

# **WISCONSIN CHAPTER**

## **OF**

### **NATIONAL AT-RISK EDUCATION NETWORK**

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*Sept. 2005*

“We must capture a student’s heart, before we can capture their mind”.

#### **From the President:**

Welcome Back! Wow, what a start! I am sure you are experiencing the same crazy start to school as I am. We all have new challenges and changes that affect us and our programs. I am always amazed how much things can change in just a few months. New programs, new teachers, new laws, new procedures and responsibilities all seem to greet us as we start the new school year. There never seems to be a lack of new challenges either. Budgets, expectations, new students with new and more intense needs, new curriculum and materials, and that never ending challenge to re-connect with the students we have worked with. As long as I have worked with at-risk and special needs students the challenge was always there every fall, to get them re-connected to school. For some it was easy for others it took everything I had to get them to come back and continue in their education.

I would like to draw your attention to the quote at the top of the page, “We must capture a student’s heart, before we can capture their mind”. I have found in my experience, if I haven’t been able to capture a student’s heart, then there was no way I was going to be able to make a difference in their desire to be educated. How do we capture a student’s heart? Here are a few ways it worked for me.

To capture a student’s heart starts with RESPECT. We need to treat our students as adults. We should treat them as individuals, and treat them with dignity. We have to learn that respect comes from modeling proper manners, watching our language making sure we are being positive and supportive and not putting them down or using sarcasm. We have to learn to appreciate differences. We need to make sure we don’t judge our students or the circumstances in which they come from. We need to look for the good in our students instead of finding fault. By showing respect to our students, we can help them to develop effective social skills and habits, make them feel good about themselves, earn their respect and start to capture their heart. Earl Nightingale said, “Our rewards in life will always be in exact proportion to the amount of consideration we show toward others”.

INTEGRITY is another way to capture a student’s heart. I wish I could say that I have always been a person of integrity, to be a person of integrity requires hard work, and I can’t say that I have always been successful. Merriam-Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, Ninth Edition

defines integrity as “essential to completeness”. To have integrity is to be a complete person. How could we ever when over a student’s heart with out having integrity? Being honest and open with our student’s will help us to capture their heart. It will allow the trusting relationship that is missing in most of their lives to be developed. It will allow them to open themselves up to you, which in turn will help you to connect with them in even a greater way then ever before. Lewis Andrews in his book “To Thine Own Self Be True” he explains his theory that dishonest behavior is the root of most of our psychological problems. We know that dishonesty turns us into phonies and manipulators. Students will know if we are phonies and manipulators and they will not respond to us or our teaching. It will ruin the relationship, without trust, good relationships are impossible.

To capture a student’s heart requires a good ATTITUDE. I believe that the type of attitude we have is the most important decision we will make in life. Attitude affects everything we do in life. People who have generally positive attitudes expect the best; people with bad attitudes expect the worst. Which attitude do you think will capture your student’s heart? Which one do you want them to have? I look back on my life. When I was a student in high school I could care less what happened to me. My folks were divorced and I was always in trouble with the law. It was a teacher’s attitude toward life and problems and toward me helped me to a change in my attitude that made a drastic change in my life. We all need an occasional attitude adjustment. How we portray life, how we respond to life’s ups and downs will show our student’s that there is always a positive to everything that happens. In giving them hope we will be able to capture a student’s heart.

To capture a student’s heart, we must let them know IT’S OK TO FAIL. Everyone fails. Failing is a fact of life. What matters is how we fail. Failure is a great teacher. It teaches us humility, it teaches us that we need to correct our course, and it teaches us we can’t always have what we want. What matters the most is how we handle failure. Our students have witnessed and seen failure probably more than most. Most of them have seen the wrong way in which to handle failure, we must teach them that it is okay to fail and to provide them the proper coping skills. I would like to share with you this quote from Benjamin Barber,

“I divide the world into learners and non-learners. There are people who learn, who are open to what happens around them, who listen, who hear the lessons. When they do something stupid, they don’t do again. And when they do something that works a little bit, they do it even better and harder next time. The question to ask is not whether you are a success or a failure, but whether you are a learner or a non-learner”.

I hope that you are able to capture the heart and mind of all your student’s. May this be your best year ever.

Peace

(Thoughts from the above article came from Hal Urban’s book “Life Greatest Lessons”.)

**Getting to Know Your Board of Directors**

## **Sally Schultz – President Elect**

Sally has been on the Board of Directors for NARENWICH since its conception. Sally was elected the Treasure of NAREWICH in October 2002. She was just elected as the President-Elect at the spring conference in Stevens Point. Sally is currently the principal of Malcolm Shabazz City High School in the Madison Metropolitan School District. She has been the principal for the past five years. Prior to her appointment at Shabazz, she has been an Assistant Principal, Athletic Director, and a Teacher at a public high school. She has also been an associate Dean at a technical college and a program director for a residential facility for developmental disabled adults.

Malcolm Shabazz High School came into existence in January, 1971. Initially, the school was experimental with minimal structure and few rules. Decisions were made by staff members and students working together to design a new kind of school. In 1972 City School was founded. It too emphasized the role of students in shared decision making. Students and staff met in management groups to make policies and to handle administrative details. In 1979, the two programs consolidated into one program know as Malcolm Shabazz City High School. The democratic traditions of both schools were maintained, and there was a continued effort to involve students in the creation of structures and rules designed to make the school the best educational environment possible. Presently Shabazz is a school where all the staff is certified in their accredited subject area. Students must meet the DPI credit acquisition for graduation. Shabazz supports the four high schools in the Madison Area School District.

Shabazz is designed to accommodate 130 to 140 students. Students who are interested in the program complete an application form and meet with a staff member for an interview. New students are enrolled at the beginning of each quarter. There are more applicants each quarter than what the school can accommodate. Twenty new students are added each quarter.

Shabazz staff serves both non EEN students and EEN students. The latest student demographics include: 18% EEN, 32% AHANA, 63% previously truant, 88% state they were “bored” at their home school.

Service – Learning permeates the culture of Malcolm Shabazz City High School. Shabazz students have service – learning options in most of their “academic” and “elective” areas. Through service – learning projects, Shabazz students interact with hundreds of youth and adults at the local, national and international level. Motivation, academic ability, communication skills, leadership, and compassion are increased through a wide variety of service – learning projects.

Character Education is also an emphasis in our curriculum. Restorative Practices is what we use to respond to disciplinary issues. The importance of communal responsibility is the focus of much of our work.

The mission of Malcolm Shabazz City High School is to create a harassment free, anti-discrimination learning environment where all people, regardless of previous academic performance, family background, socio-economic status, beliefs, abilities, appearance, race, gender identity, or sexual orientation are respected. It is a school where all students are able to feel safe and encouraged to develop social and emotional skills as well as academic competences. Education is viewed as a life-long journey. Curriculum and personalized

instruction are multicultural. A strong sense of community exists in which students are asked to participate in school decision-making, conflict resolution, and service – learning. Fundamental to the school’s philosophy is the belief that education has the power to affect positive change and strengthen the connections between the student, family and community.

The staff and students are always willing to share what they are doing with any interested individuals. Visitors are prevalent in our halls. Also we are constantly looking for growth opportunities and would love to learn from what anyone else is doing. We believe that true educational reform is found amongst all of us who realize education of our children is much more than just expounding academic curriculum.

It should be noted that Malcolm Shabazz City School was the first school in the nation to be certified by the National At-Risk Education Network (NAREN Nine) certification program.

## **NEWS TO KNOW!**

In this section of the news letter we would like to highlight upcoming training opportunities and conferences. If you are aware of any information that you feel would benefit other members or their programs, please send us that information so we can help get out the word.

This will also be where we will try to keep you informed with state and national NAREN news. If you are aware of grants, laws, or news that would impact our teachers, students and programs, please send that information to me.

- The National Office of NAREN will be moving to Madison, Wisconsin. Read more in this month's NAREN newsletter.
- State Superintendent’s Conference on Special Education and Pupil Services Leadership Issues will be held in Madison at the Alliant Energy Center on October 18-19, 2005
- The 2006 NAREN National Conference will be February 22 – 25, 2006, at the Edgewater Beach Resort in Panama City, Florida. Build it into your budget for next year.
- The 2006 NARENWICH State Conference will be March 9 – 10, 2006, at the Plaza in Wausau, Wisconsin.

## **NARENWICH CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS**

The themes for the 2006 NARENWICH State Conference were chosen from the feedback of previous conferences. They are:

1. Brain – Based Learning
2. ATODA/Mental Health Issues for Students
3. Staff Wellness
4. Project/Community Based Models

Instructions and Guidelines for writing a proposal to present:

- Please provide a description discussing the content and anticipated outcomes of the session. Must not exceed 100 words. Designate which theme your proposal supports.
- Sessions will be scheduled throughout the conference from Thursday morning, March 9<sup>th</sup> through Friday morning, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Presentations will be **75 minutes** in length. Interactive sectionals are encouraged and please plan for a question and answer time. Please note if you are willing to repeat your presentation.
- Proposals may be mailed to Jennifer Varsik at 1970N Farming Rd. Arbor Vitae, WI. 54568 or emailed to [jrvarsik@yahoo.com](mailto:jrvarsik@yahoo.com).
- Proposals are due by, **October 31, 2005**. (Earlier submissions will be appreciated) Selection, and notification of presentations accepted, will be completed by November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005.
- There will be a round table discussion forum set up focusing on participants' concerns. Please note if you would be interested in being a facilitator.

## **HONORS and VICTORIES**

We need to share our stories. It was evident at the state conference that many great things are happening all across this great state. Why wait until the conference to share, let's share now!

Nothing is more uplifting to the spirit then to hear how one of our own has been recognized or a program has been honored for something the have accomplished. All we normally hear about is the bad news, a program has been cut or someone has lost their job. It is time to share the positive news. What about the students you have been working with is there a story you like to share? With all of the students graduating maybe there is one who just stands out among all of the rest. Maybe it would be their story that can bring hope and encourage someone to succeed.

No new stories. Do you have any to share?

## **Flea Market**

Do you personally, or your program or even your school have something you like to buy, sell, or trade. When money is tight, like it is now, there is better way to save a buck or two by making a few deals. There are times when we have something we are no longer using, but it just might be what someone else is looking for. Well here is our chance to share, just send in a brief description of what is you are looking for, trying to sell, or trade. Don't forget to tell us how to get in touch with you.

Don't forget to share your ideas and news with us. E-mail Randy Hughes. [hughesr@kaukauna.k12.wi.us](mailto:hughesr@kaukauna.k12.wi.us). Here is a update list of your Board of Directors.

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