



AMERICANS ALL A National Multicultural Education Program

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BUSINESS-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP PRODUCES "AMERICANS ALL:"
THE NATION'S MOST COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

"Americans All" Co-Chairs Andrew Young and Ted Danson Say
Program Helps Provide Students with the Skills to Make
"the Tough Decisions that Lie Ahead"

WASHINGTON, D.C.--At a press conference here this morning, former Atlanta Mayor and UN Ambassador Andrew Young said: "Multicultural education in our nation's schools is no longer an option, but an imperative, if today's students are going to be able to compete successfully in the 21st Century."

Young was one of the participants in a press conference to introduce AMERICANS ALL, which developers call "the nation's most comprehensive multicultural program." Funded by businesses and foundations, AMERICANS ALL provides resource materials, teacher training and support, strategies for parental involvement and community outreach, linkage between participating schools, communities and ethnic groups, and in-school volunteers for Grades K-12.

Current supporters and funders of AMERICANS ALL include The Hitachi Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Marcus and Bertha Coler Philanthropic Fund, Holiday Inn Hotel Division, Houghton Mifflin Company, the George F. Cram Company, Inc., and USTravel Systems.

Successfully piloted over the past two years in San Diego and Chicago schools, and now expanded into the District of Columbia and Pittsburgh, the program, said AMERICANS ALL National Directors Gail Christopher and Allan Kullen, "has received high marks from teachers, administrators, and students." It will begin in the ABC School District (Los Angeles County) this week.

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AMERICANS ALL is the result of an eight-year effort by a group of multicultural scholars, historians, educators, and business leaders. "While others were debating education reform and the role of multicultural education in that process," said Kullen, "AMERICANS ALL developers were creating a program that meets today's demographic needs for multicultural education, and doing it in a manner that helps unite rather than divide the American people."

The program's developers say that they have tried to stay out of the debate that has dominated the focus of educators, historians and the media: Should the curriculum be Euro-centered or African-centered; or is there enough academic scholarship or agreement to support a revisionist approach to the writing and teaching of ancient world history?

Such debate, say Christopher and Kullen, "will take years to resolve, if, indeed, resolution is ever possible."

Christopher adds: "It also will take decades to revise and distribute texts that reflect the demographics and the diversity of this nation. Meanwhile, millions of students will become alienated from -- and continue to drop out of -- an education system in which they feel invisible at best, and at worst, rejected.

"What the facts tell us," said Christopher, "is that the need for multicultural education -- and the materials and training that can deliver it directly to the nation's classrooms -- is critical. Our teachers need support. And our children cannot wait. The leadership that has developed AMERICANS ALL has galvanized the support of education's diverse factions to create a forum for shared leadership among teachers, unions, administrators, school board members, parents, publishers, and future employers of today's and tomorrow's youth.

The AMERICANS ALL program focuses on six population groups that helped to build the nation. Materials relative to each of those groups -- Native Americans, Africans, Asians, Europeans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans -- are integrated throughout the curriculum.

Director Christopher said: "That integration means that the AMERICANS ALL experience is made a vital part of history, social studies, geography, civics, reading, and writing -- beginning in kindegarten.

"AMERICANS ALL begins to bridge the great divide between America's most vulnerable youth and the experience and background of the teachers responsible for motivating and educating them. By being an integral part of the curriculum -- beginning with the youngest students -- the program is more than an adjunct to basic learning skills. It's a vital part of those skills, which means that from the earliest age on, the program enhances how the most vulnerable students and teachers see and think about themselves -- and others. AMERICANS ALL has the capacity to help make 'education reform' a reality," Christopher said.

At this morning's press conference, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum of the District of Columbia Schools Roger Fish said: "The culturally diverse realities of today's schools -- the D.C. schools are a good example -- make the current debate over multicultural education moot. The relevant question no longer is 'what kind of multicultural education will there be', but how quickly and how effectively can a curriculum of inclusion and related teaching methodology be integrated into today's classrooms?' AMERICANS ALL provides that vehicle."

Implementation of the AMERICANS ALL program in the D.C. schools, said Fish, is being made possible through a grant to AMERICANS ALL from The Hitachi Foundation. The Foundation also funded the initial AMERICANS ALL demonstration in San Diego.

Hitachi Foundation Senior Vice President Felicia B. Lynch said: "Evaluation feedback from the first 3000 students and their teachers, who have used the AMERICANS ALL program, confirms the program's basic premise -- that it is possible to deliver effective multicultural education that meets today's critical school realities." [See attached fact sheet].

"AMERICANS ALL does precisely what it was designed to do: it delivers critically needed tools -- training and resources -- directly to teachers and classrooms, which makes the program a prime example of the Foundation's commitment to the improvement of the ability of individuals to participate in our rapidly changing global society," Lynch added.

AMERICANS ALL Honorary Co-Chairman Andrew Young said he became involved in the program because of "the very clear needs that multicultural education must address -- and must address now -- rather than somewhere down the line, after the debate has cooled down.

"The issue no longer is whether there will be multicultural education

in the nation's schools, but what kind there will be, and who can deliver it fastest," Young continued. "The realities of our changing school populations speak for themselves. If we are going to compete as a multicultural society, we are going to have to learn to live as a multicultural society. The schools certainly are one of the places where that process must be nurtured, and the AMERICANS ALL program has already proven to be an invaluable assist to that process.

"It provides students with the experience and skills to make the tough decisions that lie ahead," Young continued.

Honorary AMERICANS ALL Co-Chair Ted Danson, star of "Cheers" and president of the American Oceans Campaign, said in a written statement that his interest in -- and commitment to -- environmental challenges prompted his involvement in AMERICANS ALL. "Unless our citizens can relate to and accept one another, they won't have the skills necessary to come together in the effort that is going to be required to save our environment.

"AMERICANS ALL helps children gain respect and appreciation for each other, which, in turn, enables them to think about other issues in a clear, analytical, and critical way. The ability of our citizens to think in that manner, then make informed decisions, will determine our future," Danson added.

AMERICANS ALL National Director Gail Christopher said that reactions from teachers to the program "have been especially gratifying."

"When many think about multicultural education, they tend to forget that the classroom teacher is the person who is on the frontlines of the process. Today's teachers have the difficult role of helping high-risk minority youth feel 'at home' in the classroom. The good teacher knows that a sense of belonging is an important first step in learning. Our materials have proven to be an invaluable tool in assisting teachers learn more about the diverse backgrounds of their students, which enables both teachers and students to create a more positive learning environment more quickly," Christopher continued.

The coalition that created AMERICANS ALL, Christopher said, "is multicultural, and knows first-hand the problems that are encountered daily by teachers and students in our nation's classrooms. Their knowledge and experience, which have gone into the AMERICANS ALL program, have created a program -- and a partnership -- that works for America's future by working for -- and in -- our nation's schools."

In addition to San Diego, Chicago, D.C., Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles, AMERICANS ALL plans implementation during 1991 in Miami and Dubuque (IA) schools.

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AMERICANS ALL is a project of The Coordinating Committee for Ellis Island, Inc., a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) educational organization founded in 1982.