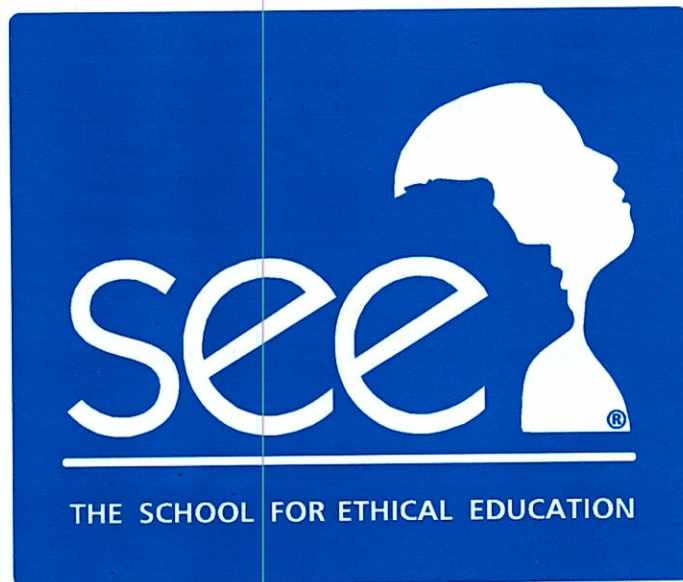


Annual Report

September 1, 2002 – August 31, 2003



Ethics in Action Creates Character

440 Wheelers Farms Road • Milford, CT 06460
www.ethicsed.org

The School for Ethical Education is grateful to the organizations and individuals that have funded our mission to advance *ethics in action* in 2002-2003.

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In Memory of Mildred Gibson Wright



The School for Ethical Education will miss Mildred Wright, who served as chairwoman of its board of trustees from 1996 to 2002. We are grateful to her for advancing the vision of ethics in action begun by her late husband, John Winthrop Wright.

Introduction

The School for Ethical Education (SEE) is pleased to report its progress in advancing ethics in action during its eighth year of operation. With the addition of approximately 40,000 subscribers to Connecticut's Newspaper in Education program, nearly 48,000 students and adults participated in SEE programs during the 2002-2003 school year. SEE administered four different programs during this period. More than 750 students from 21 schools or after-school programs completed service projects and practiced ethical reflection as participants in SEE's Youth: Ethics in Service program, formerly known as Building Ethical Communities. The service-learning projects included environmental restoration, peer mentoring, service to the needy and school improvement. Approximately 280 teachers and students attended SEE's one-day character-education conference, which helped disseminate successful ideas and practices in modern character education. Also, nearly 1,600 participants completed classes or participated in workshops led by SEE staff. In addition, approximately 4,500 students wrote essays for SEE's Laws of Life essay program. Laws of Life provides students with the opportunity to reflect and write about the values, principles and character goals that they believe will help them live productive lives.

The following annual report is provided for those interested in the history, progress and mission of SEE. SEE welcomes inquiries for more information and looks forward to expanding its base of support in order to advance comprehensive ethics and character education.

History

John Winthrop Wright founded The School for Ethical Education in 1995. As a nonprofit organization recognized as tax-exempt by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, SEE provides courses and seminars for teachers, parents and students to advance ethical behavior in schools and communities. Mr. Wright's vision for school improvement focused on expanding opportunities for teachers and students to learn how *ethics in action creates character*. This phrase became the school's motto and recognizes the power of positive ethics in the creation of character. The core ethical concepts or virtues Mr. Wright desired to promote included respect, responsibility, caring, justice, honesty, truthfulness, courtesy, citizenship and the principles of the Golden Rule.

Mr. Wright's timely initiation of SEE coincided with the education reform movement's recognition that success in any academic program rests on the existence of positive student character. The goal of positive character development is integrated into all programs offered by SEE. Carrying on the vision of the late John Winthrop Wright, Wright Investors' Service has continued to provide critical financial support to The School for Ethical Education.

Since its inception SEE has focused its resources to advance several successful initiatives, including a service-learning program, an essay-writing program focusing on values, a series of university courses and workshops, and a character-education conference.

Vision

The School for Ethical Education teaches strategies to put ethics in action. SEE encourages learning experiences that foster positive character and advance responsible and caring communities.

Mission

The School for Ethical Education affirms the need for an increased focus on ethical behavior for the 21st century. It also recognizes the contribution of sound ethical reasoning for the advancement of positive character. To teach ethical reasoning for positive character development, SEE provides courses and seminars for teachers, parents, children and community leaders in collaboration with schools and other organizations. SEE instructors teach, administer programs, write, speak, host events and

meetings, and consult with education organizations as the primary methods of disseminating strategies to promote ethics in action for the creation of character.

The following report is a 2002-2003 summary of SEE's four program areas, plans for the future and year-end financial report.

Teaching, Consulting and Communications

SEE continues to focus its programs on teaching strategies to put ethics in action. This program goal anchors SEE's designation as a 501(c)(3) school. SEE reached more than 43,000 participants during the 2002-2003 school year by teaching and consulting and its collaboration with Connecticut's Newspaper in Education program.

SEE's ongoing relationship with the University of Bridgeport (UB) provided an opportunity for SEE Director Dr. Wangaard to teach graduate-level courses on character education, conflict resolution and service-learning. These one-credit courses were held at UB's teaching sites in Bridgeport, Stamford and Waterbury. Approximately 320 students participated in these classes in the past year. Dr. Wangaard also served on doctoral dissertation committees for two University of Bridgeport students in the Division of Educational Leadership.

A meaningful teaching highlight for 2002-2003 was a collaborative effort between SEE and the Connecticut Newspapers in Education (NIE) Council. NIE published SEE character education lessons in Connecticut newspapers. SEE also provided curriculum and teacher guides for NIE, which were made available to every subscribing Connecticut teacher and student. More than 40,000 students subscribed to NIE's character program. The Connecticut NIE

Council received national NIE recognition for its collaboration with SEE on this program.

Newspaper in Education (NIE) is a cooperative program between newspapers and schools throughout the United States and many foreign countries. NIE fosters the use of newspapers as learning tools in all educational settings, from kindergarten through adult learning levels. Connecticut newspapers involved in the NIE program include The Hartford Courant, The Connecticut Post, The New Haven Register, The News-Times, Record Journal, The Advocate, Greenwich Time, Journal Inquirer, The Hour and The Day.

Once a month for ten months, NIE published SEE curriculum and activities to help teachers integrate character education into their classrooms. The monthly themes were as follows: September – Community Building, October – Teamwork/Cooperative Work, November – Making Decisions, December – Learning to Reflect, January – Conflict Resolution, February – Problem Solving, March – Diversity Awareness, April – Serving Others, May – Goal Setting, June – Celebrating Success. For each of these themes, SEE created two sets of lessons: "Character Quest" was designed for students in grades two through six, and "Ethical Journey" was written for students in grades four through eight. Funding for this initiative is not available for 2003-2004 and must be obtained to continue the collaboration in the future.

Other teaching and consulting highlights included a full-day workshop entitled "Character, Assets, and Resiliency Education" offered in collaboration with RYASAP, a prevention agency in Bridgeport; workshop presentations on SEE's Youth: Ethics in Service program at the Character Education Partnership's national conference; an overview of character education presented for the Bell Reform Network, a national organization whose mission includes character education; consulting for a fifth year as an evaluator for the Character Education Partnership's National Schools of Character program; and a successful summer institute hosted in collaboration with the University of

Bridgeport and CES, a regional education service center in Trumbull. SEE plans to continue all of these initiatives in the upcoming year.

SEE also continued to publish its newsletter, SEE News. SEE staff made content and design improvements to the newsletter in 2002-2003. The newsletter featured successful character-education initiatives, current SEE program offerings and links to character-education resources. SEE News expanded its circulation to 6,000, including schools in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. SEE provides the newsletter at no charge. The newsletter is also available on SEE's Web site. In an effort to reduce costs, SEE published two rather than three issues and compiled e-mail addresses to distribute the newsletter electronically.

Through its Web site (www.ethicsed.org), SEE continued to gain exposure and offer visitors historical and background information about SEE, descriptions of program offerings and consulting services, links to character-education resources, a bibliography and activities for teachers and youth workers. There were approximately 5,600 visits to SEE's site in 2002-2003. The Web site is hosted by Wright Investors' Service and maintained by a private Webmaster.

Youth: Ethics in Service

SEE assisted 21 student teams in Connecticut in planning and implementing service-learning projects as part of its Youth: Ethics in Service (YES) program during the past year. YES is a teacher training and youth leadership program that employs service-learning to enable educators to teach skills that promote socially responsible behavior and positive character in students.

Students were recruited from schools and after-school organizations in urban, rural and suburban areas throughout Connecticut. Student teams included wealthy and low socio-

economic teams and ten percent of the students had a special education classification.

As in the previous five years, the YES program began with workshops in October for teams of students and their adult leaders from participating schools and after-school programs. At that workshop, SEE staff introduced service-learning as well as other key concepts and skills integral to the development of effective and ethical working groups (e.g., shared values, reflection, models for ethical decision-making and team roles that can help a group work more effectively). During the workshop, teams also began the process of developing ideas for their service-learning projects. Upon their return to their schools and after-school programs, the students shared their ideas and the skills learned at the workshop with their peers and continued to plan and implement service-learning projects.

SEE provided ongoing technical assistance as well as a small stipend for costs associated with projects and monitored the teams' progress. In addition, YES provided all students with a journal (*An Ethical Reflection Journal for Service-Learning*) containing 44 activities and exercises designed to stimulate thinking, discussion and reflection on student service-learning projects as well as to impart the key values and principles of the YES program, including team roles, ethical decision making and the Golden Rule. SEE invited YES participants to attend Connecticut's Assets-

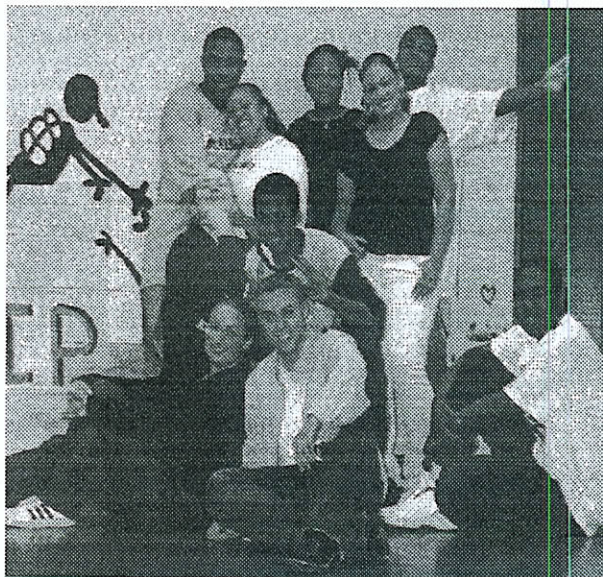


Elementary students participating in a YES team-building activity.

Based Character Education conference in May to present their projects to other teachers and students.

During the year YES demonstrated many successes. More than 750 students and teachers in grades four through twelve participated in the program. Twenty-three school teams began and 21 teams completed 28 projects that resulted in approximately 24,000 hours of service to their communities. Students raised money and purchased necessities for homeless families, donated supplies to foster children, tutored other students and restored a nature center, to name but a few of the projects. One participant in the YES program stated, "I have been alive for 18 years and this is the first time I've felt like what I did mattered."

To evaluate the YES program, SEE staff surveyed students and adult participants throughout the year regarding their involvement in the program and evaluated their level of understanding of service, reflection and community building. Student questionnaires and focus-group interviews were also completed in April and May by program evaluators from Central Connecticut State University.



YES team members from Harding High School, Bridgeport, posing for cover photo of their music and poetry CD that they created and sold as a fundraiser for homeless shelters.

The evaluation of YES suggests that, with some notable exceptions, the program is being used more effectively and with greater impact by elementary students than by middle school or high school students. This may reflect the fact that elementary teachers have greater flexibility to integrate YES objectives into their academic objectives and may develop a stronger teacher-student bond. In addition, elementary students may be more enthusiastic about school and school projects. Exceptions to these observations exist among high school students who have developed a high degree of commitment, expressed enthusiasm and bonded to their instructor during their YES projects. Our challenge in the upcoming year is to adjust the YES program to further engage middle school and high school teachers and students.

The reflection journals provided by SEE were found to be useful and resulted in positive feedback from 13 out of 21 YES teams. Teams that did not use the journals felt that they were either not age-appropriate or not relevant to their projects. During the latter part of 2002-2003 SEE staff authored a publication entitled *Service-Learning Planning and Reflection: A Step-by-Step Guide*, which will replace the reflection journal. In addition to being more appropriate for students in all grades served by YES, the guide contains more planning and reflection activities as well as a means to track project progress. The guide will be published in the fall of 2003 and will be available for 2003-2004 YES teams and others.

SEE staff evaluated the efficacy of continuing to hold fall workshops for YES teams. In most cases, entire teams were not able to attend these workshops. To enable full teams to participate in the workshops and to eliminate scheduling and financial issues for teams traveling to the workshops, SEE staff have decided to hold workshops at each school or after-school site in 2003-2004. This will enable entire teams to participate in YES skill development and project planning.

During 2002-2003, SEE staff drafted a teacher's manual, which is considered the next step in the dissemination of YES strategies. The manual is intended to allow schools and after-school programs to implement YES without direct SEE staff technical assistance. The manual includes activities and lessons educators and students can use to create a meaningful service project based upon YES skills and strategies. The manual is unique in that it integrates ethical reflection (links to the student reflection journal), character-building activities and a step-by-step guide for project planning. The manual and service-learning guide will be marketed to schools and after-school organizations serving students in grades 4-12. SEE is seeking to develop collaborative relationships with national after-school programs such as 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs and YMCAs to disseminate the YES program.

The students, teachers, administrators and community members who participated in the 2002-2003 *Youth: Ethics in Service* program are all to be commended for the commitment, hard work and creativity they demonstrated throughout the year.

Connecticut's Assets-Based Character Education Conference

Connecticut's fifth Assets-Based Character Education Conference was successfully hosted by SEE on May 1, 2003, at the conference facilities of Central Connecticut State University in New Britain. More than 280 participants from 58 Connecticut communities attended, along with educators from New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Positive comments about the conference included the following: "...very helpful and inspiring, the presenters offered concrete suggestions," "...workshops I attended were insightful" and "A boost to the spirit!" More than 96 percent of the responses to conference evaluations noted agreement or

strong agreement with the following statement: *"I will be able to apply skills/information from this conference in my school, community, or home,"* and 99 percent responded positively to *"I am pleased that I attended this conference."*

Chip Wood, co-founder of the Northeast Foundation for Children, was the keynote speaker for the conference. Mr. Wood is nationally recognized as an author, consulting teacher and co-creator of The Responsive Classroom approach to professional development and school renewal. His keynote addressed key assets, particularly adults, that help develop schools of character and achievement.

Sixteen workshops were also presented during two breakout sessions. The workshops focused on programs that promote character, from the classroom perspective to strategies for school or district-wide implementation. Participants in SEE's Youth: Ethics in Service and Laws of Life programs attended and contributed as presenters.

With the exception of three of the sixteen workshops, participants responded unanimously to the statement *"I would recommend this presentation for future conferences."*

The status of this event is uncertain in 2003-04 until funding sources can be secured to pay for mailings, a conference location and a keynote speaker.



Participants in general session of Assets-Based Character Education Conference, May 1, 2003.

Laws of Life Essay Program

In our current culture, activities that encourage students to identify and set goals with positive values are extremely valuable. The Laws of Life essay program attempts to fill a gap in ethical reflection and goal setting that exists in our public schools.

In 2002-2003 SEE administered its third Laws of Life essay program. This year, approximately 4,500 students across Connecticut wrote about their "laws of life" – the values and ideals by which we live – that transcend religions, cultures and national borders.

The Laws of Life program provides students in grades 5-12 with a chance to discover, reflect and write about the core values that can guide them throughout their lives. It also gives students an incentive to engage in a writing experience that is both personally and academically meaningful, encourages schools and local organizations to work together in a positive way for students and gives communities an opportunity to honor and recognize young people for expressing their values.

In 2002-2003 students in public, private and parochial schools in urban and suburban areas throughout Connecticut wrote Laws of Life essays. Most participants were middle school students. A school for non-hearing students participated in the program this year, the first such school to participate in Laws of Life anywhere in the world.



Winners of 2002-03 Laws of Life essay program at awards ceremony in New Britain, CT.

As in previous years, each participating school in SEE's Laws of Life program selected a coordinator who engaged other teachers and their students in the program and involved the community in judging, supporting and celebrating the student essayists. The top two essays from each school were entered into a statewide competition organized and administered by SEE. A distinguished panel of judges from throughout the state evaluated the essays.

The 10 students whose essays were selected as statewide winners were honored at an awards ceremony held during Connecticut's Asset's Based Character Education Conference on May 1. These students wrote about laws of life that included helping those who are less fortunate, loving yourself, appreciation, friendship, perseverance, determination, not judging other people, stretching yourself, respect and self-reliance.

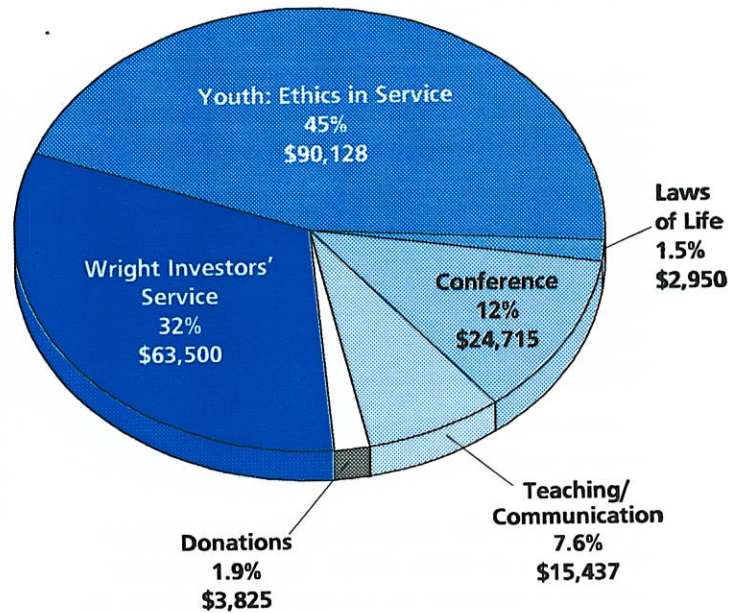
Each student received a U.S. savings bond donated by the New Haven Savings Bank Foundation and a gift certificate donated by Bob's Stores. Bigelow Tea provided gifts for teachers and school contest coordinators who attended the event with the student winners. Two of the students inspired the audience by reading their essays. Following the ceremony, the student winners, teachers and/or program coordinators and parents participated in a discussion led by SEE staff about Laws of Life and heard the winning essays.

SEE's evaluations of Laws of Life have documented a number of positive benefits that include advancing a vision for character development, promoting excellence in writing and fostering a sense of community by encouraging dialogue between students and adults regarding shared values. Students and teachers participating in Laws of Life in 2002-2003 made the following comments:

"Our school found that the program was invaluable, in terms of directing children to

(continued on page 8)

Summary of SEE Income 2002-2003



The School for Ethical Education Profit and Loss Statement For the Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2003

	Consolidated	Conference	Youth: Ethics in Service	Laws of Life	Teaching/ Communication	Non-Cash Charges
INCOME						
Grant Income	108,040.00	15,840.00	90,000.00	2,200.00		
Vendor Income	150.00	150.00				
Conference Registration	7,725.00	7,725.00				
Tuition Income	15,437.80				15,437.80	
Donations - TWC	63,500.00	15,875.00	15,875.00	15,875.00	15,875.00	17,180.00
Donations - Others	5,575.00	1,000.00		750.00	3,825.00	
Other Income	128.00		128.00			
TOTAL INCOME	200,555.80	40,590.00	106,003.00	18,825.00	35,137.80	
EXPENSES						
Personnel Expenses						
Salaries & Benefits	150,273.93	8,005.42	83,474.06	12,540.94	46,253.51	
Office Expenses						
Indirect	10,557.10	2,463.22	243.21	402.00	7,448.67	
	5,800.00	2,298.00	16,086.00	2,298.00	2,298.00	(17,180.00)
Travel Expenses						
(inc. conf. rooms, catering)	9,430.84	5,679.48	2,351.84	150.68	1,248.84	
Outside Services						
CES Administration	14,505.81	6,230.34	1,345.52		6,929.95	
Speaker Fees	4,500.00		4,500.00			
	2,000.00	2,000.00				
Other Expenses						
Project Grants	10,715.00		10,715.00			
Consulting/Evaluation	4,300.00		4,300.00			
Teaching Materials	319.76		274.00	22.86	22.90	
TOTAL EXPENSES	212,402.44	26,676.46	123,289.63	15,414.48	64,201.87	
NET SURPLUS (SHORTFALL)	(11,846.64)	13,913.54	(17,286.63)	3,410.52	(29,064.07)	0.00

(continued from page 6)

think about themselves and others. The impact that the curriculum had on my students, as well as on me, cannot be fully articulated.”
— School contest coordinator

“This contest created an avenue for going beyond the walls of the classroom to involve non-teaching staff, parents and community members in supporting student writers.” —
School contest coordinator

“It showed me how to live my life.” — Middle school student

The Laws of Life program had many accomplishments in 2002-2003. The program received recognition as an approved activity by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents and the Connecticut Association of Schools. Although funding constraints precluded SEE from providing schools with prize money for their local essay contests, most schools were able to award prizes with donations from parent-teacher associations, local merchants and service clubs.

In spite of funding challenges, SEE was able to maintain a significant level of student participation, fine-tune program administration, improve the criteria for judging essays, provide additional technical assistance to participating schools and develop more useful evaluation tools, including a survey of participating students. In addition, SEE developed relationships with organizations, such as Rotary International, that have helped disseminate information about the Laws of Life program. To accommodate non-hearing students who entered the statewide contest, SEE was able to enlist a non-hearing judge.

The essays of two students, which were among the top ten essays in SEE’s statewide 2001-2002 contest, were selected for publication in a book, *Teen Ink: What Matters*, that was published in the spring of 2003. The two essays were chosen from thousands of Laws of Life essays from around the world.

The commitment and dedication to Laws of Life on the part of school coordinators, school administrators, judges and others have undoubtedly contributed to the success of SEE’s Laws of Life program. Given the success of Laws of Life in Connecticut, The School for Ethical Education maintains its commitment to the program and believes that all young people deserve the opportunity to write and reflect on their “laws of life.” To that end, SEE will continue its efforts in seeking long-term funding for Laws of Life and has received a challenge grant of \$5,000 from the Templeton Foundation to continue the program in 2003-2004.

SEE Financials

SEE is fortunate to continue to receive meaningful operational funding and non-cash gifts in the form of office support from Wright Investors’ Service (WIS) of Milford, Conn. Thirty-two percent of SEE’s income of \$200,555 came from direct donations by WIS. SEE’s goal is to substantially reduce this contribution in the coming years.

SEE’s flagship program, Youth: Ethics in Service, received grant income during the 2002-03 fiscal year totaling \$90,000. Grants from the Connecticut State Department of Education (administrator of federal Learn and Serve funds) as well as The Louis Calder Foundation and Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation supported this program.

Laws of Life received the final installment (\$2,200) of its original grant from the John Templeton Foundation, which completed the two years of funding from the Foundation. The Assets-Based Character Education Conference was supported by a variety of funders that included Webster Bank, the Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut Assets Network, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the Rotary Club of Bridgeport.

Teaching and communication income of \$15,437 represents fees received for contracted services provided by SEE. Donations to SEE came in response to a year-end donation request mailed to past and potential individual supporters of SEE's mission.

SEE is currently working to expand its base of individual and corporate funders through personal contacts and letters. Creating a broad and diverse base of support for SEE programs is of critical importance to SEE's longevity. In a positive development, The Louis Calder Foundation and the John Templeton Foundation have provided challenge grants (\$40,000 and \$5,000, respectively) to encourage SEE's efforts in 2003-2004 to seek individuals, business or foundations to support SEE's work.

The Opportunities

Certainly, we live in a time where there is a critical need to strengthen the ethical fiber of our culture and our youth. The media provide daily reminders of ethical failures in businesses, government, faith communities and in the media itself. In all of these cases, adults have failed to make choices that demonstrate positive character. To resist this flood of unethical behavior, there must be opportunities for children to learn and experience the benefits of positive ethics and character.

We celebrate the many opportunities that SEE provides to encourage positive experiences with ethics and characters. The programs of The School for Ethical Education have a demonstrated track record of successfully advancing character education by offering:

- activities, classes and conferences for teachers and students
- consulting services for school and community organizations

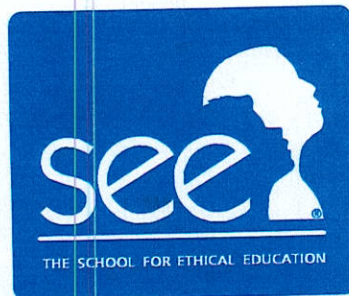
- community service-learning programs that encourage student character development
- an essay-writing program that integrates ethics and character themes into school curricula

We see opportunities to expand all of these program areas. However, additional funding will be necessary to achieve this vision.

SEE invites partners to join its effort to strengthen the moral fiber of our youth. Donations to The School for Ethical Education are an investment in the future of youth and our culture. Gifts may be designated for a specific program (i.e., YES or Laws of Life) or for the general operations of The School. For more information about The School for Ethical Education, please call us at (203) 783-4438 or visit our Web site at www.ethicsed.org.

In the long run, there is no capitalism without conscience; there is no wealth without character.

President George W. Bush
on Wall Street, July 2002



2002–2003 Annual Report