



A Letter from our Director of Programs....

Dear Friends,

In a speech given earlier this month, Education Secretary Arne Duncan said, "No issue is more pressing than education. ... This is the civil rights issue of our generation—the fight for a quality education is about so much more than education. It's a fight for social justice." Mr. Duncan goes on to address the ways he feels the current education system is undermining teacher quality, saying, "When great teachers are unrecognized and unrewarded—when struggling teachers are unsupported—and when failing teachers are unaddressed—the teaching profession is damaged."

The federal government is investing \$100 billion into education as part of the Recovery Act. Much of this Recovery Act funding will go to supporting struggling schools and to finding new ways to develop and maintain "teacher quality." In our work we have always seen teacher development as critical to student outcomes of all kinds—social, emotional, academic. One of the primary dimensions of our work is to support teachers to cultivate their own "teaching presence"—interconnected qualities of open heart, presence, respectful discipline and emotional range. When teachers develop awareness about "teaching presence", we have a greater capacity to truly educate our students, as in the Latin word *educare*—to draw out or bring forth, or as Yeats said—"not simply filling a bucket, but lighting a fire."

And yet because teachers often feel overloaded, underpaid, and unappreciated, it can be difficult for them to find the time and energy to engage in anything beyond what is absolutely required by their district. This "pressure cooker" paradigm creates the sense that teachers must choose between either teaching academic content OR fostering social and emotional learning. But what brain research and learning theory consistently demonstrate is that these dimensions are two sides of the same coin.

As Mr. Duncan says, "All of us remember an educator or coach who changed our life. It stays with us forever. It sustains us, guides us and inspires us. They're the ones who commit those everyday acts of kindness and love and never ask for anything in return." I'm sure each of us also remembers the teacher who negatively impacted us, who didn't exhibit "teaching presence." It is our experience that when teachers develop and nourish their own inner lives and self-awareness, they can more effectively "give" in the way Duncan notes above, creating classroom environments where students are engaged, motivated, and connected to each other and to caring adults. And when educators have a toolbox of activities, methodologies and practices that foster a classroom culture that is safe for intellectual risk and personal sharing, their daily work becomes invigorating, alive, multi-dimensional. So often we hear from teachers—"PassageWorks has put a framework and language to what I am intuitively doing with kids" or "you have offered me tools to put into practice what I know to be true about learning."

As the government pours critical

dollars into education and strives to improve "teacher quality", it is essential to find ways to support and sustain teachers so they have the inner and outer resources to engage students at a whole new level. This entails a reshuffling of priorities, and it requires that funding and standards follow these priorities. In this pivotal moment in education, your voice is truly needed—it is through collaboration and dialogue that a new educational approach will emerge: one that considers social and emotional learning, global citizenship competencies, and the development of students' inner lives as integral to academic achievement. Please stay in touch and let us know what your thoughts are about PassageWorks and the educational system. What are your priorities for education? What issues do you see in your own school communities that need to be addressed?

We hope you enjoy our summer newsletter—it is filled with updates on our recent activities and announcements of upcoming courses and events.

Warm wishes,

Laura Weaver
Director of Programs
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PassageWorks School Updates

Alexander Dawson, Lafayette, CO

The Alexander Dawson School will be continuing with our 6th grade and implementing our 10th grade curricula with 50-60 students beginning this fall. Seven faculty members will be involved in this project.

Think College Now, Oakland, CA

In spring 2009, we completed a successful pilot year with TCN. To continue the project, both TCN kindergarten teachers will implement the kindergarten curriculum for a second year during 2009-2010. Additionally, the TCN school counselor is planning to attend the our October Foundation Course, extending the scope of the project.

Martin Elementary & RA Doyle Elementary East Prairie, MO

Batya Greenwald will partner with two elementary school principals Mellisa Heath and Donna Turnbo-Smith to offer follow-up trainings with their respective faculties in late summer. Both schools have been integrating the PassageWorks model for the last three years, and their faculties have all participated in a Foundation Course. Batya will also offer a two-hour introductory workshop and presentation for local elementary school principals. To share the story of the impact of the PassageWorks Missouri Project, Laura Weaver and principals Mellisa Heath and Donna Turnbo-Smith will co-write an article to be published in 2010.

Boulder School of Integrated Studies, Boulder, CO "School Climate Survey" Improvement

Congratulations to the staff of BCSIS whose hard work and dedication resulted in significant improvements in the 2008-2009 annual school climate survey, as reported by students. Teachers commented that PassageWorks played a considerable role in these gains. Two major areas of improvement included 1) children feeling cared for by teachers in the building and 2) reduction in students' experience of bullying at the school. We look forward to continuing our relationship with BCSIS.

PassageWorks has worked with Charles Elbot and the DPS Office of Intentional School Culture over the last several years. For more information on School Culture, go to www.schoolculture.dpsk12.org.



Beki An Sciacca with her grandson Eddie Sciacca-Peters at the BCSIS Kindergarten Witness Council in May, 2009



Student, West High School

West High School Denver, CO

We successfully completed a rich and challenging pilot year with West High School in Denver, under the leadership of Pat Sanchez. We are currently gathering data from a number of sources to evaluate the project. UCD administered pre and post project surveys with students and teachers in relation to school climate and the advisory program and data should be available by early fall. Preliminary reports from West High School show that the number of students completing 9th grade went from 64% in 2008 to 80% in 2009 (after the pilot). Additionally, preliminary data from the UCD West High School surveys show that the "Caring Adult" section of the survey showed significant improvement from fall 2008 to spring 2009. This spring, PassageWorks completed ten video interviews of teachers and students around their experiences with advisory.

"I didn't used to speak English that well so I was a little bit afraid to speak to people. Because of PassageWorks I have more confidence. It taught me that I shouldn't be afraid to just speak what I want to say."
- "Newcomer" student, West High School



Curriculum Development

Kindergarten Curriculum Completion

Carrie Simpson and Rachael Kessler will complete the second semester of the kindergarten curriculum this summer. The single-semester curriculum has now been piloted in four schools across the country in rural, urban and suburban environments. The full-year curriculum will be available by late fall 2009.

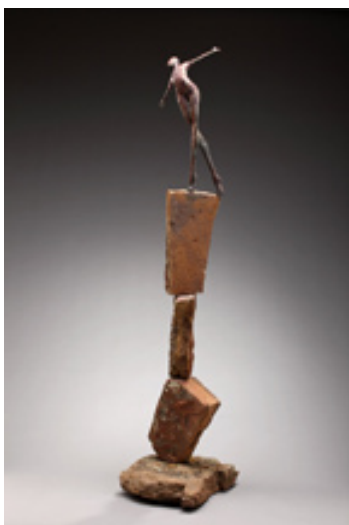
8th grade Curriculum

8th grade Language Arts teacher Diana Bamford will partner with PassageWorks staff to develop the initial outline of the 8th grade transitions curriculum this summer. PassageWorks plans to publish this completed curriculum in 2010.

Keeping Connected... PassageWorks' Social Networking Initiative

In early 2009 Naropa University graduate student Erynn Simone began a graduate internship with PassageWorks. Her first task was to survey individuals who have attended a PassageWorks training, asking how our organization can best support them in their work. The overwhelming answer? **Stay more connected!** This was the beginning of our Social Networking Initiative.

With the help of volunteers Margaret Thompson, Jim Halligan (www.jimhalligan.com), Marya Read (www.peopleproductions.com), and Kirsten Boyer (www.kirstenboyerphotography.blogspot.com), PassageWorks began the task of using social media to keep our community connected. In June, we officially launched a Facebook page for the general public. We also wanted to provide graduates of our courses with a place where they could support and learn from each other, share resources and stories, and hear directly from PassageWorks staff and faculty. And so in July, we launched the **PassageWorks Learning Community**—a password protected section of our website for educators, administrators and parents who have taken the Foundation Course or Teaching Presence Course. Registered users will have access to our **"Teachers to Teachers"** blog, photos, videos, links, articles, and resources that relate to the PassageWorks mission and vision, as well as to national and global education topics. If you are a graduate of a PassageWorks training and would like to become a member of our community, send an email to info@passageworks.org.



Playing on the Edge

"I am an art teacher, PassageWorks facilitator and faculty member, and a professional sculptor. This sculpture, *Playing on the Edge*, is about embracing the full range of our life experiences and opportunities; not just those that are comfortable and entrenched, but also those that push us towards growth. My artwork is inspired in part by my journey with PassageWorks."

- Lorri Acott-Fowler

www.lorriacottfowler.com

Training and Professional Development

Upcoming Courses

Our next Foundation Course will be held October 22-24, 2009 in Boulder, CO and facilitated by Laura Weaver, Lorri Fowler, and Ari Gerzon-Kessler. For more information or to register for the course, visit www.passageworks.org/index.php/courses-events

Three Foundation Courses in 2009 - February, March, & June:

PassageWorks offered three Foundation Courses in 2009: one in Maui in February, and two in Boulder in March and June. During the June FC we piloted new approaches and distributed a re-organized and improved participant source-book and other materials.

Teaching Presence Course in June 2009: PassageWorks offered our 2nd annual Teaching Presence course in June, co-facilitated by Rachael Kessler, Laura Weaver and Mark Wilding. The next Teaching Presence course is planned for the spring of 2010.

Summer and Fall 2009 Conferences

CASE Conference (July 29-31 in Breckenridge, CO): Mark Wilding and Principal Pat Sanchez will present a breakout session in which they will share about the PassageWorks advisory program and other West initiatives that positively impacted West High School's Freshmen drop-out rate.

NNER Conference (Oct 14 - 17 in Bellevue, WA): Mark Wilding, Pat Sanchez and Gordon Dveirin will present an NNER break-out session entitled "It's About Relationships" and will meet with other strategic allies in the northwest.

Keynote, Holistic Learning Conference (October 23 - 25 in Toronto, Canada): Rachael Kessler is scheduled to give a keynote address at this October 2009 Conference.

Visit us online at
www.passageworks.org

Mind and Life XIX

October 8 - 9, 2009 in Washington, D.C. Educating World Citizens for the 21st Century - Mind and Life XIX with H.H. the Dalai Lama - "Mind and Life XIX brings together world-renowned educators, scientists, and contemplatives, in conversation with the Dalai Lama, to explore new avenues for science and educational practice related to the cultivation of these positive human qualities..." see www.educatingworldcitizens.org.