

News Notes

by Robert C. McKean and Bob L. Taylor

Help with Community Education

Help is available for school districts wanting to introduce community education programs. The Federal Community Education Clearinghouse has been set up by HEW's Office of Education in Rockville, Maryland. It gathers, analyzes, and disseminates up-to-date information on community education topics. A toll-free number provides easy access to the clearinghouse during regular working hours. Requests can be made by dialing (800) 638-6698 from anywhere in the continental United States, except Maryland.

In responding to requests, the clearinghouse draws upon its file of materials that have been collected. A requestor may receive excerpts from journal articles, descriptions of successful programs, or explanations of alternative approaches to the subject. Also, referrals are made to state agencies that offer technical assistance or to an individual in his geographic area who has the needed expertise. The clearinghouse may provide several items on a subject by sending a bibliography of references.

In addition to answering individual requests, the clearinghouse will provide:

1. A quarterly publication, the "Community Education Calendar," which highlights issues, events, and important developments in the community education field.

2. A registry containing the names and interest areas of community educators. Those on the list will receive the latest products and publications of the clearinghouse and will serve as a resource for linking requestors with appropriate contacts.

3. A directory describing the goals, activities, and results of selected projects funded by the Office of Education's Community Education program. Projects will be selected to illustrate the variety of settings, target populations, and administering agencies represented in the federal program.

4. A catalog of resource material listing the most important printed and audiovisual items contained in the response/referral service. An expanded abstract and purchase information on each item will help community educators know what is available in the subject areas.

Alternative High School Program

Today's schools are regularly faced with the disenchantment felt by students who do not respond to the traditional classroom methods. These students are threatened by the structure and authority of the regular school setting, and consequently, they have a negative attitude toward attendance policies, course requirements, and behavioral standards. To meet this concern, Cedar Falls (Iowa) High School has provided a program of supplementary education. This is the PLUS—Preventing the Loss of Uninterested Students—Program. It offers an interdisciplinary mixture of skills, curriculum, and human relations. Students are referred into this alternative program by teachers, counselors, and administrators. The student may be skipping classes, reading below grade level, failing classes, or having problems associated with self-concept.

The program enrolls between 15 to 20 students at the high school, and approximately 10 additional students per hour use the PLUS Learning-Reading Center. Faculty and staff involved directly with the program are the director-coordinator, guidance counselor, vice principal, three subject matter specialists, and a secretary.

The objectives of the program are: to help students achieve a high school diploma, increase their skills, help build positive feelings toward themselves and others, and to extend the classroom experiences through field trips and community involvement. These objectives are accomplished by curriculum designed to be relevant to the needs of these students, by emphasis on the basics, for example, reading, comprehension, and computational skills, by reading center services for students who want to improve their individual skills, by fulltime staff members encouraging immediate one-to-one or small group interaction, and by individual and group counseling.

The courses offered provide the basic requirements for a diploma at Cedar Falls High School. The classes are one semester courses taught by professionals in each field of study. The students are enrolled for a 3-hour block of time from 9 a.m. to 12 noon each day. Physical education and group guidance are provided in the three-hour block. Other time periods during the day are available for reading improvement in specific classes or

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general comprehension. Curricular offerings are: general business, mathematics, social studies, speech, English, and physical education. Special activities included are: field trips, community service projects, school-related projects, and career exploration. Grades are awarded to students for achievement. Essentially, students operate on a point system that gives them points for attendance and activity. Evaluation is made on the basis of the accumulated points. The point system requires that the student attend and participate in order to earn credit. Evaluation of the program is accomplished by standardized pre- and posttesting of all students, monthly parent meetings, home visits, and continuous review of the program by other staff members.

For additional information about the program, contact: PLUS Program, Cedar Falls High School, 10th & Division Streets, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613.

Discounts for Schools on Smithsonian Traveling Exhibitions

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

(SITES) is offering reduced rental fees for schools on selected exhibitions in their American Studies program. The fees will be reduced up to 50 percent on multiple bookings of exhibitions within a 12-month period.

The purpose of the discount is to encourage school systems to consider traveling exhibitions as supplementary teaching aids to their curricula. A SITES exhibition provides an in-depth learning experience for students, at their own individual pace. It can also be a convenient tool for a teacher who wants to highlight certain aspects of a subject, with a more lasting impact than a film or slide presentation.

These exhibitions, which have been researched, produced, and circulated by SITES, feature different aspects of American cultural history. They are panel exhibitions that present a topic through photographs, illustrations, and explanatory text, with all graphic elements mounted on supports or panels, ready to be wall-hung.

Most exhibitions are accompanied either by handouts, posters, or study guide materials for teachers, including bibliographies, film lists, additional discussion topics, and classroom activities to plan in conjunction with the exhibition.

Under the terms of the discount, when a school books two exhibitions in the program, the fees will be reduced by 20 percent; three exhibitions, 30 percent; four exhibitions, 40 percent; and five or more, 50 percent. Each exhibitor pays the outgoing shipping costs to the next location on the tour.

To assist with curriculum planning, SITES has composed a list of suggested series that schools can coordinate with different areas of study. Series topics include black history, inventions, presidential history, technology, communications, and other topics. For example, a series on women's history could include such exhibitions as *America's First Ladies*; *Black Women: Achievement Against the Odds*; and *Workers and Allies: Female Participation in the Trade Union Movement*.

There are multiple copies of each exhibition available for distribution in different areas of the United States during the academic year 1977-78. For a list of exhibitions with rental fees, and a list of suggested series, contact: Smithsonian Institution, Traveling Exhibition Services, Arts and Industries Building #2170, Washington, D.C. 20560. ⁹⁷FL

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