

#### Participants say:

"The best training I have been to in a long time!"

"I liked the interactive pieces; they gave meaning to what was being taught."

"I can't believe we left with skills and tangible ideas!"

#### ReachOut at upcoming conferences:

[CWLA 2005 Western Region Training Conference](#)

[School of the 21st Century National Conference at Yale University](#)

[Washington Food Coalition 2005 Annual Conference](#)

[The Bridge from School to Afterschool and Back 2005 Conference](#)

ReachOut offers training and consulting to promote the delivery of culturally-relevant and respectful services by organizations that support diverse, low-income populations.

#### Past clients include:

Environmental Science Center

Highline School District

Family Partnerships Project: Seattle Public Schools

School's Out WA

Family Policy Council Summit (WA State)

Puget Sound Educational Service District (Fife)

Ruth Dykeman Children's Center

## Reaching Out

### Promoting Respect, Relevance, and Results

Welcome to the second edition of *Reaching Out*, a periodic e-newsletter with practical ideas and thoughts for you and your organization regarding issues of cultural competency and parent and community involvement. Be sure to check out the newest addition to our newsletter, [Calling Out](#). This new section invites and addresses the questions you've always wanted (but never had the nerve) to ask regarding cultural competency.

#### Increasing Parent and Community Involvement

One of the first, and most essential, steps to increasing involvement is building real relationships with parents and community members. Remember that old adage; *it's all about the relationships!* ReachOut's Parent and Community Involvement Training offers *6 Essential Strategies for Enhancing Relationships & Engagement*. Here is one of the strategies and some specific suggestions for implementation.

**Maintain a Presence within the Community.** See and be seen. This strategy is about gaining a greater understanding, building trust, and showing a genuine interest in communities. Recently White Center (in South Seattle) hosted a Cambodian New Year's celebration. This was an incredible opportunity for those of us who are not familiar with Cambodian culture to gain a bit of insight, celebrate, and eat some delicious food. This was also a chance for people to step outside (our offices, schools, buildings) and participate in a community-driven event. In another example, at a recent event at a New Futures community center, one of the highlights for the children was the opportunity to see their principal and teachers not only outside of school, but in the apartment complex where they live.

Suggestions: Attend community-driven activities and events. Summer is a great time for festivals and other community events. Commit to attending two or three festivals/events you don't typically attend. Have a physical presence in the community. If people aren't coming to your events/meetings/programs, why not try taking the programs to where people live and gather?

#### Striving for Cultural Competency

How are we doing on "exercising" cultural competency skills? Remember becoming culturally competent requires a personal commitment to developing this skill, and for organizations it involves creating an environment that promotes and supports this. Another strategy to consider as we exercise our cultural competency skills:

**Challenging: Press for Real Personal and Organizational Change.** Exercising should also be challenging. We need to challenge ourselves to do a little more, constantly push ourselves a bit outside of our comfort zone. If you've ever tried to learn a foreign language, you know that improvement usually only comes through really challenging yourself and practicing. Sometimes it means putting yourself in really uncomfortable situations, or even risking looking ignorant.

Personal Suggestion: Become an active ally in the fight against oppression. Challenge yourself to become active in promoting social justice. Seek out and become active in a local social justice group. If you cannot find a local group, consider starting one. If you live in the Seattle area check out the calendar of peace and justice events.

Organizational Suggestion: Take the extra effort and time to recruit a diverse pool of applicants for any open positions. Challenge your organization to come up with five or six diverse places, such as a local ethnic newspaper or radio station, to post advertisements. Another idea is to pass along your job announcements to organizations that work with diverse communities, as they often have more knowledge or access to diverse candidates.

## Calling Out

### Past conferences include:

[SW Washington  
Early Childhood Tapestry  
Conference](#)

[11<sup>th</sup> Annual Northwest  
Conference for  
Parenting Educators](#)

[OSPI's 2005 Conference](#)

[NASW 2005 Conference](#)

[6<sup>th</sup> Gathering of Social  
Enterprise Alliance](#)

[Oregon Department of  
Education Conference 2005](#)

### The numbers:

ReachOut has trained over 600 people in the past 9 months.

On a scale from 1 to 5, participants on average rate the usefulness of ReachOut trainings as 4.56.

**ReachOut**  
(206) 248-9647  
[training@reachout.us](mailto:training@reachout.us)  
[www.reachout.us](http://www.reachout.us)

This new section invites and addresses the questions you've always wanted (but never had the nerve) to ask regarding cultural competency. ReachOut invites you to send your own questions, and promises you will remain anonymous. One question will be addressed in each newsletter edition.

*Dear ReachOut,*

*I work in a fairly diverse organization and have noticed that there seem to be obvious cultural cliques at our workplace. How would you address the issue of cultural cliques?*

*-- Wondering in Seattle*

Dear Wondering in Seattle,

Thank you for the great question. Please know that you are not alone. There are definitely a lot of people wondering the same thing. We often hear the request to address issues of cultural "cliques" in our trainings.

Perhaps we'll pose a few questions back. Start by considering, are you a part of a cultural clique? Or an affinity clique? If you're a parent of young children, do you gravitate toward other parents? Are many of your friends people who have had similar life experiences? Are cultural cliques really such an anomaly, or really do we ALL have a tendency to stick with people we hold things in common with? Could this grouping be seen as supportive, rather than divisive?

There is a well-known book called, "[Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria](#)," by Beverly Daniel Tatum. She proposes you could walk into any racially diverse cafeteria and find a group of black students sitting together. She also notes that, "conversely, it could be pointed out that there are many groups of White students sitting together as well, though people rarely comment about that." Has this piqued your interest? If so, you might consider reading Tatum's book.

Thanks,  
ReachOut Staff

If you have a question for ReachOut, please send it to [callingout@reachout.us](mailto:callingout@reachout.us).

### **How can ReachOut help you and your organization promote cultural competency and increase parent and community involvement in your work?**

Could your organization use a bit of support and motivation in the areas of cultural competency or parent and community involvement? Contact ReachOut and ask how we could customize a training to fit your needs.

**Stay Tuned:** The next edition of Reaching Out is going to offer some more practical examples and ideas to promote cultural competency and increase parent and community involvement.

**ReachOut** is the social enterprise of [New Futures](#), an award-winning, nationally acclaimed site-based provider of services and programs to low-income children, families, and neighborhoods. For more than a decade, New Futures has operated in low-income apartment complexes just south of Seattle, partnering with residents to develop programs that utilize their strengths and respond to their stated needs.

**ReachOut** welcomes any questions, thoughts, and comments.

