

Helsinki Conference

The Society of Organizational Learning (SoL) held its first global forum June 10th thru the 14th in Helsinki, Finland. The event hosted by Finland Sol, took place at the Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli. This great facility is set in the beautiful community of Espoo, just outside of Helsinki. A short 10-minute cab or bus ride put us in the center of the port of Helsinki. The title of the forum was *Inventing Desired Futures for a Global Society*. Attending the forum from the Civility Center was Kent Roberts/Director and Marty Carver/Vice President of the Board of Directors. There were over 350 participants from 35 different countries representing every corner of the world.

The formal part of the forum started on Wednesday evening the 11th. However, there were pre-conference sessions during the day, on both Tuesday and Wednesday. Kent and Marty both attended the SoL Education and Youth Development Forum. This session proved to be a valuable and insightful experience. With a generous gift from the Bandag Corporation and with the facilitation of the Civility Center, a number of students were also able to attend. Four students directly received scholarships from Bandag and others indirectly were helped thru SoL. The following students received the scholarships: Daniel Bryant - Oakland County, MI, Wun-Mei Chaing - Muscatine, IA, Laura Raba - West Des Moines, IA and Ante Glavas - Croatia. The session centered on the "core competencies" of the Five Disciplines of Peter Senge. As often is the case the students were not only learners but provided great input. On Friday the students presented to the larger forum their understanding of the pre-session.

Their insight was well received.

The forum was worth the effort and travel. We now have a better understanding of SoL and Peter Senge's work. We suggest you visit www.solonline.org and view the entire schedule of events and the information posted on the presentations. One outcome of the forum will be a visit to Muscatine by Louann Riley (youth/education coordinator), other members of SoL and possibly Peter Senge to discuss how we could develop a pilot project in Iowa on the "core competencies." Both Kent and Marty would love to share their experience in Finland. Please feel free to contact either of them for further discussion.

Director's Thoughts

I was proud to be apart of the Helsinki experience and represent the Civility Center. It is great to meet so many passionate and interesting people. The interest in our work was great.

It will be fun to watch and see what outcomes result from this event. Please look for new changes with our website

www.civilitycenter.org. Tina Halligan of Greenleaf Design has worked hard in updating this site. We would enjoy your input, as this is always a work in progress. We also are playing with the marketing idea of using the C-words associated with our Center.

How could we present this: community, catalyst, connectors, coaches, conversationalists, conveners, and civility.

It is hard to believe but we are gearing up to begin our 4th year. We are a very lean but to this date, effective organization. We can only do this because of people like you. With a small staff, it takes dedicated individuals who have other full time jobs to get all of our work accomplished.

Speaking for myself, I would like to thank all of you for allowing me the opportunity to play at this important work.

Helping Communities

News from communities who are working closely with the Civility Center.

- 1) St Joseph County Michigan: Jay Newman and Liz O'Dell are busy preparing for a two- day visit from Vaughn Grisham. They will be using this event to begin another successful and progressive year.
- 2) Muscatine, Iowa: Community members have been busy reorganizing their "Safe Streets" program. Their new design has the potential to have a great impact within the community. They have also contacted and accepted a proposal by John Kretzman of the ABCD Institute Northwestern U. to conduct an asset inventory. This community is gaining momentum and starting to leverage resources.
- 3) West Des Moines, Iowa: Dr. Donna Wilkin, Associate Superintendent of West Des Moines Community Schools attended the SoL Forum in Finland. She also helped in the facilitation of bringing a student from the school system with her. Dr. Les Omotani has worked with Kent Roberts and Marty Carver in preparing a proposal for the Carver Trust. Whether the proposal is accepted or not the discovery process has been of value.
- 4) Oakland County Michigan: They also sent a student to the SoL Forum. They have ordered 400 copies of our new book *Community Weaving*. They continue receive recognition for their hard work. The concepts of the Civility Center are a major part of their core beliefs.
- 5) Green County Wisconsin: Kent Roberts was the Keynote Speaker at their first Leadership Graduation class. County leaders have embraced the ideas of civility and along with the community of New Glarus, create initiatives that have a positive impact.



Release of Community Weaving

Some of you have received advanced copies of our book *Community Weaving*. We now have 5,000 copies ready for distribution. Please contact us if you would like more copies. We are starting to receive many requests and believe our current supply of books will be gone before next spring.

Office Move

As of July 16th the Civility Office will be located at the corner of Mississippi Drive and Iowa Avenue, in the old Hotel Muscatine. Our mailing address will remain the same PO Box 497, Muscatine, IA. 52761. All of our phone numbers and email addresses also remain the same.