

The Barahona Center for the Study of Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents at California State University San Marcos announces three workshops for summer 2007.

“Current Issues: Books in Spanish for Young Readers” will take place June 11–13. It is an introduction to and analysis of current practices and problems in selecting and using books in Spanish for children and adolescents. Sample topics and activities are: discussion of reader appeal and literary quality, the Spanish language publishing world, and language issues. The three-day workshop is conducted in English and costs \$115.

From June 25 to 27, “Reading Strategies for Bilingual Students in Grades K-8” will be offered. This workshop will focus on reading, selecting, and using appropriate literature to teach reading strategies to bilingual students. Topics and activities include selecting appropriate literature and using reading strategies such as Reader’s Theater, Directed Listening/Reading Thinking Activity, Choral Reading, Preview/Review, Language Experience Approach, Reciprocal Questioning, and responding through the arts. Methods for accelerating vocabulary development and motivating readers will also be demonstrated. Conducted in English, the workshop costs \$115.

The final workshop, “Books in Spanish for children and adolescents/Los libros en español para niños y adolescentes” is conducted in Spanish (though Spanish-speaking ability is not required) and will take place July 16–18. It is an introduction to quality fiction, nonfiction, and reference books in Spanish for children and adolescents, including different genres, subjects, and countries of publication. The cost is \$115.

Workshop sessions are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and students will be free to use the resources of the Center in the afternoons. Enrollment is limited; early registration is recommended.

For further information, call (760) 750-4070, e-mail Dr. Isabel Schon at ischon@csusm.edu, or write the Barahona Center for the Study of Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents, California State University San Marcos, 333 S. Twin Oaks Valley Road, San Marcos, CA 92096-0001.

The Connecticut Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education (CT-NAME) has announced that Ronald Takaki, author of eleven books on ethnic history and multicultural education, will be the keynote speaker at the 12th annual Northeast Conference on Multicultural Education. The conference will take place on Thursday, October 11, 2007, at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The opening of this new convention center has allowed the

conference to grow from a limit of 500 attendees to a maximum of 2,000 and to expand its reach from Connecticut to all the New England states, New York, and New Jersey. While the conference is still one day long, the time frame has been extended to allow for three sessions of 14 concurrent workshops, a late afternoon reception, and an evening banquet featuring the keynote speaker.

The conference theme is “Best Practices in Multicultural Education.” In addition to the workshops led by teachers and administrators and the keynote speech by the distinguished professor at the University of California–Berkeley, the conference will feature exhibits of educational materials, musical entertainment by students from local districts, and a luncheon and awards presentation.

For more information and registration materials, contact William A. Howe, Education Consultant for Multicultural Education & Gender Equity, Connecticut State Dept. of Education, 165 Capitol Ave., Room 312, Hartford, CT 06106; phone: (860) 713-6542; e-mail: william.howe@ct.gov; web site: www.state.ct.us/sde.

Programs at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and the Maricopa County Community Colleges in Arizona have been selected as Examples of Excelencia (Examples of Excellence) in a national effort to identify, celebrate, and promote programs that improve educational achievement for Latino students in higher education.

UTEP’s “Model Institutions for Excellence (MIE)” and Maricopa County Community College’s “Achieving a College Education (ACE)” were named as the 2006 winners of the Examples of Excelencia award, which honors and promotes the awareness of working models, programs, and departments that boost Latino enrollment and graduation in higher education.

The announcement was made by officials from Excelencia in Education, the Washington, D.C.–based nonprofit organization that administers the awards program and works to accelerate higher education success for Latino students. Of 42 total nominations for the awards, 15 semifinalists and two winners were chosen. The winning programs were announced in September 2006 at the Excelencia Symposium, held at the National College Access Network annual conference in Orlando, Florida.

Examples of Excelencia, which is supported by Sallie Mae Inc., UNIVISION, and the Lumina Foundation, is one of a number of programs offered by Excelencia in Education to link research, policy, and practice to serve Latino students and the institutions and programs where they participate, at a time when the overall col-

lege-age population in the United States is changing rapidly. For more information, visit the organization's web site, www.EdExcelencia.org.

In the fall of 2006, the world's first humanitarian video game, *Food Force*, became available in seven languages following the launch of French, Hungarian, and Chinese versions. These joined the Japanese, Italian, and Polish editions already available, and the original English game launched in mid-2005. The games were released in the lead-up to World Food Day on October 16, 2006.

Food Force is an educational computer game created by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to teach children about the problem of hunger and the importance of humanitarian aid work. The game, targeted at children aged eight to thirteen, may be downloaded for free at www.food-force.com.

All *Food Force* language versions have been made possible through donations from game industry leaders and international organizations. The French game was supported by the computer and video game publisher Ubisoft. The Hungarian version has been financed by the European Commission's development agency, ECHO, and the Chinese *Food Force* was built on a pro-bono basis by one of China's leading media companies, Shanda Interactive Entertainment, Ltd.

Graywolf Press is delighted to announce that Tracy K. Smith's forthcoming book *Duende* was selected by Elizabeth Alexander, Kimiko Hahn, and Terrance Hayes to receive the 2006 James Laughlin Award, a \$5,000 prize that recognizes and supports a poet's second book. The Academy of American Poets hosted Smith at an awards ceremony and reading on November 8, 2006, in New York City.

Duende explores history and the intersections of folk traditions, political resistance, and personal survival. One poem tells of a Ho-Chunk Indian boy separated from his tribe by the government; another, written as a play, gives voice to Ugandan women kidnapped by rebel commanders and forced to become their wives; and others, with lyrical grace, describe the dissolution of marriages, often against the backdrops of war and political violence.

Smith is the author of *The Body's Question*, published by Graywolf Press in 2003 as the winner of the Cave Canem Poetry Prize. For more information, contact Graywolf Press, 2402 University Ave., Suite 203, St. Paul, MN 55114; www.graywolfpress.org.

The Health Policy Institute (HPI) of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies has released a report from the Dellums Commission detailing policy recommendations that can improve life options for young men of color who face many social and institutional obstacles in American society.

In addition, HPI announced that the AFL-CIO, as well

as other parts of the labor movement, have partnered with HPI to launch a new initiative, Mobilization for Young Men of Color (MYMC), a pilot program that will work with local, state, and federal governments to implement policy changes, while also recruiting a massive multisector response that will create employment, educational, and cultural opportunities for these young men.

The commission, whose work was funded through a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, investigated circumstances faced by a wide range of minority male youths—from the challenges that African American and Hispanic youths face in urban and rural communities, to the plight of Native American and Alaskan youths, to the often overlooked obstacles that Asian youths encounter.

The report paints a vivid picture of what young men of color face trying to succeed in America today. High school graduation rates for African Americans (42.8 percent), American Indian/Alaska Natives (47 percent), and Hispanics (48 percent) are far lower than whites (70.8 percent). More than 29 percent of African-American males who are 15 years old today are likely to go to prison at some point in their lives, compared to 4.4 percent of white males of the same age. Health outcomes are also troubling. For example, the mortality rate from homicide for African-American males ages 15–17 is 34.4 per 100,000, compared to a rate of 2.4 per 100,000 non-Hispanic white males ages 15–17.

A number of policy changes have been recommended, including abolishing mandatory minimum sentences and Three Strikes laws, increasing the minimum wage, reforming No Child Left Behind, extending health care coverage to uninsured children and for mental health conditions, and supporting diverse media ownership.

Also available is one of the background reports for the commission, "Black Male Students at Public Flagship Universities in the U.S.: Status, Trends, and Implications for Policy and Practice." This paper focuses specifically on education and the status of black male students in higher education in the United States. For a copy of the two reports, contact the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 1090 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 789-6366; www.jointcenter.org.

The International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) announces its fifth World Children's Festival, to take place in Washington, D.C., on June 22–26, 2007. The first festival was held in the United States in 1998, with international festivals in 1999 and 2003 and the most recent in Munich's Olympia Park in 2006 as a prelude to the 2006 World Cup. The Munich festival featured a 100-meter-long mural collaboratively painted by nearly 3,000 German children and their guests from 34 countries.

The ICAF is currently seeking volunteers to help plan and support the festival. Those interested can learn more

and sign up at the International Child Art Foundation website, www.icaaf.org.

Founders of Just Us Books in 1988, the husband and wife team of Wade and Cheryl Hudson, continue their mission of bringing positive multicultural literature to children and young adults through their establishment of the Knowledge Is Power Project.

A nonprofit literacy organization, the project borrows from the Hudsons' personal and professional belief that good books make a positive and powerful difference in the growth and development of young people. The organization's goal is to educate, empower, and inspire low- to moderate-income and underserved youth of all ages through reading.

The Knowledge Is Power Project currently has three programs. "Make Reading a Reality" enables individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations to donate books to youth-oriented programs and groups from a substantially discounted and diverse selection of multicultural titles for young people of all ages. In addition to offering a broad selection of books, the program provides a list of after-school programs, literacy programs, youth organizations, and schools that most need the books. Those wishing to make book donations can also select a nonprofit youth program of their own.

A series of workshops aims to help educators, parents/guardians, and the community at large better understand multicultural children's literature and how to use it to build and improve children's learning foundation.

"Behind the Book" is a program that will subsidize or sponsor author visits for schools and other youth-focused groups that may not otherwise be able to afford traditional author visit expenses such as honorariums and travel costs.

Wade Hudson, president/CEO of Just Us Books and member of the Knowledge Is Power Project's board of directors, says that in addition to its core programs, the nonprofit will sponsor other events throughout the year. A community literacy event, featuring a book fair, workshops, guest speakers, and author/illustrator signings, is being planned for 2007. Writing contests and other activities for youth will also be a part of the project's programming.

Through its various programs and events, the project hopes to reach thousands of underserved youths across the United States. Hudson says programs such as Make Reading a Reality will begin with national outreach, while events such as the literacy extravaganza will first be hosted in local markets, with plans to expand to other cities as the project grows in both funding and staffing.

Nonprofit youth organizations that would like to be considered to receive the Knowledge Is Power Project's services should contact the organization in writing. Preference will be given to organizations that do not already receive major funding; however, all nonprofit organizations that serve youth are welcome. Publishers that would like their books considered for inclusion in

the Make Reading a Reality program are asked to send two sample copies of each book along with promotional support materials to the project's offices. Authors, illustrators, and children's literacy or multicultural literature experts who are available for school visits, workshops, and other programs are encouraged to send a curriculum vitae or résumé, accompanied by a cover letter, to the board of directors.

The Knowledge Is Power Project is also seeking foundations, organizations, and individuals who would like to make contributions to help finance its programs. The Knowledge Is Power Project is a registered 501 (c)(3) organization, and contributions are tax-exempt. More information on its programs and services can be found at www.KIPproject.org.

The Museum of Tolerance at the Simon Wiesenthal Center is pleased to announce the 2006 winner of the Once Upon a World Book Award, Yona Zeldis McDonough's *The Doll with the Yellow Star*. Illustrated by Kimberly Bulcken Root and published in 2005 by Henry Holt, the middle-grade novel is the story of an eight-year-old Jewish girl whose parents send her from her home in France to relatives in the United States in order to escape the Holocaust. On the journey, the girl loses her beloved doll, on which she has sewn a yellow star like the one she is forced to wear.

The award ceremony, which took place on October 29, 2006, in Los Angeles, featured a reading of the book along with an appearance by the author and by Trudie Strobel, the Holocaust survivor whose personal story inspired the book.

For more information about the Once Upon a World Book Award, which honors an outstanding children's book each year that expresses a message of intercultural understanding and human rights, contact the Museum of Tolerance, 1399 South Roxbury Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90035-4709; phone: (310) 772-7605; e-mail: library@wiesenthal.net.

A debt-for-nature swap is an agreement by which a wealthier, developed nation like the United States forgives debt owed to it by a developing country in exchange for a promise to use some or all of the money instead to preserve critical environmental areas. Typically, such deals are brokered by international nonprofit organizations like The Nature Conservancy or Conservation International, which sometimes contribute additional funds to provide grants to local community organizations participating in the projects.

One of the largest debt-for-nature swaps to date occurred in October 2006, when the United States agreed to forgive \$24.4 million in debt from Guatemala to free up the money for use in forest conservation efforts there. The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International were instrumental in putting that deal together, and each committed \$1 million toward Guatemalan conservation initiatives as well. A similar deal will allow

Botswana to repurpose \$8.3 million in debt payments owed to the United States for conservation and restoration of its tropical forests in the Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park regions.

To date, the United States has arranged a dozen debt-for-nature swaps (one under President Clinton and the rest under George W. Bush), forgiving \$135 million worth of loans for conservation's sake from not only Guatemala and Botswana, but also Bangladesh, Belize, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, the Philippines, and Peru. Under the terms of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act, enacted in 1998, developing countries with a tropical forest of global or regional significance, a democratically elected government, and plans for economic reform are eligible for debt forgiveness from the United States as long as they are willing to undertake conservation efforts accordingly. They also must cooperate with the United States on international narcotics control measures while neither supporting terrorism nor violating human rights.

While the United States has been the leader in encouraging debt-for-nature swaps, other developed countries are starting to get in on the act as well. Germany has forgiven tens of millions of euros owed it by the governments of Indonesia and Bolivia, among others, for the benefit of the environment. And last June, France jumped on the bandwagon by forgiving \$25 million in debt from Cameroon in the name of protecting still pristine stretches of the Congo River Basin, the world's second largest tropical forest after the Amazon.

Not all debt-for-nature deals have taken place without some controversy. According to the Uruguay-based World Rainforest Movement (WRM), last September Canada forgave \$680,000 in debt from Honduras in exchange for that country's establishment of tree planting and forest conservation programs. Arranged primarily within a debt-for-nature framework, Canada will actually get credit in the deal toward the greenhouse gas emissions reductions it promised under the international Kyoto Protocol. Says WRM, "The powerful hand of industry is behind this project. . . . this allows a major carbon dioxide-producing country . . . to be able to avoid implementing real measures to either reduce carbon emissions at their source or to implement the conservation of its own forests."

For more information, contact Conservation International, www.conservation.org; The Nature Conservancy, www.nature.org; World Rainforest Movement, www.wrm.org.uy.

Excerpted from "EarthTalk: Questions and Answers About Our Environment." This weekly column comes from E/The Environmental Magazine, a nonprofit publication, 28 Knight St., Norwalk, CT 06851; phone: (203) 854-5559; e-mail: earthtalkcolumn@emagazine.com.

In order to further the study and understanding of the landmark civil rights case *Brown v. Board of Education*, the New York State Bar Association's Law, Youth

and Citizenship Program has developed a web site that will provide teachers and students across New York State with free resources to enhance their understanding of the decision. The web site, www.brownvboard.net, stems from a bar association event held in 2005 called "Remembering Brown v. Board of Education and Related Litigation: A Tribute to the New York Attorneys Who Made Legal History." The site contains dynamic lesson plans teachers may use. These incorporate primary documents from the case, along with testimony from the 2005 commemoration ceremony.

The site was developed in partnership with the Youth Outreach Committee of the Bar Association and several consultant teachers. By providing this material, educators will be able to bring the case to more middle and high school students through historic documents and the firsthand accounts that the testimony provides.

A new web site, RadicalMath.org, has been launched for K-12 math teachers to help their students learn math through working to understand and address community problems. Packed with over 750 standards-based lesson plans, articles, data sets, and graphs that are searchable by both math skills and social justice issues, RadicalMath.org is hoping to revolutionize the way that people think about mathematics education.

According to recent reports by the National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP), Blacks and Hispanics, students of lower economic levels, and girls are all behind their demographic counterparts despite making gains since the mid-nineties. And with success in mathematics remaining one of the key determinants of whether a young person will graduate from college, new and innovative solutions are needed to level the playing field for all students.

RadicalMath.org has the dual goals of raising the mathematic literacy of American youth and simultaneously developing solutions to a range of community issues. The web site supports teachers in covering a wide range of social, political, and economic justice issues including poverty, the Prison Industrial Complex, military recruitment, and health care access and public health issues. RadicalMath.org also contains teaching materials on important financial topics for youth, including owning a credit card, paying for college, and avoiding subprime lenders. The web site's founder, Jonathan Osler, teaches math at El Puente Academy in Brooklyn, New York. 