



## An Opportunity for Excellence at Fairview Park City School District

The Mosaic Project is a school community enrichment initiative sponsored by the Fairview Park School District (Fairview Park, Ohio). The mission of The Mosaic is to build a culture of respect in the Fairview Park City Schools through awareness raising, education and relationship building among students, staff and families.

Through a broad based strategy implemented over three years (2007-2010), the Mosaic Project will achieve the following goals throughout the entire school district:

- Create a culture of respect.
- Foster a welcoming environment.
- Support the educational potential of students.
- Ensure the Mosaic Project sustains its work beyond the initial project period.

Like the differing components of a mosaic piece of art, Fairview's Mosaic Project was developed to raise appreciation around the differences unfolding in this inner ring school community. With the hope of creating a proactive response, The Mosaic will give students, teachers and families and inspired school system the resources to engage change as an opportunity for furthering learning excellence.

### **The Challenges Addressed**

Like many inner ring communities, Fairview Park has experienced shifts in population, neighborhood, culture and resident needs. While these trends were expected responses to urban sprawl, inner ring suburbs across the United States have been ill prepared in understanding the resulting change dynamics. As a result, inner ring communities have generally not embraced 'change', and its resulting diversity, as a positive trend. At its worse, in some communities, increased diversity has become the scapegoat for broader community issues.

In Fairview Park, demographic shifts have been evolving more rapidly over the past five (5) years. These changes are not limited to racial diversity; change in the city has been evidenced in many ways including economic wealth, status, religious practice, housing, family and marital status, and age. In the school district, these diversity trends have influenced teachers, classrooms, students and families.

While the District has worked to positively respond to these 'change experiences', most members of the school community agree that a deeper response was needed to give teachers, students and families the tools that maximize the learning environment. More importantly, the district believes strategic and innovative planning around diversity issues will help strengthen its culture of respect.

## **Project History**

The Mosaic Project was initiated in early 2006, following the need for support expressed by many in the school community. Through discussion among volunteering staff, an all staff diversity training was hosted in Spring 2006, giving insight into the impact of economic demographic shifts. By Fall 2006, a formal committee was established and strategies explored. In Spring 2007, seed funding was secured to support additional information and awareness building, the development of a strategic plan and baseline survey/data collection.

Starting in June 2007, the Mosaic Strategic Plan (see attached) was put into motion with the 2007-2008 school year serving as the public launch of programs and activities. Funding for the project is provided by the Rip Foundation, Fairview City Schools, the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, and other community organizations.

## **Achievements Thus Far**

Although only recently public, The Mosaic Project has created positive momentum throughout the district, as evidenced by the supportive rallying of students, teachers, administrators and parents. Most certainly, the entire school community is eager to turn ‘differences into opportunities’.

In many respects, The Mosaic supports the community’s overall trend of innovation development, as evidenced in school facility improvements, the construction of a new elementary school and joint-use recreation center, and the arrival of Superintendent Brion Doesch in 2006. Overall, The Mosaic project highlights the community’s ability to shape new opportunities for growth.

In the school district, The Mosaic’s anticipated outcomes include both quantitative and qualitative impact:

- Provide every member of the school community with information to raise awareness and appreciation toward diversity
- Shift culture of ‘fear of diversity’ to ‘value of differences’
- Support teaching quality and student learning excellence
- Create innovative programs that raise awareness and tolerance
- Mobilize student engagement and leadership around tolerance building
- Strengthen connection to families and members of the school community

## **Getting Involved**

In addition to completing the school community survey ([www.fairviewpark.org](http://www.fairviewpark.org)), teachers, youth, parents and volunteers are welcome to get involved in The Mosaic Project through a wide range of evolving volunteer opportunities including awareness building efforts, art projects, and outreach to families. Keep track of upcoming activities on the schools’ web site!

A Mosaic Picnic will be held on Wednesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 4:30 – 7:30 p.m. at Bain Cabin. Anyone interested in helping with the project is welcome to come. At 6:00 p.m., announcements about project progress will be made.

For more information about getting involved with The Mosaic Project, contact Chris Checkett, Crisis Prevention Counselor, Fairview Park High School (choose an email address) (440) 356-3514.

### **Mosaic Committee Members**

Please place Names and Titles Needed