



SCHOOL NEWS

September 13, 2007

PROGRAM CONNECTING STUDENTS WORLDWIDE TO SOLVE REAL PROBLEMS

COLUMBIA — Two teams of students, one each in Heathwood Hall's middle and upper (high) schools, have been selected to participate this year in the global Challenge 20/20 program sponsored by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). This is the second consecutive year that NAIS has chosen Heathwood Hall in the competitive program that pairs public and private school in the USA with partner schools around the world to solve real global problems.

Heathwood's middle school team this year will study water deficits with the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah, a Parochial school in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of Israel. At the high school level, students at Heathwood will join their counterparts at a sister school in France in tackling the pervasive issue of global poverty. Both groups are in the earliest stages of communicating and organizing their work for the year. "Our hope is that the Challenge 20/20 partnerships among schools across the globe will provide an excellent foundation for meaningful problem solving and cross continent relationships that lead to a more promising global future for our students and our schools," writes Ioana Suci, NAIS Associate Director of Global Initiatives.

At Heathwood Hall, one goal is to make this year's collaborations as successful as last year's. In 2006, NAIS paired Heathwood fifth grade science students with the sixth graders of Colegio Ingles, an independent school near Monterrey, Mexico. Together, they studied and developed a water-quality solution that earned an Honorable Mention from NAIS as one of the year's Top 5 international collaborations submitted for 5th–9th grade students.

"We created a rain garden on our campus near Heathwood's Athletic Center and senior parking lot," said middle school science teacher Peyton Sasnett. "It's now a natural space that collects runoff water from impervious surfaces nearby and uses native plants to filter it before it enters the groundwater supply, local aquifers and the Congaree River." Colegio Ingles students have since completed a similar project on their campus. In the process, students and teachers at both schools learned much more than just science.

Interest in the Challenge 20/20 continues to grow. In 2005-2006, 72 schools in 26 states and 30 countries participated, including 2 schools in SC. In 2006-2007, the numbers were up dramatically to 350 schools in 34 states and 52 countries, including 3 in SC. This year, NAIS received more than 400 applications from schools worldwide.