

2004

## Highlights of 2004

- Core Knowledge welcomes forty-two new schools to its network and certifies twenty-two schools as new visitation sites. Growth in schools exceeds projections by 40 percent.
- Research on the Core Knowledge reading program moves to high priority status in anticipation of a new book on reading by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.
- Teacher Handbooks for kindergarten and grade 1 and Day-by-Day Planners for grades K–5 are released to very positive reviews.
- Two new research studies show positive results for Core Knowledge.
- Classrooms using the *Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence* increase to 1,096.
- New Director of Educational Materials Department hired.
- Multiyear conference contract signed with the Marriott Corporation. Next conferences to be held in Philadelphia and San Antonio.
- President announces the selection of Lipman Hearne to partner with Core Knowledge in a new public relations initiative.



## A Message from the President

Dear Friends of Core Knowledge,

**M**y second full year as President of the Core Knowledge Foundation has been both exhilarating and challenging. I am inspired by what has been accomplished by my excellent staff and by the hundreds of teachers and administrators working to implement Core Knowledge across the country. These accomplishments will be apparent in the growth described in this report, particularly in the dramatic growth in the number of schools and preschools. This has truly been a year of growth—growth very much envisioned as a follow-up to the relationship-building and networking that occupied much of the prior year.

Among the achievements cited in this document, I am especially pleased that we are able to report the release of two Teacher Handbooks and six Day-by-Day Planners, resources long in development and long requested by classroom teachers, our most important ambassadors for Core Knowledge.

At the same time that I celebrate the growth of schools and resources, I am challenged by seeing the work still to be done, the projects so ambitiously begun and continued this year that are still to be funded or brought to fruition. You will be hearing about these as well. Be assured, however, that the challenge is a positive one and one that I am eager to address, knowing that I can count on the



Barbara Garvin-Kester  
President, Core Knowledge Foundation

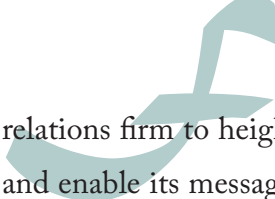
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help that all of you in the Core Knowledge network have so generously provided throughout 2004.

As in my first year, my happiest task in 2004 was visiting schools, some sixteen of them in six states: New Mexico, Michigan, Connecticut, Texas, South Carolina, and New York. I was able to pursue on these trips another significant initiative at the Foundation, the development of teacher education programs more solidly grounded in academic disciplines—programs that will prepare young people for teaching Core Knowledge. I am happy to report that two colleges—Shimer College in Waukegan, Illinois, and the College of the Southwest in Hobbs, New Mexico, are developing plans to offer Core Knowledge certification programs for teachers at the graduate and undergraduate levels. I shall be making follow-up visits in 2005 to guide these schools in their planning efforts and to help them obtain faculty support and grant funding.

I am delighted to announce that at the end of 2004, after a lengthy search, we selected a new partner in our effort to grow Core Knowledge, the head of the newly named Department of Educational Resources, Robert D. Shepherd. Bob joined our staff in early January, 2005, and brings with him a wealth of knowledge about publishing and about educational standards. Bob founded and served as CEO of his own educational publishing company and has broad experience in the development of textbooks across a wide range of curricular areas. He is very much attuned to the Core Knowledge philosophy and looks forward to making many contributions to our growth.



Following a directive from the Board of Trustees, I have found a public relations firm to heighten the profile of Core Knowledge and enable its message to be heard by a larger audience. With the Board's guidance, we selected Lipman Hearne, a Washington-based firm that almost exclusively serves nonprofit organizations, many of them devoted to educational endeavors.

I'll be working with Lipman Hearne this year to direct implementation of the recommendations in their proposal. The board will continue to provide oversight and guidance in this area, beginning with the next board meeting, the first such meeting ever to be held during the National Core Knowledge Conference.

Since the Foundation is actively pursuing alliances with like-minded organizations, I was honored this year to be able to chair the AALE certification committee for the KIPP Academy in Houston, Texas, and was delighted to find that many of the objectives of that organization are compatible with our own. You will find other evidence of outreach throughout this report, such as our continuing to seek partnerships with professional associations, funding providers, publishing companies, and reform organizations in a continuing effort to amplify our voice and to expand the vision we have for improving education for all American children.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge once again my gratitude for the remarkable contribution that E. D. Hirsch, Jr., continues to make year after year. This year, while very much occupied with writing his new book on the subject of reading, he nonetheless found time to accept an

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invitation from the Portuguese Ministry of Education to address an audience of their educators in Lisbon. Also, as a member of the Stanford-based KORET Task Force, he visited London to review their specialist schools (called magnet schools in this country). Obviously, his ideas resonate far beyond our borders, and I am extremely fortunate to have him close at hand as I strive to realize the vision he has so boldly articulated. I want to thank him and all others in the Core Knowledge network for the opportunity given me, yet another year, to grow this organization and to grow with it as it strives to realize this vision—that a solid education become the new civil right for every American child.

Yours sincerely,

*Barbara Garvin-Kester*

Barbara Garvin-Kester, Ed.D.

*Core Knowledge has taken Murfee from being a good school to being a school of excellence. Core Knowledge has added focus and depth to our curriculum and made learning meaningful and fun for our students. We are confident that the Core Knowledge Sequence has enabled us to stay on the top of the list of Texas schools with our test scores even though the passing standard has been raised each year.*

*—Kathy Rollo, Principal,  
Murfee Elementary School, Lubbock Texas*

# The Core Knowledge Foundation

## Annual Report 2004

*Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.*

—Benjamin Franklin

The adage that an institution that doesn't grow will begin to wither was tested with positive results at the Core Knowledge Foundation this year. Happily, this annual report will highlight several areas of growth, both in the development of new schools and in the publication of new resources.

### Growing through Curricular Research

#### The Reading Program: Cultural Literacy for All Children

The desired goal of Core Knowledge and its curriculum reform has always been to produce life-long readers, readers capable of enlightened participation in all



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**H**ead Elementary School in Savannah, Georgia, which adopted Core Knowledge in 2000, has met its Annual Yearly Progress goals for the fourth straight year, earning a spot on the state Department of Education's list of distinguished Title I schools and an award of \$12,492. Principal Pamela Stevenson attributes her success to an enhanced curriculum and the talented teachers who make it work, according to a laudatory article in the *Savannah Morning News* (Aug. 5, 2004), "Georgia's [official approved curriculum] is excellent," Ms. Stevenson is quoted as saying, "but Core Knowledge gives us a specific sequence that enhances that curriculum and is very beneficial."

aspects of their culture—its intellectual, spiritual, artistic, political, and economic life. A reading program of sufficient breadth and depth for meeting this goal has not emerged on the market, so the Foundation is now devoted to producing its own reading program.

This year saw considerable progress in the development of the Core Knowledge reading program under the direction of Matthew Davis, who devoted much of his time to researching and producing a prototype for this program.

The Core Knowledge program will have two strands of learning. The skills strand will teach the mechanics of decoding through direct, systematic instruction in phonics, supplemented by lots of practice to build fluency. The language strand will build vocabulary and knowledge through frequent read-aloud experiences. Stories and poems from the Core Knowledge Sequence will be grouped with other outstanding works to introduce students to key domains of knowledge. The skills strand will equip students to sound out the words on the page, and the language strand will ensure that they understand the words they sound out.

E. D. Hirsch, Jr., has contributed much *pro bono* time on this project and, with assistance from Matt Davis and Barbara Garvin-Kester, has written a revolutionary book on reading. The foundation expects that this book will alter the focus of our nation's ongoing discussion about reading and help the foundation to locate funders for the reading program.

## Growing K-8 Schools

In 2004 Core Knowledge welcomed forty-two new schools to its network, exceeding projected growth by 40 percent and bringing the total number of K-8 schools committed to implementing Core Knowledge to 486. Of these new schools, eighteen are public, seventeen are public charter, and seven are private schools. The total number of students in K-8 schools is 190,017.

Since the number of schools self-reporting their implementation of Core Knowledge varies considerably from year to year, growth has been inconsistent and difficult to assess. For this and other reasons, the schools department for the past two years has concentrated its efforts on increasing the number of official schools and certifying some schools as visitation sites. This emphasis means that our focus is not primarily on adding schools but rather on encouraging both existing and new schools to become the best possible exemplars of Core Knowledge.

This year, twenty-two schools became visitation sites, and five additional schools earned official status. These schools have had visits from Core Knowledge representatives, have participated in various professional development workshops, and have submitted clear evidence of their commitment to teach at least 80 percent of the Core Knowledge curriculum. We are particularly proud that these schools, now numbering ninety official schools and thirty-four visitation sites, will be very active partners in the growth of our movement.

**M**ills Elementary School in Hobbs, New Mexico, is fostering in its students not only academic excellence but also a spirit of community service. In the past two years, Mills has raised \$2,000 for the local humane society with a "Pennies for Pets" program and tried to share the warmth with less fortunate children by sponsoring a "mittens and hats" Christmas tree.

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As schools in their areas become aware of their achievements, other schools will surely follow.

This year saw the approval of a three-year grant totaling \$445,000 to implement Core Knowledge in four K–6 schools in the Helena/West Helena School District in Arkansas. Implementation will be guided by staff recruited from the district who will work under the direction of Gerald Terrell, vice president of K–8 Schools and professional development, and Yolanda Van Ness, CSR grant coordinator. Six school administrators from the district attended a Leadership Institute held in Charlottesville in October, 2005.

Yolanda Van Ness, based in San Antonio, has continued her work in support of schools working under grants for Comprehensive School Reform, a three-year federal program intended to assist under-performing schools. Currently, there are nine schools in their third year of using Core Knowledge and four schools in their second year. Because several schools are entering the final stages of working under CSR grant funds, Yolanda found time this year to help coordinate work on the Walton grant for Helena/West Helena, Arkansas, schools and also to work on a large grant project for Arlington Elementary School in Jackson, Tennessee.

*Since we began with Core Knowledge, our test scores and our enrollment have continued to rise. More importantly, however, our students have had substantive, "meaty" material to feed their minds. This has increased their appetite for more. And everything that is true for our students has also been true for our faculty; their excitement, quality of teaching, and ability to relate one subject to other areas of life have grown.*

— Kirby R. McCrary, Director,  
Millennium Charter Academy,  
Mount Airy, North Carolina

## Increased Professional Development

All forty-two schools added this year contracted for professional development, and another twenty-two schools scheduled

professional development for the first time. One hundred and three school leaders, some new to Core Knowledge and some not, participated in eight leadership institutes in Charlottesville, Virginia; Lubbock, Texas; and Denver, Colorado. In addition, our staff and our cadre of fifty-five trained consultants conducted 407 days of workshops this year. Geared toward initial implementation, teacher orientation, unit writing, and other topics, these workshops are designed to inspire and sustain quality performance in Core Knowledge schools across the network.

*Core Knowledge really is fantastic. . . it is the motivating curriculum that keeps our students so engaged and so eager to read, read, read. We have 157 kiddos on this campus [preK through 4th] and they are currently checking out 2,000 books a month!*

—Nancy Grayson, Principal,  
Rappoport Academy, Waco, Texas

## New Resources for Schools

### Teacher Handbooks

Bringing Core Knowledge goes hand-in-hand with producing new materials to streamline the implementation process and make it more viable for overburdened teachers and under-resourced schools. This year saw our most important publishing development in many years: the release of the first two Teacher Handbooks in the planned series of six. These Handbooks are designed to provide teachers with the background, the resources, and the teaching strategies needed to teach the *Core Knowledge Sequence* more effectively. They are coordinated with the *Sequence* and come with a set of instructional masters, or reproducible student handouts.

This project, overseen by project director Souzanne Wright, has been some four years in the making and will be completed through grade 5 by spring of 2006. The books have undergone extensive review by teachers in



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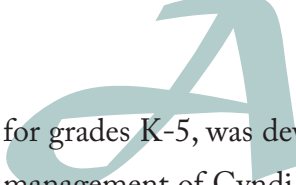
*Faculty and staff at Abilene Christian Schools, recognized in November 2004 [as an official visitation site], are busily telling the Core Knowledge story to our patrons and community. This is a new curriculum concept in our area. . . . We are delighted with the progress we are making and grateful for this excellent educational dimension for our students.*

*—Edsel Hughes, Elementary Principal,  
Abilene Christian Schools*

the field, as well as by subject-area experts. Each section is accompanied by newly developed lists of resources compiled by outside consultants.

At each grade level, the Handbooks are supplemented by two additional publications, Text Resources and Art Resources, which were released separately last year in advance of the Handbooks themselves.

### Day-by-Day Planners

nother exciting new resource for schools, Day-by-Day Planners for grades K-5, was developed this year under the management of Cyndi Wells, director of professional development. The Planners are available in CD-ROM format and are designed to help teachers implement the *Sequence* in more effective ways by providing overall learning objectives, resources, and especially ideas about pacing and recommended percentages of time to be spent on each topic. Middle-school Planners are already underway and will be released at the 2005 Conference. The CD-ROM Planners provide daily, monthly, and yearly planning views, as well as strategies for incorporating state and district standards. In addition, they contain reproducible instructional masters and suggested modifications for adapting material for learners with special needs. Printed Workbooks will also be ready for the 2005 conference. The Workbooks, designed in cooperation with teachers and consultants, will reduce the time that it takes Core Knowledge teachers to plan their lessons and will be a powerful tool for recruitment of new schools.

Taken together, these new resources represent the Foundation's commitment to the needs of classroom teachers. These resources will make the *Sequence* more efficient and more effective in the classroom and more adaptable to ever-changing state standards. The *Sequence*, of course, provides the detailed outline of the curriculum; the Handbooks provide the resources and strategies needed to teach the curriculum; and the Planners explain how to pace and connect topics so that all learning goals are achieved in a given school year.

### Classroom Libraries

Another resource for schools, classroom libraries for grades K–8, is being prepared by Core Knowledge in cooperation with the publisher Scholastic, Inc. The libraries, to be marketed by Scholastic, are being selected from books recommended in the Teacher Handbooks, in *Books to Build On*, and in “Resources to Build On,” a searchable database on the Core Knowledge website. The books in the libraries are being selected for their literary excellence, their grade appropriateness, and their direct relation to the topics in the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. Maggie Grove, an experienced outside consultant, was hired to work on this project under the direction of Cyndi Wells. These libraries will contain both fiction and nonfiction and will be accompanied by Teacher Guides. Since they will be marketed outside the Core Knowledge network, but with its imprimatur, they are expected to expand the awareness of Core Knowledge in schools nationwide.

*Parents at Morrison Elementary are more involved in our school than ever since we began sharing with them the Core Knowledge topics we are studying. We introduce them to Core Knowledge topics by having students develop a PowerPoint presentation on the Civil War, by holding a Heroes Fair and a Country Fair, by sponsoring a constellation party, and by using Sayings and Phrases as part of our morning announcements. One of our favorite programs is a day with Tennessee John and his authentic pioneer camp, complete with pioneer wagon and mules. Students are truly excited by these activities and, better yet, truly engaged in the learning process.*

*Sandy Pfeuffer, Principal,  
Morrison Elementary School,  
Fort Smith, Arkansas*

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**F**ederal Hill School, in Baltimore, Maryland, adopted Core Knowledge in 2001 under a Comprehensive School Reform Grant and with a determination to remove themselves from the state's "needs improvement" list. "By the spring of 2004," reports Principal Sharon Van Dyke, "Federal Hill Preparatory School students had met Maryland State Standards for two consecutive years. . . . There is no doubt that Core Knowledge played an important role in our success."

### Core Classics: King Arthur

Teachers will also have a new Core Classic to add to their curriculum choices this year with the publication of *King Arthur*. A Teacher's Guide is also in preparation and will be mounted on the website soon, joining the other guides, which have greatly enhanced sales of this series. This series is seen as having trade potential outside Core Knowledge schools, and we are currently researching ways of introducing the series and other Core Knowledge publications to new markets.

### New Marketing Initiative: Informational DVD

**T**his year the Foundation introduced an overview video showcasing Core Knowledge in action in the classroom. Special thanks are due to Inman Middle School in Atlanta, Georgia, and to Crestwood School in Springfield, Virginia, both of which generously participated in the filming of this video. Initial response to the DVD has been extremely positive. It will extend the marketing reach of the Foundation by providing an exciting and professionally produced demonstration of how Core Knowledge works to inspire both teachers and students to meet the challenges of a content-rich curriculum. The DVD will be sold for a modest fee to recover production costs.

## New Research and Assessment

Assessment has long been recognized as important both for self-evaluation and for sharing the success stories of Core Knowledge schools. This year Core Knowledge contracted for two outside research studies on the effectiveness of its curriculum. One study, conducted by John Wedman, Director of the School of Information Science and Learning Technologies of the University of Missouri, analyzed national test score data from twenty-two official Core Knowledge schools across thirteen states. The data covered a six-year period and demonstrated scores significantly higher for Core Knowledge students on national tests in six content areas, regardless of the sizes and the ethnic and economic profiles of those schools. The study indicated the positive cumulative effect of exposure to Core Knowledge over time.

Another study, conducted by Dr. Herb Wahlberg, Professor Emeritus of Education and Psychology at the University of Illinois and currently a Hoover Institution Fellow, found that after the third grade, Core Knowledge students compared positively to other students on statewide tests in reading and math. The study compared 1,592 Core Knowledge students with some 533,919 other North Carolina students, and was, therefore, quite comprehensive. Again, a positive long-range effect was noted, and such an effect is consistent with the Core Knowledge principle that an investment in building a student's knowledge pays, over time, exponential dividends.

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Three Oaks Middle School, in Ft. Myers, Florida, was the only school in its district to receive a Five Star Award from the State acknowledging its outstanding community participation. Congratulations to Principal Linda Caprarotta and her excellent staff!

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## Colorado and Texas Reporting

As usual, Holly Hensey, Core Knowledge National Coordinator for Colorado, has had a very busy year guiding Colorado schools in their lesson writing and professional development activities. Highlights of Core Knowledge activities in Colorado are as follows:



Kathi Jones, teacher of Core Knowledge Units at all levels in Clegern Elementary School in Edmond, Oklahoma, abandoned the pleasures of retirement for a position as a special resource teacher in a Core Knowledge elementary school. Prior to retirement, she had taught at a middle school where she noticed something special about students with a Core Knowledge background. Her observations about Core Knowledge students, made during her job interview with Principal Bill Powell, are presented on the next page.

- In January and February, eighteen day-long Colorado Teacher Roundtables were held with 448 teachers from fifty different schools. The roundtables were offered at several grade levels and in several academic subjects, as well as in Special Education, Music, Art, Librarianship, Computer/Technology, and Physical Education.
- In April, a Leadership Conference was held, conducted by representatives from the Core Knowledge Foundation in Charlottesville. Administrators were given updates from the Core Knowledge Foundation and were also provided guidance on integrating Core Knowledge with Colorado's state test, the CSAP. Thirty administrators attended the half-day training.
- At the 2004 Colorado Summer Writing Institute, sixty-three teachers from twenty-five schools participated and produced forty-two outstanding units.
- Through the 2004 Colorado Unit Writing Project, eighty-two new units were produced and were added to the Colorado Core Knowledge website, [www.ckcolorado.org](http://www.ckcolorado.org)
- Two Colorado New Teacher Orientations were offered, one in August and one in September. A total of 156 participants attended the two sessions.

- The 2004 Colorado Core Knowledge Conference took place in October at Jefferson Academy, and over 900 people from over ninety-five schools and organizations attended the 165 sessions that were offered. Jim Weiss, a renowned storyteller, and Marcy Cook, a mathematics expert, conducted sessions throughout the day.
- During the summer and fall of 2004, Core Knowledge teachers wrote a collection of assessments for Core Knowledge history and geography topics. These assessments are currently being reviewed and will be posted, along with the finalized science assessments, on the Colorado Core Knowledge website.

Bruce Frazee, National Coordinator for the San Antonio Core Knowledge Schools, also had a busy 2004. The Northeast School District in San Antonio is adding four new Core Knowledge schools.

The week-long summer writing institute attended by twenty-five Core Knowledge teachers was held at San Antonio's Trinity University. Again this year, Professor Frazee and his interns wrote another school-wide unit to present at the 2005 annual conference. As in the past, they will host a post-conference presentation for San Antonio area schools that will not be able to send representatives to the event in Philadelphia. Many schools and parents are sponsoring fundraisers to enable schools with budget constraints to send more teachers to the conference. The 2006 conference setting in San Antonio will be a boon to these fundraisers.

*When I interviewed for a job at Clegern, I mentioned that I could identify Clegern students when they left Clegern and entered my seventh-grade class in middle school. I had never heard of Core Knowledge but saw that these students had a broader knowledge base. Their vocabulary was advanced, and their use of figures of speech was surprising. They had been introduced to many of the authors I taught — Dickinson, Frost, Whitman, Emerson, and even Shakespeare. They were familiar with important periods of history, such as the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and had been exposed to the art and music of these eras.*

*I also noticed that most of these students had the kind of self-confidence I hadn't seen in many middle-schoolers. I think the fact that they had been such active participants in their education contributed greatly to this confidence. They felt well-prepared and were comfortable sharing their knowledge with their peers. I see now that this is done routinely in classes here at Clegern. This building (Clegern Elementary School) exudes a contagious excitement — I'm glad I caught it!*

*Interview remarks by Kathi Jones,  
Submitted by William Powell, Principal,  
Clegern Elementary School,  
Edmonton, Oklahoma*

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The Core Knowledge Teacher of the year for 2004 in the San Antonio area has been selected from the ranks of the Serna Elementary School faculty, and the choice will be announced in February. As always, this person represents a commitment to students and to Core Knowledge by participating in a full range of professional development opportunities.

## Growing Pre-K Programs

### Establishing a National Presence in Early Childhood Education



The significant growth in the number of classrooms using the *Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence* will enable us to capitalize on the new-found emphasis being given to early childhood education at both national and state levels. Early Childhood Director Linda Bevilacqua held several meetings with state-level policy makers this year. These include meetings with Arkansas representatives of Even Start, with the Foundation of the MidSouth, and with the Special Assistant to the Governor of Florida for Universal Preschool.

At the end of 2004, there were 282 preschools and 1,096 classrooms using Core Knowledge. About one hundred of these classrooms are located in the Arkansas Delta, and they were recruited with help from a grant provided by the Walton Family Foundation. Head Start classrooms

comprise 355 of the total, reflecting an increase of 200 percent, and state-funded classrooms comprise 164 of the total, representing an increase of 500 percent.

## Meeting New Training Needs

The growth in preschool classrooms adopting the Pre-K Sequence created need for more training, which the Foundation met by developing a new training program on early childhood leadership. The Foundation also redesigned ten of its Early Childhood professional development training modules. Forty-four training sessions were conducted in thirteen states, including sessions at the Region VI Head Start Conference. The number of sessions presented increased by 46 percent over the preceding year.

## Providing New Early Childhood Resources

The year saw a major development in the preschool publication area with the introduction of the Core Knowledge Preschool Assessment Tool, a software-based management system tied to the goals and objectives of the Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence. This tool enables reporting at the student, class, and agency levels and meets the reporting requirements of Head Start.

Core Knowledge also developed, in partnership with Lakeshore Publishing, preschool kits for assessment, math, and science. The Foundation is continuing to work on the development of a Core Knowledge preschool

*What Core Knowledge has brought to Hurst Hills is a new excitement about learning. Our test scores were already good, but now our students and teachers are enthusiastically learning together. During the fall semester, our advanced academics classes were doing a project with a local retirement center. Some of the residents came to visit, and as I was walking out with them at the end of their visit, I began to tell them about Core Knowledge while pointing to the various art masterpieces hanging in the halls. The visitors smiled and told me the students had already shared this information and more as they welcomed them into the building. They were amazed at the knowledge the students shared as they talked about Core Knowledge.*

*—Georgeann Gallian, Principal,  
Hurst Hills Elementary, Hurst, Texas*

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The designation of The O'Neal School as an official visitation site was extensively covered in the local paper, *The Pilot*, which serves Southern Pines and other parts of the North Carolina coast. The O'Neal School began implementing Core Knowledge in 1995, and Jim Miles, head of the Lower School, is quoted as being extremely pleased with the curriculum. "One of the best aspects of Core is that it's sequenced. Knowledge is built on knowledge, which means we don't have to reinvent the wheel." The article includes a full description of a unit on one of his favorite topics, Western Expansion. The unit culminates in an activity called "The O'Neal Trail." In this activity, fifth-graders act as parents to the second-graders, and both groups draw upon the knowledge they have gained from the unit.

anthology and two ancillary activity books and is seeking a partner to publish and market these titles.

## Undertaking New Preschool Marketing Initiatives

This year Core Knowledge enhanced its presence on the national early education scene by exhibiting at several major conferences, including the National Head Start Conference and the National Association of Educators of Young Children Conference, both in Anaheim, California, as well as the NAEYC Professional Development Conference in Baltimore. Core Knowledge also exhibited at statewide conferences in Ohio, Florida, and Arkansas.

Other marketing initiatives included redesigning the preschool portion of the website, producing new brochures, and advertising in Head Start's *Child and Family*, and NAEYC's *Young Children* magazines.

## Conducting New Research and Assessment in Preschools

In 2004, Core Knowledge developed a research proposal with Westat and Maurice Sykes to conduct a random design study of fifteen Core Knowledge and fifteen control preschools in Washington, D.C., all serving low-income populations. The proposal will be submitted for federal funding to the Institute of Educational Science of the Department of Education.

The Foundation also sought empirical data about student and teacher performance under a grant from the Abell and Weinberg Foundation. In this project, twenty-three classrooms using Core Knowledge in the Baltimore County Head Start program are fieldtesting a Day-by-Day Planner under development for Core Knowledge preschools.

## Growing the National Conference

In 2004, our national conference earned modest revenues for the first time. This accomplishment is especially gratifying given recent cutbacks in school budgets. The large number of attendees—2,124—is also considered quite good in light of these budget constraints.

This year Core Knowledge negotiated a multiyear contract with Marriott Hotels and Resorts for the 2006 Conference in San Antonio and the 2007 conference in Washington, D.C. The organization was able to negotiate especially favorable contract terms and to secure from Marriott an agreement to underwrite the appearance of the keynote speaker for the 2005 conference, the well-known Benjamin Franklin interpreter Ralph Archbold.

The 2004 conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia. Since the conference was able to book speakers from the faculty of Emory University and other schools and from

*We love the program [Core Knowledge] and would be less likely to move knowing our child is thriving with this program. We feel as if it's similar to a private school curriculum.*


*—A Core Knowledge parent*

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**M**aree Garnet Farring Elementary School, located in south Baltimore, is one of forty schools nationwide and one of two in Maryland to be named a distinguished Title I school by the National Association of State Title I Directors. The school has 460 students, 86 percent of whom receive free or reduced lunches. Maree Garnett was earlier recognized with a cash award given by the district for improved overall performance on the 2004 Maryland School Assessment (MSA). The school has implemented Core Knowledge with a CSR grant and has aligned all teaching units with the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSR) reading and math indicators and assessment limits in order to meet the learning needs of all students. Principal Thomas M. Stroschein and his hard-working staff are to be congratulated for creating a school environment that has led to this remarkable improvement in student achievement.

the staffs of several Atlanta museums, Core Knowledge was able to realize considerable savings on expenses. Attendees reported that the inclusion of local speakers contributed to the quality of the conference as well. Tapping local resources will be a continued feature of future conferences.

## Future Planning of the Conference

useum row will be a featured part of the vendor exhibits at our 2005 conference. In an October visit to Philadelphia, Conference Director Karen Baggiano was able to line up speakers from several museums, as well as experts from the University of Pennsylvania and other local universities. A new feature of the 2004 Conference—a festive complimentary lunch with a keynote speaker—was extremely well received by attendees. Children’s poet Jack Prelutsky, the program’s featured guest, was a major attraction and generated impressive sales of his books.

In the second half of 2004, the conference staff spent considerable time in the preparation, production, and mailing of 66,000 promotional pieces soliciting registrations for and interest in the 2005 conference.

The staff also mounted a more vigorous program for soliciting vendors, and by December, it had contracted with fifty vendors, five more than participated last year.

Ambitious plans for the growth of the conference will be realized with the assistance of a new staff member



hired this year—Emily Cherry, a recent graduate of the University of Virginia.

## Growing through Technology

### *Common Knowledge*

This year the Foundation continued to develop its electronic newsletter, *Common Knowledge*, as an important vehicle for introducing Core Knowledge to the media and to new audiences of all kinds. Published four times a year, *Common Knowledge* now has almost eight thousand subscribers, more than twice the number who subscribed to the print edition.

*Common Knowledge* also continued in 2004 to be a tool for connecting the Foundation to its network of schools, for featuring the achievements of Core Knowledge teachers in the field, and for sharing stories with the potential to enhance classroom instruction. Some highlights from the 2004 editions of *Common Knowledge* are

- an article by Core Knowledge consultant Elda Martinez showing how to adapt Core Knowledge to the teaching of children with special needs
- an article by Bruce Rodgers of Kellog Middle School in Rochester, Minnesota, explaining his study of the effect of Core Knowledge on the achievement of middle-school students

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- a profile of Debra Lindsay, an outstanding music teacher at Crestwood School in Springfield, Virginia
- an account of an excellence-in-teaching award made to Core Knowledge teacher and consultant Ellie Gaines. Given by the Milken Family Foundation, the award included a check for \$25,000.
- a story about the website developed by Jim Morgan, former teacher at Liberty Common School in Ft. Collins, Colorado, to help middle-school teachers implement Core Knowledge

*These articles and all past issues of Common Knowledge are posted on the website.*

## Core Knowledge Website

*Core Knowledge is providing ALL our students with a new, creative outlet for learning! They are more actively involved in the learning process through Core Knowledge.*

*—Jennifer Guy, Third-Grade Teacher,  
Broadmoor Elementary School, Hobbs, New Mexico*

Since many people discover Core Knowledge through our website, we have made a commitment to its continual improvement and expansion. This year Core Knowledge hired a new webmaster, Diana Brewster, who overhauled many features of the website, improving its general appearance and making navigation easier for the end user by, among other things, designing more convenient online forms. Diana has also begun the process of building our electronic publishing capability. She assisted with publication of the Day-by-Day Planners, designed the user manual for the Planners, and oversaw the hiring of a consultant to write installation software. Diana also redesigned the HTML pages for navigating the *Share the Knowledge* CD distributed at the national conference.

## Growing through Administrative Changes

This year the Foundation undertook two important administrative initiatives. It introduced a new employee pension plan and conducted a major job classification study that aligned employee compensation with industry standards.

A welcome addition to the administrative staff is our new executive secretary, Shelia White, who has returned to her hometown of Charlottesville after many years as an executive assistant with the Tropicana Corporation in Florida.



## Financial Highlights

The Core Knowledge Endowment Fund was established in 1995 through the generous donation of royalties generated by the sale of E. D. Hirsch, Jr.'s *Grader* series, published by Doubleday. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Founder of Core Knowledge and Chairman of its Board of Trustees, receives no monetary compensation for his work.

In 2004 the Core Knowledge Foundation continued implementation of a structured financial planning and management process. This implementation included the development and execution of an operating budget that details what the Foundation earns and buys and a

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performance budget that details how the dollars relate to strategic goals and objectives. Monthly financial data is reviewed and analyzed, and, with departmental participation, in-depth analysis is conducted quarterly. Linked to the Foundation's strategic plan and long-term financial strategy, this programmatic financial planning and management approach provides a sound, integrated financial management architecture for the future.

The Core Knowledge Foundation's financial position remains stable. Net assets at the end of 2004 were over \$5,500,000, an increase of \$900,000 from the end of 2003. The unrestricted asset balance (operating funds and the Foundation endowment) increased by approximately \$200,000 to over \$4,200,000. The restricted asset balance (grant funds) increased by approximately \$700,000 to over \$1,300,000, consistent with the varying cycles for grant allocations. In 2004, total Core Knowledge operating expense activity, including grant expenses, exceeded \$4,600,000. Cash flows remain stable and sufficient to meet the day-to-day needs of the Foundation.

## In Conclusion

Growth has been the theme of the plans and projects described in this 2004 report, and growth will continue in the years to come as Core Knowledge reaches beyond its internal network to potential new clients, new markets, and new ways of influencing the reform of American education. Some of our initiatives, like the reading program, the *Teacher Handbook* series, the teacher education project, and the public relations effort, will no doubt consume much of our attention in 2005 and much of the space in the next annual report, but always our commitment to serving students and teachers and schools will remain the same. Growth will not be pursued for its own sake, but only as a condition for fulfilling our mission. Growth will be sought in service to our schools and to our children, to make real for them the words *improvement*, *achievement*, and *success*.



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## Core Knowledge Foundation Board of Trustees

**E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Chairman, and Polly Hirsch**  
Professor Hirsch is the author of ten books, including works of scholarship on the Romantic period. His views on education reform are widely published in articles and in such acclaimed books as *Cultural Literacy* and *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*. He is also editor of the six-book series *What Your Kindergartner–Sixth Grader Needs to Know*. Polly and Don Hirsch founded the Core Knowledge Foundation in 1986.

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