr Elementary School not only brings music into the hearts and lives of our students, but it also serves as the unifying cultural cornerstone of the Burr Elementary School community. We created this on our first day as a new school in 2004, when we opened with staff and children from many different schools, so it was important to form as one Burr family. The opening assembly began and ended with song, as does every one of our assemblies throughout the year.

"I don't know of any better way to join hearts and to unite a group of people than through music and song," says Carole Maravich, the vocal music teacher at Burr Elementary School. All students have music each week for two half-hour classes, which include movement, Orff instruments, and recorder instruction, but learning to be comfortable using one's singing voice is paramount in our music program. We have many school-wide celebrations based on musical history, diversity and song. One of our favorites is our traditional Holiday Songfest in December, where students narrate the cultural traditions attached to the songs they sing.

Our music program integrates units of study with various grade-level curricula. These include the first-grade's authentic Native American powwow; the first-grade's Reading Incentive Celebration, which celebrates different genres of literature and relates them to music and song; the third-grade study of folktales, where students act out authentic African and Japanese tales using movement, instruments, and song. The performances are recorded for later viewing in our library media center. In addition, throughout the year there are many other lessons in math, language arts, and diversity that are extended through unifying learning projects in music.

All fifth-graders belong to the Burr Choir, which meets once a week and more often in preparation for concerts. The students learn and perform music in both two- and three-part harmony and learn self discipline, teamwork, and the art of doing one's personal best in performance. In addition to the choir experience, fifth-graders have the opportunity to be selected for membership in the Burr Ensemble, a smaller group of students who meet once or twice a week before school for an elite vocal performing experience.

Our students look forward to performing at their winter and spring concerts and finally at their fifth-grade closing exercises. Music is truly a strong part of the rich educational fabric at Burr Elementary School.

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### **McKinley Elementary School, Fairfield**

Program Title: The McKinley School and Wakeman Boys' and Girl's Club Outreach Program

#### Program Description:

McKinley Elementary School in Fairfield is fortunate to partner with the Wakeman Boys' and Girls' Club to provide enhancement programs for McKinley students. The goal of the Wakeman Outreach Program at McKinley is to give students the opportunity to participate in educational, social and athletic experiences that they otherwise would not be afforded because of financial, cultural, language or social barriers. The Wakeman Outreach Program meets the varied needs of McKinley's diverse student population through improvement of performance in the classroom, development of social skills and making a contribution to general health and wellness.

Coordinated through the Wakeman Stratfield Site Unit Director Tim Cepetelli and School Psychologist Becky Miller, the Outreach Program provides a variety of after-school programs for McKinley students throughout the school year. Among these programs are Basketball and Soccer Skill Building, Preparing for Team Sports, Field Sports, Board Games and Chess Club. Wakeman high school volunteers additionally help supervise Reading Club and Homework Club after school groups. Also located at the school, Wakeman provides high school mentors for nearly fifty students. The mentors support class instruction, engage in recreational activities, and provide positive role models for the McKinley students. Altogether, approximately 300 students participate in Wakeman Outreach Program related activities.

In addition to the on-site programs and services offered within the Wakeman Outreach Program, five days a week 40-50 students are also bussed to the Wakeman Stratfield Site Clubhouse at the nearby First Presbyterian Church. While there, students receive homework assistance, have access to a computer lab, and engage in recreational and team sports. This program continues until 6:00 each evening enabling working parents to have a safe, productive and supportive environment for their children. During the course of the four year partnership between McKinley School and the Wakeman Boys' and Girls' Club, student attendance has improved, homework completion has been supported, and students have generally exhibited greater confidence as learners. This partnership has had a profound impact on the culture of the school by helping to create a positive climate in which the students are enabled to grow and learn.

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### **East Farms School, Farmington**

Program Title: Student Council

The East Farms Student Council program is in its third year. A group of highly motivated teachers wanted to provide leadership and service opportunities for third and fourth grade students. They developed an application process that requires students to answer questions about why they would want to be part of the Council. Because the Council members become role models, classroom teachers need to sign off on each

application signifying that the individual student is meeting her/his responsibilities as a student and community member:

**Program Description:**

Student Council members serve as program leaders for our monthly respect assemblies, they present the morning announcements for the school and lead the school in the Pledge of Allegiance each day. They organize and conduct numerous service projects. The students contribute to the selection of activities for the Council. Members meet with their five faculty sponsors before school once a week. The number of children participating in Student Council is increasing each year. This year there are 73 students, which represents 40% of eligible students.

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**Eastbury School, Glastonbury**

Program Title: Read to Feed

**Program Description:**

In the spring of 2007 Eastbury Elementary School celebrated its annual Reading Month with the theme "Read to Feed", which focused on "global education, awareness and action". Throughout March the Eastbury community read enough books to donate over \$1,000 in animals and plants to Heifer International, a charitable project for ending hunger and empowering impoverished citizens of the world. Students were motivated to read knowing that those less fortunate would benefit.

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**Dr. Ramon E. Betances Elementary School, Hartford**

Program Title: Fitness First

**Program Description:**

1. Describe your program staff and achievement of goal.

Fitness 1st is a student directed cyclical wellness program designed to help student improve their health and wellness over time. The Fitness 1st cycle includes Assessment, Goal Setting and Planning, Logging and Journaling, and Re-assessment. Students' fitness levels are assessed and all students were given the goal of improving their aerobic fitness. Also, students have to pick one other fitness component that needed improvement as a second goal area. Students then create a physical activity plan for both home and physical education class that helps to improve their goal areas. Each day students then logged/journal their efforts toward reaching their daily physical best in their goal areas.

As part of Fitness 1st's web application students, teachers, administrators and parents can track individual physical fitness assessment scores measured by the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment. In addition, Fitness 1st allows the tracking of daily physical activity levels that are rewarded with toe tags and shirts for various participation levels. Last year through the use of this program students in grade 4-6 saw an overall improvement in Aerobic Fitness, as measure by FitnessGrams®'s Pacer Assessment of Aerobic Fitness, from the Fall of 2006 (November) to Spring 2007 (May) of 34%. This improvement was



significant due to the limitations in safe play space at Betances School, and the gains were achieved over the winter months.

As part of the Fitness 1st program, a before school activity program is implemented called, "Betances Bright Beginnings" where students are encouraged to eat healthy and be active every weekday morning Monday to Thursday 8:00 am to the beginning of school at 8:42 am. In addition, students were also provided Intramural sporting programs two days after school each week during the winter months.

The Fitness 1st slogan: "Through a healthy body we build a strong mind along with a positive character."

2. What sets this program staff or achievement of goal above and beyond the standard? Currently, childhood obesity is a major topic of concern among health care providers. Providing a program where students can improve their aerobic fitness levels significantly and help students to gain a more active lifestyle is a major accomplishment especially in an inner city school with limited play space and opportunities for students to be active outside the school setting.

3. How can other schools replicate this program?

Since Fitness 1st is based in part on the Physical Best model developed by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education, and FitnessGram developed by the Cooper Institute. Other schools can use these models to create their own programs. NASPE also provide the training need to develop these programs, and to use them in school settings.

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### **Dr. Ramon E. Betances Elementary School, Hartford**

Program Title: Haskins Literacy Initiative

#### Program Description:

The Haskins Literacy Initiative, Hartford is a three year research-based embedded professional development project that serves kindergarten through grade two teachers and support staff. Two highly trained and experienced mentors translate three decades of reliable reading research, framing findings in meaningful ways so teachers can make informed decisions about what to teach when to which children. This initiative systematically addresses all areas of a comprehensive literacy program; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and oral language. This project is set apart from other professional development because it embeds teacher knowledge through workshops, modeling, coaching, and teacher reflection. A teacher specialist on staff trains closely with the Haskins mentor in order to sustain evidence-based practices. Other schools can replicate this project by utilizing existing trained teachers or reading coaches that have been trained by Haskins mentors to implement this embedded professional development project in additional school sites.

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**John C. Clark, Jr., Elementary School, Hartford**

Program Title: The STARplus (Student Academic Review) Program

Program Description:

The STARplus program (Student Academic Review) is a process designed to improve students' academic achievement through a systematic analysis of student work. This process utilizes a team approach consisting of school administrators, literacy, special education and numeracy facilitators, and classroom teachers. Once a month, the review team convenes and reviews student portfolios and classroom data binders for teachers. During our pilot, Clark reviewed portfolios for teachers in grades 3-6. Using a 5 point rubric, portfolios are rated based on alignment of student work to state standards and high stakes assessment inclusion of formative and summative assessments, data summaries, social development data, portfolio organization and feedback on student work.

During the review process, the teacher reviews her data portfolio and identifies her students' strengths and weaknesses. She is also reflective; identifying instructional practices that have proven to be successful and those practices that have not. After each 30 minute review, the team provides written feedback to teachers citing strengths and next steps based on the data. Parenthetically, professional development needs are identified as well as best practices. The teachers utilize this feedback to improve instruction and participate in the review process the following month, reflecting on the impact of the feedback.

Three teachers were identified through structured observations and analyses of portfolios to have high implementation of this process. This was also confirmed through the recent 2007 4th Generation CMT scores. Katrina Erickson, 3rd grade teacher was successful in achieving over 15% increase above the 2006 CMT scores in reading, math, and writing; Tara Corwell, 5th grade teacher, was successful in achieving an 11% increase in reading and a 15% increase in math. Melissa Trantolo, 6th grade teacher, was successful in achieving a 15% in math.

This process can be successfully replicated by any school leadership team that has been trained in Data Driven Decision Making and Making Standards Work. Additionally, school teams should have a working knowledge of effective teaching strategies and building professional learning communities. The success of this process lies in teacher collaboration and ongoing monitoring of student learning and teacher effectiveness.

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**Dr. Michael D. Fox Elementary School, Hartford**

Program Title: After School Mentoring Program

**Program Description:**

Ms. McCullough has developed an after school mentoring program that pairs her 5th grade students with former students of hers that are presently attending high schools in Hartford. These mentors provide help with homework, they read together with the 5th graders, play chess with them, and provide a positive role model for her students, many of whom have special needs. She volunteers her time and personal finances for this program. As excited as our students are about participating in this program, the high school mentors are more enthusiastic. They are helping our students become school leaders. Ms. McCullough plans to expand this program to include students and teachers from other 5th grade classes

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**Killingworth Elementary School, Killingworth**

Program Title: Early Intervention Project Team

An effective learning community must be responsive to students' diverse needs. Educating the whole child is a necessity especially during the foundational academic years. Children enter Killingworth Elementary School at different levels of readiness, experiences and backgrounds. Children need to learn in an environment that is developmentally appropriate in order for them to achieve their fullest potential.

During the past four years, we have worked together as a collaborative team of educators where meaningful dialogue around curriculum, instruction and assessment has occurred while we continue to move forward in our pursuit of improved student learning. The focus has been and continues to be centered on teaching and learning as we created this professional learning community.

The Early Intervention Project team at K.E.S. has created and implemented the EIP process as a general education initiative that provides assistance to teachers to support students experiencing difficulties with learning or behavior. The goal of our EIP is to intervene early and provide support and assistance to teachers through a collaborative approach. Issues that might initiate the process are academic difficulties, inappropriate behavior or social/emotional concerns. The teacher discusses these concerns with the child's parents to keep them abreast of their child's academic/social/emotional progress. Families become partners with our school so they can participate in the implementations at home. Parents/guardians know their children best and their participation is essential to school success.

The teacher works with the EIP facilitator and the grade level team to brainstorm and choose new strategies to be implemented during a set period of time. The teacher will observe student, collect data, provide support and document progress. The teacher meets with the EIP Team to review progress, continue or modify interventions, close successful cases or seek additional support if necessary. The team is actively involved in decision

making through the use of data as it relates to student performance. Each year a new group of teachers volunteer for this training provided by the State Education Resource Center (SERC). The success of our EIP process is based on the commitment and dedication by our learning community. Our motto is...

**All students can learn and succeed,  
but not on the same day  
and in the same way.**

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**Center School, Litchfield**

Program Title: Healthy Lifestyle Ceramic Tiles

Program Description:

Rochelle Clementson, Art Teacher at Center School, had a vision for each student and staff member to paint a ceramic tile which depicted a healthy lifestyle. This supports our school initiative of Project Physical Pride (Physical Fitness, Rest, Improving Eating Habits, Daily Hygiene, Exercising Your Brain). Each tile shows one aspect of healthy living.

Healthy lifestyles were a focus of our school for the past several years. These glazed tiles were mounted in the entire main hallway of the school as a permanent part of the school. The legacy of the students and staff will live on for many years. The learning experience for children to be published artists in this permanent way in the school is invaluable. Taking on the entire project with a few volunteers, Rochelle came in weekends and throughout the summer to fire the 500 separate tiles, set up the tiles in the hallway, and to work with the various volunteers from the community.

To replicate this, all students and staff should be part of the process. Assisting each student and staff member to think of the idea and paint the tile takes many months. The teacher should be adept in glazing and firing the tiles and volunteers from the community are needed to permanently mount the tiles. PTO and several organizations from town provided the funding.

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**Lyme Consolidated School, Lyme**

Program Title: Dance Group

Mrs. Connie Price and Mrs. Lisa McDermott, third grade teachers at Lyme School, started a "dance group" which includes a multi-age kindergarten to fifth grade group of students. This group spends their Tuesday lunch/recess time learning new dance steps, which in turn benefits all students. The dance group performs at our bi-weekly "Town Meeting", and many of the dances are then taught to the student population during the concluding "dance out" portion of our Town Meeting.

This fun activity promotes school spirit, sign language, and exercise. It also incorporates leadership as well as literacy. Our school librarian assists with this activity by finding books which enhance movement and also incorporates new movements by dancing/acting out various selections.

Our classroom, music, and physical education teachers enthusiastically promote this activity. Interested students must apply by filling out an application, which is submitted with a teacher's recommendation. These applications are then placed into a lottery system, with selections of a consistent number of students from each grade level, totalling approximately 30 students. This selection process is repeated at the mid-year point with a new group of kindergarten to fifth grade students.

Students understand that participating in this activity is a privilege. All students must display appropriate behavior on a daily basis, display good citizenship, and complete all of their school work and home work on time.

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### **Island Elementary School, Madison**

Program Title: Individualized Reading Instruction

#### Program Description:

Individualized Reading Instruction for grades 1 and 2 students at Island Avenue School is designed for developing readers, who benefit from additional support. Lessons address students' and needs, while continuing to build their confidence. During individualized lessons, students learn three strategies so as to employ them independently.

Comprehension activities are included to teach the four Reading Strands assessed by the CMT. Daily assessments through running records allow lessons to be tailored to each child's immediate needs. The mission of the Madison Elementary Schools is to meet the developmental and individualized needs of every student: through this Individualized Reading Instruction, each participant's individualized needs are met.

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### **J.Milton Jeffrey Elementary School, Madison**

Program Title: "Touchdown for Character"

#### Program Description:

This program is a collaborative between Jeffrey Elementary School and the Daniel Hand High School Athletic Department. In the fall the entire football team participates on Friday afternoons of their home games. Two players join each of our classrooms and read pre-selected books focusing on courage, sportsmanship, and making positive choices. A special Jeffrey Night is designated at a football game as a culminating event.

This program was expanded last year to include the Girl's Hockey team, during the winter months. The program has been spearheaded by one of our third grade teachers, Esther Magee, and has had a very positive impact on both the Jeffrey students and the athletes

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## **K.H. Ryerson Elementary School, Madison**

Program Title: Ryerson School 'Connecticut Loves to Read Week'

### Program Description:

#### Connecticut Loves to Read Week

The State of Connecticut sponsors Connecticut Loves to Read Day. We have taken this concept and expanded it at Ryerson School to 'Connecticut Loves to Read Week.' We begin on Monday and Tuesday by having students from our middle school come and read to our students. About 85 Brown Middle School students come into our classes and read their favorite books to our students and then we read our favorite books to them. On Wednesday, we have a prominent local author spend the day with us, discussing books they have written and/or illustrated. They explain the process they went through to write a book and have often worked with the classes to create stories of their own. Every class visits the author on this day. On Thursday and Friday, we invite members from our community to read their favorite children's books to each classroom. School, town, community, and often state elected officials join us on these days. They also share what their jobs are in the community and engage the students in rich discussions.

Usually on Friday, we have special classroom activities that vary by grade level. For example, in several of the younger grades, they have a PJ day where students wear their PJ's to school and spend a good part of the day relaxing, reading their books and participating in reading activities organized by the teachers. Our PTO is very involved in working collaboratively with our staff to plan this week and to make it very special. They help identify the author, organize the community members' schedules, and provide a great atmosphere when they come to visit. The entire school is engaged in this week long program that gives a clear message to our students that reading has value in learning and also for reading pleasure. It is always an exciting week that the students look forward to.

This past year, the State of Connecticut General Assembly gave Ryerson School an Official Citation for the work done during this week to promote the love of reading. Governor Jodi Rell also gave Ryerson School a commendation for their work in encouraging children to read and to promote reading as a life long activity.

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**Southeast Elementary School, Mansfield Center**

Program Title: Southeast School Mileage Club

**Program Description:**

Southeast School Mileage Club provides a healthy option at recess that allows students to set and reach fitness goals. It creates an opportunity for staff, students, families and the community to walk or run together to promote life-long wellness. This cost-efficient program adapted from Fitness Finders Inc. is easy to set up and run in the school. Each student has a mileage tracking card that is punched after each lap by a parent volunteer. After reaching set goals, students can earn "toe tokens" and healthy after school outings. Achievements of community members, parents, staff members, and visiting educators are recognized by inviting them to walk or run with the mileage club participants. Our previously food-oriented celebrations of Mother's Day and Father's Day have evolved into fitness-oriented events with Mileage Club. "Muffins for Moms" became "Mileage for Moms" and "Donuts for Dads" became "Distance for Dads". Statistics are kept to track the accomplishments of all members. At the end of the year, all participants receive certificates.

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**Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, Marlborough**

Program Title: Marlborough Elementary School Art Program

**Program Description:**

We celebrate the achievements of Ms. Denise Ketterer, our Art teacher, and the positive impact her professional goals have had in promoting school success. Ms. Ketterer has been teaching Art for 23 years and currently instructs children in grades 1 - 6 in Marlborough, Connecticut. Beyond the outstanding standards based program she delivers, Ms. Ketterer has supported our school goal of nurturing the school-community partnership. In an effort to help students understand the impact of Art in a community, she has successfully promoted the display of student work throughout the community and beyond.

Ms. Ketterer researched the art exhibition possibilities in the community and at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. She created a reference journal in which the specific requirements of exhibitions for individual locations would be at her fingertips. As she teaches according to State/National Standards, she can help students select and reserve specific pieces for exhibition when they fit the terms of a given platform. Students learn about a variety of materials and styles of Art and are asked to think about and refine their outlooks on the purpose and place for Art. Students find that their art creation impacts the community positively. This past year, the students were involved in several exhibitions including a Town Hall Exhibit, Town Library Exhibit, participation in an art auction to benefit a fellow student battling cancer, and an exhibition at the CCMC that resulted in permanent donations to their collection.

Through student participation in many additional local, state and international competitions and projects, our students enjoy a variety of opportunities to share their

creations. Ms. Ketterer also continues to create and exhibit personal work. Her most recent project was a four-foot fiberglass apple for the Glastonbury Apple Trail. Her commitment to contributing art to the community and the process for helping students to select pieces for display, guarantee that her program will continue to be a successful endeavor that can be replicated by all schools.

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### **Israel Putnam School, Meriden**

Program Title: Israel Putnam Saturday Adventures Program

#### Program Description:

Israel Putnam School sponsored a Saturday Adventure Program for students who have limited access to cultural and community resources. On five Saturdays in May and June of 2007, four staff members accompanied approximately 50 students to special events. Students attended a play, Amelia Bedelia, at Choate, a Hartford Symphony Family Matinee, the New England Carousel Museum, the Carousel at Bushnell Park, Mystic Aquarium, a Rock Cats baseball game, and a picnic at Hubbard Park in Meriden. These experiences were valuable in expanding student's knowledge and providing enrichment beyond the traditional curriculum. Funding and personnel would be needed to replicate these experiences for students.

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### **John Lyman School, Middlefield**

Program Title: TECH BOARD/Tech Committee

We are honoring Philip Moriarty, a 3/4 teacher for his work with the John Lyman School TECH BOARD/Tech Committee.

The Tech Committee is composed of third and fourth graders who support the school at our weekly assemblies. Students who want to be a part of Tech write a letter to Mr. Moriarty to express their interest and tell why they should be named to the committee. From the letters, and in consultation with colleagues, Mr. Moriarty selects a group of students whom he trains to use all of the technology necessary to support any events held in the auditorium.

Students are trained to run the lights, curtain, screen, microphones, overhead projector and LCD projector. Each week Mr. Moriarty reviews all of the tech needs identified by those classes or individuals sharing or presenting at assembly and then prepares a color coded sheet assigning students to their tasks for that week's assembly. On Friday morning he meets with the tech members for the week and reviews everything with them. Students use the sheets as a guide so that assemblies run smoothly.

During the assembly, Mr. Moriarty and two other classroom teachers, lead the audience in singing favorites selected by the class hosting the week's assembly.

All John Lyman students gain such confidence and poise through their frequent opportunities to present and share at our weekly assemblies. Members of Tech gain all of that and more. By the time they leave Lyman to go to fifth grade, these students have all of the skills necessary to technologically support programs and performances. Mr. Moriarty gives this gift yearly to our students, staff and school community and his efforts are recognized and greatly appreciated.

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**Bielefield School, Middletown**

Program Title: Middletown Preschool at Bielefield School

Program Description:

Bielefield School's preschool program was recently designated a NAEYC Accredited Preschool. The designation is for programs that meet the comprehensive and rigorous standards of the new NAEYC accreditation process. Few preschool programs nationally currently have been awarded this designation under the new accreditation process. This is a testament to the professionalism and skills of the preschool staff and the quality of the program.

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**Hop Brook School, Naugatuck**

Program Title: Map Application Grant

Program Description:

Five teachers from Hop Brook School in Naugatuck, Ct -under the direction of Principal Steve Zepecki and Assistant Principal Maria Zillo - have applied for and been awarded a MAP grant through ACES for the promotion of excellence in the curriculum areas of Math and Science. These teachers and their homeroom classes have been awarded \$1000. each to partner with a sister school in Connecticut and share resources, ideas, communications, guest lecturers and class trip shared experiences that concentrate on improving social relations, appreciation for diversity, avoidance of bullying, and improvement in the areas of math and science with fun and exciting activities.

Students will be engaged in communicating with their partners via email, snail mail, blog space and even video clips. Sister school classes will partner with each other for many shared experiences to improve interpersonal relations- such as guest lectures and class trips and celebrations. Student communication skills will improve as each student will, in addition to mail communication, keep

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**Maple Hill School, Naugatuck**

Program Title: Badge Math

Program Description:

Maple Hill School's Badge Math program is a special way for our students to interact academically with members of the Naugatuck Police and Fire Departments.

For two years, volunteers from these departments have been making a commitment to come to Maple Hill for a minimum of one hour a week to tutor students on math problem solving skills and strategies. All lessons are prepared by teachers. The men and women representing the 'finest' and the 'bravest' serving the Naugatuck community not only provide math support skills, but also act as role models for our students.

This program was designed as a way to enhance our student learning by building strong community bonds through this positive school partnership. We gratefully acknowledge each member of Badge Math and their partner teacher who share their time and knowledge to strengthen our learning community.

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### **Salem School, Naugatuck**

Program Title: Read a Million, Be a Millionaire

#### Program Description:

Salem elementary School students participated in a school-wide reading incentive program last year aimed at increasing their reading at home. They were challenged to read one million minutes during the school year. Individual, class, and school minutes were recorded each week. Children were awarded certificates as they accumulated minutes, and occasionally raffles were held for children who were participating. Each week the class with the highest total was awarded a guest for the week: Melvin, the Million Minutes Mascot Monkey. Melvin's twin brother, Marvin, joined him partway through the year, and classes were paired up into teams. This helped encourage the lower-performing classes and gave them an opportunity to spend some time with the mascot. The class with the highest monthly total participated in the Million Minutes March. All the children lined the hallways to cheer and clap as the winning class marched by, waving flags that said, "Every Second Counts." John Philip Sousa resounded over the loudspeaker as the honored class made their way to the cafeteria where they were served homemade treats. They were also given a "Congratulations" balloon bouquet to bring back to their class.

Special incentive weeks included Family Reading Weeks and the Salem Staff Challenge, where each grade level was challenged to beat the staff's minutes. Minutes were tracked on a large graph in the lobby. An assembly was held when we reached a half million, and we raised the grand total on the graph to much excitement and cheering. Logo shirts were raffled off to children who had read more than 3,000 minutes, and all students were given reading bracelets to mark this achievement. Newsletters were periodically sent home to report the progress of the program, including pictures and articles on the accomplishments of different classes.

At the end, when the children reached one million minutes, they were rewarded with a day of fun and special treatment. They entered the school on a red "carpet" in acknowledgment of their extraordinary accomplishment. During lunchtime the teachers donned aprons and cleared the children's places for them, giving each an after-dinner chocolate while music played in the background. First through fourth grades participated in grade-level versions of "Who wants to be a Millionaire?" which was created based on the curriculum. The principal, paraprofessionals, and superintendent took turns sitting on the panel of experts, which was one of the optional "life lines" for the game. Million dollar bills were awarded to the winners and all children received hundred dollar bookmarks. Overall, the program was successful because it increased the reading done

by children at home. Many parents offered positive feedback. Great excitement was generated through the many activities, and the school came together as a community

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### **Consolidated School and Meeting House Hill School, New Fairfield**

Program Title: Student Centered Collaborative

#### Program Description:

The Consolidated and Meeting House Hill School Communities is committed to success in meeting the needs of all students, including students with disabilities. In order to best meet the needs of all students, the Consolidated and Meeting House Hill School Communities chose to create an Inclusive School beginning in the Fall of 2006. In preparation for this goal teachers and administrators reviewed the research on school change. We found, without exception, that the most important factor in a child's education is having a good teacher and that effective schools are part of a collaborative learning community. As the plan evolved it became clear that we not only wanted to provide most instruction within the general education classrooms, we also wanted to develop a system that promoted interaction within teacher teams, including paraprofessionals and special services staff, to enhance the learning opportunities for all. The Student Centered Collaborative model is based on the premise that teacher teams bring together complimentary skills and experiences that are greater than those of any single member of the group to enhance learning outcomes for children.

In implementing this concept, the master schedule was adjusted to provide common planning periods for teams of five teachers on each grade level K-5 making consultation time a priority in the school day. Paraprofessionals' roles were redesigned to reflect their increased importance in the general education classroom. Actions were begun to implement in-class support options whenever possible. In-service training was provided before the opening of school regarding Collaboration and Teaming. Teacher teams were sent out for continued training throughout the school year to develop and refine skills related to best practices in inclusive schools, co-teaching, differentiation and Response to Instruction.

The staff of Consolidated and Meeting House Hill Schools went far beyond the standard in implementation of this program in its initial phase. Our two schools of almost fourteen hundred pre-kindergarten through grade five students and nearly 200 staff members moved from schools that were primarily traditional settings with teachers working much of the time in isolation and students with special needs being educated for portions of their day in separate settings, to schools where shared responsibility for the education of all students became the norm - in one short year. We are extremely proud of our accomplishments and anxious to move toward becoming true Professional Learning Communities in the near future.

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## **Dr. Charles E. Murphy School, Oakdale**

Program Title: Dr. Charles E. Murphy School Dance Club

Objective: To promote wellness, teach social skills, instill respect for others, and introduce ballroom dance as a means of exercise that lasts a lifetime.

### Program description:

The purpose of the Dr. Charles E. Murphy School Dance Club was to introduce ballroom dancing as a new and fun way to exercise. It was open to fourth and fifth grade boys and girls. Along with teaching the cha-cha, tango, rhumba, meringue, disco, and samba dances, the children were taught life lessons in socialization at a dance, and politeness and respect for their fellow dancers. The club had strict guidelines that the members and their families read and signed before the dance lessons began. We underestimated the interest it would generate and had 14 boys and 33 girls sign up.

The six week after school club culminated with a formal ballroom dance at which the girls were required to wear dresses and the boys had to don dress pants, shirts and ties. The dance was hosted by, Chad Bigelow, a National Honor Society member from Montville High School. Chad also volunteered to help at some of our practices. We served healthy refreshments of fruit, vegetables and dip, finger sandwiches, and water. The second half of our dance consisted of a presentation for the dancer's families and the school administrators, including our superintendent, Mr. David Erwin.

Our dance club staff members included Mrs. Donna Lozupone, music teacher, Mr. Lou Rubino, PE teacher, Mrs. Mariely Henry and Mrs. Debra Murphy, both paraprofessionals who have taken ballroom dance lessons. This was a perfect team because it consisted of a diversified group, each with special talents to offer. We also had the support of our administrators, Mr. Jeffrey Newton, principal, and Ms. Joan Joplin-Silvia, assistant principal.

We feel that our program went beyond the standard because we had a 95% attendance rate at all practices, including the two lunch recesses that were a requirement for the dancers to attend. We also had 100% attendance at our dance, which was held at the beginning of the busy spring sport schedule. We expected a high standard of behavior and respect during our dance lessons/dance and our club members rose to the occasion. It was a joy to watch the poise and confidence that the dancers attained.

In order for our program to be replicated, a school would have to have support from their administration, someone with basic ballroom dance background, and depending on the size of the group, additional staff to help. A gym facility is needed, ballroom cds, and a cd-player. As with any after school program, parents have to provide transportation home and give written consent for their child to participate.

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**Center School, Old Lyme**

Program Title: Center School Gazette

**Program Description:**

The Center School Gazette is a school newspaper published three times each year. The committee that produces it is comprised of students and parents and facilitated by the principal. Each publication includes various sections such as, school clubs, news reporters, roving reporters, special person feature, book reviews, comics, art and photographers, among others. Everything included in each edition is the product of a student.

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**Plainville Community Schools, Plainville**

Program Title: STARS: Strategies to Accelerate Reading Success

**Program Description:**

The STARS targeted intervention program at each of the three elementary schools in Plainville is designed to meet the needs of struggling readers - both English speaking and English language learners. Literacy Instructors work with classroom teachers in grades K-5 to identify areas of challenge for emerging readers. The Literacy Instructors then work with students either individually or in small groups on a single area at a time in order to improve students' achievement and attitude toward reading. Regular assessments by both the classroom teacher as well as the Literacy Instructors guide the work all along the way.

In the first year of the newly revised model, student achievement on the Connecticut Mastery Test for our struggling readers improved significantly, with 53% of the students in the program scoring at or above proficiency, and 25% of them scoring at the state goal. Additionally, using the Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory as a beginning, mid course, and end of year assessment, our students experienced an average oral reading score gain of 2 grade levels, and an average silent reading score gain of 1.8 grade levels. Our Literacy Instructors are all college graduates, and many of them hold teacher certification. They receive high quality professional development provided by a teacher leader dedicated to our literacy efforts. This teacher leader also provides organizational support and peer coaching support to both the Literacy Instructors and the classroom teachers so that each child receives the intervention necessary for continuous improvement. Funding for much of the program is accomplished through Title I and Title III grants.

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**Myrtle H. Stevens Elementary School, Rocky Hill**

Program Title: Bright Beginnings Preschool Program

**Program Description:**

The program that I am recognizing today is our Bright Beginnings Stevens Preschool Program held at Myrtle H. Stevens Elementary School in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. Bright

Beginnings is a joint venture between the Rocky Hill Board of Education and the Parks and Recreation Department. The program is team taught by Eileen Touger an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher and Cara Vasquez a Speech-Language Pathologist. Two paraprofessionals are also assigned to the program daily as well as our school occupational and physical therapists that provide consultation and direct service as needed.

These teachers strongly believe in the importance of early childhood education. They believe that a quality preschool program should be language based as language is the foundation for all other learning. The Bright Beginnings Stevens Preschool Program promotes positive development in children and enables the special education students to develop side by side with their typical peers. The goal at Bright Beginnings is to encourage the development of each child as an individual in a caring, supportive and fun filled environment using developmentally appropriate learning activities.

The curriculum incorporates an integrated thematic program. Within each theme, the children are provided with a variety of hands on experiences which promote age appropriate development in the areas of readiness, language, personal-social, self help as well as motor skills. The curriculum follows the performance standards and benchmarks of the Connecticut State Department of Education Preschool Framework. The program also follows the NAEYC standards as well as the Early Childhood Rating Scale-Revised. Other schools can replicate this program through professional development programs, self-evaluation and training to assure that their students have the readiness skills needed for school.

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### **Booth Free School, Roxbury**

Program Title: Together We Care

#### Program Description:

During the 2006-2007 school year, one of our high school seniors began a movement, which ignited excitement, compassion and humanitarianism in our small rural community. This senior spent time working with a group called Simply Smiles in an impoverished area of Oaxaca, Mexico. This was where she was introduced to the children of Casa Hogar. Children at Casa Hogar are mostly orphans, abandoned or unable to be provided for by their families. Many of the Casa Hogar children have debilitating physical ailments, learning disabilities, and most have never had a loving group of comrades to support or understand them. When the senior approached the Booth Free School Student Council, their hearts and minds were immediately committed to helping their fellow children. We set a goal to show these children that people cared for them. All the while, our "small town kids" were learning about the difficult issues that other children face each and every day. After learning about individual children at Casa Hogar, at an in-school presentation by a Simply Smiles volunteer, Booth Free School students began a basic needs drive led by the students and staff of the Student Council. Students brought in items they admittedly took for granted. Boxes and bags were stuffed with toothbrushes, pillowcases, sneakers, and clothing. Students had seen

pictures and heard real stories about the very children they were helping. They knew many needed better dental care, and that some had never even slept with a pillow. This familiarity, and the strong feelings it elicited, helped them feel personally responsible. Our students then began writing letters to the children at Casa Hogar. They sent pictures and drawings, along with stickers and notes that simply said, "We Care." For some, what started as a classroom project carried over into a community project. Many students continued writing pen pal letters from home. Others brought the information to their churches and began collecting donations and conducting fundraisers. One family even began sponsoring a child. Students were thrilled when pictures, letters, and drawings of thanks and excitement came in from the Casa Hogar children. This program exceeded our expectations. It began with one high school senior hoping to raise awareness and evolved into a community of humanitarians working together for a group of children who are eternally grateful. We encourage other districts to seek out a cause to which all children and community members can relate. There are countless programs like Simply Smiles, which will come out to schools and present facts, pictures, stories, and information about how one community can make a world of difference. With very little guidance, our students and community did just that. We hope to inspire other districts to do the same.

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### **Paul E. Chatfield School, Seymour**

Program Title: The Younger Generation meets the "Greatest Generation"

#### Program Description:

In this interdisciplinary unit, students have the opportunity to interview veterans from all branches of the service as well as age groups. They use the information to generate a written tribute about one of their "heroes", an American serviceman. The students then educate the school and the community with an historical and musical homage to honor our countries' servicemen.

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### **Southwest School, Torrington**

Program Title: After School Basketball Camp

#### Program Description:

Having fun, elevating self-esteem, promoting healthy activities, and team work were all motivators for the creation of my after school basketball camp. I held this camp once a week for an hour and half after school. Students worked first on their homework, which allowed me valuable time to sit with them and give them one on one instruction and extra help. After our homework time we headed down to the gym and worked on learning the various skills of basketball, how to play the game, and team building activities. The camp was open to all fifth grade students, making it clear from the start that all students were invited to come, not just those who knew how to play. During our time together I stressed the importance of healthy activities and how important it is to keep your mind and body strong.

Over the course of the camp I noticed many kids working and playing with students that they had not played with prior to coming. Students talked more about going outside to play because they were practicing drills they learned or they had new games to try out. I found that in the classroom students who had once been shy felt more comfortable talking and taking a chance in our class discussions.

I feel that this program can be set above the rest because it reaches a child in a holistic fashion. It promotes learning and the time management of schoolwork, by first working on homework. It also encourages children, in an age of countless video games, to play and exercise their bodies and to live healthy lives. The camp raised self-esteem by having them become successful in areas that they never new possible. Overall, the basketball program gave students an outlet to have fun and enjoy the other students around them. The team building activities helped them to appreciate others, accept others, and to see new sides of their classmates.

Replicating this after school program would be easy for other schools. Teachers need only to have some background knowledge in a sport that they enjoy playing and the time to offers students a new outlet of learning. There is a need to have a space for the activities such as a gym or a playground and equipment can be borrowed from the physical education teacher. The most important aspect to replicating this program is stressing the idea of having fun, working together, and building students' self-esteem with team building activities, positive reinforcement, and praise of all who attend.

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### **Booth Hill School, Trumbull**

Program Title: Parent Literacy Night

#### Program Description:

This night program created by Booth Hill staff members is designed for parents of students in K and 1st grade. Classroom teachers, special education instructors, speech and language pathologist and reading consultants design literacy stations that parents participate in and target specific literacy skills necessary for student success. Parents not only participate in these modeled activities, but leave with a comprehensive resource packet that allows them to assist their children at home.

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### **Daniels Farm School, Trumbull**

Program Title: Celebrating Our Diverse School

#### Program Description:

Daniels Farm School has long placed importance on introducing our students to a variety of cultures. Our diverse school population is rich in experience and traditions, the sharing of which serves to strengthen our school community. Our staff seeks opportunities to enrich classroom programs by inviting parents and community members to bring their experiences to our students. One staff member, Susan Littlefield, has worked tirelessly to promote cultural diversity within our school. In addition to representing us for many



years on our town-wide cultural diversity committee, she heads such a committee at Daniels Farm.

Greeting visitors to our school lobby is a special feature: a large glass display case filled with attractive, eye-catching treasures. These collections have included artifacts and stories explaining traditions maintained by our families. Kwanzaa, Chinese New Year, St. Lucia Day, Diwali, and Mardi Gras are among the many displays attracting attention and inciting discussions. These discussions promote interest and empathy, a big step toward living and working with others. The program showpiece in May was our DFS World Tour, a spectacular family event highlighting food, dance, music and artifacts from many cultures. The event was deemed a tremendous success by the more than 400 in attendance! The Daniels Farm staff is proud to see Susan Littlefield recognized for her tireless efforts on behalf of cultural diversity in our community.

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### **Frenchtown Elementary School, Trumbull**

Program Title: Grade 4 Endangered Species Project

#### Program Description:

In fourth grade, students conduct an in-depth research study of Endangered Species. Working in the classroom and the Library Media Center, students use multiple sources to complete a graphic organizer that is then developed into an expository piece and displayed on a board. One extension to this project has the fourth grade students writing stories in the style of Kipling's "Just So Stories." Using their knowledge of the animal in a creative writing piece, they imagine how their endangered animal ended up with some distinguishing feature (e.g. "How the Camel got his hump"). Students then create an animal mask in Art class, and practice appropriate animal movements in Physical Education. Technology is also an important element to this project, where students create Power Point "slides" containing pertinent information on their animals. The Fourth graders come together in a culminating celebration during an evening Endangered Species Fair. This evening consists of sharing the results of their research, exhibiting display boards and animal masks, and offering oral presentations to visitors. The celebration ends with animal songs practiced during music class.

This unique project is a result of collaboration between the grade four teachers, as well as the music and art teachers, media specialist and school computer manager. It provides an integrated, meaningful approach to the curriculum that deals with "real world" issues and problems. Considerable emphasis is placed on the various technology applications used (i.e. Microsoft Word, the Internet, Power Point), as well as the students' development of their multiple intelligences through art and music.

The goal of this project is to build those fundamental academic and social competency skills necessary for student achievement. It is extremely gratifying to observe the high level of poise and confidence demonstrated by the students as they orally present knowledge of their endangered animal to their parents, the students and the community.

This project could easily be replicated by any teacher willing to collaborate on topics having "real world" meaning and application to students.

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**Skinner Road School, Vernon**

Program Title: Data Team Successes

Program Description:

Skinner Road Schools' recent successes can be attributed to the focused instruction based on formative assessments. Through a narrowed focus and implementation of high yield instructional strategies, students' scores on state and local assessments have improved dramatically in reading, writing, math, physical fitness, improved student attendance and student behavior! Way to go!

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**Rotella Interdistrict Magnet School, Waterbury**

Program Title: Rotella Black Light Theater

Program Description:

The Rotella Black Light Theater was developed by first grade teachers as a way to improve students' reading comprehension through a motivating, hands-on activity that incorporates storytelling, theater, music, visual art, and dance. Students in each of four first grade classes performed a different story from the Trophies reading series. Students worked cooperatively to create and manipulate giant puppets, props, and scenery made from cardboard and florescent paint. The performances were staged using a black light and recorded on DVD. Students not only gained a deeper understanding of story elements and characterization but experienced the emotional rewards of successfully working together to complete a project.

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**Washington Elementary School, Waterbury**

Program Title: K.N.O.W. Kids Need Our wisdom

Program Description:

Retired teachers are hired using grant funds. Their expertise is utilized to model, share and enhance classroom instruction. They plan collaboratively with staff, facilitate small groups and offer years worth of knowledge and experience. They work long beyond their allotted time, support the teacher with materials, volunteer for school functions, chaperone field trips, implement "lunch bunch" sessions and offer emotional support to both students and staff. They are one of the school's greatest gifts!

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**John Trumbull Primary School, Watertown**

Program Title: The John Trumbull Primary Players

**Program Description:**

Realizing the importance of providing children with many valuable developmental opportunities outside of the school day, The Primary Players drama club was created at John Trumbull Primary School. Children are taught music and choreography which introduces them to the very basics of a musical. By the end of the school year a musical is performed by the students for the school and the community.

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**Judson School, Watertown**

Program Title: D.A.R.E. Program

**Program Description:**

The DARE program needs not explanation. However, our program has gone beyond the classroom lessons. The officer has become a real member of our staff, working with children, teachers, and parents on a variety of topics and relevant issues. The relationship he has with the children is one of utmost respect.

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**Polk Elementary School, Watertown**

Program Title: Co-Teaching Initiative

**Program Description:**

On behalf of Polk Elementary School, we honor our Co-Teaching Team for their professionalism, perseverance and positive energy as they serve our students in grade three, four and five. The Co-Teaching Team is comprised of three special education teachers, one speech and language pathologist and five classroom teachers. Their primary focus is to provide differentiated instruction in particular areas to meet the needs of all students inclusive of special needs students.

The eight teachers participated in co-teaching training sessions and collaboratively planned to develop units and lessons that integrated grade level objectives and individualized educational plans. Each team organized instruction to include accommodations and modifications and to reflect a variety of co-teaching structures. Successfully bringing this model to realization in one year is an achievement far exceeding our expectations. With teacher commitment, professional development and scheduled teacher collaboration opportunities, this program continues to grow in our school creating an environment where all students achieve at their personal best.

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## **Westbrook Elementary School, Westbrook**

Program Title: Academic Support System

### Program Description:

Kindergartens through fourth grade children with academic or behavior concerns are referred to our Collaborative Assistance Team (CAT). Strategies are then put in place. When a concern persists after this pre-referral process, students are referred to our Child Study Team. This process is helping us move quickly to the RTI (Response to Instruction) model of providing tiers of support services for all children. Each kindergarten has three hours per day of paraprofessional support. All the paraprofessionals are trained in the Teaching Literacy Competency (TLC) program so we can address the needs of any "at risk" First Grade students in "TLC". Students in second through fourth grade receive additional instruction from the support staff. We continue to revamp our schedule so that the most intensive support is provided at the same time at each grade level which has enhanced our ability to be flexible with the groupings.. Students can be frequently changed so that they are working with others who have the same focus or level of intervention. Last year we had a third grade class with a significant number of students needing support in mathematics. Intensive support was given to a group of students resulting in 89% of the class reaching goal and 97% reaching the proficient level.

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## **Frisbie School, Wolcott**

Program Title: Frisbie ES "Bee Connected Program"

### Program Description:

Frisbie School is joined together, K-5, in a "Bee Connected" theme, based on our school mascot the Bee. Under this umbrella theme our teachers have developed four sub committees to improve students' reader/text connections based upon assessment data, student work samples, and perceived needs. The program aligns with research by Robert Marzano. Students have created a logo with the "Bee Connected" theme which will be printed on t-shirts and posters. We are all in this together and can wear our shirts in celebration of the connections we are able to make. Another sub committee, One School One Book, is developing activities to go along with a picture book and chapter book that will be read, discussed, and shared by every Frisbie Student. Teachers throughout the school will read the same story encouraging discussions to develop comprehension skills and foster the love of reading.

Another sub committee is developing a list of diverse objects that can be compared/contrasted in order to stretch students' thinking. Teachers will use examples from this list to create Venn diagrams with their students. Each class chooses the top similarity and difference to be displayed on a school-wide bulletin board and announced over the video distribution system. We have a second bulletin board dedicated to displays of both teacher and student connections to books. Students are encouraged to get their picture taken and write a connection to a story that they are reading either in class or in their free time.

The Kindergarten classes, through a Wolcott Education Foundation grant, started the "Bee Connected Kindergarten Book Club". Each week every student in Kindergarten takes home a book bag that includes a book and a journal. Parents and children read the book together and then talk about how the book connects to their lives. After they discuss the book, then the parents write the connections down in the journal to share with the class. Parents are encouraged to go on the "Bee Connected" website set up through [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com). They were provided with a password and username to access the site. On the site there are educational games to play as well as assignments, reminders and announcements about the program from the teachers.

We also have the fourth and fifth grade Book Club where we are making connections to the Nutmeg Books that the students are reading.

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