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November 2010

[Nebraska Department of Education](#)

Office of Multicultural/Native American Education

[www.education.ne.gov/mce](http://www.education.ne.gov/mce)

## The Real Story of the First Thanksgiving

Editorial by Carol Rempp

*“Each November educators across the country teach their students about the First Thanksgiving, a quintessentially American holiday. They try to give students an accurate picture of what happened in Plymouth in 1621 and explain how that event fits into American history. Unfortunately, many teaching materials give an incomplete, if not inaccurate, portrayal of the first Thanksgiving, particularly of the event’s Native American participants.*

*Most texts and supplementary materials portray Native Americans at the gathering as supporting players. They are depicted as nameless, faceless, generic “Indians” who merely shared a meal with the intrepid Pilgrims. The real story is much deeper, richer, and more nuanced. The Indians in attendance, the Wampanoag, played a lead role in this historic encounter, and they had been essential to the survival of the colonists during the newcomers’ first year. The Wampanoag were a people with a sophisticated society who had occupied the region for thousands of years. They had their own government, their own religious and philosophical beliefs, their own knowledge system, and their own culture. They were also a people for whom giving thanks was a part of daily life.*

*Like the Wampanoag, thousands of Native American nations and communities across the continent had their own histories and cultures. Native peoples were and continue to be an integral part of the American story.”*

This is the introduction of *American Indian Perspectives on Thanksgiving* which was published by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. It along with multiple resources that present an accurate and authentic perspective of Thanksgiving can be accessed at:

<http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=education&second=thanksgiving>

It is my belief that teachers want to integrate and create exciting and interesting experiences for their students. However when it comes to teaching about Thanksgiving too often we miss the mark. Unfortunately too many of the craft projects our children

do or the plays they participate in continue to perpetuate stereotypical images. I believe that this is simply because the creators of the resources available don’t know any better. It is difficult for a teacher who is not of American Indian heritage to discern when materials are good and when they are not.

With this in mind here are a few helpful hints: 1) begin your instruction by finding resources from reliable sources such as the Smithsonian; 2) remember that American Indian history and culture is diverse; 3) much of American History is based on myth or tradition meaning that the stories we share are not necessarily accurate or authentic; and 4) find out how and

when Thanksgiving really began, who the people were who really took part, and what really happened.

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time to share fellowship with friends and family. It is a wonderful time to reflect on what we have to be thankful for. However, it is important to remember that Thanksgiving, like Christmas or other holidays, can be a difficult time for some children. Not all students understand the holiday. Some may have different meanings if they come from different countries. My Native American friends and family do actually

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**Your Brain Needs Exercise**

Learn the best brain exercises to keep you focused. [See page 5.](#)

**PE an RX for ABC’s?**

Is PE really important? [See page 2](#)

**Native American Month-Nov**

December 10-17: Human Rights Week  
December 21: World Peace



[See page 6](#)

Credit: Corbis



**“A child cannot be taught by anyone who despises him, a child cannot afford to be fooled.”**  
**James Baldwin**

*Editorial continue from page 1*

celebrate the holiday but it is a day to be together with friends and family. We do not make it a political statement about stereotyping or the inaccuracy of American history. However that does not mean that I overlook those things. I feel it is part of my job to help inform teachers about what they can and should do to present information surrounding Thanksgiving in a way that helps their students become more culturally competent.

So this year for Thanksgiving, resist the making of headbands or “war bonnets.” Resist holding the Thanksgiving

play where the students dress up as Pilgrims and Indians. Instead use this time to discuss the differences in American Indian tribes. For example, the Plains Indians lived in tipis but the Wampanoag did not. The reasons are because of the raw materials that were available to them. Also the East Coast Indians ate very different things from the Plains Indians or the Southwest or Northwest Indians again because of what was available. This list could go on and on. It is a list similar to what you would explain as you talk about modern America and how various industries have developed because of different resources. It is very difficult to trap lobster in Nebraska just as it is difficult

to grow corn in Nevada.

Finally, I would encourage teachers to talk about how this holiday really came about through President Lincoln's attempt to find a uniting event for the North & South and that it only includes one small group of European people and one small group of American Indians and is not part of the entire experience of all tribes. (site that provides his proclamation: <http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/thanks.htm>).



## Is PE an Rx for ABCs?

A growing body of research says that students who are more active do better in school academically.

*Sarah Lemagie, Star Tribune, Milwaukee WI*

Entire article: <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/health/93641299.html>

In the struggle to teach students to read, Jack Olwell may seem an unlikely role model. He's a teacher, yes, but his subject?

Physical education.

Yet Olwell has drawn praise for his efforts to boost test scores at North Trail Elementary in Farmington. A program he started has taken students behind in reading or math and put them in the gym the first thing in the morning, right before they head to classes in those subjects.

The idea is that exercise helps kids learn -- and it's not just Olwell who believes this. A growing body of research links physical activity and academic performance, according to a report released last month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

That's why Olwell had students racing around the gym before math lessons this winter, why third-graders did jumping-jack exercises on stability balls during a break this week in Golden Valley, and why kids at a St. Paul school ran twice a day during testing in April.

The report is ammo for PE teachers who have long fought the

notion that their classes are expendable. Despite campaigns against childhood obesity, many schools have cut back on gym time because of tight budgets, competition from other subjects or pressure to prepare for high-stakes tests.

"Some schools have reduced the time required for physical education in the mistaken belief that having children spend more time in the classroom and less time in the gym will lead to improved scores on standardized tests," said Mary Thissen-Milder of the Minnesota Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

In fact, the CDC's review of 50 studies found "substantial evidence" that physical activity can help with academics. Maintaining or adding time for PE does not appear to hurt -- and may help.



[www.healthiergeneration.org](http://www.healthiergeneration.org)

Review the data  
Create and implement a plan  
Monitor your results

## Healthy Kids are Successful Learners

How school health programs work. Nebraska's Norris Public School Principal, Dr. John Skretta wrote an administrators view.

(Excerpt)

Schools across the country are required to write school improvement plans (SIP). As more attention and research emerges on what many of us already knew—health and learning are connected, these plans are increasingly including health and wellness as goals, objectives and/or strategies. For schools participating in the Healthy Schools Program, the six-step process utilized to make health improvements in the school environment aligns with the continuous improvement process of school improvement planning. Here are some tips for making connections with the school improvement plan at your school.

## Happy Meals Bye-Bye

San Francisco leaders are deciding if children will be sad if their Happy Meals go bye bye.



Theory is McDonald toys are enticing the younger set to purchase fat and high calorie, thus non-nutrition Happy Meals.

The City Council's goal is to have a "food justice movement" to address 50 of their restaurants which include McDonalds, Burger King and Subway that give way

toys to sell food. Under the proposal the Happy Meal will have less than 600 calories and 35% of total calories can be from fat. Each meal must contain .5 cups of fruit and .75 cups of vegetables and less sodium.

Taken from CNN <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/11/09/california.fast.food.ban/index.html?hpt=T2>

## Your Brain Needs Exercise Too



*One of the best brain exercises is walking. It oxygenates your body and your brain and allows the blood to flow better.*

That mushy thing between your ears, behind the eyes—yes that is it—the BRAIN!

We need to exercise not only our bodies but our brains.

Daily there are new smells, colors and sights our brains

are processing. As you are sitting there or driving, bam a song comes on the radio. You remember a special occasion but for the life of you can't remember all the words.

We have become a sedentary society. Today less than one fourth of school children participate in exercise or physical education classes. Adults are

worse as we all sit way too much in front of computers and televisions. Now what was on that grocery list? I know it was only three items.

Do more, take some brain teasers and exercise that thought/thinking process. What do you put in a toaster? I hope you didn't say toast! It's bread which will become toast. Now where is that grocery list anyway?

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“Children are unpredictable. You never know what inconsistency they’re going to catch you in next.”  
Franklin P. Jones



### The Nebraska State Board of Education approved the Coordinated School Health Policy on March 2, 2010.

[www.education.ne.gov/PEhealth/Index.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/PEhealth/Index.html)

A coordinated school health program (CSHP) model consists of eight interactive components. Schools by themselves cannot, and should not be expected to, address the nation’s most serious health and social problems. Families, health care workers, the media, religious organizations, community organizations that serve youth, and young people themselves also must be systematically involved. However, schools could provide a critical facility in which many agencies might work together to maintain the well-being of young people.



### NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ENDORSES THE USDA HEALTHIERUS SCHOOL CHALLENGE

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html>

The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) is a voluntary initiative established in 2004 to recognize those schools participating in the National School Lunch Program that have created healthier school environments through promotion of nutrition and physical activity.

Nebraska Department of Education's Nutrition Services  
[www.education.ne.gov/NS/index.htm](http://www.education.ne.gov/NS/index.htm)

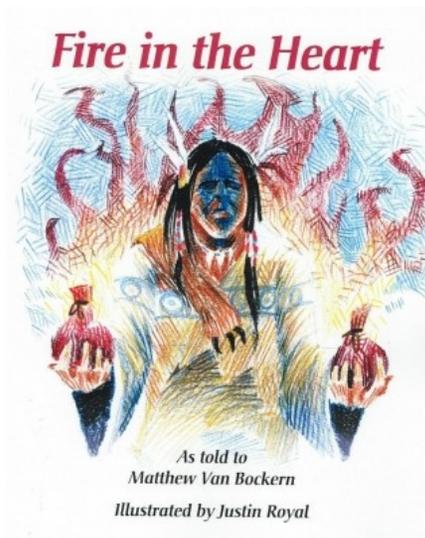


## Get Your Family Excited About Books and Reading

- Join the online community and share the great reads of your life with book lovers around the world.
- Let your kids explore a special section created just for them!

<http://youarewhatyouread.scholastic.com/>

you are what  
you read



Written by 5th Grade Teacher Kathy Dennison from Brookville, PA.

Fire in the Heart as told to Matthew Van Bockern is an excellent example of a Native American legend. This engaging story captured the interest of my fifth grade class. They sat engrossed as they learned of a young Indian boy named Roanhorse mentored by an old woman he met in the woods who taught him the importance of respect for the earth and its people. When Roanhorse came of age, he was chosen as one of two deserving young men to vie for the position of leader of the tribe.



### Opening Ceremony

An opening ceremony for the school day  
Karen Thuo, a fifth grade teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota created a the following ceremony and ritual for her class that she uses as part of her morning meeting. A student is selected to be honored and two different students lead the ceremony. Students gather in a circle for the ceremony. There are seven Native American students in her class that play a part.

Here is the form that Karen uses to help the process. You may use or adapt this form to meet your needs. Thank you, Karen, for sharing this with us.

<http://www.reclaiming.com/content/node/146>

Book Review  
Book Review



“While we try to teach our children all about life, Our children teach us what life is all about.”  
**Angela Schwindt**

Retrace the 1961 civil rights bus rides. During the protests, some 430 black and white men and women, mostly students traveled to the South to challenge segregation. A nonviolent group met violence along the way, eventually spurring the Kennedy administration to action.

Original Freedom Riders from 1961 will join the ride along the route. A documentary in the making. To be aired on PBS May 2011

*New York Times*

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE wants to bring 40 students from across the nation together with civic leaders and the original Freedom Riders to have an inter-generational conversation about civic engagement and about what it means today.

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE will select students with a broad range of backgrounds—lending diverse voices to the journey. We are looking for students who want to share their experiences and who are eager to learn from their peers, from pioneers in the civil rights movement, and from today’s civic leaders. Students should possess strong written communication skills and must demonstrate a commitment to civic engagement.



The **2011 Student Freedom Ride** will provide these students with an opportunity to take part in an inter-generational conversation about the very idea of civic engagement. What form does civic engagement take today? What has changed since 1961? What would inspire today's students to "get on the bus?" A moving digital media platform, the **2011 Student Freedom Ride** will facilitate the students' use of both social and traditional media to share their experiences, bringing others along on their journey, and encouraging their friends and classmates to think more seriously about civic activism and the role that it plays in a thriving democracy.



## Invites College Students to **“Get on the Bus”**

**Be one of 40 college students to join original Freedom Riders in retracing the 1961 Rides.  
 May 6-16, 2011 Washington, DC to Jackson, MS**

*Application deadline: January 17, 2011. An essay is required. Visit the website for complete information and criteria.*

Website: [www.pbsorg/freedomriders](http://www.pbsorg/freedomriders)  
 Contains, applications, video and more information.  
[www.facebook.com/ride](http://www.facebook.com/ride)

**Notice to Educators:** Your classroom can follow the bus and read comments as they travel across the South.

Description	Award	Eligibility	Deadline
<p><b>Fuel UP to Play 60</b> This grant provides money to help schools jumpstart and sustain healthy nutrition and physical activity improvements. Eligible schools can apply for funds to help them increase awareness of and access to nutrient-rich foods and physical activity opportunities for students. The funds can be used for a variety of activities and tools, such as food service materials and equipment, nutrition and physical education materials, student and staff incentives, staff development and overall Fuel Up to Play 60 program implementation. <a href="http://www.FuelUpToPlay60.com">http://www.FuelUpToPlay60.com</a></p>	\$3,000	Activities/tools such as food service, materials, nutrition, physical education and more	December 1
<p><b>The Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Award</b> To celebrate the significant role of teachers in society, The Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards will spotlight some of the country's most inspirational teachers and recognize them for their contributions. On March 22, <a href="#">Stephen Sondheim's</a> birthday, a select number of these teachers will each receive The Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Award in appreciation for their contributions to the field of teaching. Awardees will also be showcased, along with the people they inspired, on The Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards web site. <a href="http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/awards/sondheim/">http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/awards/sondheim/</a></p>	\$10,000	Spotlight inspirational teachers	December 15
<p><b>Honeywell: Educators at Space Academy Program</b> The Honeywell Educators at Space Academy Program funds five-day scholarships for middle school math and science teachers at the U.S. Space &amp; Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Recipients have 40 hours of intensive classroom, laboratory and training time, focusing on space science and space exploration, including participation in astronaut-style training and simulations and activities designed to promote life-long learning in a classroom setting. <a href="http://www.spacecamp.com/educators/honeywell/">http://www.spacecamp.com/educators/honeywell/</a></p>	Travel and lodging, materials, tuition to a workshop	Teachers grades 6-8 math/science	December 31
<p><b>Leadership and Learning</b> Support public school teachers, public education support professionals, and/or faculty and staff in public institutions of higher education for one of the following two purposes: *Grants to individuals fund participation in high-quality professional development experiences, such as summer institutes or action research; or *Grants to groups fund collegial study, including study groups, action research, lesson study, or mentoring experiences for faculty or staff new to an assignment. <a href="http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/educators/grant-programs/grant-application/learning-and-leadership/">http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/educators/grant-programs/grant-application/learning-and-leadership/</a></p>	\$2,000 individual \$5,000 group	Practicing public with less than 7 years of experience. PreK-12	February 1 June 1
<p><b>Schools of distinction Awards: Intel</b> Intel honors K-12 schools in the U.S. that demonstrate excellence in math and science education through innovative teaching and learning environments. To be considered as an Intel School of Distinction, schools must develop an environment and curricula that meet or exceed benchmarks put forth by national mathematics and science content standards. Up to three schools at each level — elementary, middle, and high school — will be named as finalists in the math and science categories. <a href="http://www.intel.com/about/corporateresponsibility/education/soda/index.htm#">http://www.intel.com/about/corporateresponsibility/education/soda/index.htm#</a></p>	\$3,000 \$10,000 \$25,000	Develop an environment an curricula that meet/exceed benchmarks in math/science content standards. Gr K-12	February 17
<p><b>We Can Change the World Challenge-Gr K-12</b> The <a href="#">Siemens Foundation</a>, <a href="#">Discovery Education</a>, and the <a href="#">National Science Teachers Association</a> have announced the launch of the third annual <a href="#">Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge</a>, a program designed to educate, empower, and engage students and teachers across the United States to become "Agents of Change" in identifying and solving environmental problems. Teams will be judged on both their ability to create a positive, measurable solution to a local sustainability issue or challenge using scientific methodology and their ability to explain how the solution can be replicated by other communities. Student and teacher/mentor prizes, which vary according to grade level, include savings bonds and school grants. <a href="http://www.wecanchange.com/">http://www.wecanchange.com/</a></p>	Savings bonds and school grants	Environmental problems	March 15
<p><b>Annie's Gardens</b> Annie's Grants for Gardens from Annie's Homegrown help schools and nonprofits in the United States that intend to create gardens. The focus of these grants is on schools, community gardens, and other educational programs that will connect children to gardening. <a href="http://www.annies.com/grants_for_gardens">http://www.annies.com/grants_for_gardens</a></p>	\$250	Schools for community gardens and educational programs	Open





**“There are only two things a child will share willingly—communicable diseases and his mother’s age.”**  
*Dr. Benjamin Spock*

**Gates Millennium Scholars: Deadline January 11.** The Gates Millennium Scholars Program, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, awards scholarships to minority students who are eligible to receive Federal Pell Grants and have achieved academic excellence in high school. The scholarship helps students cover the portion of their college costs not funded by other grant and scholarship awards. Scholarship applicants must be nominated by an educator familiar with their academic backgrounds. <http://www.gmsp.org/>

## Student Scholarships



**DELL Open November 1-January 15.** The Dell Scholars Program, sponsored by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, carries an award of \$20,000 to help students complete their college educations. High school seniors who have financial need and plan to enroll immediately in bachelor's degree programs can qualify by enrolling in approved college readiness programs as high school students and completing a Dell Scholars scholarship application online. Applications open on November 1 and the deadline is January 15. <http://www.dellscholars.org/public/>

Dec. 6-12	Natl Hand Washing Awareness Week
Dec. 10-17	Human Rights Week
Dec. 21	World Peace Day
Dec. 26	Natl Thank You Note Day

**Plan Ahead**



Sponsored by: Anti-Defamation League  
 December 13<sup>th</sup>, Omaha NE  
 Cost: FREE  
 Register by contacting Jessica Gall [jgall@adl.org](mailto:jgall@adl.org) or 402-334-6573  
[http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/cyberbullying/](http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/cyberbullying/)



**Leadership for Equity Training**  
 March 2-3, 2011, Phoenix AZ

<http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/ea/conference/>



### Teacher and Student Workshops

Lied Center-Lincoln  
[www.liedcenter.org](http://www.liedcenter.org)

Student matinees scheduled at nominal fee of \$4.00 per individual.

Alice in Wonderland, February 2011  
 Disney's Choo Choo Soul, March 2011

Teacher workshops scheduled:

1. Dramatizing the Content with Curriculum Based Readers Theatre, teachers of grades 5-12
2. Poetry Off the Page, teachers of grades 5-8

Teacher resources:

1. Kennedy Center Partners in Education Program Performance Guides
2. Professional Development for Teachers
3. Professional Development for Teaching Artists

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