

To whom it may concern at CSIET:

October 24, 2009

I wish to nominate **St. Edwards School in Vero Beach, Florida** as a recipient of a 2010 Global Classroom Award. This small PK-12 school of 725 students has a long-standing commitment to a "world-view" education, with global studies beginning in the elementary school.

At the Lower school, tablet computers throughout the classes allow the students to compete in the global mathematics competition V Math Live. They eagerly search maps to find their competitors! Shortly after they wrote letters to soldiers in Afghanistan, author Greg Mortenson spoke to the students about his *Pennies for Peace* project to build schools there, which the students embraced by filling collection jars in empathy. Third graders held a fundraiser to benefit a hospital in Tanzania providing orthopedic surgery for children. During the preparation for the bake sale, the students have had the opportunity to compare their lifestyle to the lifestyle of an African youth. "It made me feel like we were building a bridge to someone," stated one astute 8 year old.

At the Middle and Upper School a global paradigm pervades with integration among classes. 7th grade Global Studies students may be studying the Chinese dynasties while reading *The Red Scarf* in literature and learning to use an abacus in math. Advanced 8th grade students are offered honors level high school Chinese Language and Culture, and 9th grade honors students take AP Human Geography. One current 8th grader, who had visited China two years before and was disappointed, states about her teacher, Mr. Moir, who teaches Spanish and Chinese, and is fluent in 7 languages: "I never knew Chinese could be so cool, it's my favorite class!" She plans on being a youth exchange student someday. International studies are offered on school breaks to Russia, China, Turkey and Thailand, language study trips to Spain and France, and a summer matching exchange program to Europe or Taiwan through Rotary. Student organizations raise awareness of international service, and last year included fund raising efforts for polio immunizations in India, Darfur relief, school supplies to Barbados, facial reconstructions for children in Peru, among numerous others.

Saint Edward's School has expanded their international exchange program to enrich the student body with a talented and diverse pool of students. Their commitment to the international program allows the local community to build meaningful relationships and deepen its understanding of others through linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity. Over the last two years, students from a number of countries in Europe, Asia and South America are currently enrolled in the school, including Italy, Austria, Germany, China, Suriname and Ecuador.

The students are welcomed into our community from the day they step off the plane. All new international students participate in a week long orientation process that is both fun and informative as they start their voyage on the "Pirate Ship". The program exposes students to available SES programs (athletics, arts, clubs, etc), orientation to the community of Vero Beach, expectations of living with a host family, detailed hints such as US banking and social habits, utilization of issued tablet computers for all school work, and specific information about student life at Saint Edward's. Last year, a Youth Exchange student from China was awarded as the co-vaedictorian of the Upper School, while other YE students participated in theater, on the football team, as a Homecoming prince, modeled in a charity fashion show, participated in the surf club, and served in student-run international service clubs including Interact, Mu Alpha Theta, MUN, and many more. They quickly become, not a stranger, but an integral part of the warp and weave of our school.

Students are placed with host families in Vero Beach, a small town of 20,000 on the eastern central coast of Florida. Host families for the most part have or have had children go through the St. Edwards experience, and look forward to sharing their home and their culture with these young ambassadors.

The school has awarded full tuition scholarships to inbound students through the Rotary International Youth Exchange program during each of the last two years, providing education, activities, extensive student support, even a laptop computer to each at a value of over \$25,000 per year. Last year's Rotary scholarship student was placed on the Head of School List for academics, and won the highest awards in both French and Spanish language studies. This year's student plays on the varsity volleyball team and is on the yearbook staff.

Two honors level SES students, in 10th and 11th grades, are currently outbound for a year, chosen as Rotary Youth Exchange Ambassadors to Japan and Italy. The school has been extremely supportive of their involvement, providing methods for the make-up of missed work and allowing flexible scheduling in order to graduate on time with their peers. The school administration schedules an assembly each fall to promote long and short term exchange opportunities to the students.

In closing, as a college preparatory school, Saint Edwards has made an extreme impact on the lives of students around the world through their activity and concern to create global citizens, not only among current local students, but also by embracing inbound students from around the world. In my role as a District Chair of Rotary YE programs, I work closely with many Florida public schools, and have often requested full scholarships for inbound students from private schools, to limited avail. In my District, the generosity and support given by the St. Edwards School staff to their international students has no comparison.

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