

#### Participants say:

*"The presenters were very dynamic and incorporated a number of different learning styles."*

*"I love that you actually gave strategies, along with very applicable tools and knowledge."*

*"Best Cultural Competency Training I've been to."*

#### ReachOut at upcoming conferences:

[Personalizing Education  
OSPI January 2006  
Conference](#)

[All-City Tutor Training](#)

[Securing Brighter Futures  
CWLA 2006  
National 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*

*Puget Sound Educational  
Service District (Fife)*

*Ruth Dykeman  
Children's Center*

*Non-Profit Staff  
Development Coalition*

*Passages Northwest*

*Cascade Harvest Coalition*

## Reaching Out

*Promoting Respect, Relevance, and Results*

Welcome to the fourth 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. If the latest edition of *Reaching Out* appears difficult to read in your mail viewer, please access a PDF file of this e-newsletter online at <http://www.reachout.us/reachout.html>.

### Check it Out

Looking for a good book to read? Need a gift idea? Want an interesting movie suggestion? Check out the new [Links & Resources Section](#) on the ReachOut website. We've created book and movie recommendation lists that 'Expand Our Worldview.' Keep checking back as the lists will be updated periodically. If you have a book or movie that you would like to recommend please send it to [resources@reachout.us](mailto:resources@reachout.us).

### Striving for Cultural Competency

How's it going with 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 growth. Try this strategy for your next workout!

#### **REALISTIC: Set realistic goals, expectations, and timelines for action and change.**

Developing and maintaining a skill is usually a process that takes time and careful planning. Just as it is impossible to learn to speak a foreign language in a short class, cultural competence is not achieved in one quick professional development course. Planning by setting realistic goals, expectations, and timelines is an important part of sustaining the development process. The end of the calendar year is a perfect opportunity to reflect back on efforts of the previous year and plan for action in the coming year.

Personal Suggestions: Create a regular (quarterly, yearly) goal setting and reflection session for actions and efforts. Plan and share ideas/reflections with friends over a monthly breakfast/lunch club. Check out Tolerance.org's '[101 Tools for Tolerance](#)' for great ideas to help plan for continued development.

Organizational Suggestions: Make cultural competency a priority in your strategic planning process. Develop a system to evaluate efforts on various levels within your organization. Browse online examples of cultural competency organizational assessment tools and resources: [CCHCP's Cultural Competency Assessment Tools Bibliography](#), [AUCD Multicultural Council Survey](#), [The National Center for Cultural Competence \(NCCC\) Health Practitioner Assessment](#), and [CWLA's Cultural Competence Agency Self-Assessment Instrument](#).

Past clients continued:

[WSU Extension](#)

[South King Council  
of Human Services](#)

Past conferences include:

[Family Policy Council  
Summit \(WA State\)](#)

[SW WA 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 Dept of Education  
Conference 2005](#)

[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](#)

[Grantwriting:  
Tools of the Trade  
PSGA Fall Conference](#)

[Multiculturalism Conference  
NASPA Student Affairs  
Multicultural Institute](#)

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## 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 has outlined *6 Essential Strategies for Enhancing Relationships & Engagement*. Here is one of the strategies and some specific suggestions for implementation.

**Create an inviting engagement space.** Does your physical space reflect, honor, and welcome the community? Are staff, language capacity, and artwork reflective of the community? Is your school/organization's idea of welcoming and comfortable the same for parents and families? Did community members give input into creating the space? Remember beautiful and nice does not always equal welcoming. This strategy of creating a welcoming and inviting space is especially relevant during the winter holiday season. At New Futures, one of our community centers is located in an apartment complex with a significant Muslim population that does not observe Christmas. Yet another site has a large Latino population that actively celebrates the Christmas holiday. This difference highlights the importance of being aware and respectful of individuals' comfort in celebrating and acknowledging dominant holidays. Do you know how parents or families in your community feel about celebrating or acknowledging mainstream holidays? Are there special cultural holidays throughout the year that you might not know about?

Suggestions: Decorate space so it reflects and honors the community. Create a comfortable, informal gathering area. Greet people in their native language. Ask community members for ideas on artwork and other decorations. If you have families that don't observe holidays like Christmas, use common themes such as winter celebrations, which are inclusive for all.

### 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.

Check out our website, [www.reachout.us](http://www.reachout.us), to read past editions of *Reaching Out*.

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.

