

## NEWS RELEASE

By Karen Patterson  
July 29, 2013

### **Martha Holden Jennings Foundation Awards Grant to Support “Growing Together” Service-Learning Leadership Seminar**

Columbus, OH—The Martha Holden Jennings Foundation has awarded a professional development grant of \$18,000 grant to the non-profit organization Partnerships Make a Difference. The grant will enable Partnerships to expand the base of trained service-learning practitioners in central Ohio through the “Growing Together” Service-Learning Network, a consortium of more than 25 urban, rural, and suburban schools.

The funds will support the 2014 “Growing Together” Service-Learning Leadership Seminar, Level 1, which will be designed to strategically promote excellent teaching through service-learning “best practices.” Up to 40 K-12 teachers from Network schools will receive in-depth training to develop their knowledge, skills, and commitment to successfully plan and implement high-quality service-learning projects throughout 2014.

#### **About Partnerships Make a Difference**

Partnerships Make A Difference (Partnerships) was founded in 1996 by experienced and committed educators whose mission is to help young people develop a *sense of passion and purpose* for their own learning, and to enhance students’ belief that they can positively impact their own lives and the lives of others. Toward that end, our organization has successfully focused on helping schools and community organizations strengthen such program areas as service-learning, Project Based Learning, career development, substance abuse prevention, dropout prevention, and character education.

Currently, the major focus of Partnerships is to promote and expand the use of service-learning and Project Based Learning as strategies for instructional improvement, student empowerment, and positive community impact. This focus is evident in our work with the “Growing Together” Service-Learning Network.

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*Learning with Purpose...Serving with Passion!*

## **About The “Growing Together” Service-Learning Network**

The “Growing Together” Service-Learning Network is a successful education initiative currently entering its third year of operation. The Network’s goals are to enhance student success and empowerment, increase the number of civically engaged youth, support significant school improvement/reform, and address critical local and global issues and needs. These goals are being accomplished through the expansion of school-based service-learning across a diverse and committed network of K-12 urban, rural, and suburban schools acting in partnership with key community agencies. Service-learning is an effective instructional strategy that directly connects community service with the school curriculum, adding relevance to the learning process and helping students actively engage in meaningful outreach efforts.

The *Growing Together* Service-Learning Network began taking shape in August 2009 and became operational for the 2011-2012 school year. There are currently more than 25 member K-12 schools, representing urban, suburban, and rural settings in central Ohio. In addition, the Network includes a growing number of key community agency partners.

In its first two years, the “Growing Together” Service-Learning Network has helped hundreds of teachers and thousands of students actively address critical needs related to poverty, homelessness, hunger, early childhood issues, literacy, physical and mental health, the environment, disaster relief, safety, individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and other concerns.

### **For More Information, Contact:**

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