

FRESNO STATE

Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

ANNUAL REPORT: 2007

Purpose of Bonner Center

The KSOEHD's Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship was formed in 1997 to promote character education in the Central Valley through providing nationally recognized speakers for the Fresno area, forums on character education and professional ethics, materials and other professional resources for review, and coordination for a variety of character award programs.

Administrative Housing of Ancillary Unit

The Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship is an authorized Ancillary Unit of the CSU Fresno and the KSOEHD. Dr. Jacques Benninga is its director and Dr. Pam Lane-Garon is its Associate Director. The Center's activities are guided by an Advisory Board composed of KSOEHD faculty, public school personnel from Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Madera counties and a representative of the Bonner Family Foundation.

Major Accomplishments for 2006-2007

1. A series of 13 new scripts were written for the fourth season of KVPR's short program, "The Moral Is..." , written by Jacques Benninga and narrated by Kaye Cummings. The program aired twice weekly in Spring/Summer 2007.
2. The class, Principles of Character Education, was offered in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. This was the third full year this class was offered for CSUF credential students. The Spring class featured Dr. Hal Urban. Over 200 students registered for these classes during the year. It will be scheduled again for Fall 2007 and Spring 2008.
3. The 23rd Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education was held on April 20, 2007 at the new Fresno Convention Center with Dr. Hal Urban and the 2006-07 Teachers-of-the-Year from Tulare County and Fresno County as keynote speakers. Students and faculty from Fresno Pacific University joined our CSUF students and faculty. Jacques Benninga co-chaired this event with Jane Moosoolian. Sponsorships were received from the KSOEHD, the Fresno COE, Tulare COE, Madera COE, EECU, the Bonner Family Foundation, the California Campus Compact, and the California Geographic Alliance. Of the 35 breakout sessions, 11 were conducted by CSUF faculty and 3 by faculty from FPU.
4. The 20th Annual Virtues and Character Recognition program resulted in the awarding of 8 local middle schools for exemplary character education programs in April 2007. The 2007 program was initiated in October 2006 and the deadline for applications was February 9, 2007. The Bonner Center's Advisory Committee screened applicants and arranged for site visits to finalist schools. As in previous years, the award ceremony will be held at the 2007 Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education. Schools to be awarded in 2007 include:

GREEN ACRES MIDDLE SCHOOL
Visalia Unified School District
David Tonini, Principal

LAWLESS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District
John Maurer, Principal

LIVE OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tulare City Schools
Paula Adair, Principal

LOS TULES MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tulare City Schools
Gary Yentes, Principal

MULCAHY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tulare City Schools
John Pendleton, Principal

RAFER JOHNSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Kingsburg Elementary Charter District
Laurie Goodman, Principal

SEQUOIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District
Mike Ribera, Principal

WAWONA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District
Mike Darling, Principal

5. Between January and March 2007 Pam Lane-Garon successfully trained faculty and students at all of the FUSD Middle Schools on principles of peer mediation. This was a major undertaking, involving not only faculty and students from each of the middle schools, but faculty and students from each of their feeder elementary schools as well. Hundreds of students and teachers participated. Pam was busy with this project almost every day for the three months, and for her exemplary effort was presented a special recognition by the Bonner Center at its April conference and by FUSD at its first Character Education Recognition Ceremony on May 15, 2007.
6. The Bonner Center, in conjunction with the Tulare County Office of Education and the Josephson Institution of Ethics (e.g., Character Counts!), has completed its first year of work on a four-year grant to evaluate the effectiveness of the Character Counts! Program in Tulare County. The project is funded by a grant from the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools of the US Department of Education (Partnerships in Character Education Programs).
7. The paper published by Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn and Smith in the February 2006 Phi Delta Kappan ("Character and Academics: What Good Schools Do") has been selected for re-print in the Annual Editions: Education series (McGraw Hill), and in Current (a reprint journal of the Helen Dwight Reid Foundation).
8. Jack Benninga presented his research as part of a specially invited panel of researchers to the annual meeting of the Character Education Partnership in October 2006. Subsequently he was asked to present an overview of research on character education to the Character Counts! National Trainers meeting in Los Angeles (December 2006). He remains on the Academic Advisory Panel at Stanford University's Center on Adolescence, the moral education sub-committee of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), and the Editorial Board of the Journal for Research in Character Education.

9. Work has continued throughout 2006-2007 on the cooperative character education grant with Fresno Unified School District. Pam Lane-Garon has trained and supported peer mediation groups at each of the eight targeted schools, and Jack Benninga, Dick Sparks and Rich Firpo are conducting a program of professional ethical faculty development sessions with those targeted schools and with the Superintendent's Cabinet. 2007-2008 will be the last year of the grant. Work in this last year will focus partly on institutionalizing the programs we've developed. As a result of our project work, Rich Firpo and Jack Benninga have been invited to provide a professional ethics component for the FUSD Leadership Group class (a cohort of FUSD "emerging leaders" identified and supported through an administrative credential program at Fresno State).

10. Jack spent a good deal of time in Summer 2006 lobbying the California Department of Education, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), the California Superintendent of Education, and local superintendents regarding the lack of criteria for character education in the California School Recognition Award Program. As a result, he has been asked to join a committee to revise the 2007-2008 California School Recognition Program criteria.

Sources of Funding

Funding for the Bonner Center's operations have come from a variety of sources. Of prime importance is the continuing support from the Bonner Family Foundation, Fresno, CA. The Bonner Family Foundation's support over 11 years has been integral to the existence of the Bonner Center. Other support has come from the USDE (Partnerships in Character Education grants), the EECU, the Fresno County Office of Education, the Tulare County Office of Education, the Madera County Office of Education, the California Geographic Alliance—San Joaquin Chapter (Steve Kemper), as well as the KSOEHD.

Space and Equipment Utilization

The KSOEHD allocates space for the Bonner Center's materials collection in the INTERESC room, ED 420.

Goals and Objectives for 2007-2008

Several areas will receive primary attention by the Bonner Center in 2006-07. These include:

- Research. Our FUSD Partnerships in Character Education research team has spent the bulk of 2006-07 implementing peer mediation programs and preparing assessments, testing teachers and implementing professional ethics discussions in target schools. 2007-08 will be the final year for this project.

- Research. Our TCOE Partnerships in Character Education research team has spent the bulk of 2006-2007 identifying schools and instruments. The first year of this grant is the planning year. 2007-2008 will be the first year of the program during which assessments will be administered and interventions begun.

- The 2008 Conference on Character and Civic Education. The 24th conference will be scheduled for April 2008. A major keynote speaker will be selected and planning for the myriad details that will make the conference successful will be worked out. The 20th Annual Virtues and Character Recognition Award applications (elementary schools) will be due in February 2008 and will be screened and validation teams will be formed to visit finalist schools. Additional character education workshops will be planned.

- California Department of Education. The Bonner Center spent significant time over the years 2000-2004 ensuring that character education criteria were included in California's award to distinguished schools. Schools applying for the award during those years had to address character education at their schools. Surprisingly, for the 2006 award most character education criteria had been deleted. The Bonner Center contacted the CDE about this issue, and an editorial written by Michael Josephson and Jacques Benninga criticizing the CDE appeared in the Fresno Bee in April 2006. We continued to advocate with the department

to reinstate character education as part of the distinguished schools nomination process with the result that Jack Benninga has been asked to work with the CDE on award revisions in Summer 2007.

- Other areas. Other areas to receive attention in 2007-08 include the materials collection in the Bonner Center, consultation with schools, speaking engagements, and instructional programs, and a framework for an evaluation of character education at the high school.