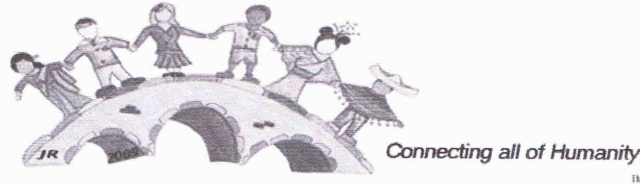


Building Bridges Coalition of Staten Island



BBCSI 2010 Unity Project

Project Outline and Goals For Teachers

Building Bridges Coalition of Staten Island (***BBCSI***) is again sponsoring a borough-wide Unity Project for 2010. The project can be an essay, poem, poster, or video. It can be an individual or group effort. The projects must, however, express the themes expressed in one of the attached seven “scenarios”.

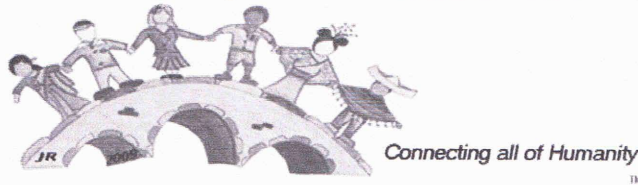
Advanced Project Themes, while intended for grades 9 – 12, may be undertaken as a project for any student(s).

Temple of Understanding (***TOU***) Interfaith Dialogue and Education Action (***IDEA***) training **will require a commitment to 30 – 40 hours of peer-to-peer interaction at various locations on Staten Island.** The training will be under the supervision of TOU staff. Participants will learn communication and crisis management skills that will better prepare them for the challenges of adulthood. High School students interested in the Temple of Understanding (***TOU***) Interfaith Dialogue and Education Action (***IDEA***) youth mentor program should contact Bob Myerson (phone: (718) 698-7416 or bobmyerson@verizon.net).

BBCSI 2010 Unity Project Information can also be found on our website: buildingbridgessi.org or by emailing us at information@buildingbridgessi.org. Most of the project materials can be downloaded from the website.

In 2009 the BBCSI Unity Project had over 225 submissions, by over 300 Staten Island school children, from 10 participating schools. The force behind this overwhelming effort came from interested school administrators and teachers like you. If you are a school administrator please assign this to your Social Studies, English, and Art teachers. If there is a department teaching students in video it may also benefit from participation. If there are appropriate clubs in your school, dealing with social, interfaith, or peer-to-peer communication, they too may benefit by participating in the Unity Project. If you are a teacher, please pass this information to other interested teachers or your school administrators.

The BBCSI 2010 Unity Project packet has been sent to the principals of all 78 Staten Island schools with grades 6 – 12. The packet contains this letter for educators, BBCSI Mission Statement and Project Goals, Project Rules and Themes for Students, one of which must be used as the foundation of a project, the detailed Project Rules, the ***TOU IDEA*** information sheet, and a Project Receipt. The student materials should be duplicated and given to your students. Materials can also be downloaded from our website: buildingbridgessi.org.



BBCSI 2010 Unity Project

The Staten Island Building Bridges Coalition Mission Statement

Individuals who witness a growing need to build bridges of understanding and respect within a diverse community organized the Staten Island Building Bridges Coalition. Representatives from religious institutions and ethnic organizations meet to share common concerns and develop community programs.

Building Bridges Student Outreach Goals

- To invite students in grades 6-12 to participate in activities to promote tolerance, and respect for individuals of all religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.
- To encourage students on Staten Island to form friendships and alliances that will prevent confrontation between youth from various neighborhoods.
- To provide opportunities for our youth to participate in forums designed to encourage dialogue between students of various religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds in an effort to dispel commonly held stereotypes and prejudices.

New York City is considered the “great melting pot” of the United States, yet Staten Island, the fifth and smallest borough, does not share many of the characteristics of the rest of the city.

Most of our neighborhoods, and as a result our schools, are segregated by race and socio-economic status. Transportation issues make getting around inconvenient. Our children do not venture into other neighborhoods due to tensions between rival groups, and therefore do not get to know one another. If youth are not involved in organized sports or religious activities there are few recreational opportunities available and fewer safe places for them to peacefully congregate.

In response to these issues, Building Bridges is sponsoring an annual Unity Project to invite the youth of Staten Island to join us in ***Building Bridges Connecting All of Humanity***. Building Bridges recognizes the unique challenges that living on Staten Island presents, and acknowledges the unique talent among our young people to extend their hands to one another in peace, friendship, and understanding. It is our sincerest hope that our children will rise to this challenge and be instrumental in healing the divisions that exist among us.

Building Bridges hopes for this to be a positive experience for the children. The scenarios and themes for the project are not intended to further fuel divisions but to make clear the reasons for our student outreach. We hope that your lessons introducing this project will spark a dialogue among your students that will lead to a meaningful project. Pages 3 – 8 (3 – 9 for high school students), below, are for distribution to your students.

At BBCSI we are not trying to change the world: we are only trying to change one very small part of New York City. We hope those youngsters who benefit from our programs will make significant effort to change the world.