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AMERICAN RE-EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AREA News

President's Corner

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In this issue of AREA News, you'll find some articles about projects designed and implemented by some dedicated and creative teacher-counselors who were awarded grants by AREA last year. These two projects are as different as night and day, but the spirit of our Re-ED mission shines through them in equal measure. They have in common finding ways to live and breathe the Re-ED principles in their work with young people. They build learning and growing into joyful, fun activities that benefit the children, and in turn, the larger community to which they belong. That's so Re-ED! A third article speaks to the continuing contribution of a grant awarded some time ago. Read their stories to be inspired.

To carry out the AREA Board's intention to consistently celebrate and support the teacher-counselors of our member programs, AREA awards up to three \$1,000 grants each year. We call these Rico F. Pallotta Innovation Grants. Have you got a great idea that needs some funding? The application can be found on the AREA website at www.re-ed.org.

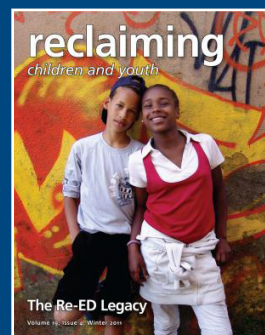
This grant program was also created for another purpose – to honor the memory of Dr. Rico Pallotta upon his passing. Rico was the founding executive director of Positive Education Program (PEP) in 1971 and its inspirational leader until his death in January 1998. Rico was awe-struck by the Re-ED philosophy and brought it to Cleveland area youth and families through sheer determination and by building a belief in its utility and potential with the stakeholders needed to make PEP happen.

Dr. Pallotta was also fundamental in the creation of the American Re-EDucation Association. By joining with other giants of our collective agency histories, AREA came to be at the Council for Exceptional Children Conference in New York City in 1981. Clark Luster of Pressley Ridge was elected our first president. For many years it was a lot of fun to watch the friendly competition between the two to see who could support AREA and Re-ED more!

I have a feeling that Nicholas Hobbs and Rico Pallotta are engaged in an ongoing, rigorous, and fascinating conversation about serving kids and families. And they smile upon us for continuing the work with the same creativity, determined reinvention to survive the threats that come along, and dedication to keeping Re-ED alive and well.

Reclaiming Youth International publishes a journal quarterly, delivering inspirational stories of important work and observations to caring professionals all over the world. The co-founder of the publication, Dr. Larry Brendtro, has always supported the work of Nicholas Hobbs and invites articles by those who bring life to the work they do with children and families. To that end, Re-ED is featured in each issue of *Reclaiming*, providing an opportunity for Re-EDers to communicate their great work and stories in a professional journal.

It is critical that AREA take advantage of this invitation to continue the conversation about the significance of Re-ED and what it means in the present. Life is to be lived now, so let's assure we support that principal by sharing our good ideas. If you are interested in writing a piece for the journal, please discuss it with your supervisor and see if the idea can be included. If so, contact me at imshepard55@gmail.com. As the editor for the Re-ED section, I will work with the author to move the piece forward.



The “Prentiss Autism Center Goes Green” Project

DAVID J. WEISS, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST, PEP, PRENTISS AUTISM CENTER

“In the final analysis, it is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings.”

-Ann Landers

It is in the spirit of this poignant statement about teaching self-reliance and independence by Ms. Landers that I proudly accepted a Rico Pallotta Innovation Grant in 2010. Our students at Positive Education Program’s Prentiss Autism Center live with autism and severe developmental disabilities and therefore, learn best in situations where activities are functional in nature. With recycling and green practices at the forefront of culture and science today, we discovered that recycling is a perfect activity for providing our students the extensive learning and practice they need to gain vocational and social/communication skills that generalize across environments.

Several years ago, I began recycling projects with our students. We found that with practice and the needed supports in place, our students were able to learn new work skills (competence makes a difference), become less apprehensive about vocational tasks (self control can be taught), understand the expectations of work (ceremony and ritual give order), work in teams with other students (the group is important), complete recycling tasks in community settings (communities are important). Most importantly, they learned to look forward to and be excited about vocational tasks (A child should know some joy in each day)!

The Rico Pallotta Grant has allowed us to expand these programs in what has been an exciting year for us here at Prentiss Autism Center. With the grant funds we have been able to purchase items needed for recycling, such as recycling containers. We have also been able to purchase needed items to make instructional materials. For example, visual task analyses to help our students understand what is expected of them. After obtaining the grant, we were able to expand our recycling efforts and have more students participate, and we were able to increase our recycling of paper, plastic and aluminum cans. As of this date, we have recycled several tons of paper, and also increased re-use of paper. We have also recycled large numbers of plastic containers and aluminum cans.

At the end of last school year we were able to utilize grant funds to buy materials for our “Recycling Celebration.” During the celebration we read stories about recycling, created art using re-used materials, made healthy snacks, and students actively participated in creating our “Collaborative Garden.” All students who had done recycling work during the school year participated in our “Recycling Celebration.”

This school year we have continued the great work. Our program (formerly Harbor Center) has moved into a new state-of-the-art building with a new name - PEP Prentiss Autism Center, and our building is the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building in the city of Fairview Park, Ohio. In the spirit of true community we bequeathed our “Collaborative Garden” to another PEP program. That program moved into our previous building, and their students worked to finish the job of maintaining, harvesting and using the produce. We have continued our recycling work and have been working hard to set up systems for our students to be actively involved in the process of recycling. We continue to recycle more, re-use more, and waste less! Prentiss students continue to enjoy the environmentally responsible work that they are doing. Most importantly, and in no small part because of the Rico Pallotta Innovation Grant, recycling work for our students has become an important part of our culture of learning, and as Ms. Landers stated, teaching students to “do for themselves” here at Prentiss.



The AREA Newsletter will be published quarterly. If you do not see your article in this issue, look for it in the next issue.

If you have an interesting story about your work or your colleagues’ work with children and families, please submit your articles to Lshepard@re-ed.org. We’d love to hear your story, and will help you develop it into something that your peers across the country will learn from and enjoy. We can’t wait to hear from you!

Kilns for Kids

DEBBIE SIMMERS, DIRECTOR, WRIGHT SCHOOL

As we know, teacher-counselors are an eclectic bunch of “decent adults, educated, well trained...” You know the drill. In my long history as a Re-EDer, the very best teacher-counselors often hold a variety of roles in order to continually nourish and refresh their own lives, during their lengthy tenures in their organizations. Rachel Bowman is a perfect example of the innovative no-job-too-big-or-too-small T-Cs at Wright School. She first appeared at Wright School in 1998 as an art therapy intern. When she completed her internship, Wright School, nor anyone in North Carolina, were hiring Art Therapists. Fortunately, in addition to being an artist and a therapist, Rachel was employed as a graphic designer at University of North Carolina and a knowledgeable Mac user, which was our platform at that time. We were a match made in heaven, and serendipitously, we had a new IT position for Rachel to help us enter the world of technology.

We hired Rachel to be our IT person, with the understanding that she could do “a little art therapy on the side.” Today Rachel is our only IT staff, functioning as network manager, hardware/software person, webmaster, HIPAA Privacy/Security Officer, Emergency Evacuation Coordinator, E-rate expert, AND our only helpdesk person! Oh, and she does “a little art therapy on the side.”

Rachel works with clay when making her own art and she thought clay would be a great addition to Wright School’s tools to work with a variety of kids. Silly putty was in our budget, but she wanted kids to have exposure to real art experiences and materials.

I have always thought of the Rico Pallotta Grant as AREA’s tribute to Rico’s love of Re-ED by celebrating his talent in creative financing - finding the funds to get teacher-counselors the stuff they needed to do their work and inspire children. So, in 2002 she applied for and was awarded a Rico Pallotta Grant to buy a kiln. Since that time she has used clay in work with groups and individual children to create art for the nourishment and refreshment of their own lives.

Rachel often puts kids work on our web page www.wrightschool.org/kids.htm, which is a source of pride and joy for kids and their families.



“Incan Golden Mask” by Josh



“Two Versions of Gir” by Kaitlyn

In the daily business of our work, teacher-counselors come up with imaginative, talented and inspirational ideas that support Re-ED’s core principles, making our work different from that of others. The AREA Board of Directors has created a way to recognize and fund some of these ideas by instituting the Rico Pallotta Grants. The Board takes great pleasure in supporting creative efforts of teacher-counselors and always looks forward to hearing about the implementation. Please, take advantage of this opportunity. It is unique to Re-ED and important to the continued energy for creativity. We encourage teacher-counselors to work with their supervisors and others to brainstorm some new great ideas that require a little bit of help to get off the ground.

The American Re-EDucation Association provides at least two \$1000.00 grants each year to deserving teacher-counselors that have an idea to implement in their program. The grant is called The Rico Pallotta Innovation Grant.

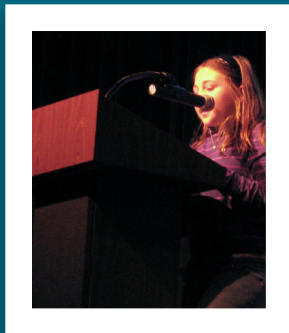
Go to www.re-ed.org for details and the application.



Power to Change

Youth Guided Anti-Stigma Campaign Focuses On Bullying In Middle School

JENNIFER BURGER & SONYA BEASLEY, CENTERSTONE



Michael Jackson's lyrics, "It's time to make a change..." resonated from the speakers while students from Mt. Pleasant Middle School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Mt. Pleasant, TN streamed into the auditorium for a school assembly. The "Power to Change" assembly focused on addressing bullying in their school. Students from 5-8th grade, teachers, administrators, and community partners came together to discuss their experiences with bullying and share ways to make a positive change so that the school will be a safe place for all.

The Mule Town Family Network (MTFN) is a Centerstone Collaborative Grant focused on addressing the mental health needs of children and youth utilizing a Systems of Care approach. The Network issued a challenge to local schools to develop and implement a youth driven mental health awareness campaign entitled "Raise Your Voice". The campaign focuses on peer education and decreasing the stigma on issues related to mental health. This school year, Mt. Pleasant Middle School for the Performing and Visual Arts accepted this challenge, utilizing Rico Pallotta Innovation Grant funds.

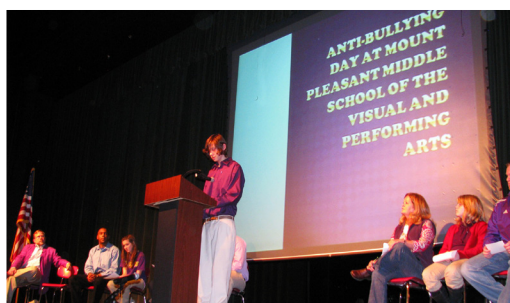
The public forum was a result of many hours of discussion, development, and planning by a group of students, who worked diligently with the help of MTFN teacher-counselors and the school's guidance counselor. As the students worked together on this peer education effort, they exemplified the Re-ED principle that "the group is very important to young people, and it can become a major source of instruction in growing up."

During the assembly, the students discovered the importance of a second Re-ED principle, "communities are important for children and youth, but the uses and benefits of community must be experienced to be learned." The students understood that it was important for their own community to come together to educate and support each other, instead of bringing a speaker that wasn't a part of the middle school community.

Part of the students' vision for this anti-stigma campaign was to encourage fellow students to raise their voices throughout the school community and bring about a positive change in their thoughts and actions towards others. In order to help facilitate this charge, the students and faculty were provided the opportunity to sign an anti-bullying pledge. Those who participated and accepted the responsibility for positive change received a purple bracelet and pin to wear in school. These items identified them as someone who will stand up for others in a positive way.

The assembly is only the first step for the members of the Mt. Pleasant Middle School for the Visual and Performing Arts community. They know that in order to keep the "Power to Change" program a strong force in the community, it will need to be an ongoing effort. The students have learned that if they want to improve the culture and atmosphere of their school, they must support each other.

The Mule Town Family Network, a system of care located in Maury County, TN, is a partnership between the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, Centerstone, Tennessee Voices for Children and other community stakeholders. The system promotes integration and coordination of services to allow children and youth with serious emotional disturbances to function more effectively at home, in school and within the community. The Mule Town Family Network is funded by a grant from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS). For a listing of mental health services and providers in Maury County, please go to www.muletownfamily.org.



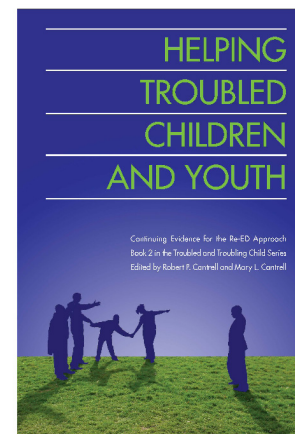
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The Re-ED book, *Helping Troubled and Troubling Children: Continuing Evidence for the Re-ED Approach* is now available. Visit www.re-ed.org for ordering instructions, or order online at Amazon.com.