

NEWS RELEASE

Ambos Nogales Students Tackle Cross-Border Problems

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For Immediate Release

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Sixty students from Mexicayotl Academy, Escuela Secundaria General #1, Escuela Secundaria Tecnica #9 and Nogales High School will meet May 17th in Nogales, Arizona to research and propose public policy approaches to local cross-border issues.

Students will participate in the **Civic Exchange: U.S.-Mexico** program sponsored by the Center for Civic Education (CCE), Instituto Federal de Elecciones (IFE) and Secretaria de Educacion y Cultura.(SEC) in the United States and Mexico. The partnership is part of Civitas Latin America: A Civic Education Exchange Program (Civitas Latin America). Civitas Latin America is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act approved by the U.S. Congress.

The **Civic Exchange: U.S.-Mexico** program seeks to teach civic skills, instill democratic values, and promote understanding between students of the United States and Mexico. It will form partnerships among schools in the United States and Mexico. Students will learn about each other through class lessons and activities.

Once partnered schools are familiar with each other, they will select a public policy problem with similar characteristics in their respective communities using the **We the People: Project Citizen** curricular material. U.S. and Mexican students will then work to research and propose a solution.

The Civic Exchange project will culminate with a presentation before an international panel of political and community leaders in which the students from the U.S. and Mexico will present their particular solutions. Student exchanges and other activities will be conducted between the partnered schools during the program in order to familiarize students with each other and facilitate the interchange of ideas, information, and experiences.

Each class will research and define the problem, identify the

public policy possible solutions to the problem, and propose a policy. The class' work is documented in a research portfolio. To culminate the process, students will present their findings to governing boards on both issues of the border.

Baltazar Garcia, director of Mexicayotl Academy stated, "It's about time we got these kids together. Somos una familia. We've got a lot to teach and a lot to learn from each other"

George Thomson, one of Nogales High School stated, "We should be getting the future leaders of this community together so they can know to solve cross-border problems together now, as they will be tomorrow as adults."

As for the Project Citizen curriculum Thomson stated, "It was no big deal for the students to take on a research problem, prepare a portfolio then give a presentation about it. We already have them do this same process in the Senior Project."

Some of the cross-border issues selected by the classes for which they will propose a public policy include:

- o Teenagers crossing the border to drink alcohol
- o Raising voters political awareness so that voters know that they can solve serious political problems like corruption.
- o The needed infusion of art and culture into Nogales, Arizona from Nogales, Sonora
- o Light pollution from Ambos Nogales
- o Border Militias
- o Excessive trash and littering
- o Enforcement of existing laws that require education to reduce child labor and poverty.

On May 17th students will meet in at Mexicayotl Academy. At that time students from the schools will present their policy proposals to a each other and adults in attendance, hold discussions on each problem and prepare for the presentations to the local governing bodies. The public is welcome to attend the students' presentations beginning at 11:00 AM.

The project will be an annual event in Ambos Nogales. The project is being tested in the 2002-03 school year. Next school year the schools will begin earlier and agree on the issues to tackle. Working together the students from both sides will study the issues and propose public policy approaches as solutions to the issue.

Administration and funding of Civic Exchange is administered by IFE in Mexico and by the Center in the United States and conducted under the Mexico/Center for Civic Education partnership. The partnership is part of Civitas Latin America: A Civic Education Exchange Program (Civitas Latin America). Civitas Latin America is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act approved by the

U.S. Congress. Civitas Latin America builds upon and expands the work conducted by the Center's worldwide Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program.

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