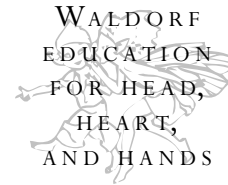


FEBRUARY, 2004



HIGH SCHOOL
Students
EMBRACE
Socially Responsible
BUSINESS

The generation graduating from high school in this post-millennial era is a group unlike any of its predecessors. They are the first generation to have grown up since the Internet became the global conduit of information. And they are coming of age in a time of unprecedented globalization—one marked by global conflict, environmental worries, and economic uncertainty.

INSIDE

LETTERS 2
IN THE GRADES 3
SCHOOL NEWS 7
COMPASSION IN WAR 10
PARENTS AT HVS 12
EVENTS OF INTEREST 13
CLASSIFIED 15



ECONOMICS TEACHER GARY LAMB AND HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS TACKLE SERIOUS GLOBAL ISSUES. THROUGH THEIR STUDIES OF ADAM SMITH, KARL MARX, AND RUDOLF STEINER, STUDENTS LEARNED ABOUT THE CONCEPTUAL BASIS OF CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM, AND ASSOCIATIVE ECONOMICS.

Yet many of this generation receive little opportunity during school to consider how they could help solve some of these urgent challenges. Studies have shown that this group, dubbed by pollsters as the “e-generation,” is imbued with important qualities: optimism, confidence, and high values regarding civic duty, morality, and diversity. As they face their college years or the prospect of entering the workforce directly, they are interested in making a difference.

This situation inspired Gary Lamb, a high school teacher at Hawthorne Valley School in Columbia County, to develop an intensive course in economics that focused not just on how to be productive but also how to be socially responsible in the process. For four weeks this fall, the students at this independent Waldorf school investigated the main features of capitalism and socialism, and then looked into emerging alternative economic movements such as fair trade distribution, community supported agriculture, community land trusts, associative economics, and socially responsible investment. They visited a local factory, heard guest speakers on alternative business models, and created business plans for socially responsible enterprises including a windmill manufacturer, community-building restaurants and coffee shops, an advertising agency, and a stringed instrument manufacturer that trains and employs socially disadvantaged individuals.

“Students who are about to graduate are often equally apprehensive and excited,” said Mr. Lamb. “They are very attuned to both the good and bad in the world, and as a consequence, sometimes there is tension in their souls as they struggle to understand the social problems they see and to figure out what they can do about them. They can easily

be overwhelmed by it. My goal with this course is to give them enough knowledge of mainstream economic structures and alternatives so that they can begin to understand what is going on and feel that they can eventually make a difference in the world.”

I THINK ABOUT IT EVERY DAY

The students worked together in groups of five to create their business plans, which they presented to an audience of faculty, parents, and others in the school community. All the students found the course invigorating and eye-opening.

“Most people don’t get to learn this side of economics in school,” said Stephanie Hartka, whose group developed a business plan for the “Rise Up Café,” a combination café, music shop and bookstore with space and programs for young and old to attend concerts, discussion groups, art exhibits, and lectures. Their proposed environmental policy for the enterprise includes provisions for the installation of solar panels on their building to generate renewable energy and the use of recycled paper products whenever possible. The café would favor local farmers and fair trade suppliers for its ingredients. The Café’s profits would go partly to a donor fund to support arts programs in public schools, scholarships for students who attend private schools, and tuition support for employees and patrons who attend college.

“Before this course, I thought economics studies sounded really boring,” said Ms. Hartka. “But it isn’t at all! I’ve become so conscious of how and what I consume, and how important it is to know what you are fueling or supporting as a daily consumer. Economics is every-day life. I’ll definitely study it in college, if

Resources for further Study

FAIR TRADE

Alternative Trade Organizations are committed to work directly with indigenous peoples and to market their products directly to end consumers.

EQUAL EXCHANGE ~ This worker-owned cooperative pioneered Fair Trade. www.equalexchange.com

THE FAIR TRADE FEDERATION ~ The FTF works to educate customers about the importance of fairly traded products. www.fairtradefederation.com

GLOBAL EXCHANGE ~ This Independent non-profit works to educate and advocate work around international social justice issues. www.globalexchange.org

TRANSFAIR USA ~ This non-profit third party fair trade certifier authenticates that coffee has been purchased in accordance with FLO standards. www.fairtradeusa.org

COMMUNITY- SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST
A public policy research center jointly created by American Farmland trust and Northern Illinois University in 1991 helps to protect America’s agricultural lands and to encourage healthy farming practices. www.farmlandinfo.org

ROBYN VAN EN CENTER FOR CSA
RESOURCES ~ This organization facilitates connections to further the success of CSA’s. www.csacenter.org

LOCAL FOOD WORKS fosters sustainable local food systems through the development of local food networks. www.localfoodworks.org

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT & BUSINESS

THE RUDOLF STEINER FOUNDATION creates social benefit through global services that include philanthropic management, community investment, lending, grantmaking, advising, and educational programs. www.rsfoundation.org

ASSOCIATIVE ECONOMICS NETWORK offers seminars, publications and courses, and research into the nature and tasks of modern economic life. www.associative.economics.com

SOCIAL INVESTMENT FORUM ~ This national nonprofit membership organization promoting the concept, practice and growth of socially responsible investing. www.socialinvest.org

BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (BSR) is a global organization that helps member companies achieve success in ways that respect ethical values, people, communities and the environment. www.bsr.org

IN THE VALLEY

HAWTHORNE VALLEY ASSOCIATION & HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM ~ HVA promotes cultural renewal through education, agriculture, and the arts. www.hawthornevalleyfarm.org

GARY LAMB ~ Associative economics consultant, teacher, author. Email: garylamb@usadatanet.net

TUROSE GIFT SHOPPE ~ Offers Fair Trade gift items from around the world. 518-672-0052

there is somewhere where I can learn this kind of economics.”

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, more than 1500 four-year universities and colleges now offer entrepreneurship classes, compared with only 450 such course since 1997. But, apart from ethics classes, there is little available on alternative economic and business models.

Mr. Lamb is aware of this and, consequently, is working on developing college-level courses and programs in alternative economics. He is discussing possible courses with colleges both locally and in Central America. “My students often want to continue learning about alternative economic approaches when they go to college.” he said, “But I am finding that most business and economic courses are not really up to date with the new and innovative activities happening right now. They seem to focus on what worked in the past, not what is needed for the future.”

Drawing upon 25 years in business and not-for-profit administration, Lamb also gives workshops on globalization for adults interested in learning about sustainable development and socially responsible business.

Lamb believes that we need to examine new models. “They exist,” he explained. “Creative companies like Equal Exchange, a \$13 million company that pioneered the Fair Trade movement, are proving that new economic models can be both socially responsible and economically viable. One of their staff came to speak to our high-school class about how fair trade distributors are purchasing coffee from farmers in developing countries

at fair prices that really support them and their families, usually far above market levels. He also spoke to us about their worker-owned cooperative structure of the business. The students really like to meet and hear about creative people doing innovative things out of a concern for others rather than merely working out of self-interest.”

CREATING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKERS AND THEIR WORK

For Hawthorne Valley senior Jonah Thomas, the process of deciding what business to create grew easily out of the creative inspiration the course provided. His group devised a stringed-instrument manufacturer,



Guest speaker Kevin Hollender of Equal Exchange, explained the Fair Trade movement that his company helped create.

“IN SO MANY BUSINESSES TODAY, THE WORKER HAS NO PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORK THEY DO.”

JONAH THOMAS, HVS SENIOR



*Students produced and presented business plans
for five socially-responsible businesses,
and drew their own logos for each company.*

City Strings, based in Oakland, CA. The business centered on recreating a modern version of European guilds, where inner-city individuals without many employment opportunities could gain employment as apprentices and become true craftsmen and women, producing violins, violas, cellos, basses, and guitars, mostly from wood produced in a City-Strings-owned tree farm. The business would be windmill-powered and would recycle heavily, right down to wood scraps transformed into children's building blocks. Employees and their families would participate in cultural field trips, and long-term employees would eventually share in the ownership of the firm.

"The idea of what the firm would build was secondary to our intent to elevate the consciousness of the workers and offer them the opportunity to participate in a cultural atmosphere they otherwise would not readily have access to," said Thomas, who is himself a classical violist who is training at The Manhattan School of Music. "We wanted to create a business where the workers could produce something from start to finish, where they could

see the end product and be proud of it. In so many businesses today, the worker has no personal relationship to the work they do."

According to Thomas, Lamb's introduction to capitalist and socialist economics were good grounding for an exploration of new and creative alternatives. At the end of the course block, the students were hungry for more.

Fellow student, Aiola Komenda agreed. Her group devised a consulting and advertising agency called *Open Your Eyes*, whose mission was to educate the public about the socially conscious companies it serves. Its out-of-the gate client roster included *City Strings*, *Rise Up Café*, and the other student creations from the course.

Ms. Komenda, who intends to major in social work and minor in foreign languages when she enters college, thought that economics would not interest her. She discovered otherwise. "I didn't think I would like economics," she said. "But I really enjoyed it. We had very lively debates and came up with wide-ranging solutions to problems that are part of the world we live in." ❁

HAWTHORNE VALLEY SCHOOL NEWS

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Published monthly for our students, parents and grandparents, and for faculty, alumni, and others interested in staying abreast of the mission and activities of Hawthorne Valley School. Hawthorne Valley News strives to:

1. Enhance understanding of Waldorf education at Hawthorne Valley School
2. Expand interest in and understanding of the School's mission and governance
3. Provide practical information about School activities, needs and goals
4. Publish examples of work of students, faculty, alumni, and others associated with the School
5. Recognize and encourage community volunteerism
6. Give voice to the talents within the community

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Hawthorne Valley News is published the first week of each month, September through June. We invite readers to submit articles for consideration that relate to school activities and events. Hawthorne Valley School reserves all editorial rights, including the right to reject any material it deems unsuitable for publication. Editorial and advertising submission deadlines for Winter-Spring 2004 are as follows:

RELEASE DATE	ADS DUE	EDITORIAL DUE
February 5	January 19	January 19
March 4	February 19	February 23
April 1	March 19	March 19
May 29	April 19	April 19
May 27	May 12	May 14

All submissions are due by the deadline at 9 am. They should be typed and delivered in hardcopy and on floppy disk or CD in the Publications Mailbox at Hawthorne Valley School, or via email to jcross@crossworldnetwork.com.

Display and classified advertising reservations should also be made by contacting Janet Cross at 518-851-3580 or via email. Ad materials can be submitted as hardcopy (high quality laser output), or as PDF, Quark, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator or Word files. They must be received by the deadlines noted above. Send materials via email to