School of Education Hosting Learning To Give Summer Institute

With goals of incorporating philanthropy and positive community initiatives into K-12 curriculums, the School of Education at Grand Valley State University is practicing what it is preaching by hosting a Learning To Give Summer Institute.

The comprehensive program is scheduled for June 21-24, 2004, at the GVSU Pew Campus in downtown Grand Rapids.

The institute is designed to introduce teachers to the body of knowledge about civil society and citizen action through the voluntary sector.

Created by classroom teachers, educational leaders and foundations, Learning to Give provides a blueprint of lessons designed to encourage young people to take positive action in their own lives, become involved in community initiatives and understand what it takes to build a strong democratic society.

By incorporating principles of philanthropy-giving, serving and taking action for the common good into lessons or projects, the Learning To Give initiative promotes a stronger society and a better living environment for all. Lessons are provided as stepping stones that help teachers incorporate philanthropic themes into curriculum they are already teaching.

What will be accomplished:

The Summer Institute will provide an overview of components and benefits of academic service learning and curriculum experience that is tied with high-stakes testing standards. In addition, an overview of philanthropy themes and lesson plans, hands-on work in the development of integrated instructional units, student assessment and rubric writing and presentations will be explored. Books and materials will be provided.

The extensive sessions will run Monday through Thursday at the Pew Campus in downtown Grand Rapids.

Eligibility requirements include and application form (www.gvsu.edu/soe), current resume, recommendation letter from school district principle or superintendent indicating that you will be supported in implementing at least one LTG unit and be allowed to present LTG at one staff meeting and a statement of interest in teaching about voluntary action with description on a plan to implement the strategy learned from the institute.

The institute – which includes housing and most meals -- is free of charge. However, a $50 deposit is required. The deposit will be returned upon successful completion of the program.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Learning To Give-Michigan, which is housed within the School of Education Community Outreach Office (616.331.6240).

GVSU is 'Learning to Give' As Program Host

Grand Valley State University was chosen by the Learning to Give project to be its pilot institution. Grand Valley will serve as a pilot university that will eventually train staff from nine other partner institutions across the U.S. including Indiana University, University of Wisconsin – Madison and University of Texas – Austin. Learning to Give – Michigan will be housed in the School of Education Community Outreach Office.

"LTG was looking to partner with an institution that has a well respected teacher education program," said Dr. Kathryn A. Agard, Executive Director of LTG. "We are delighted to collaborate with Grand Valley where the Outreach office has shown exceptional leadership in picking up this national program."

The School of Education Community Outreach Office has been asked to spearhead the effort at Grand Valley.

"Being selected as the pilot institution for LTG is an incredible opportunity for GVSU, because it not only provides new connections with schools in the community, but also higher education institutions across the nation," said Dr. Claudia Sowa-Wojciakowski, Director of the Community Outreach Office of the School of Education.

Over the next three years, GVSU will host numerous conferences, professional sessions and train new teachers in LTG methodology. Faculty members have also joined the effort to foster the concepts of philanthropy in graduate and undergraduate courses.

"I've been excited about the opportunity to share both the Learning to Give philosophy and practical application ideas with our student teachers," said professor Liz Storey of the School of Education. "Hopefully, this will have an impact on their sharing with children in their own classrooms."

To support the Grand Valley pilot endeavor, the Michigan Council of Foundations and W.K. Kellogg Foundation have matched funds raised by the GVSU Development Office. This effort was assisted by the fact that Learning to Give has been endorsed by numerous national and local foundations and organizations including the National Council for the Social Studies, the American Federation of Teachers, National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Alliance for Business-Business Coalition for Education Reform.

"Being selected as the pilot institution for LTG is an incredible opportunity for GVSU, because it not only provides new connections with schools in the community, but also higher education institutions across the nation."

— Dr. Claudia Sowa-Wojciakowski, Director of the Community Outreach Office of the School of Education.

This national effort has provided many benefits for educators at all levels. "Time, talent and treasure" is how LTG defines philanthropy for K-12 students. More than 700 lesson plans on the website www.learningtogive.org incorporate this theme and meet Michigan curriculum standards. The lesson plans are free and many other resources are available on the site, including information about how youth can set up their own foundations in their schools called The Student Service and Philanthropy Project.

"At the end of the day, I am pleased to contribute to a program that can change many lives and provide teachers with materials and strategies to educate youth about our civil society," Sowa-Wojciakowski said. "It is great that this program has found a home at Grand Valley and we have the opportunity to serve as a model for other universities across the nation."

School of Education student Haley Follette transports goods collected during the School of Education's Traverse City campus Food and Coat Drive.

Food & Coat Drive Benefits The Needy

The Grand Valley State University School of Education's Traverse City campus hosted a Food and Coat Drive at the start of the winter semester to benefit the Traverse City Women's Resource Center.

Two truckloads of goods were collected by students and staff during the drive, which was conducted between Jan. 5 and Feb. 14.