



# Spera Speaks...

*The Project Spera Quarterly Newsletter, Volume 3: Issue 1, January 2004*

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## An Update On Our Annual Appeal...

Thank you, thank you to everyone who supported Project Spera in our most recent Annual Appeal. We have raised over \$17,500 since mid-December, about 20% of our annual budget of \$94,500. We would like to recognize the continued support of the **Mortenson Family Foundation**, who generously awarded a \$13,000 grant in December. We'd also like to welcome and thank new donors, and to stress that your support is particularly important as we continue to grow.

**It is not too late to support this year's programs! You can now give online at [www.projectspera.org](http://www.projectspera.org).**

As our World Affairs Challenge approaches, your support becomes particularly important. A contribution of just \$134 supports a student's participation in the Challenge, and \$88 can pay for a student in a global issues course in one of our partner schools.

**Your contributions to date have allowed us to:**

- Build the Professional Development Program, which directly serves 160 students and 30 teachers
- More than double the size of the San Francisco World Affairs Challenge with over 250 students participants
- Launch our Global Citizenship After-school Program at two sites in the Bay Area, serving 25 students throughout the year

## Project Spera In The News...

The **San Francisco Chronicle** recently featured the World Affairs Challenge, "*Northern California students gather at Washington High for debate*" on January 30, 2004. Check it out at: [www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com)

## San Francisco's Second Annual World Affairs Challenge™

On March 27, from 9am to 4pm, some 250 students from Northern California middle and high schools will converge on George Washington High School to discuss violations and affirmations of children's human rights for the World Affairs Challenge™.

The World Affairs Challenge is administered by the Center for Teaching International Relations (CTIR) at the University of Denver. Project Spera has been hosting the competition in San Francisco since last year.

The students will compete in four events: the Formal Presentation, the Global Awareness Quiz, the Collaborative Question and the Discovery Poster. Over 40 volunteers such as local government officials and representatives from non-profit organizations and local businesses will judge the competition. The program incorporates public speaking, dramatic presentation and group problem solving, and is designed to illustrate the relevance of academics to real world global problems.

Students are currently researching a range of topics related to children's rights, including child labor and international laws that protect children's rights. Students will use their research to design a Formal Presentation for Challenge day. The preparation process is itself educational, strengthening teamwork and critical thinking, as well as research and writing skills.

Check out the volunteer section in this newsletter, or consult our website for opportunities to volunteer on Challenge Day!

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## After-school Program Update

Students at YES examine why the U.S. still says NO to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Students participating in the Global Citizenship After-school Program at both sites, **YES in Oakland** and the **Beacon Center in San Francisco**, are currently preparing their presentations for the World Affairs Challenge. Students at YES have decided to focus on the reasons why the United States and Somalia are the only two countries not to have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the main international instrument that lays out basic universal standards for the protection of children rights. It spells out the human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The Convention

protects children's rights by setting standards in health care, education and legal, civil and social services. (Source: UNICEF, [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org))

The YES team has chosen to illuminate the issue by clearly articulating the importance and utility of the CRC and its possible weaknesses, and then to develop a team consensus on whether the U.S. is justified in delaying the ratification of the treaty.

Madiha and Dana coach this team as a part of the After-school Program. The Program at the Beacon Center is fielding a middle school team for the Challenge. The students in this team will examine homelessness and youth, both in San Francisco and globally.

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## Professional Development Program

Project Spera has been facilitating elements of the Professional Development program in three Bay Area high schools: International Studies Academy (ISA), Youth Empowerment School (YES), and XCEL Academy.

### International Studies Academy

Project Spera conducted a workshop for all staff on integrating Human Rights into various disciplines, and have registered teachers in the Educators network to begin consulting with them for the upcoming semester. Project Spera is also assisting in the design of the Junior Project, a requirement for all eleventh graders at the school, and producing course outlines and resources for the International Relations classes. We have also assisted in advising students writing their Senior Project, which requires them to write a paper on a global, debatable topic.

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## Xcel Academy and Youth Empowerment School (YES)

At YES and XCEL, Project Spera staff have been teaching Global Issues courses to ninth graders. At YES, this is a yearlong course which all ninth grader take twice a week. At XCEL, this class was offered as a nine week elective to 40 students. The classes examine basic human rights, conflict, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, media's role in international affairs, and refugees and immigrants. Students are encouraged in this class to see themselves as global citizens – by connecting these issues to their own communities, both locally and globally.

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## California World History Project

Project Spera has been invited back this year to help organize the California World History Project (CWHP) for the California International Studies Project. CWHP provides a comprehensive curriculum for 10th grade teachers to teach modern world history, including WWI, WWII and a series of contemporary issues such as gender and minority rights, international terrorism, international trade and finance, child labor, health and regional conflict management. Participating teachers and their classrooms are assigned “country identities”, and the students are required to discuss and debate the role of their assigned country throughout modern history.

The curriculum uses online interaction with staff members who act as “press” to hone their country identity and develop their understanding of the issues. In the spring, the students begin to research the contemporary issues from the perspective of their assigned country and prepare for a Global Forum, during which they interact with their peers and discuss solutions to the issues they have been studying. Much of the preparation for the Global Forum happens through online interactions with other countries to discuss the issues and possible solutions. Project Spera is facilitating the interactions between the CWHP staff and the students.

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## Funding and Support Update

The Mortenson Family Foundation contributed \$13,000 in December in support of our programs. We are extremely grateful for their continued support of the organization and their commitment to global education.

We would like to extend special thanks to the following individuals for their **generous contributions** since our last newsletter:

Alan and Anne Rubin  
Amy Antos  
Casey Kriedman  
Chris Lee  
David Hansen  
Denise and Greg Kelly  
Derrlyn Tom  
Diane Neimann  
Gary and Joyce Ruckelshaus  
Geoffrey Kertesz  
Jason Curran and Amy Robertson  
Jennifer Lucky  
Joya Rajadhyaksha

Justin Reyna  
Kelly Sears  
Kelly Sutherlin  
Lauren Bloomer  
Lori Stevens  
Phil Giarrizzo  
Ron Herring and Tuckie Yirchott  
Shira Tannor  
Temp Keller  
Terry Kriedman and Duerward Hughes  
Thanuja Lintotawela  
Todd Stenhouse

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On November 17, 2003 we co-sponsored a reception with Bay Area International Development Organizations (BAIDO). Thanks to all of you who came and supported us at the **event**. The following companies provided generous in-kind support for the reception:

Virgin Atlantic Airways  
Banana Republic  
Child Family Health International  
Diageo  
Festoon Salon  
International Orange Day Spa and Yoga Studio  
Let's Go Publications  
Lonely Planet Publications  
M<sup>2</sup> Salon  
Uncommon Grounds

Mission Language and Vocational School  
Psoas Bodywork  
Rainbow Grocery  
Re:refresh Day Spa  
Safeway Supermarket  
The Cheese Board  
The Yoga Loft  
Trader Joe's Specialty Grocery Stores

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## Volunteers and Interns

Project Spera's day-to-day operations and growth are greatly attributable to the hard work, intelligence, and motivation of a small team of interns that have been with us for the past several months. These folks work tirelessly to help in a variety of capacities – to raise funds for program support, plan events, help plan curriculum and prepare classroom activities, and support the implementation of the World Affairs Challenge. **We are incredibly grateful for the commitment they have made to Project Spera and to the students and teachers we serve.** We applaud your efforts, commitment and enthusiasm!

### Meet our interns...

Charmagne Campbell-Patton: Charmagne attended Grinnell College in Iowa and received her BA in Political Science and French last May. She is currently working on development work for Project Spera, with a focus on program evaluation.

Jesse Handsher: Jesse attended UC Davis and focused his studies in American History. He plans to pursue a Master in Policy in the Fall, with a concentration on Education Policy. He has teaching experience in Spain and the U.S, and has an interest in working with kids and in schools. Jesse has also traveled in Asia and Europe and has an interest in global affairs.

Marie Meslin: Marie has studied International Relations at the Universiteit van Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and Social Anthropology at the University of Sussex, Brighton, England where she obtained her BA. Her interest in global issues stems

from her experiences living across Europe, the Middle East and now America. After working with a range of education and refugee organizations in England and the Red Cross in Belgium, Marie has been interning with Project Spera as a Development Program Intern since November 2003.

And, joining our intern staff as of February 2004 are Jan Wiginton, Kate Spelman and Jake Meyer.

The following people have also generously volunteered for Project Spera in the past few months, and we would like to recognize and thank them for their hard work:

Caleb Zigas  
Charmagne Campbell  
Deepali Nahar  
Gregg Biggs  
Ian Brennan  
Jesse Handsher  
Kristin Coker  
Laura Mendoza  
Linda Lopez  
Marlene Clarke  
Meredith Miller Vostrejs  
Nana Chin  
Patrick Fahey

We need **volunteers for the World Affairs Challenge**, and have a range of available positions for assisting on that day. Please contact Madiha Murshed at [murshed@projectspera.org](mailto:murshed@projectspera.org) or (415) 292-7421 if you are able to join us on March 27th as a volunteer.

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# Author's Corner

Women in Afghanistan By Lina Abirafteh

***An excerpt from the latest submission to our Author's Corner...***

"Afghanistan's tumultuous history has left Afghan women with schizophrenic rights, and yet Afghan women continue to persevere despite extraordinary circumstances. Afghan women today look to the heroic women of their past and present, and are determining the direction their new lives will take. Women like Malalai, the ancient warrior, and modern-day General Khatool, made famous for jumping out of airplanes... these are the women that mark Afghanistan's history and inspire Afghan women today..."

...A well-rounded education in the US can help women in Afghanistan. The future leaders of the country are in school today. The more they know and understand about the world, the better off we will all be. The only way to achieve true peace and a better life for all of us is to understand "the other side" a little bit better, even somewhere as seemingly remote as Afghanistan."

For the full text of this article, please visit [www.projectspera.org](http://www.projectspera.org) and click on "Author's Corner".

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## Test Your Global Awareness!

**Are you an informed global citizen?** Try to answer the following questions, excerpted from a Global Awareness Quiz given to students participating in Project Spera's programs. (Answers at the end of the newsletter)

1. What two countries in the world are fighting over the region of Kashmir?