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cityscape

the monthly newsletter for City High School & Tucson Small School Project

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CITY
HIGH SCHOOL



learning. working.
creating. connecting.

CITY HIGH SCHOOL strives to be a community of learners in which all members use their minds well and care about one another. We engage with challenging academics and the unique resources of our city and region in order to become active citizens and responsible stewards of our world.

TUCSON SMALL SCHOOL PROJECT is a nonprofit organization with two primary purposes: to start and sustain City High School, a new charter high school in downtown Tucson; and to promote dialogue and professional development that foster smaller, more equitable learning communities for all students. TSSP is an Arizona corporation with 501(c)3 tax-exempt status.

Exciting Progress with “City Works”

A dynamic aspect of the curriculum at City High School is the City Works program, first described in the January issue of *cityscape*. Designed to engage students in learning from and contributing to their community, City Works courses will provide a real-world context for students to apply and hone skills they learn in other classes, such as science, math, Spanish, arts, and humanities.

Progress on our City Works program has been steady and exciting. The variety of courses include collaborations with the Fox Tucson Theatre, Tucson Community Technology Education Network (TCTEN), UA Science Center, Tucson Pima Arts Coalition, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), and Southwest Preventative Health. The City Works classes will be co-taught by a City High teacher and one or more community partners.

Although each City Works course will be unique, they will all share a similar structure that includes community needs assessment, field work, research, and

public presentations. All courses will incorporate two or more state standards in language arts and civics, in addition to standards in other disciplines, such as math, science, technology, business, and the arts.

An example of a City Works course in the planning stages is one that City High School is partnering with TCTEN to create. The course is designed, in part, due to needs expressed by the Tucson Fire Department and Department of Transportation. Students will learn cutting edge Geographical Information Systems (GIS) technology, and then apply that to mapping footprints of downtown buildings, in order to aid the fire department and other first responders in successfully carrying out their mission.

City Works classes have a three-hour block built into the school schedule each week. This time frame allows students to effectively work in the community on a place-based project that also combines service to the community.

~ Jennifer Rosenthal

City High School will kick off its “Spring for Fall” fundraising campaign this month. The goal is to raise \$50,000 during the late spring and summer months for the upcoming school year. The contributions will augment state and grant monies and help to ensure a successful first year for the school.

*THANKS to the supporters whose donations in the past six months
have helped to fund City High School's planning year ...*

Anonymous (2)
Karen Blumenthal & Mark Pretti
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Jared & Nancy Rifkin
Walter & Sonia Rifkin
Miriam Silver
Marie Witzman
Teresiana & Armando Zurita

Science Curriculum Update

WHAT ARE "DIVISIONS"?

City High School will be divided into **three divisions**, which students will move through as they progress towards **graduation**. In order to move from one division to the next, students will present a **portfolio of their work** to a panel of parents, peers, and community members that they invite in order to demonstrate **academic progress** and successful application of the **habits of heart and mind**. For the first cohort of students starting in Fall 2004, **Division 1** will include 9th and 10th grades. In future years, Division 1 will include 9th grade only. **Division 2** includes 10th and 11th grades. Division 3, or the **Senior Institute**, is for 12th grade students.

In the past few months, three planning sessions were held as a means of preliminary brainstorming concerning the science curriculum for City High School. During the first of these sessions we focused on what the four-year science program will look like for the school, while in the second and third sessions we focused on developing the course for in-coming students this fall.

The science course for Division 1 is starting to take shape. As with the philosophy of the school and its focus on 'Sense of Place', the first year science class will be an exploration of the natural history of the Sonoran Desert, with an emphasis on the part of the desert in which the city of Tucson finds itself. Such a class will integrate many areas of the sciences, and be directed toward the resources of our desert home: water, plants, animals, soils, minerals, and climate. The idea is to prepare our students with knowledge of our natural community and to provide a jumping

off point for further studies in the sciences. Similar to other City High School classes that will be using the city as a text, this class will be using our natural environment as a text, with curriculum bridges being extended to our man-made environment as appropriate.

The full four-year program is still evolving in terms of exactly how to include – and to what degree to integrate – the traditional high school sciences (physics, chemistry, biology). The group will continue to meet this summer to work on developing the full sequence of science courses and to outline in more detail the Division 1 class.

The science curriculum will engage students in fieldwork, lab work, the development of observational skills, collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, class-wide discussions, as well as scientific reading & writing.

~ Elliott Lax

Humanities Curriculum Update

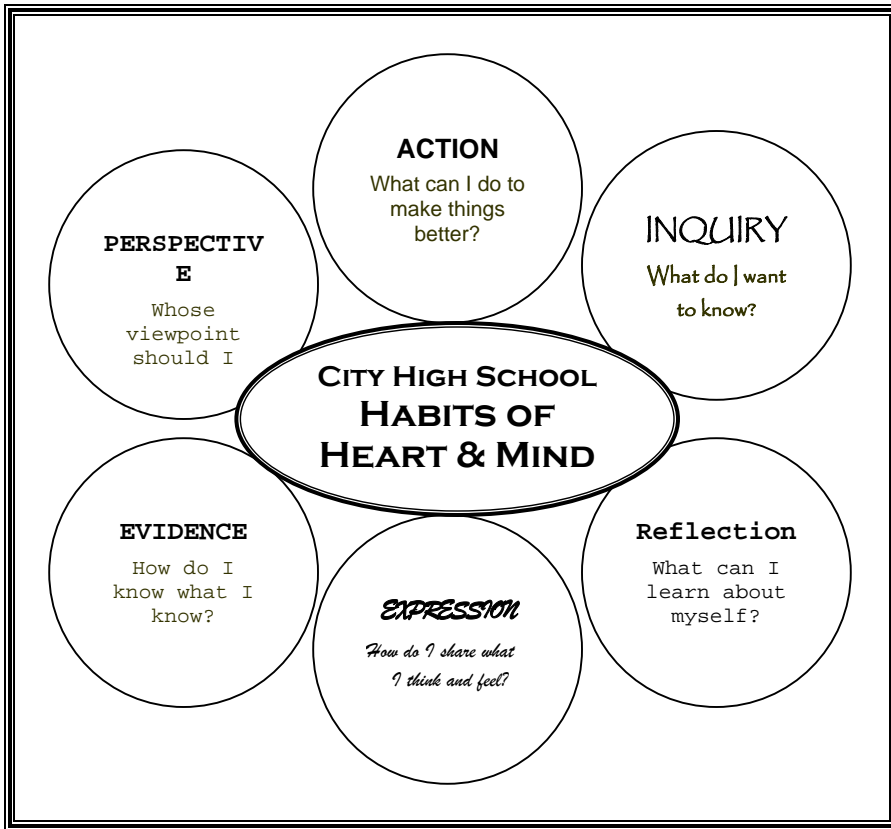
City High School's humanities teachers, Brett Goble and Eve Rifkin, are designing an innovative, curriculum that integrates the study of history, culture, writing, literature, and the arts. Students will use a variety of sources to explore contemporary society and the past in their humanities classes; they will read fiction and nonfiction, examine historical documents and artifacts, interview elders and others in the community, and conduct field visits as part of their studies.

The Division 1 humanities course will serve as an introduction to place-based education with an emphasis on City High School's habits of heart and mind. We'll explore the stories of our immediate area, including specific streets, buildings, personalities, and events of downtown Tucson, and use these stories as entry points for our study of the human experience. For example, what can the historic Pima County Courthouse teach us about the democratic process, Arizona state history, notions of public space, and trends in Southwest architecture?

The Division 2 humanities curriculum has two one-year components that are still in the planning stages. One component will be a study of American culture informed by the perspective of Southern Arizona and the Southwest region. The other component will focus on developing a deeper understanding of contemporary issues that are both local and global in nature.

City High School teachers will be participating in a two-week institute in early June sponsored by the Arizona State Museum that focuses on developing place-based curriculum, which will help to further their work. They will also be inviting educators, artists, historians, and other professionals in the field of humanities to offer feedback and input at summer curriculum planning meetings.

~Eve Rifkin



City High School's first annual Picnic in the Park took place Sunday, May 16 at La Madera Park in central Tucson. Students, families, and friends spent an afternoon of meeting, eating, playing, and learning. Look out for announcements for upcoming events for City High School students to participate in this summer.

At the Center: Habits of Heart and Mind

An important thread that will help tie together the entire educational program and reinforce real world application and life-long learning will be the school's habits of heart and mind. These habits are embedded in rich subject matter and depend on students using the skills of reading, writing, logic, computation, research, and scientific inquiry to give them substance. They are both intellectual and affective and encourage students to develop consistent, rigorous, ethical, and caring ways of approaching the world.

Drawing on a variety of similar approaches at successful small schools, such as Central Park East Secondary School in New York City, Wildwood Academy in Los Angeles, and High Tech High in

San Diego, City High School worked with our curriculum design team of educators and students to narrow down and define a core set of "habits" that will inform all aspects of the teaching and learning in classrooms and the whole school community.

The six City High School habits of heart and mind – inquiry, reflection, expression, evidence, perspective, and action – are outlined above. The graphic organizer is designed to reflect the dynamic and interconnected relationship of these critically important skills, or ways of thinking and being, that students will be encouraged to practice and incorporate into all realms of their experience at City High School.

~ Carrie Brennan



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UPCOMING EVENTS

(All events take place at 48 East Pennington St. unless noted otherwise.)

May

- 5/12 6:00-7:00 p.m. **Information Session** for students, parents
- 5/16 4:00-7:00 p.m. City High School **Picnic in the Park** at La Madera Park
- 5/18 3:00-5:00 p.m. City High School **Hiring Committee Meeting**
- 5/27 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tucson Small School Project **Board Meeting** (rescheduled from 5/20)

June

- 6/1-11 **Sense of Place Institute** at the **Arizona State Museum**, co-sponsored by City High School
- 6/3 6:30-9:00 p.m. **Voices' Release Party for 110° Magazine** at MUSE
- 6/11 9:00 a.m.-2 p.m. **Community Stories Workshop**, sponsored by Voices, Inc. and PRONeighborhoods
- 6/14 **Humanities Curriculum Meeting** (time TBD)
- 6/15 6:00-7:00 p.m. **Information Session** for students, parents
- 6/16-19 **National Charter Schools Conference** in Miami, FL
- 6/17 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tucson Small School Project **Board Meeting**
- 6/20-23 **High Tech High Network Meeting** in San Diego, CA

*Please note: This issue and all **past issues** of **CITYSCAPE** are available on our **website**, www.cityhighschool.org.*

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