

Fall 2001

## NEIU College of Education: The Ripple Effect- Fall 2001

Newsletter Staff

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The *Ripple Effect* is published by the Health & Physical Education Department, in cooperation with College of Education, Northeastern Illinois University

Dr. Nan Giblin, Dean, College of Education

**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

My relationship with T.E.A.M. can be best described as symbiotic. I was first learning about experiential education a year or two before T.E.A.M. came into existence. My own experiential program at McCracken Middle School in Skokie, Illinois began as a nine week course for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the fall of 1990. The previous year we started our 5<sup>th</sup> grade outdoor experience with a three day trip to White Pines Ranch in Oregon, Illinois.

Our first issue of the "The Ripple Effect" was published in the fall of 1991 and this is our 20<sup>th</sup> issue almost 10 years later. T.E.A.M. had its first conference in 1989 and by the time you get this newsletter we will have completed our 12<sup>th</sup> conference.

I have been on the newsletter committee since the first issue and I have been on the conference planning committee since 1992. As you can see the two experiences had a simultaneous existence over the years with a lasting influence. This relationship brings me to the concept of the "Ripple Effect".

I have learned much from working with a dedicated and selfless group of individuals who gave of their time over the past 12 years to put out the newsletter and a great experiential conference. I learned from many of the presenters at the conference who shared their knowledge freely with all who attended, and I learned from the articles written for the newsletter. I shared my experiences and knowledge learned with my students and colleagues with the hope that they would share what they have learned with friends and family. "The Ripple Effect" at work.

It is our hope at T.E.A.M. that in some way we have influenced you to be a "positive influence in the world". We hope you will choose to go out and influence those around you, and they will influence those around them.

On a solo canoe trip in Canada a number of years ago I saw the ripple effect in action. It was just before sundown and the lake was a mirror of the sky. A few raindrops began to fall. Each drop sent out a ripple but because there were so few none of the ripples touched each other before their strength dissipated to stillness again. As the rain began to fall with more intensity I began to notice some of the ripples begin to reach others. As the rain became more intense I looked across the lake and realized that with so many raindrops every ripple on the lake was connected with others creating a tapestry of interconnected ripples.

We at T.E.A.M. and all of you reading this are part of the "Ripple Effect". Together we can influence others with the hope that some day we will be like the ripples on the lake and become a tapestry of experiential and adventure based learning.

Read "The Hundredth Monkey" in this issue for a different "Ripple Effect."

Gus Pausz  
Newsletter Committee

*This year The Ripple Effect will be published only once. As always, thank you for your support and contributions.*



## OUR MISSION:

### Teachers of Experiential and Adventure Methodology

(T.E.A.M.) is an organization dedicated to promoting and supporting the process of experiential and adventure based learning. Through the sharing of ideas, skills, and curricula, T.E.A.M. provides individuals and organizations in all fields of human and community service with personal and professional growth opportunities.

The annual conference and bi-annual *Ripple Effect* newsletter serve as a network center for everyone seeking to learn about, start or enhance experiential and adventure programs.

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## Leadership and Service: A Synergistic Combination

by Alexa Pearce, Badger High School and NYU  
Introduction by Carol Carlin

"Preparing students to exist in a society not partitioned by walls and chalkboards and to understand that we are all equal and that we have a responsibility to build a foundation of trust for each other, so that we would be able to work together effectively in and out of the classroom" are goals of the Leadership Dynamics Program at Badger High School in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The leadership program consists of three classes which are one-week "Outward Bound" type residential camps held at a local camp on the shore of Geneva Lake. The Senior Leadership curriculum continues through the school year and investigates life planning techniques, individual leadership styles, strategic planning, grant writing, ethics, decision making and consensus building, while planning and implementing a year-long project.

Alexa Pearce's team of 17 seniors set four goals: to restore the image of teenagers, to give people a place to process their grief and remember their loved one, to restore an environmental area, and to include the entire Badger community. The In Loving Memory Project restored Donian Park Wetland Preserve in Lake Geneva and created a Memory Garden in the Park and at Brookwood Middle School in Genoa City. Local elementary students are helping to maintain each while learning about the environment and their community.

Alexa is a student at NYU, and joined our teaching team the summer of 2000. In this article she reflects on her experience in the Leadership Dynamics program.

(continued on next page)

## QUOTABLES QUOTABLES

The language we use shapes the way we think.  
We cannot change our attitudes & actions until  
we change our words.

— Karen Hall

When I see an adult on a  
bicycle, I have hope for  
the human race.

— H.G. Wells

Laughing is the  
signal that you can  
dance into the eye of  
a hurricane.

— Steve Allen, jr.

Service to others is the rent that you  
pay for your room here on earth.

— Elijah Muhammad

BEHOLD THIS DAY...IT IS YOURS TO MAKE

—Black Elk, Olgala Sioux Lakota



# Reflections on Senior Leadership

by Alexa Pearce  
Class of 1999

When a single project is passed through the many hands of the members of a large and diverse team, it is bound to confront conflicts and obstacles. Despite the difficulties associated with a team project as extensive in nature as the Senior Leadership Dynamics community service project, the team aspect of the project is precisely what made it an enjoyable enhancement to my academic year.

I would describe our team in particular as especially diverse. It is comprised of many strong and individual personalities, who I believe have succeeded in creating a healthy team spirit. I think that this happens in two basic ways, the first of which is the experience of several people jointly confronted with challenges and obstacles. When a group is forced to come together in order to plan how it will overcome an unexpected hurdle, it also gains a bonding experience. The second way is when the members of a group augment each other's work. The best simulation of this experience was the finger-painting project at our retreat. When one person pours time and effort into a task and then gives it to the group to be enhanced, that person establishes a connection with the group as well as an element of trust.

One benefit of working with a diverse group is that the integrity of the project is protected and considered from several different points of view. However, it is often susceptible to sacrifice by the same cause.

The most difficult challenge any team might face is that of finding balance among several powerful factors. In a large group, everyone is not necessarily tuned into the feelings and interests of everyone else. Half of the team may be experiencing growth and accomplishment while the other half is experiencing weakness and destruction.

I learned this when we had our lengthy afternoon meeting, during which we all wrote down our feelings and listened to them read out loud. That meeting was, however, a critical step on the way to examine the situation from other perspectives within the team, so as to get a sense of the entirety of the project, while still maintaining efficiency.

I believe that this project was especially filled with components beyond the group's control. Not only was a large portion of our work subject to the rules and rulings of the Lake Geneva City Council, it was also weather-dependent. In addition to those factors, an environment restoration project must be carried out in an environmentally-sound fashion. As a group, we had a lot to learn. Due to the position we were in, we were forced to find a way to balance all of our planning, leaving room to adapt to forces beyond our control while making progress at a steady pace.

My personal vision for this project was focused on the enhancement of neglected property into a functional, meaningful park. My hope is that this vision of mine, which I believe is common among many of the team members, will be valued by members of both communities we aim to serve. Ordinarily, an emotional investment occurs when I devote time to a significant piece of writing, be it a literary analysis for school or a poem or journal entry of my own. In a group project, it might occur when objectives of the group have been successfully organized and a final result is attained.


With the arboretum project, the emotional aspect for me came during our experiences clearing Donian Park. Personally contributing to such extraordinary progress became a planting process in itself, in terms of dedication, emotion, and appreciation for the help we had.

This process has definitely resulted in personal growth for me, much of which has been characterized by my observation of others. I have witnessed some people in the group grow and contribute in ways which I would not have expected. That realization in turn causes me to reflect upon my own potential to do things I haven't previously considered. The project has therefore also served as a motivational experience.

Although meetings could be very stressful at times, they also served to provide me with atmospheres of relief when I knew this project was one aspect of school that was not a burden for me to carry independently. I am also aware that everyone in the group did not often feel as I did in that regard. Some members carried exceptional amounts of weight and were continuously let down by their teammates. I regret that happening, but I do not regret avoiding putting myself in that position because I know it was one thing I didn't need this year.

I think that the Senior Leadership Dynamics course stands out in the Badger curriculum. It has the potential to give its participants an excellent and invaluable experience.

I'm excited to have reached this point in the project. Handing over our records to the other groups that will be taking over makes it all seem quite real. I'm pleased to have been a part of this experience. I saw many different groups of people and individuals interact and was amazed, several times, at the success of these groups' communication with each other. Human emotion and interaction both played a very central part in this project. I was sometimes motivated by the intensity of those factors alone.

I would choose to do this again. 

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# So you think you know how to COACH!

by Heidi Baran

I have to admit to a few things that I am ashamed of. I used to think the whole purpose of coaching was winning. I am not sure how I developed this philosophy, but after examining American society in general I guess it comes as no surprise. In college when we were to select our student teaching assignment the only school I wanted to go to was York High School. Why was I so set on student teaching at York? One reason: they had one of the best cross-country programs in the country. I wanted to learn from the best so someday I too, could have a cross-country team that was first in the state. This is not something I am proud of. I wish I could say I wanted to student teach at a certain school for academic reasons, but I can not turn back time.

A lot has changed since my student teaching days. I am still coaching, but I do it for more important reasons than simply to win. I blame this change on the adventure education bug....I was bit! For those of you who share my love for adventure education you know what I am talking about. Over the past few years I have been able to teach and coach with a new found meaning. After only a few years of coaching I was becoming bored because all I cared about was winning.

I was not excited to go to practice or meets and I noticed some of my athletes seemed to share my feelings. In fact, I almost stopped coaching altogether. Then I decided to incorporate some of the adventure activities I was doing with my adventure education classes into my practices.

At first my athletes looked at me as if I was from outer space when I told them I was going to tie them together and blindfold them. Some actually ridiculed the idea. When they successfully ran the entire cross-country course tied up and blindfolded something magical happened; they truly became a team and I became a true coach.

I realized that negativity is contagious. I did not enjoy what I was doing and it showed. After I started focusing more on team-building and trust activities and less on winning, my whole attitude about coaching changed. Not only did my attitude change, but so did my athletes. When I started using adventure education activities in my practices, my teams naturally became more successful.

I have used adventure activities in coaching cross-country and soccer. For those of you who want to try using adventure activities in your practices, but do not know how to justify them to the other coaches, there are many ways you can. They can be used to help condition and train your teams.

More importantly they can be used to develop unity, communication, and trust amongst your athletes. Below I have listed a few of the adventure activities that were successful with my teams. If you need additional ideas open up any adventure education book and use your imagination.


I know I have changed as a coach and I am the first to admit adventure education has helped me become a much better coach, teacher, and overall person. I also know that my athletes have truly benefited from the use of adventure education in sports because at every end of the year banquet they never mention wins or losses. They remember all of the "Crazy Coach Baran" games.

## Adventure Coaching Activities

**Tie 'Em Up Soccer/Cross-country/Basketball:** Get your team in a circle as close together as possible. Then tie them up with a medium length climbing rope. If you want to make it even more challenging blindfold some of the "leaders" of your team. Then have them attempt to score a goal, make a basket, or run their home course while they are tied up and/or blindfolded.

This sounds like a crazy activity and it is, but I guarantee you it is one that they never forget and it truly helps them learn to trust their teammates.

**Hoops:** This activity is a great conditioning activity. You set up 4 hula hoops around a soccer field or basketball court or any wide area. I then place 20 pennies of various colors in the fifth hula hoop located in the center of the area. I divide my team into four groups and tell them in order to finish the game of hoops they have to have 5 different colored pennies in their home hoop. (Their home hoop is the hoop they start out at). They are allowed to steal from the other teams throughout the game. Basically they are sprinting the entire game and do not realize it because they are having so much fun. This activity teaches them how to work collaboratively in a small group.

**Giants, Wizards, and Elves:** This activity is an old favorite from Karl Rohnke. Although it seems immature my juniors and seniors love it. I love the game because it is a great conditioning activity. 

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*Judge not, then, the  
karmic path walked  
by another. Envy not  
success, nor pity  
failure, for you know  
not what is success or  
failure in the soul's  
reckoning.*

— author unknown



# The Profound Wisdom of an Eight Year Old

by Jim King

One day, while I was facilitating a group of high school mentors and their grade school mentees, I was amazed by an eight year old's comment. We were involved with an icebreaker activity called Memory Circle. We had established a pattern for the beanbags to travel by calling out a person's name and then tossing the beanbag to that person. After first getting the order down, we attempted to increase the speed of the beanbag within the circle. Once the group accomplished this task they wanted to try something more difficult. The group decided to try four beanbags. After successfully using four, we discussed how to increase the difficulty again. The group decided to try eight at one time. As the eight beanbags were traveling around the established pattern you can imagine things became more hectic. Having completed three rounds, I started dropping the beanbags out one at a time until they were all gone, and then we took time to debrief the activity.

After the activity we sat down and I gave each person in the circle a chance to comment about the beanbag or just pass. We started on my left, the first student said, "It was fun." The next youngster was a second grader and eight years old. He began by saying how he thought what we had just done was a lot like life! When the eight beanbags were being thrown at the same time, it was rather hectic and reminded him of many things in life that you are faced with that zoom by you everyday. Even though that is something that probably comes out of this Icebreaker at time, it really surprised me coming from an eight year old.

Later, I grew to appreciate how amazing this observation was because of the background of this child. This eight year old did not come from a nurturing environment, nor was he a gifted student. He was an average student struggling through school and home life because of an abusive parent.

Our principal was very moved by the comments of this eight year old boy. It may have been the defining moment in our program when he and I both realized the impact even simple group initiatives could have on our children. After that experience he wrote up the following questions to take to our school board. Here are the questions:

1) How can such a simple activity inspire this type of complex thought?

2) What can we as adults learn from this young man's words?


3) How would you measure the value of this eight-year old student's experience?

4) What type of modeling are we doing as parents, school board members, administrators, teachers and support staff?

5) Five years from now will this child remember the books he read, the tests he took, the grades he received, or will he remember how the teacher treated him in class?

Editor's Note: Jim King is a very well respected Physical Education Teacher and coach in his home community of Eureka, Illinois. About five years ago he attended several seminars in Adventure/Challenge Education at the Illinois State Physical Education Convention. As a lifelong educator he was "bitten" by the adventure bug and knew he needed to develop a program for the students in his school. However, he was not really sure what this Adventure "stuff" was or how it really worked.

He slowly started to investigate by reading suggested books, attending more seminars, talking with speakers, calling them on the phone, and visiting schools with established programs. As he gathered information he talked with his building administrators and school board members about the program and the positive impact it could have not only for the school but the entire community.

Today he has a fully integrated Adventure/Challenge Education program for his students and is developing plans to involve the high school, sports teams, and community groups. He will be presenting a workshop at the Illinois State Physical Education Convention, in November, 2001, about his program. He would be happy to give you all the information he has to help you start your own program if you are interested. 

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# T.E.A.M. MEMBERS RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY

Sylvia Dresser and Gus Pausz are recipients of Awards from the Association of Experiential Education (A.E.E.) for their work in the field of Experiential Education. Both of the recipients have been actively involved with the production of *The Ripple Effect* Newsletter since the first edition was mailed out ten years ago. When you look up the definition of servant leaders, both of their names are listed in Webster's Dictionary.

Sylvia, a former school librarian, won one of the AEE Servant Leader Awards for 2000. She has been actively involved with AEE at the regional level for the last seven years, serving most recently as the Chairperson of the Heartland Region Council. She served on the planning committee for the 1995 International Conference, and is now a member of the International Board. She currently works as a consultant for Project Adventure.

Gus Pausz was awarded the Experiential Educator of the Year award for 2000 from the Association. His 9 week Experiential Education program for 6th, 7th and 8th graders at McCracken Middle School serves as a model in the State of Illinois. He has served as the Co-Chairperson of the TEAM Conference Planning Committee for the last three years, and served on the planning committee for the 1995 International AEE Conference.

Congratulations for this well deserved recognition from their peers in the field of Experiential Education. They are perfect examples of the impact one person can make through a ripple effect.



## Reflections From Our Students "Seeing Beyond The Surface"

by Dan Creely Jr.

This course summary paper was submitted at the conclusion of a one and a half day Rock Climbing course taught at North Central College, in Naperville, Illinois. Can teambuilding activities incorporated into a basic rock climbing class have a lasting impact on our students? Read on...

### Reflection Journal for HPE 115-Rock Climbing

by Todd Meilcarz

My expectations for this class were no more than that I would spend the first evening learning basic skills and equipment, and that I would spend a large portion of the next day climbing until my arms could not take anymore. What I experienced was much more than that, and it made that class an enlightening experience that I will not soon forget.

One of the first things I did when I arrived at the class (which is the same thing that I always do when entering a group situation) was to do an immediate judgement of all the people in the room. I made up my mind right away who I would sit next to and who seemed like they would be weird and who seemed like someone that I would like. These judgements were made almost immediately with total disregard for any information except that which I was able to compile in just a few seconds. I also made judgements on the classroom, the equipment that was sitting out, the music playing on the stereo and the candles that were lit by the window. There were incongruities within this setting that made me wonder what I was in for. Why was Kenny G being played in the classroom, and what did candles have to do with rock climbing?

(continued on next page)

*No tree becomes rooted  
and sturdy unless many a  
wind assails it.*

*For by its very tossing it tightens  
its grip and plants its roots more securely;  
the fragile trees are those that have grown in a sunny valley.*

— Seneca the younger (57 BC-AD 65)  
"On Providence" Moral Essays



*(Rock Climbing continued)*


I would soon find out that this course would focus on much more than rock climbing, and in fact climbing had very little to do with the class itself. I have been part of community building exercises before, but none as thorough as this course. From the time the evening began, until I left the climbing facility, I felt myself being challenged both physically and emotionally. The most valuable lesson that I learned in that first evening was that the judgements and labels we imposed on people every day prevent us from some of the most rewarding interpersonal and group experiences.

Throughout the evening we were challenged to become a community that trusts each of the members equally. Each of the activities we accomplished made me realize how wrong I was about these people I had labeled when I walked through the classroom door. Working with these people in situations where cooperation and trust were necessary for success forced me to look beyond my presumptions. By the time we got to the activity where the group would lift up an individual and slowly rock him down, I realized that there was more satisfaction in seeing one of the other group members succeed than my own success. This is when I started to feel that we had built a strong sense of community within the group. The next morning became more about my own personal goals working within the group. I would set goals for each climb that I attempted, and the added safety of the harness allowed me to really test the limits of my body. Even if I didn't make it, knowing that I pushed my hardest was a very rewarding experience.

When I was watching other people climb, whether I was belaying for them or just observing, it was exciting to see other people accomplish things they said they would never do the night before. I was so excited by the end of the session that I went back that day to the main climbing gym for two more hours in the afternoon. What I found from this class to be the most useful to me in my everyday life was the challenge to drive in my car without the radio on so that I can spend that time reflecting on my experiences. At first it was hard and I did miss the noise in the car, but after a couple of days I found out that I did not miss it at all. In fact, I discovered that the quiet time was extremely valuable.

For example, I was driving to work thinking about a proposal I had just written. I went over in my head those things that I had said in the proposal and realized a mistake that I had made. While it was a silly mistake, it would be seen as an act of carelessness and the repercussions might have been extreme. By using this time to think about the events in my daily life I found out that I was more efficient in my work.

One of my goals since the class has been to continue to take this reflection time each day to think about my experiences. I realize that the time spent in the car alone is a precious time and I should take advantage of it. I also realized the importance of finding activities that challenge

my abilities and give myself a break from my everyday life. I plan to continue to go to the climbing gym as I find that it is a challenge that provides great rewards, even though the physical toll is high. The night before the climbing reminded me how important it is to have an open mind when it comes to people and activities, because there is no way of knowing what positive consequences there might be. And not even trying is worse than trying and not succeeding. 



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*My desires alone differ from those of others—for I value drawing nourishment from mother nature.*

—Lao Tzu



# The Hundredth Monkey

by Ken Keyes, Jr.

There is a phenomenon I'd like to tell you about. In it may lie our only hope of a future for our species! Here is the story of the Hundredth Monkey:

The Japanese monkey, *Macaca fuscata*, has been observed in the wild for a period of over 30 years. In 1952, on the island of Koshima, scientists were providing monkeys with sweet potatoes dropped in the sand. The monkeys liked the taste of the raw sweet potatoes, but they found the dirt unpleasant.

An 18-month old female named Imo found she could solve the problem by washing the potatoes in a nearby stream. She taught this trick to her mother. Her playmates also learned this new way and they taught their mothers, too.

This cultural innovation was gradually picked up by various monkeys before the eyes of the scientists. Between 1952 and 1958, all the young monkeys learned to wash the sandy sweet potatoes to make them more palatable.

Only the adults who imitated their children learned this social improvement. Other adults kept eating the dirty sweet potatoes.

Then something startling took place. In the autumn of 1958, a certain number of Koshima monkeys were washing sweet potatoes - the exact number is not known. Let us suppose that when the sun rose one morning there were 99 monkeys on Koshima Island who had learned to wash their sweet potatoes. Let's further suppose that later that morning, the hundredth monkey learned to wash potatoes. THEN IT HAPPENED!

By that evening almost *everyone* in the tribe was washing sweet potatoes before eating them. The added energy of this hundredth monkey somehow created an ideological breakthrough!\*

Thus, when a certain critical number achieves an awareness, this new awareness may be communicated from mind to mind. Although the exact number may vary, the Hundredth may remain consciousness property of these people. But there is a point at which if only *one more person* tunes in to a new awareness, a field is strengthened so that this awareness is picked up by almost everyone!

You may be the "Hundredth Monkey"...your awareness is needed in saving the world. You may furnish the added consciousness energy to create the shared awareness to rapidly achieve a nuclear free world.

*\* We were just informed that Ken Keyes, Jr. in the early 1970's, after reading Joe Campbell's works extensively, decided to see how far this story he developed, would evolve. It's a story that he made up; however, isn't this really how things work. We can learn from this story's metaphor about what needs to happen in order for a community to change.*

## TEACHING IN A CIRCLE

by Laurie Leahy

If I imagine a huge circle made up of all the students I've taught, there would be over five hundred people in this circle. It would glow and sparkle and hum. This circle does exist, scattered as stars, and it contains magic and grace. I teach young children, and they teach me. They have taught me how to teach, and they help me learn how to live.

Every September, for all my teaching years, my class begins with a circle. This becomes a pattern we expand through the year, for meetings, for discussions, for stories: each other's and our own. Sitting on the carpet, side by side, room for all, everyone equal. I have come to sense increasingly the value and gifts of our circle, and I believe my students sense them too. The circle is a symbol, acted out daily, of the community we form as our year together unfolds. The circle is where we find out that no question is silly, that even the boys can hug, and that tears—including the teacher's—are respected.

Last September, first day of school, a student new to our school joined our class. Danny had just suffered a tragedy, the accidental death of his mother, a few weeks earlier. Danny asked me to tell the class about his mom's death when I introduced him, so I did. Our very first circle grew hushed, eyes widened, all typical third grade fidgeting stilled. I suggested maybe we would like to hold hands a moment. I was right; we did. After a moment, one voice, belonging to a girl who had been labeled "oppositional-defiant", was heard: "Nothing can ever replace Danny's mom, but maybe if we all help him we could each be like a little part of his mom for him." And for the entire year, they did and they were.

A different year, it doesn't matter which, we were discussing the biography of Martin Luther King Jr. which we'd been reading. We grew somber as we got to the part about the children's march in Birmingham, and I became teary as my students asked me, a white woman, to explain how white adults could have been so hateful to black children. Jasmine, an African-American child who was sitting clear across the circle noticed my tears, and asked, "Mrs. Leahy, are you crying?" I told her that, well, yes, just a little bit, I guess I was. She rushed across the circle, put her arms around me, and proclaimed, "It was NOT your fault!" I, who had been ten years old at the time of the Birmingham marches, experienced a healing.

(continued on page 11)



# A simple connection to the earth Snooze at the School

WARREN TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

by Roy Triveline

Forty students and six staff members set out for a wild adventure behind the school grounds of Warren Township High School in Gurnee, Illinois. The event was sponsored by the school's environmental group M.E.C.S. (Mother Earth's Concerned Students). The group originated ten years ago in response to student concern over recycling, but has evolved into more of a outdoor educational organization. The idea of the camping trip was simply to expose students to the out-of-doors without the hassles of traveling. The convenience of having the camp out behind the school made much of the event easier to plan. For many of the students it was the first time camping, so the proximity of the building was a nice safety net for unforeseen circumstances of inexperienced campers.

The afternoon started out with group initiatives. These endeavors brought the students together to solve specific problems and allowed staff to share their specific talents with the group. Simple props, like a small wooden platform, created challenges for students to solve using creative problem solving skills. The challenge of fitting fifteen people on a small platform for five seconds was a spectacular example of what could be done when we all work together. Trust falls and a name game were also used to create group cohesiveness. In about an hour's time students felt comfortable with both the people around them and their surroundings.

During the evening, we enjoyed the company of the Astronomy Club who shared their telescopes and knowledge of the stars with us. The highlight of the event was the fire circle, which was started without matches. Instead we used a large bow drill that took at least eight students to operate. Students took turns pulling and pushing the 8' bow to create enough friction to create a small fire coal below the wood. Although it took quite a while, the accomplishment amazed both students and staff. The group dynamics of the fire took on magical properties as we observed students from different cliques working together to accomplish a goal. The discussions that took place at the fire that night were priceless. The boundaries between teacher and student were temporarily erased and true communication took place. We discussed how important fire was to our ancestors and why this fire was so special to us. We had included with our fire the coals of the Seventh Fire for peace, which has traveled around the world. The next day, each student received coals from the fire that were wrapped in cloth and tied in string. They were asked to share the story and the coal at their next campfire.


*When you get to the end of your rope,  
tie a knot and hang on.*

— Franklin D. Roosevelt



In an effort to make the trip educational as well as fun, we taught students how to camp with minimal impact to the environment, encouraging the idea that after we pack up there should be no evidence that we camped there the

night before. For instance, great effort was made to remove the sod from the school grounds for the campfire. The small fire burned for several hours in the hole we dug and the next day the sod was replaced with no evidence of the fire.

It was a great and inexpensive way to get students more connected with their fellow classmates and the natural world around them. Bringing the wonders of nature to suburban high school students was easy and very rewarding. 

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# Killer Circle

## A K A Thumb o

by Karl Rohnke

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a publication of Project Adventure, Inc.

The old game of "Killer" isn't played much lately; I think the name militates against itself. Parents don't want their kiddos playing a game that advertises itself as Killer and I can relate to that. Seems a shame though, that a decent role-playing game is shunned because of negative nomenclature.

So change the name. Who's to know? Who's to care? How about "Thumbo", a Disneyish appellation referring to the method used for choosing a killer (eliminator), i.e. that nefarious person responsible for eliminating the remainder of players. Agree? Cool! So delete the Killer Circle rubric above, and let's get on with the game.

If you have never played the old Killer game, no problem, 'cause here's how to play Thumbo, rules courtesy of Lisa Faulkingham, who gleaned them from Adam Clark, who got them from... The intent of new and old versions is identical—for one unidentified player to eliminate all the other players, and have some fun along the way.

Stand in a Velcro circle. A Velcro circle indicates a shoulder to shoulder circular standing arrangement, pretending that each player has Velcro strip on their shoulders. [But what if a shorter player's shoulder only comes up to their partner's elbow? Obviously, imagine a longer strip of Velcro.]

Each encircled player (everybody) rests their open left hand on their own back, palm facing out. Each player then reaches to their right with their right hand, and joins hands with the outfacing left palm of their right-side Velcro partner. It's all very neat looking when viewed from inside the circle, and half-friendly when viewed from outside.

Before the Velcro circle is formed, a killer (remember, we're calling him/her Thumbo to alleviate the angst) should have been chosen using the no-see-um "thumbs up" technique. To wit: each player who wants the opportunity of being chosen as Thumbo extends their hitchhiking hand into a rapidly forming cluster of extended thumbs. (If a player chooses not to be Thumbo, but wants to be part of the action nonetheless, that player simply extends their hand into fleshy cluster of prehensile digits with their thumb withdrawn. Why would someone not want to be Thumbo? Beats me. Maybe it has something to do with an incipient responsibility phobia or an uncontrolled thumb fetish—whatever.)

With all players either looking away or operating with eyes firmly closed (peek-by-choice), the facilitator (eyes also closed), reaches in the digital cluster and squeezes an available thumb once. The single squeezed thumb (with player attached) then reaches around, finds another dancing digit, and squeezes that thumb twice. The twice squozen digit immediately takes on the unannounced role of Thumbo.

Reconstitute the Velcro circle above and get ready to play. At his or her leisure, and unannounced, Thumbo squeezes either hand he or she is holding (only one) from one to ten times. The person who receives the squeeze or squeezes from Thumbo then "presses the flesh" of the person next to them one less time than the number of squeezes that they received. (Ex. Thumbo begins the action by squeezing a hand four times. That pressed hand squeezes the next hand three times. The one who receives three, delivers two, etc. until someone gets a single squeeze. A single squeeze is the "killer" sign. The player receiving that solo squeeze is eliminated from the game. The now marked person (after waiting ten seconds or so) announces their symbolic demise with a wild shriek and/or whatever histrionic gesticulations seem appropriate, or inappropriate, as the case may be.

Simply stepping out of the circle with a shy smile and lowered eyes may represent the epitome of Victorian recreation decorum, but here's your chance to "blow doors", and make the scene, Get noticed. Don't go peacefully into the night.


Thumbo shrewdly joins in the spontaneous laughter and nervous speculations about when, where and who. Then, just as the group seems not off balance, Thumbo initiates another series of insidious squeezes. If you think about it (and you better), since the number of squeezes can vary from one to ten, no one can definitively estimate where the hand squeezes are originating. Thumbo can deliver a squeeze in either direction, but a player who receives a squeeze from the left must deliver their squeeze to the right, and vice versa.

If someone eventually believes they have discovered the sanguinary squeezer, that person announces "I accuse!" Another player must then say, "I'll second that accusation." (If no one seconds the original accusation, the game simply continues.) Then, without looking at Thumbo, on the count of three, (counted out by the facilitator ) the two people point to the persons they believe to be Thumbo. If they are both pointing at the same person, and that person admits to being Thumbo, game over man. If the accusing speculators point to different people, the remaining players get to experience two screaming deletions from the game.

The game continues until either Thumbo is discovered or he/she eliminates all the circled players. Good fun with willing and trusting players.

(continued on next page)



A quiet alternative. When players receive the single squeeze, they raise both hands and place them on either side of their face, at the same time miming an elongated silent scream. Having thus unequivocally identified themselves as having received the squeeze, they quietly remove themselves from the diminishing circle. The name of this game variation is, appropriately, The Silent Scream. 

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*TEACHING IN A CIRCLE* (continued from page 8)

A few years ago our class included an emotionally troubled child who had the dangerous habit of fleeing. Out the door, down the hall, onto the playground she ran, leading the staff on a number of pursuits. She was making strides in curtailing this behavior when one day she told me she just liked to “run free.” She asked me if she could do this if she stayed in our room. I told her I thought it might be okay, but since it would impact her classmates, she should probably check it out with them at circle time. Maintaining the control needed to manage her impulses, she waited and at circle time asked the other kids. The third graders responded with insightful questions: “Will you be careful not to bump into things and hurt yourself or us? How long will you run? Are you sure you will stay in the room? Do you want us to close the door?”

The questions were soon answered to everyone’s satisfaction: She wouldn’t bump anything or anyone, she would run for two minutes, and yes, she said, closing the door was a good idea; it would reduce temptation. One child, who asked to be the timekeeper, told her, “Ready, set, GO!” and off she went, zipping artfully around the circle, a glorious streak of unbroken foal in her. Before her time limit ran out, she ran to her place and sat down. The class applauded and praised her for staying within her limits: “That was really good! You did everything like you said you would!” One boy commented, “It was fun to watch her run. I liked how her hair blew back in the wind, like a horse’s mane!” She never felt the need to run from (or in) our class again. The circle is a safe container.

Our circle has done some amazing things. We have sent anonymous surprises to other classrooms with treats the children bring in themselves, written notes of condolence to students at a neighboring school when their playground was vandalized, and sent letters to corporations which have contributed to rainforest destruction. So our circle has moved outside of itself, a strong web that can expand. The circle has also literally moved outside, as in times when we’ve collected autumn leaves and sat around them on the grass, and when we’ve very carefully made a fragile circle of snow angels, twenty-four of us simultaneously flapping legs and arms in a field of January white. Nature teaches about circles everywhere!

Of course it is not the literal shape of the circle that creates community—though it helps. What I think is truly formative is an openness to one another that makes connecting and learning possible.

I think I have always been fairly adept at walking in my students’ moccasins: I was a third-grader once myself, after all. What has gradually changed for me has been an increasing openness to allowing them to walk in my shoes. When I’ve listened closely, I’ve heard them ask for this, for an experience of an authentic adult, with uncertainties and mistakes and hurts as well as triumphs and joys. So I bring myself to the circle, and I am in the circle, one who is among them, not hovering some unreachable distance above.

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*I shall pass through  
this world but once;  
any good thing  
therefore I can do,  
or any kindness I can  
show to any  
human being,  
let me do it now.  
Let me not defer it  
or neglect it,  
for I shall not  
pass this way again.*

— Stephen Grellet



## *The Ripple Effect*

Do you want to be a positive influence in the world?

First, get your own life in order. Ground yourself in the single principle so that your behavior is wholesome and effective. If you do that, you will earn respect and be a powerful influence.

Your behavior influences others through a ripple effect. A ripple effect works because everyone influences everyone else. Powerful people are powerful influences.

If your life works, you influence your family. If your family works, your family influences the community.

If your community works, your community influences the nation. If your nation works, your nation influences the world. If your world works, the ripple effect spreads throughout the cosmos.

Remember that your influence begins with you and ripples outward. So be sure that your influence is both potent and wholesome.

How do I know that this works? All growth spreads outward from a fertile and potent nucleus.

**You are a nucleus.**

*compliments of Garden Island*



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## WISDOM OF OUR ELDERS 7TH ANNUAL GATHERING - TOPIC: WISDOM FROM THE GRANDMOTHER

Native American elders will facilitate this weekend gathering in historic New Harmony, Indiana. This workshop will cover Native American philosophy, customs, and traditions. The open-space format will help to build a sense of community by having the elders and participants agree upon the direction, content and format of the weekend. Traditional Native American food will be prepared and shared at some of the meals.

**Date and Time:** Barn Abbey Conference Center New Harmony, Indiana

**Arrive:** Friday, September 21 • 5:00 - 7:00 pm.

**Depart:** Sunday, September 23 • 2:00 pm.

**Fees:** \$150.00 includes 2 nights lodging and meals

\$100.00 - registration - meals only \*\*Let us know if you have any dietary needs (eg. vegetarian)

**Location:** Barn Abbey Conference Center, New Harmony, Indiana

\*\*Conference is limited to 60 participants. There are only 25 beds at the Barn Abbey. Space at the Barn Abbey is reserved on a first come, first served basis with full payment. Full conference information will be mailed upon payment.

**Contact Person:** Dan Creely at 773.442.5564 or e-mail: d-creely@neiu.edu

## SEA KAYAKING FOR BEGINNERS

This workshop will be conducted in two parts. Part one will concentrate on sea kayaking equipment, paddling techniques and rescue procedures in the indoor pool at Northeastern. Part two will consist of a two hour paddle on Lake Michigan leaving out of Diversey Harbor, if conditions permit. If the lake is too rough for safe paddling we will stay in the harbor.

**Date and Time:** Saturday, September 29 • 8:30 - 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** Northeastern Illinois University Pool and Lake Michigan at Diversey Harbor

**Cost:** \$60.00 (includes lunch and all equipment) \*\*Class is limited to 10 participants

**Dress:** Bathing suit for the pool, clothing gear for paddling on the lake will be provided

**Facilitator:** Shawn Tressler will instruct this workshop. Shawn has been an American Canoe Association coastal Kayaking instructor since 1992. He enjoys teaching people how to be safe and efficient paddlers. Shawn has taught for Track and Trail and the Northwest Passage. Shawn has paddled extensively nationally and internationally.

**Contact Person:** Bill Quinn at 773.442.5565 or e-mail: w-quinn@neiu.edu

## ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSING

This workshop will focus on adding activities to your bag of tricks for the seasoned facilitator and also provide activities for the beginner. Processing these activities will also be a vital component of the workshop. A model will also be shared how to process in a therapeutic setting. The areas to be covered will include participation in adventure games and activities, processing techniques and learning how to utilize these techniques even in a therapeutic setting.

**Date and Time:** Saturday November 10 • 8:30 am to 2:00 pm.

**Location:** Northeastern Auxiliary Gymnasium in the Physical Education Complex

**Cost:** \$40.00 includes lunch

**Dress:** Comfortable clothes to be active

**Facilitator:** Keith Jacobs will be facilitating this workshop. Keith has a Master's Degree in Recreation Therapy and has worked extensively as a substance abuse counselor. He worked at Pretty lake Adventure Center in Michigan for three years before joining Cliffs and Cables in Chicago.

**Contact Person:** Bill Quinn at 773.442.5565 or e-mail: w-quinn@neiu.edu

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**NOTE: please make as many copies of this registration form as needed.** Submit a separate check and registration form for each workshop, so in case a workshop is cancelled, we can refund you the amount for that specific workshop. **Make checks payable to:**

**T.E.A.M.** Northeastern Illinois University, 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue • Chicago, IL 60625-4699 • Physical Education Complex

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Payment reserves space on a first-come, first-serve basis. You will only be notified (and payment will be returned) if the workshop is filled to capacity or if it is cancelled. This brochure is your reference for seminar dates and times.



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