



Learning to Give

The Council of Michigan Foundations Progress Report and Products

Three years ago, the Council of Michigan Foundations created a project without precedent to revolutionize the way students learn about the power of giving and serving-philanthropy.

Learning to Give set out to expand the popular definition of philanthropy and to take this ambitious project into schools and homes throughout the nation, and the world. The broad definition includes the giving of time, talent, treasure, and private citizen action for the common good, without regard for the age or economic status of the giver.

The visionary nature of *Learning to Give* has been based on organizing a movement. The founders have been motivated by their own experience in working closely with youth for over a decade, and their combined expertise in leading and funding national social change efforts.

A status report on each aspect of the project follows:

The Curriculum

Strands, Standards, Benchmarks.

The new philanthropy curriculum is organized into strands, standards, and benchmarks. Benchmarks are the written set of learning expectations defining what students should know about philanthropy and be able to do by grades 5, 8, and 11. There are four major “strands”. Within each strand, there are a series of idea sub-groups further refining what should be known-“standards.” Finally, under each of the standards are a series of very specific benchmarks defining what the student should know. An overview of the Strands and Standards and a sample of the benchmarks is attached at the end of this paper.

Sample Lesson Plans.

Over three hundred lessons are finished and are available for viewing and downloading from the *Learningtogive.org* Web site. Another two hundred are in the final editing stages. This summer, another 200 new lessons will be added to the pool. By fall 2001 there will be a sample lesson covering each of the philanthropy benchmarks.

Service-Learning / Experiential Component.

While the project is focused on concepts and ideas, each unit also contains one lesson with a “hands-on” experiential component called Service-Learning. For example, a unit on the role and history of the Red Cross may have the students spend a day working on stocking a food pantry in support of local Red Cross disaster relief.

Family Support.

Starting with the summer 2000 lessons, “Family Recipes” are being infused into current curriculum. These take-home ideas provide families with specific activities that help the child learn philanthropy content.

National Lesson Plan Competition.

The first national lesson plan competition was launched in 2000. The winning unit covered not only the philanthropy themes, but also science, math, and social studies benchmarks.

Standardized Assessments

The project is developing a set of standardized tests. The test design and half the questions are written.

- 1) The project plans to pilot-test the questions on students in the fall of 2001.
- 2) The project plans to assemble three test booklets and field-test them nationally. The final product will be two validated test booklets for grades 5, 8 and 11 (for a total of six tests) plus banked, validated questions for future tests.

Teacher Developed Lessons

All lessons are written by practicing classroom teachers who work in an environment of strong state-mandated learning objectives. The state objectives closely parallel the national educational proposed curriculum standards.

Teacher Testing of Lessons

Each lesson is being field-tested by five other teachers: three in Michigan, two in other states. Nine hundred teachers from 36 states have volunteered to field-test the existing Philanthropy lessons.

Curriculum Support

Definitions for Students

The initial list is completed and on the World Wide Web site: *Learningtogive.org*

Lexicon for Teachers

The initial list is being compiled and is available on the Web site.

Briefing Papers for Teachers

Sixty papers dealing with Concepts, People and Organizations are completed. The first fourteen may be accessed from the “Resource Room” on the *Learningtogive.org* Web site. Another forty-five are in the process of placement on the site. Forty to fifty additional papers will be written during spring term 2001.

Bibliographies

We have completed an annotated children's literature bibliography by grade level for teacher use. It is currently on the Web site under the "Resource Room" and is undergoing further updating.

Historic and Philanthropic Timelines

Historic and Philanthropic timelines with events from Michigan, U.S. and world history are available on the Web site under "Resource Room," "Timelines."

Foundation Founder Biographies

The initial set of biographies of individuals who have founded private grantmaking foundations are now on the Web site.

Nonprofit Careers

Internet links have been established with related Web sites that focus on nonprofit careers.

Lending Library of Books and Materials / Web sales

This component of the project, which has enormous long-term potential, is under development.

Videos of Leading Nonprofit Leaders

We are compiling a bank of videos about leading nonprofit thought-leaders. Examples include John Gardner, founder of Common Cause, and a video on the Independent Sector is completed. A video on Russ Mawby, Chairman Emeritus of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is ready for editing.

Textbook, Teacher Guide, Student Guide and CD-ROM

The book outline, book development and CD-ROM development process are completed. The book will have content in economics, geography, government, history, English language arts and visual and performing arts. The book development will include a teacher guide, student guide and will be prepared for CD-ROM distribution.

Calendar of Annual Philanthropy Dates

A month-by-month calendar of the annual dates celebrated in the general culture (*Memorial Day*), to specific philanthropy days (*Make a Difference Day*), plus other related days (*Kwanzaa*) and how these days might be used to teach philanthropic behavior-is in the final editing stages.

Teacher Professional Development

Summer Residential Institutes

Summer 1999 30 new teachers/CEU and graduate credit was offered. Each teacher produced a new unit for the curriculum.

Summer 2000 30 new teachers scheduled from Michigan.
25 new teachers scheduled from Kansas.
12 new teachers in the arts from Berrien County

Summer 2001 30 new teachers scheduled from Michigan.
30 new teachers scheduled from Ohio.

Philanthropy Educators Network (PEN)

The membership association, with special Web access, is under development. Market research is completed on a selected group of related national and state professional educators' associations that will become dissemination sources for our work.

Inservice and Curriculum Development, District by District

Twenty Michigan school districts currently interested in articulating the Philanthropy curriculum across multiple grade levels and buildings are being recruited. One district has volunteered to teach the lessons K-12, half of the buildings have been recruited the others will be on board for a fall 2001 start.

Masters Degree Program

Discussion is underway with Ferris State University for a Masters Degree in Education with a concentration in philanthropic studies. This degree will be offered with an emphasis in online learning. Michigan produces one out of every 10 of the nation's teachers and has major teacher education programs.

Undergraduate Teacher Preparation

The preparation will be conducted within the disciplines in colleges of education. This concept is currently under discussion with Olivet College.

Web site (Learningtogive.org)

Curriculum, Lessons, and Resource Materials—Online for Teachers Everywhere
The Learningtogive.org Web site is supported by Michigan State University.

Links to Purchase Books

Each lesson has a bibliography. We would like to link from within the lesson to easy on-line book purchasing from major Web bookseller(s).

Meta-site

This concept calls for one major Web site for all philanthropy Learning to Give Internet activity. We have identified and linked to many related sites. To be developed, for example, is a link between an individual DeTocqueville lesson discussing the importance of associational life in the United States-to the DeToqueville Web Home Page.

Other

Family Foundation Book

Containing timelines, calendars and activities, is drafted printed and ready for distribution.

Family Involvement Research

This original educational research is ready for editing and publication.

State and National Joint Ventures

Indiana University / Grand Valley State University / Case Western Reserve University are assisting with writing initial briefing papers and test questions

Formal partnerships and sponsorship agreements have been developed with:

- Independent Sector
- Council on Foundations
- Association of Fund-Raising Professionals
- United Way of America
- National Forum of Regional Association of Grantmakers
- National Center on Black Philanthropy
- National Center for Charitable Statistics
- Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy
- Urban Institute
- National Council of Nonprofit Associations

A Washington DC office is being established under partnership agreement with the Independent Sector.

The Corporation for National Service has funded a joint venture between Michigan and Ohio to support philanthropy education and service-learning.

International Inquiries

Unsolicited, direct inquiries about replicating the project have been received from, for example, Australia, England, Brazil, Bulgaria, South Africa, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Japan.

The project was discussed at the first White House Conference on Philanthropy in the fall of 1999. In addition, the project was presented at the International Society for Third Sector Research in Dublin, Ireland in June 2000.