

# Around the World Project

## Passaic Valley High School Responds to Secretary of State's Appeal

From 8 AM May 20<sup>th</sup> through 8 AM May 21<sup>st</sup> (EST) Passaic Valley High School students will videoconference with students from over a dozen foreign countries in an effort to promote global awareness and understanding. This project was motivated by a statement from Secretary of State Colin L. Powell quoted in *International Education Week 2002*.

“As we work to end the scourge of terrorism, let us also work to increase peace, prosperity and democracy. We can do this through international programs that promote the exchange of ideas and the sharing of experiences. These programs give us insight into other languages and cultures and in the process build long lasting relationships among peoples based on mutual understanding, respect and trust.”

The Passaic Valley “Around the World Project,” is such of international program. It will bring students from different cultures and backgrounds together to promote global awareness and understanding through a combination of videoconferencing, real time e-mail and online chats during one 24 hour period. Our hope is that this event will lead to future cooperative projects, long lasting friendships, and a better understanding of our role and responsibilities in an ever-changing world. Our first year's endeavor is focused on “getting to know each other.”

Schools and organizations interested in participating in the project were asked to prepare some form of presentation for the videoconference that would help others learn more about them. For this purpose, Passaic Valley made a video of a typical day at school to play during the videoconferences. Participants were also asked to prepare at least five questions that they would like to ask about our country, school, etc. The questions prepared by Passaic Valley students are:

1. What do you do for fun? (sports, hobbies, other recreation)
2. How would you describe a typical American?
3. In your view, what is America's role in the world?
4. What misconceptions do you think exist about your country?
5. What do you think is the biggest problem facing the world today and how can we solve it?

Schools currently scheduled for the project include: Thomas Lord Audley School in Great Britain, Academy of Economic Studies in Romania, Barrie Learning Center in Canada, John Kelly Girls' Technical College in Great Britain, Grupo Educativo Marin in Argentina, Bauer International School in Mexico, Lincoln School in Costa Rica, Warracknabeal Secondary College in Australia, Wako Kokusai High School in Japan, Diocesan Boys' School in Hong Kong, Bharatiya-Vidya Bhavan's School in India, GDLN DLC in Ukraine, Johannesburg Youth Techno Center in South Africa, Sigmund-Schuckert-Gymnasium in Germany and Metro West High School in Israel.

An all night videoconference event with students in other countries was the idea of Principal John Wallace. The Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Viktor J. Joganow and the Passaic Valley Board of Education granted permission for the event. Director of Technology, Matthew Conforth was given the challenge of organizing the project along with creating the theme. Conforth recalled the speech made by the Secretary of State and thought it made an excellent focal point for the project. It was decided to involve students in the Passaic Valley Junior Statesman Club under the direction of Danielle Vigilante because of the cultural diversity of the club and their previous involvement in a United Nations Project on Human Rights organized by Global Education Motivators.

This international K-12 project was made possible by the efforts and contributions of many participants and showcases the growing partnerships between business, higher education and K-12 schools.

Additional information about this year's Around the World Project can be found at: <http://www.njedge.net/activities/aroundtheworld2003>

## **Project Leaders and Facilitators**

### **Passaic Valley High School**

Dr. Victor J. Joganow, Superintendent,  
John Wallace, Principal  
Matthew Conforth, Director of Technology  
Danielle Vigilante, Teacher

### **Global Education Motivators:**

Sabrina J. Cusimano and Wayne Jacoby

Because of their expertise in videoconferencing, Global Education Motivators (GEM ) helped bring together schools from across the globe for this exciting project. GEM is an educational organization that coordinates videoconferencing and on site experiences for classes and schools in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and worldwide. Programs are based on global issues, awareness, and responsibility; and are designed to facilitate communication and understanding of our interconnected world.

Visit GEM at [www.gem-ngo.org](http://www.gem-ngo.org).

### **NJEDge.Net**

NJEDge.Net's partnership in the Around the World Project will enrich the experience of the participating students by supplementing the live video conferencing with an online website and course. The website gives the ability of parents to view the video and the course creates an ongoing opportunity for the students from each country to continue their conversation. Special thanks go to Charlie McMickle, Assistant Director for Technology; Sheri Prupis, Educational Technologist; and Sujay Daniel, Systems Administrator.

NJEDge.Net promotes New Jersey's colleges and universities integration of technology into instruction, research and public service through an enhanced statewide data/video network.

Visit NJEDge.Net at [www.njedge.net](http://www.njedge.net).

### **Verizon**

This program was made possible in part by the support of Verizon New Jersey. Passaic Valley HS will be connecting to sites internationally by using the ACCESS NEW JERSEY Video Portal. The Access New Jersey Portal provides a statewide video conferencing network for all K-12 schools throughout New Jersey.

### **Portal Facts.**

- Over 300 registered New Jersey schools participate with the ANJ Portal.
- The Access New Jersey Portal has been in existence for the last four years.
- The Portal is funded by monies that come out of the Access New Jersey Program.

This 24 hour event will be staffed and coordinated by Daniel Cleary, Stephen Antonucci and Eric Kulmala, members of the Video Portal team. NJIT will be connected to the ANJ Portal so that the Program can be streamed on the World Wide Web.

ANJ Portal website: [www.accessnewjersey.net](http://www.accessnewjersey.net). Phone 973-497-9765....

### **New Jersey Institute of Technology**

The Around the World Project is appreciative Bill Duelly and his staff in their efforts to stream the video conference.

### **Montclair State University**

Elements of this program were made possible in cooperation with the Office of Information Technology at Montclair State University.

### **Global Leap**

Some of the school partnerships were made possible with the assistance and cooperation of Global Leap. Visit them at <http://www.global-leap.com/>