

Section Description

In this section are descriptions of CLASSROOM VISITS, SITE VISITS, and PROJECTS.

Compton-Drew Investigative Learning Center, Karen Turner - Teacher

Thirty-five students participated in a SITE VISIT to St. Louis City Hall on March 10. They met in the Board of Aldermen chambers with 9th Ward Alderman Ken Ortmann. Alderman Ortmann presented an overview of the City government and the job of Alderman. He then answered questions dealing with such issues as the environment, Metro Link, and housing. The students then went into the gallery, where they observed the proceedings of the Board of Aldermen. Their presence was acknowledged from the floor. Finally, the students went to the Mayor's office, where they met Mayor Harmon and other City officials. Deputy Mayor for Development Mike Jones talked with them about the Mayor's job and his own job. The remainder of the time was devoted to his answering students' questions and posing for photos. In social studies, the students integrated their study of local government with state and federal issues; in science they studied the concept of "power" and environmental issues; in literature, they studied persuasion techniques. They presented the findings of their research at the PROJECTS FAIR.

Normandy Middle School, Shonta Smith - Teacher

On April 25, Normandy City Administrator George Liyeos, the Director of Public Works, the Acting Police Chief, and a detective spoke to the class during the CLASSROOM VISIT section of the CECH-UP program. Mr. Liyeos brought blueprints of an abandoned park. After studying proposed federal legislation dealing with juvenile crime, the students decided to create plans to redevelop the park, which would include a recreation center. The park and recreation center would be used to occupy the time of youth in order to get them off the streets. For the PROJECTS FAIR, the students created a skit showing how youth are harassed by the police. In addition, they showed visuals of their design for the park and recreation center.

Parkway Central Middle School, Randy Krone - Teacher

For the SITE VISIT portion of the CECH-UP program, fifteen 8th grade students toured the City of Chesterfield by bus. They were accompanied by the Assistant Planning Director and the Public Works Director/City Engineer, who described their jobs and talked about each site visited. Students got off the bus at several sites. At the last stop of the day, the students went to the Chesterfield City Hall, where City Administrator Michael Herring, the Director of Finance and Administration, and a police captain described their respective jobs and discussed major issues facing the city. One group of students worked on the proposed home rule issues; another group on changes in business and industry in the community, especially the Chesterfield Valley. The students were required to read and summarize newspaper articles dealing with these issues. They presented the results of their research at the PROJECTS FAIR.

Parkway Northeast, Kay Sandweiss - Teacher

Early in the fall, Mrs. Sandweiss met with Kathleen Mansfield, Assistant City Manager of Creve Coeur. They talked about many issues relevant to Creve Coeur, but settled on working with an ad hoc committee that was working to pass a bicycle helmet safety ordinance. If this ordinance passed, Creve Coeur would be the first city in the State of Missouri with such a law. Next, they met with Drs. Sam Page and Bob Hoffman, and Lt. Dennis Spoerry and Officer Bob Darlington of the Creve Coeur Police Department. As part of the CLASSROOM VISIT section of the CECH-UP program, the officials came to the classroom and discussed the issue with the students (26 in number). Questions discussed included: For what age group should this ordinance be written? What incentives (or consequences) should be established? How shall we educate our citizens? Then, a select number of students attended a Creve Coeur City Council meeting to hear the ordinance introduced and discussed. The committee members decided to hold all further meetings at Parkway Northeast Middle School in order that the six volunteer students (those who attended the council meeting) could be active, working members of the committee.

Approximately six to seven meetings were held at Northeast Middle where plans were made to do the following:

- ✓ Purchase helmets at a discount to be given to kids(donor funded).
- ✓ Survey 3rd, 5th, and 7th grade students in Creve Coeur to determine attitudes. The students surveyed approximately 600 students in both public and parochial schools in Creve Coeur, all in one day. Next, they went back to the Government Center where they were provided with a lunch, and there they planned how to computerize and graph the results of the survey. They also decided that they needed to go back next year and survey 4th, 6th, 8th grades (same schools) to see if their education program about bicycle helmet safety had made any difference.
- ✓ Select and purchase motivational items such as stickers for the plain helmets, reflector lights, spoke lights, wristbands, etc. (donor funded).
- ✓ Additionally, the students videotaped some key spots on TV and in the meetings, and then put them together on a single 10-minute video.

The students worked through a couple of case studies in the CECH-UP HANDBOOK. The discussion was enhanced by their knowledge of how a city council works and by having gone through the bicycle helmet study.

At the PROJECTS FAIR, student Erin Moody thanked all of the people involved with the PROJECT: city managers, CECH staff, teachers, and the students. Her point was that young people do have opinions and need a forum to voice their thoughts. She thanked CECH and

the City of Creve Coeur for recognizing this need, and for listening and allowing young students to participate in this form of education: learning by doing. On Saturday, May 20, and Sunday, May 21, several of the students attended the Creve Coeur Days Festival. From 1:30 p.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m. each day, the students, working in conjunction with the Creve Coeur Police, manned the education booth and encouraged young people to sign a pledge to wear a helmet. In return, each signer was given a free, flashing bicycle reflector light, and was entered in the drawing for a brand new bike to be given away, courtesy of The Sun & Ski Shop and St. Johns Mercy Hospital. Two of the students alternated dressing up in a dog costume (Hel-Mutt, thanks to Aetna Insurance Agency) and paraded through the Festival grounds encouraging others to sign up for bicycle safety. It was wonderful to watch the middle school students relating to the younger children and the younger children listening to and hugging Hel- Mutt.

In addition as part of their responsibility, the students chose the poster winner from among the entries sent in by the participating elementary schools in Creve Coeur. Both the students and the teacher feel they have gotten a great deal from this study. They helped write and pass the first bicycle helmet safety ordinance in the State of Missouri. They surveyed attitudes and now will be working with Creve Coeur to educate its citizens. Through this process, they have become informed, reliable, responsible citizens, and as such will not forget their obligations to democracy in the future.

In June, Ms. Sandweiss, her six students, and Citizenship Education Clearing House (CECH) were honored by the Creve Coeur City Council.

Several students, who participated in this PROJECT, were invited to speak at the Community Betterment Conference to share their PROJECT idea with students from other communities.

Pattonville Heights Middle School, Janet Baldwin - Teacher

During the CLASSROOM VISIT, John Allen, Staff Planner, and Steve Rasmussen, Assistant to City Administrator conducted a "brainstorming" session with Janet Baldwin's 6th and 7th grade students. For the SITE VISIT, Mr. Rasmussen arranged for the twenty-four students to visit Maryland Heights City facilities, including the Street and Public works Departments, Community Center (parks and Recreation), Police Department, and City Hall. At City Hall the students met with City Administrator Mark Levin, Mr. Allen, Mr. Rasmussen, and the Director of Building and Codes. They were presented with some options for PROJECTS. The students decided to study the Bennington Woods area, which is being considered for development as a park. They created several alternative plans for the park.

Saeger Middle School, Mary Gismegian and Donna Keebey - Teachers

One group of students continued their work on Blue Ribbon week which they began last year. The City of St. Peters will commemorate this week in November. The students hope to help spread the idea of Blue Ribbon Week to other communities in Missouri. At the PROJECTS FAIR, they showed a background video which they had produced.

During a site visit to the St. Peters City Hall, students met with Mayor Tom Brown and talked with him about the Blue Ribbon PROJECT. He agreed that youths need to be recognized in a positive way and that the Blue Ribbon ceremony was a good way to accomplish this.

The students asked Mayor Brown to proclaim a Blue Ribbon Week. During this week, everyone in the community would be asked to continue to acknowledge others who make a difference. Mayor Brown agreed, and the students are in the process of organizing a Blue Ribbon Week for the week of November 15-22. The class designed a brochure "Who I am Makes a Difference, Kids Impacting Local Government", which describes the PROJECT.

Another group of students (6th grade) did research on youth/gun/media violence, war, child abuse, and capital punishment and presented their findings at the PROJECTS FAIR.

Sperreng Middle School, Colleen Stein - Teacher

Nineteen students participate in a SITE VISIT to Crestwood City Hall on April 6. They heard from Mayor James Brasfield and Assistant City Administrator Matt Conley about current issues and developments facing the city. Mr. Conley told them about a site proposed for redevelopment as a department store next to the city hall. He also showed them a blueprint of the site plan and talked with them about tax incremental financing (TIF). The students walked over to that site. Their PROJECT was to develop a monument on the edge of the site. On the walk, back to city hall, the students got a quick guided tour of the firehouse. The students developed alternative plans for the monument and presented these plans at the PROJECTS FAIR. Students from the other school attending the PROJECTS FAIR (Saeger) got an opportunity to vote on the best design. The winning design was the Sappington Sundial. The designers will present the design to the Crestwood City Council later this year.

Willow Springs Middle School

Four teachers at Willow Springs Middle School focused on city government with the 6th grade and county government with the 8th grade. Jim Ronald, the Extension field specialist, arranged for the four 6th grade classes to participate in a SITE VISIT to West Plains on May 2 and May 9, where they visited the University Extension Office, the City Hall, the Jail, and the County Commission. They met with University Extension Office staff, a Judge and Prosecutor, the County Tax Collector, the County Assessor, the County Clerk, the County Commission staff, and the Sheriff. Jim also made arrangements with the local community TV people for the 8th graders to videotape a city council meeting. For their PROJECT the student made posters dealing with various local issues. They placed these posters in Willow Springs storefronts and presented them at a city council meeting.

Salem Jr. High, Debbie Morton - Teacher

Students at Salem Jr. High toured Salem City Hall, visiting with the Mayor, Director of Public Works, Economic Developer, and City Clerk. They developed a brochure and a PowerPoint presentation that will be used to attract businesses to the area, working in conjunction with the local teachers association, the city council, and other civic groups.

A.B. Green Middle School, Brian Rockette - Teacher

The students worked with Maplewood and Richmond Heights. In March they visited the city halls and other sites in both cities, where they met with various government officials. Their PROJECT was to develop plans for a parcel of land adjacent to the new Richmond Heights Community Center (The Heights). The students decided to recommend that a Family Fun Center be built on the vacant lot. The Center could include an arcade, go-cart track, miniature golf course, and eating area. The students conducted a survey of other students at the school. The survey responses substantiated the need for the Family Fun Center and the strong feeling that young people would use it.

During their later site visit to the Maplewood City Hall, the students looked at a current controversy involving an historic house that a church wanted to buy. After a trip to the actual site, the students returned to the city hall, where they held a simulated City Council meeting.

The students took the roles of council members, mayor, church members, and interested citizens. After hearing testimony, the Council voted on whether to rezone the property to allow the church to buy it.

Compton-Drew Investigative Learning Center, Karen Turner - Teacher

The 8th grade students studied the concept of "power" from literature, science, and social studies perspectives. In social studies they looked at the political meaning of "power" as the ability to bring about change and at how local government can bring about change. They first took a trip to the St. Louis City Hall in December, where they met with the Mayor, his Legislative Liaison, and an Alderman, and they sat in on a lively and informative session of the Board of Aldermen. They then did research on urban sprawl and habitat, producing a video which they showed at the May 16 PROJECTS FAIR.

Kirby Jr. High, Barbara Easley and Lisa Goforth - Teachers

Seventh graders at Kirby Junior High School in north St. Louis County got a personal look at how city governments make decisions on important local issues. The kids also gathered information and gave advice on a project in the city of Hazelwood. The issue was whether the city should approve a plan to build a large "shoppertainment" mall on a Missouri River flood plain area. The mall site is an undeveloped area of northwest Hazelwood. Another question was, if the mall was built, what sort of stores should be included?

That's where the kids came in. Last December, thirteen seventh graders conducted 246 interviews with fellow students. They asked other kids what sort of stores they'd like to see in the mall. Thirteen-year-old Tierra McCoy said, "We conducted the survey when we saw students in the hallways." Then, after the surveys were counted, a representative of the Mills Corp. came to the school to hear the results. The Mills Corp. is the developer that was proposing to build the new mall. It would have 200 stores, including 16 large anchor stores. The corporation specializes in malls that combine retail stores with all sorts of entertainment

opportunities. That's why they use the term "shoppertainment" to describe their malls. The company has projects in 14 other states. According to survey results, Kirby kids wanted outlet branches of all the major department stores. That would include Famous-Barr, Dillard's, Sears, J.C. Penney and Lord and Taylor. Forty percent of the kids also mentioned restaurants, such as Red Lobster, Applebee's, and others. Twenty-five percent wanted sports-oriented stores such as Athlete's Foot and Foot Action. About one in five students also mentioned hip-hop-oriented stores such as Styling Brands, Vibe and The Source. Twelve-year-old Chassidy Bell said twenty different stores were mentioned in surveys she took. She and thirteen-year-old Nicole Davis said the kids mentioned wanting a Dave and Buster's restaurant.

The survey of store suggestions was just one part of the Kirby kids' study of the Hazelwood city government. On February 27, all thirteen took an all-day field trip to see what's involved in running a community like Hazelwood. They got a personal briefing from Mayor T. R. Carr in the city council's meeting room. While listening to the mayor, the kids sat in seats usually filled by the mayor, city council members and the city manager and city attorney. Tierra McCoy said, "I really liked to use the microphones at the city council desks." But, 13-year-old Katie Lutas said she liked the tour of the city jail and the city fire station best. All of the kids were impressed by the chance to see the cells where prisoners were kept. All of them were glad they could leave when they wanted. Other places on the tour included the city garage, the community center, the public works, the finance department, and the actual site of the proposed mall. They also got a chance to question City Manager Ed Carlstrom on his role in the Mills Corp. mall project. He said the mall negotiations had been going on for over 2 1/2 years. It had taken so long because many people in Hazelwood didn't want a mall built on the Missouri River bottomland. They wanted it left undeveloped and used for park land.

Joel Smiley, Assistant to the Hazelwood City Manager, helped the kids understand the different parts of the mall project. Barb Easley, the social studies coordinator in the Hazelwood School District, planned the city government lessons for the kids. She said, "We're going to spend time in class talking about these earlier conflicts." Smiley said most of the court challenges to the mall project have been settled. The city expects to have a ground-breaking ceremony in the spring. When that happens, the Kirby kids will have a better understanding of how that project came to be. They'll even have had some part in which stores are included. (Information taken from *Young Saint Louis* website and other sources)

Ladue Jr. High, KaneU Mings - Teacher

Thirty 8th-grade students in the Youth in Government after-school club decided to work for the support of Proposition A, a proposed \$50 million bond issue which would provide improvements in and/or additions to district buildings and other facilities. There had been no tax increase in the district for 28 years. After receiving parental permission to participate in the PROJECT, the students held election rallies before school. They produced a special

news report on the election on the school's TV station. The report featured the superintendent of schools. On April 2 and April (the day of the election), students wore yellow plastic hard hats with a "Vote Yes" logo and held signs in front of their school. The bond issue passed by a 60/40 margin. In addition to the above PROJECT, the students conducted research on the five municipalities which feed into the Ladue School District (Ladue, Olivette, Frontenac, Town and Country, Richmond Heights).

Parkway Central Middle School, Randy Krone - Teacher

The students went on a bus tour of sites within the City of Chesterfield, accompanied by the City Administrator. Afterward they visited the Chesterfield city government center, where they met with the city administrator and the city department heads. Students did individual and small group PROJECTS related to amenities of the community (including the YMCA, Butterfly House, Faust Park, Chesterfield Commons, St. Luke's Hospital, Chesterfield Mall, schools and colleges within Chesterfield) and the new city government center being built. One group designed a board game of sites within the community. Prior to their work on the project, students were given a handout outlining the expectations and evaluation criteria. Following completion of their PROJECTS, the students had to submit a report and self-reflection.

Parkway Northeast Middle School, Kay Sandweiss - Teacher

On, April 17, 8th graders spent a half-day learning about and "running" Creve Coeur. The students first learned about the budget process. They then broke into two groups. The first group of students met with city department heads to get staff perspectives on the annual budget and to learn how each department is operated. The departments included police and fire, parks and recreation, public works, and capital improvements. These students worked with the department heads in deciding on budget priorities. The second group of students met with elected officials, including the Mayor. They were to develop a set of budget priorities from the elected officials' perspectives.

Everyone then re-convened in the Council chambers. Students who represented staff of the various departments made presentations on their budget priorities to the students playing the role of City Council members and the Mayor. Each group had to stay within its budget allocation, and the combined budgets could not exceed the city's budget of \$11 million. Students playing the roles of the nine City Council members and Mayor heard the presentations, asked questions, and then voted on how the money would be spent.

Parkway South High School, Elizabeth Morrison - Teacher

Students at Parkway South High School live in five different governmental units (Ballwin, Des Peres, Manchester, Valley Park, Ellisville, and unincorporated St. Louis County. Ms. Morrison's students were divided into six teams of five. Each team did research on, and visited, one of the cities. The information they collected was used to establish a Learning Extravaganza in the school library.

Pattonville Heights Middle School, Janet Baldwin - Teacher

The students developed a plan for a proposed skateboard park in the Missouri River Bottoms area of Maryland Heights. They visited the Maryland Heights City Hall and took a city tour. They conducted a survey of adults and students to get their opinions on creating Skateport. 370 responses were received from adults and other students. 68% supported skateboarding; 54% said there was a need for a skatepark. 61% said they did not mind having a skatepark near their homes. The students hoped to present their proposal to the Maryland Heights City Council.

Saeger Accelerated Middle School, Mary Gismegian - Teacher

Students organized the *Heroes PROJECT (Helping Everyone Reach Out and Educate Society)*. They took part in charity services such as Faith House, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Frame-a-Friend (Make a Wish), Hoops-4-Heart (AMA), Friend of Gifted Award (Mel Carnahan), and the Blue Ribbon PROJECT (suicide awareness). They designed a student newsletter, outdoor marquee, a poster and banners, and brochures. They met with the newly elected Mayor Robert Powers of Cottleville, informed him of their service PROJECT and worked with him on developing a program for the fall which would recognize middle school kids in the community for their volunteer work.

Sperrung Middle School, Colleen Stein - Teacher

7th grade students worked with the City of Fenton to develop alternative designs for the Olde Towne Revitalization. Fenton wants to develop three new areas in Olde Towne: a family entertainment area, an historic area, and a marina area, all of which are along the Meramec River. Most of the students focused their efforts on designing the family entertainment area. Fenton city officials came to the school to explain the redevelopment project. In January, the students attended a Planning and Zoning Committee meeting at the Fenton City Hall which focused on the Olde Towne Revitalization. In March the students took a field trip to Fenton to meet with the City Administrator and other officials and to actually tour the area to be redeveloped. Later on that same day the students visited the Crestwood City Hall, where they were given an orientation by the Assistant City Manager and the Mayor. At the May 18 PROJECTS FAIR, the students presented and described seven 3-dimensional displays showing designs for the family entertainment area. Students from the other schools present were asked to vote on the best design.

Wydown Middle School, Sandra Sermos and Janet Crews - Teachers.

8th grade field science Arboretum Team students participated in the All Taxa (Species) Survey of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In October, they visited the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, Tennessee. When they returned to school, they conducted an "all species survey" of the biological richness in Clayton. The survey began this spring with a count of all the trees in Clayton that are native to Missouri. In February the students visited the Clayton City Hall. As a follow-up, Wydown sponsored a "Champion Tree Contest." The purpose of the contest was to find and catalog the largest tree of each native species in Clayton. An article about the PROJECT appeared in the City of Clayton's

CITY VIEWS newsletter. Citizens were invited to help the students catalog all the trees. If a resident wished to nominate a large tree in his or her yard, he or she was asked to contact Sandra Sermos, the 8th grade teacher and coordinator of the students' activities.

The City of Clayton was extremely helpful in this project. The people, with whom the students met, such as City Manager Scott Randall and Assistant City Manager Lenore Toser-Aldaz, helped the students make the PROJECT community-wide. To really get the community involved, the students have made plans for the entire school year. They will travel to the three elementary schools in Clayton to teach the younger children how to identify the trees in their yards and to send in the surveys to them to be catalogued. They will teach the younger students how to use a dichotomous key, find the circumference of a tree, and much more.

6th grade students studied Missouri's native trees, especially the ones in their area. They then designed posters which included drawings of twigs, foliage, bark, and fruit of the trees. In May, the 85 students gathered in front of the school to talk about their PROJECT and to put their artwork on a Bi-State bus. These posters showed what kinds of trees grow along the routes of Bi-State buses, Metro Link trains, and various areas in the State of Missouri.

A club of 6th and 7th grade students were involved in *LEAP (Leadership in Environmental Action Project)*, sponsored by the Gateway Center for Resource Efficiency. *LEAP* encourages the school to reduce, reuse, and recycle. The club set three goals for the year: (1) to collect over two tons of paper each month; (2) to collect 18 tons of paper for the year; (3) to collect four tons in one month. To help achieve these goals, the club decided to have a paper collection contest in February. The paper recycler (Abitibi Consolidated) provided a banner to advertise and donated paper bags to promote the contest. The club asked each grade level to compete by bringing in the largest number of bags of recycled paper by the end of the week. On a cold rainy day, LEAP members held their pick-up signs high, waving down the people who had bags of recyclables. Many parents from the community participated in the paper pick-up. LEAP members tallied the number of bags of paper for each grade level. 220 bags were collected.

North St. Francois County Middle School, Keith Buck - Teacher

Keith Ruck, at North Francois County Middle School, in Deloge implemented the program. Missouri Extension staff, Shelley Bush, Lynna Lawson, and Michelle Crader met with Mr. Ruck and also got the classroom involvement of Jeff Juede (City Manager of Bonne Terre) and Sandra Wells (St. Francois County Clerk). Mr. Juede brought aerial maps of the town for the students to look at and keep. Mr. Ruck was very impressed with the level of cooperation that he received from the Extension Office in St. Francois County, and said that Ms. Bush, Ms. Lawson, and Ms. Crader had been wonderful to work with. Extension Specialist, Bill Pabst grabbed the students' attention with the computer game Sim City 2000. The game gave the students a comprehensive look at running a city government, and made the classroom visits of Mr. Juede and Ms. Wells more meaningful. Students worked

individually and collectively to create laws for the classroom. Students were given a choice of (a) creating a model city; (2) creating a country; (3) researching the history of their town/community. If students chose to build a city, they would have to develop a sound infrastructure; safe, attractive residential areas; shopping areas; industrial areas; open space and parks; special areas for hospitals, schools, and other public buildings; and a budget. If they chose to build a country, they would have to develop a form of government, laws, a map (showing the capital city, flag, map key), and a budget. If they chose to do a town/community history, they would have to write up the history, present facts to relate historical events in America's and Missouri's history to local historical events, compare an earlier known map of the town/community with a present day map, and show what future growth is in store for the town/community. Oral presentations were also made by students choosing options 2 and 3. Dr. Marvin Beckerman from the CECH-UP staff visited the North St. Francois County Middle School in February, and met with Mr. Ruck and the Outreach and Extension staff. Mr. Ruck showed the group his students' PROJECT. He and a group of his students attended the May 4th PROJECTS FAIR at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Hollenbeck Middle School Donna Carter – Teacher

On March 27, 2003 St. Charles County Director of Planning, Steve Lauer, spoke to the class about current happenings in St. Charles and future plans for the city. Mr. Lauer also spoke about the Page Extension and how it will affect residents of St. Charles County and the Katy Trail in particular. The students were interested in the future of the Katy Trail, and after visiting the actual site, decided to develop a plan that would enhance the park without cost to the county. The students began research with the idea of creating a rest area on the Katy Trail. The rest area will be made with bricks that would be sold for \$25 each. Each brick would be engraved with the donor's name. The proceeds from the sale of the bricks would pay for the installation of the bricks and park benches. Included in their research, students visited St. Charles County Government Buildings. On April 27 they met in the county council chambers with Executive Director, Joe Ortwerth, and Lisa Dunham, Director of Governmental Communications. Executive Director Ortwerth began the site visit with a brief summary of how government works at the local, state, and federal levels. He then answered students' questions dealing with such issues as development of new businesses in St. Charles, annexation of property by surrounding cities, and the role of the county council members. The students then visited the administrative building, including the Planning Department where students were advised of steps new businesses should take to be granted approval. After the site visit, students continued to work on their PROJECT, which was presented at the PROJECTS FAIR on May 9th. After the PROJECTS FAIR, Mrs. Carter presented the students' work to St. Charles County (Steve Lauer) with the hope that this PROJECT would be enacted or continued with the next year's eighth grade class.

Normandy Middle School Kim Morton – Teacher

On March 4, 2003, Normandy City Administrator and Mayor, George Liyeos and Jim Murphy, respectively, spoke to the class. The class had already begun thinking of a

PROJECT that involved decreasing residents' need to depend on state welfare payments. The City Administrator and Mayor encouraged the students to continue to develop their ideas and suggested asking a state legislator to visit the classroom so they could obtain information from the state's point of view. On April 7th, Senator Rita Days visited the students to discuss the current welfare system and some ideas of how to proceed with a PROJECT aimed at removing people from the welfare roles. In April, students also spent time at the Technology Lab at the University of Missouri to continue their research. The students soon began calling their PROJECT the Welfare to Work Program. The focal point for their PROJECT included remodeling an abandoned building to house the Welfare to Work Center. The center would provide welfare recipients with childcare, resources to improve job skills, and instructions on interviewing technique and writing effective resumes. The students' PROJECT mandated that all welfare recipients would spend 20 hours a week at the WTW Center in order to continue to receive welfare payments. For the PROJECTS FAIR, the students created a PowerPoint presentation, floor plans of the Welfare to Work Center, and a three-dimensional model of the proposed WTW Center. It should be noted, this PROJECT was featured on an educational website, www.youngsaintlouis.com.

Parkway Central Middle School Randy Krone – Teacher

On April 8, 2003, Chesterfield City Manager Michael Herring, spoke to two Social Studies classes in the theater room at Parkway Central Middle School. Mr. Herring's discussion focused on the development of the area formerly known as Gumbo Flats. The area, once was in a flood plane, now known as the Chesterfield Valley is fast becoming an integral part of the City of Chesterfield. Mr. Herring invited students to visit city hall on April 14, 2003 for a first hand look at how their local government operates. Each class decided to prepare a separate PROJECT. One class focused on the development of the Chesterfield Valley, and with interest sparked by the site visit to city hall, the other class decided the focus of their PROJECT would be researching the duties and effectiveness of various departments of the City of Chesterfield. Their research included conducting interviews with department heads and conducting surveys of the community. The classes presented the results of their research with graphs, posters and an audio presentation at the PROJECTS FAIR.

Parkway Northeast, Kay Sandweiss - Teacher

On March 10, Mrs. Sandweiss along with a student representative from her class, attended the evening Creve Coeur City Council meeting. Attending the meeting served as a means to become familiar with the current issues facing the city. The meeting focused on the remodeling of the Diehlman Recreational Complex. Originally, the city planned to construct a new multi-million dollar recreational complex, but with the poor economy the city council members decided to remodel the existing complex. For their CECH PROJECT, the students of Mrs. Sandweiss were interested in finding out more about the proposed renovation of the recreation center, and more importantly how a city plans and projects years ahead of their actual need. The class toured the building on April 27th to ascertain the current status of the Diehlman Complex. Students found the ice rink to be unusable and unsafe. While at the

Diehlman Complex, students met with Kathleen Mansfield, Assistant City Manager of Creve Coeur. Ms. Mansfield spoke about Creve Coeur’s future plans and explained why the city decided for renovation as opposed to building a new multi-million- dollar complex. Students asked the following questions:

- What issues do you consider when budgeting for the future?
- How do you get the citizens’ support on your decisions?
- How do you find out the views of the citizens before developing a huge PROJECT?
- How do you deal with the citizens who are opposed to the way the city spends its revenue?
- Who helps you make your decisions?

The students continued their research into predicting the future needs of the city and how/if the Diehlman Complex will meet not only the needs of the current residents but future residents as well.

Holman Middle School, Debbie Green - Teacher

On March 18, John Allen, Landscape Architect/Staff Planner, presented a “state of the city” presentation to the students of Debbie Green. Mr. Allen talked about current issues the city is dealing with, as well as a piece of land the city is considering turning into a park. The students seemed interested in the idea of creating a proposal to the city on what should be included in the park and the proposed costs. Mr. Allen gave the students a blueprint of the vacant land and encouraged the students to visit the site for a first hand look. On April 2nd, students did visit the site and took a tour of the new Maryland Heights City Hall. During the visit to city hall, City Administrator, Mark Levin, talked to students about a controversial issue facing the city: eminent domain. It seems the county would like the city to use its authority to obtain rights to some property to widen a street and to install new sidewalks. Mr. Levin, along with other city staff members then facilitated a mock city council meeting (with students acting as city council members) involving the proposed condemnation of property owned by some Maryland Heights residents. The vote was evenly split among the eight board members with “the 13-year-old Mayor” casting the deciding vote in favor of installing sidewalks because she would “like to ride her bike on the new sidewalks.”

The visit to the site of the proposed park was very beneficial. The students were able to visualize exactly where each piece of playground equipment would be located and how the entrance to the park would affect the community. Students presented their findings at the PROJECTS FAIR with a PowerPoint presentation as well as a model of the proposed park.

Saeger Accelerated Middle School, Dr. Mary Eckert - Teacher

On April 8, 2003, Julie Powers, Director of Planning and Development along with Ken Braunfeld, Planning Coordinator for the City of St. Peters, met with the students of Dr.

Eckert. Ms. Powers introduced herself and Ken as the “Julie and Ken Show.” It seems Julie’s and Ken’s presentations can be seen regularly on Cable TV during the televised monthly city hall meetings. Julie and Ken came to the classroom prepared with huge maps and plats of the city. They talked about how cities control development through the Planning and Zoning Department. They also talked extensively about an area that is now a flood plane but will become a “new” part of the city once a levee is constructed. Julie and Ken invited the students to come up with proposals on how the area should be developed, including deciding if the area should be zoned residential, commercial, or industrial, and to develop a plan for street construction.

The students were divided; one group wanted to take Julie and Ken up on their challenge of designing a planning guideline for the “new” area, but other students wanted to use the idea and apply it to a city in Iraq. The students wished to focus their research on the development of the City of Mosul including accommodating immediate needs such as how to get electricity and water to the residents, as well as plans for future construction. The rest of the students took Julie’s and Ken’s challenge to create scenarios for the future development of a large tract of land that will soon become an important component to the future development of the City of St. Peters. At the PROJECTS FAIR, the students presented information from both PROJECTS.

Armstrong Elementary Sarah Salbego and Diane Nanney - Teachers

On March 9, 2003, students were invited to tour Hazelwood City Hall and to meet with Mayor T.R.Carr. Mayor Carr discussed details of the development of a huge shopping/entertainment complex being built by the Mills Mall Corporation. The tour of city hall included visiting the police department and spending a couple of minutes in a jail cell. Students were most impressed as they were invited to sit in a police car and turn on the sirens and lights. After the tour of city hall, students began work on finding out more details of the Mills Mall project. Students were invited to the Mills Mall Office where they were treated to “inside information” on the development. They were able to view blue print and three-dimensional models of different sections of the mall. Students spoke with officials from the Mills Mall Corporation for about two hours. The Mills Mall Representatives took advantage of the opportunity to include the students in a focus group. Students learned their opinions make a difference in local government issues, as well as in the decisions big corporations make when deciding what stores, restaurants and amenities to offer. Students used PowerPoint to present information and pictures during their presentation at the PROJECTS FAIR.

Wydown Middle School, Jim Sturm -Teacher

While studying local government and ways to improve their community, students from Jim Sturm’s class became interested in exploring the revitalization of a run-down, vacant lot. The students’ research of the property included a visit to city hall to determine ownership of the lot and also a visit to the actual site to measure its boundaries and to investigate ways to

renovate the lot. Students discovered the surrounding area included drug houses and other unappealing neighbors. The students were determined to continue their efforts to improve the area and designed a proposal to turn the run-down lot into a neighborhood park. The plans included providing a fence around the perimeter to increase the safety of park visitors. The students designed detailed plans of the park including costs of improvements. On April 21, the students met at Richmond Heights City Hall to present their proposal to Assistant City Manager, Amy Schutzenhofer, Parks and Recreation Director, Teresa Proebsting and Parks Operations Superintendent, Tim Brunzman. The city officials were impressed with the design, which included a dog-walking track, baseball field and a playground area. The city officials suggested ways to make further improvements such as considerations for handicap visitors and ways to make the baseball field into a multi-use field to include soccer. Discussions were then centered on ways to fund the construction of the park through state and federal grants.

Northwest Valley Middle School, Brenda Grosvenor – Teacher

Northwest Valley Middle School kids are getting an insider’s look at how county government works. They also are helping finance a new county skateboard park. A total of 180 Northwest Valley eighth graders participated in a University of Missouri-St. Louis program that shows how local governments work. It’s more than textbook learning. The semester-curriculum in the Citizenship Education Clearing House (CECH) program includes getting involved in local government. Northwest Valley’s PROJECT included getting involved in developing a Jefferson County sports complex. The kids are focused on helping finance a county skateboard park. Fourteen-year-old Bobby Propes said the PROJECT taught him that “it takes a lot to get simple things done in the community. You have to talk to lots of people to get approval.” But the High Ridge kid added, “We’re just a bunch of kids and we’re getting a lot done.” Bobby gave most of the messages over the school intercom about the skateboard PROJECT.

A delegation of kids was at the groundbreaking for the park, held earlier in May. In late May, a student delegation presented the Jefferson County Commissioners with a petition requesting more financial support for the park. Fourteen-year-old Ashley Bruce drew up the petition asking for a grant from the commissioners. She also made a petition asking for a grant from the Tony Hawk Foundation. Hawk is a professional skateboarder who supports skateboard park development across the country. Ashley said she composed both petitions at home and got them approved at school.

The House Springs kid said the petitions were circulated throughout the school to get signatures. Kids were asked to sign while buying raffle tickets and at a professional skateboard demonstration. The skateboard raffle and demonstration were a part of the kids’ fund-raising efforts. Another student fund-raiser was a Walk-A-Thon early in May. For a donation of at least \$3, kids were excused from history class to walk or run on the school track. That school fund-raiser brought in over \$1,000. Fourteen-year-old Brandon Null turned the Walk-A-Thon into a run. He ran most of his 16 laps (or four miles). He said he’s planning to go out for track next year in high school.

Null said he felt the new county skateboard park will be more valuable to him because he had a personal hand in financing it. Fourteen-year-old Mitchell Gossage said his personal involvement in the government PROJECT has made him “a whole bunch more interested” in the way his county works. The Fenton student said he takes part in skateboard competition. He traveled to the skateboard park in the St. Louis Mills shopping center in northwest St. Louis County. “I really liked it,” he said.

Fourteen-year-old Jackie Glick was one of the students who got to visit the county courthouse in Hillsboro. She sat in on a commissioners’ meeting and visited the jail and county offices. Fifty kids were winners of an essay contest to determine which kids got to go to Hillsboro. The High Ridge student said she was impressed with the amount of work that goes into every government PROJECT. However, she said she doesn’t want a career in government. She said she’d like to be a writer or a professional musician. She’s been practicing with the guitar for a year and is “looking to get into a band.” Jackie said her interest in music “grew out of listening to music since I was a little kid.”

Fourteen-year-old Christopher Rowley was glad to be a winner in backing the skateboard PROJECT. His earlier one-man effort to change a school rule didn’t turn out so well. The Fenton student said he circulated a petition to try to get a later start to the school day. He was asking to change the school’s “early out” day to a “late start” day. On the monthly “early out” day, kids come to school at the regular time but get out shortly after noon. He proposed starting later, maybe 11 a.m., and get out at the regular afternoon time. “I got over a 100 eighth-graders to sign but I didn’t get enough seventh-graders,” he said. The school administration didn’t approve the “late start” day. But, Christopher said his skateboard experience made him “much more” interested in government.

Note: The above CECH-UP story was featured in the June, 2004 section of YoungSaintLouis.com website. Reprint permission granted by Young Saint Louis.com

Lone Dell, Carol Hampton – Teacher

While teaching the local government section of her social studies curriculum, Teacher Carol Hampton invited Pat Lamping, Jefferson County Commissioner and John Brazeal, City Manager for the City of Arnold to participate in the CLASSROOM VISIT section of the Local Government CECH-UP Program.

Mr. Brazeal caught the students’ attention when he shared information about a new community center that will be built next year. Students were extremely happy to find out there would be a swimming pool available with a slide that extends outside and then twists around to bring the swimmer back to the pool inside the building.

During the visit from County Commissioner Pat Lamping, students were amazed to find out that so many stray animals are needlessly put to death by the county because the owners could not be located. Students decided their CECH-UP PROJECT would involve helping

increasing the registration for pets in their community. The students began by writing letters to veterinarians in the county encouraging them to make pet owners aware of the county

registration system. The students encouraged veterinarians to offer to register animals when they are brought in for care. Students also made informational posters for the community to advise them of the county pet registration system.

Spikard, Dean Larkin – Extension Specialist

I worked with a Junior High class of 18 students in the small town of Spickard. Various teaching techniques were used including, discussion, role playing, and group problem solving. The students used math skills, research skills and even interviewed local school board members. The program was taught in six sections :

County government

City government

Special districts

Taxation

Researching the community

Solving community issues

The first session helped the students identify the local officials and what their jobs are. As part of the CLASSROOM VISIT section of the CECH-UP program, the local assessor came and spoke about her job. At the end the students could identify the county officials and their role in the governing of the county.

The second unit focused on city government. The students were able to identify the different forms of city government and the functions of different jobs.

The third unit focused on special districts. The first part was studying the school board. The students developed a campaign for an imaginary school board member. They also interviewed a school board member about their ideas and goals. The students learned how schools are funded and how decisions are made.

Another part of this unit dealt with special districts. Participating in the CLASSROOM VISIT section of the CECH-UP program, a representative of the Health Department came and spoke to the students about how the office is funded and how it functions.

The unit on taxation showed how tax bills are established and administered. The students worked through an assessment and created a tax bill for "Joe Taxpayer". The students learned that taxes equal revenue and that equals services to people.

The unit on researching the community had the students researching the social, economic and demographic make up of the community. As our PROJECT for the CECH-UP program, the students used this information to create a brochure promoting the Spikard community. The

students did not think that there was anything in the small town to use in a brochure but discovered many aspects of the community they had taken for granted. The brochure was forwarded to the Local Government CECH-UP office for copying. Copies of the brochure were given to the students to distribute and additional copies were provided to the county offices.

The final session analyzed public issues. The students looked at three local issues and were able to state the costs and benefits of each side of the issue. They learned that people have differing expectations and values which cause conflict but can usually be handled in a responsible manner.

There is a general lack of understanding about local government, how it works and how democracy is grown in Missouri. The Citizen Education Clearing House has created a program to address this deficiency by providing instruction to Junior High students.

Section Description

This section contains suggestions to assist teachers in implementing the Local Government CECH-UP Program.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CECH-UP PROGRAM TEACHER GUIDELINES

By: Colleen Stein, Sperreng Middle School Lindbergh School District

September

Discuss the Local Government CECH-UP Program at Open House so parents are familiar with it.

October and November

Meet city or county administrator to discuss a PROJECT for the school year.

December or January

Attend a meeting of the City Council (Board of Aldermen, County Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Task Force, etc.) where the PROJECT will be discussed. Offer extra credit points to students who attend and encourage parents to accompany their children. (You may want to limit the number of students to 15). Students should take notes from the meeting and present information to classmates the next day.

February

Invite the city administrator (county administrator, city attorney, architect, etc.) into your classroom to speak to students about the PROJECT. Encourage students to ask questions and begin thinking about ideas for their PROJECT.

February or early March

Plan a site visit or a tour of city hall (county courthouse) and other sites. You may want to limit the group to 25.

March

Brainstorm PROJECT ideas in class. Students choose their own group members. Groups of 2 or 3 work the best. Also, some students prefer to work alone. Discuss PROJECT guidelines and assign a due date. The group should have a typed report explaining the PROJECT approximately 1 page). Give students about one month to complete the PROJECT. They should have at least one day per week to work on the PROJECT.

April

Students turn in their PROJECTS and give oral presentations to class. Their classmates grade, critique, and ask questions about PROJECTS during the presentations.

Choose the best PROJECTS for the CECH-UP PROJECTS FAIR. Only students with good citizenship and effort grades should be allowed to attend.

May

Practice oral presentations before the PROJECTS FAIR. Some students may choose to attend and not speak in front of an audience. Attend the PROJECTS FAIR .

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT CECH-UP PROGRAM TEACHER GUIDELINES
By: Kay Sandweiss, Parkway Northeast Middle School, Parkway School District

September

Discuss Local Government CECH-UP Program with incoming students so they understand what and why they will be learning during the coming year .At Open House, explain the concept to parents and let them know that you will be asking for their support and possible volunteer help (such as driving, discussing issues). This is a good opportunity to explain how the program ties into the concept of democracy and the challenge of developing informed, educated citizens.

October

Meet with city/county administrator to discuss possible PROJECTs. Invite an administrator or other representative of local government to come and speak to the class. Decide beforehand what the issues for discussion will be. Do a mini-lesson on government. (Include federal, state, city/local.) Prepare students to listen to the speaker and to respond with appropriate questions. Set a "give and take" (question and answer) climate. Alternatively, or in conjunction with speaker, set up SIM CITY (computer game) that simulates what city administrators deal with on a daily basis. Whoever is playing the game (teacher or city administrator) can literally teach the class as the game is played out on a large TV projector or screen. Ideally, the planning takes place in October and the class meeting/SIM City takes place in November.

November

November is a good month to use your speaker or speakers. SIM CITY can be played before the speakers come as part of the speakers' class session or as a follow-up lesson. This is also a good time to select at least one of the teaching models in the Local Government CECH-UP handbook. Discussion and reflection are important components of all of the exercises.

December

December is a busy month. However, a site visit should be considered at this point. It gives the students an opportunity to "see" local government in action. At this point the teacher and city administrator should decide what would be most beneficial --whether the entire class should take the field trip, or if a number of class representatives should go and report back to their peers. The site visit should be carefully planned so that the students get a well-rounded picture of all the jobs/problems in city government and of what is actually involved in running a municipality.

January

Invite a group of students (usually on a volunteer/interest basis) to attend a city council meeting. Arrange to be there early so that the students can be acknowledged and have clear information about the agenda. Picking up the agenda the evening before and discussing it that day in class is helpful, if it can be arranged.

Most city councils meet in the evening, so car-pools, parent support, and permission slips will be needed. Students who attend the meeting must report back to class, and from their data gathering of the issues, a PROJECT can be selected. This will involve much discussion, brainstorming, and voting--all the trappings of the democratic process.

February

Having chosen the PROJECT, students now must form in groups to plan the various aspects of the PROJECT and how they intend to present it at the PROJECTS FAIR. I find that groups of four work best I usually let them pick their own groups based upon interest. Each group selects its own chairperson and recorder. The recorders must get together to write out a brief explanation of the PROJECT. The chairperson selects from the group one or two people to speak at the PROJECTS FAIR. All students must be willing to explain their part of the PROJECT when the actual viewing and sharing take place. All also are encouraged to ask questions and discuss with other schools what was involved in their particular PROJECT. February and March are working months. Often, students will need to refer back to particular city officials (Planning and Zoning, for example) in order to get enough information to complete the PROJECT. Sometimes blueprints are brought into class. At other times, another guest speaker may be necessary (Missouri Department of Transportation, for example).

March

I find that planning and working on the PROJECT goes more smoothly when I allow two days a week for it. There is enough time spent on PROJECTS that we don't lose continuity, yet not too much time is devoted to projects to the exclusion of other parts of the curriculum. Because of spring break (one week) and student led conferences, we often need to work on into the first and second weeks of April.

April

Students put finishing touches on the PROJECT. They demonstrate/practice for their classmates, reflect, and critique their presentation. When possible, I arrange for them to do a

presentation for another class. This practice allows them to be more proficient in their presentation at the PROJECTS FAIR.

May

PROJECTS FAIR. I take the entire class, if possible. The benefits far outweigh the hassle of the arrangements. The sharing of experiences and the interaction among the students sets up a learning climate that leads to deeper understanding of the role of local government. At the very least, students' eyes are opened in relation to the many and varied job opportunities afforded on local government. They also carry away a strong conviction that democracy is a worthwhile form of government.

Having done this program for a number of years, I have found that, while I am teaching and guiding in the first steps of the process, I soon am able to back off and become the facilitator. The students take responsibility for their own learning and their understanding is deeper because of that.

This particular program, I believe, is the best and most effective way of teaching government to students.

