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Getting Up Close with *We The People*

Due to ongoing cuts in school budgets, this year funds are being raised to support the county-wide *We The People* program as well.

Developed by the Center for Civic Education, the goal of *We The People* is to promote civic competence and responsibility among the nation's students. This program gives students an opportunity to learn more about constitutional principles, culminating with a simulated congressional hearing where students testify before a panel of community members that can include judges, lawyers, teachers and civic leaders. Students successful in the regional competition proceed to the statewide finals. Schools in our region have historically been very competitive at the state level and national level, frequently taking home honors.

We hope you will consider providing funding support to help: purchase sets of *We the People* study books for area classrooms, pay for costs associated with the regional competition held in Grand Rapids and help defray costs for local schools that place and are able to attend the statewide finals.

Find us online. Go to www.kentisd.org, click on Instructional Services, Student Programs, then click Close Up.

Interact with alumni and current students on facebook - search for West Michigan Close Up.

Kent ISD
We Lead Learning

Close Up West Michigan

Informing, inspiring and empowering young people to exercise the rights and accept the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy

CLOSE UP FOUNDATION

Annual Report 2013

Special Thanks to Representative Vernon Ehlers

Kent ISD, including its Superintendent Kevin Konarska and the Board of Education, would like to express its most sincere appreciation to Representative Vernon Ehlers for serving as the Close Up Fundraising Chair for the last two years. Representative Ehlers presided over a dynamic and exciting time of expansion of our support for civic education programs. This includes the development of online civic education content and the expansion of our support to the *We The People* program for area schools.

Representative Ehlers served as a congressman for 16 years representing "Jerry Ford's District." Prior to his work as an elected official, Representative Ehlers was an educator – a Calvin College physics professor. In summing up his commitment to programs like Close Up, his daughter Heidi Reinstra noted, "Always an educator, my father believes strongly that the next generation of leaders can be taught best by experiences in programs like Close Up."

Thank you Representative Ehlers for all of your work in ensuring that these valuable experiences continue to be available to new generations.

Participating Local Schools *(Close Up & We the People)*

Comstock Park Public Schools
East Grand Rapids Public Schools
Fremont Public Schools
Hamilton Public Schools
Grand Rapids Public Schools
Kentwood Public Schools
Kelloggsville Public Schools
Potters House
Rockford Public Schools

West Michigan Close Up Fellowship

West Michigan Close Up Fellowships were established to assist low-to-moderate income students. Fellowships are awarded in the amount of $500. This allows more students to participate in the Close Up Washington program.

2012-2013 West Michigan Fellowship Recipient

Brianna Esparza, Oakridge High School
Nicholas Hadley, Grant High School
Anissa Krauss, Hamilton High School
Lara Perkins, Fremont High School

Close Up is an amazing program. I traveled all around DC and saw many of the war monuments, the Holocaust Museum, even the White House! All of these places taught me about our past and now I am able to use this knowledge to understand politics better. My favorite part of the program was meeting other kids from around the country. I heard different views and made new friends! It was a great experience. Thank you for helping me participate!

– Anissa Krauss, West Michigan Fellowship Recipient

Adler Fellowship

The Adler Fellowship was established to honor Garrell Adler, a Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for General Education at Kent ISD. The Fellowship covers 50 percent of the cost of the Close Up Washington program fee. These fellowships are awarded to students who show great financial need.

2012-2013 Adler Fellowship Recipient

Shelby Timmer, Hamilton High School

Administrator Scholarship

This year, through our Close Up program, we sent Loraine Phillips, an administrator from Ottawa Hills High School in Grand Rapids Public Schools, to participate in this program and send back a report on its educational value. Here is a portion of the report she provided.

First, thank you for the opportunity to experience this excellent program.

Close Up is an amazing program and one in which I would encourage as many students as possible to participate. It is very well organized and both teachers and students leave with an incredible amount of knowledge about our government and history.

The students not only learned about the legislative process but held their own mock congressional debate and vote. They learned how to express and explain their beliefs on different issues and then made their arguments before a vote. Students met every night in small groups to discuss and prepare for Capitol Hill. Capitol Hill provided a walking tour of the Capitol and then students met with as many of their representatives and senators as possible. I was impressed with the questions and concerns the students put to their legislators.

The teacher program was equally engaging. As with the student program, they kept us busy from morning until night.

The Close Up organization had everything well planned, including transportation and meals. I will never forget this experience.