



Preparing the citizens of tomorrow today

2020 - 2021 Program Year



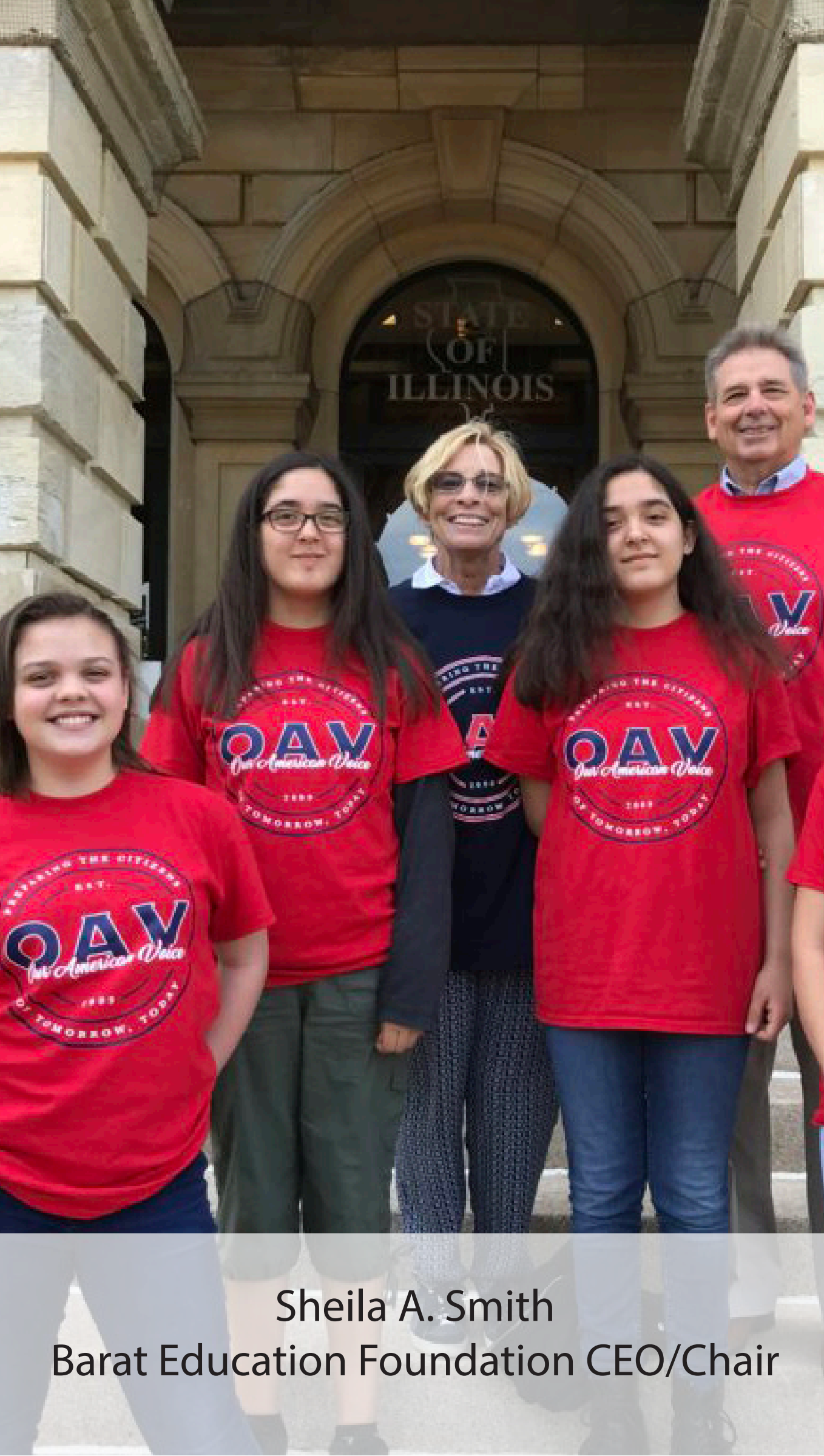
The Our American Voice Institute

OAV SCHOOLS

The Our American Voice® Institute, established by the Barat Education Foundation, builds civic and community capital, strengthening the ties that bind us together as Americans. The Institute has three cornerstone components: OAV Schools, Citizen U®, and Civic Life Collaborations.

The hallmark of the Institute, the Our American Voice® Schools Program (OAV), has operated in the State of Illinois since 2009. OAV is a one-of-a-kind civic learning and engagement program for elementary and middle school students, unique because of its action civics focus and the local community improvement projects initiated and implemented by students. In 2021, Barat Education Foundation will enhance and expand the OAV Schools Program to become the OAV Schools and Communities Program.

Since its establishment, OAV has reached 175 teachers and over 6,000 students in 150 schools in socially and economically disadvantaged communities throughout Illinois. With input and assistance from teachers and community members, those students have taken the lead in creating over 170 community improvement projects to strengthen their communities. OAV alumni have continued their civic dispositions, excelling academically, serving their communities, and participating in our democratic republic as informed and engaged citizens.



Sheila A. Smith
Barat Education Foundation CEO/Chair

Citizenship Is A Way of Life

In March 2007, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor challenged a group of education leaders, *"It's imperative if we are going to survive as a nation that our schools teach civics. Knowledge and understanding about our system of government is not something that's handed down in a generic pool. You have to learn it."*

Barat understood there was a civics crisis in education and in 2009 created Our American Voice® (OAV) to address the civic education vacuum in middle and elementary schools "to prepare the citizens of tomorrow today." Realizing that good citizenship requires more than civic education, Our American Voice® is a one-of-a-kind civic learning and engagement program for elementary and middle school students operating in and impacting marginalized communities throughout the state of Illinois. Since our inception, OAV has reached 175 teachers in 150 schools, more than 6,000 students creating over 150 community improvement projects. What makes OAV unique is its action civics focus. Each academic year OAV schools take civic principles and lessons and develop local community improvement projects initiated and implemented by OAV students.

Today, OAV continues to be a distinctive and transformative civics engagement program developed by OAV teachers and students for teachers and students. OAV students are not only tomorrow's citizens. They are today's citizens exhibiting the knowledge, actions, and abilities of informed citizenship. They continue to show what we can accomplish when we lift our voices together in collaborative problem solving instead of antagonistic opposition and rancor that far too often is governing the political process. The OAV students are renewing our Democracy.

A photograph of John Fontanetta, the OAV Program Director, wearing a dark blue baseball uniform with the number 35 and the word 'LEGEND' on the sleeve. He is holding a baseball bat. A young boy in a green jacket and glasses stands next to him, looking at the bat. The background is a white wall with vertical stripes.

Citizenship Is A Way of Life

It has been my great privilege to be the Program Director of the Our American Voice civics education program. Seeing our OAV students bring positive change to their communities and schools, while developing their leadership and communication skills, has been among the most rewarding experiences of my more than 40 years in education. The passion and dedication of these students and their OAV teachers is a daily inspiration for me. Their commitment to ensure OAV continued to thrive during the unique challenges of this past year is a testament to their ability to adapt and overcome in trying times.

Now, more than ever, we need the mission of OAV to develop young people who grow into engaged citizens with a desire to make the world a better place.

John Fontanetta
OAV Program Director



U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin
Illinois

RICHARD J. DURBIN

ILLINOIS

DEMOCRATIC WHIP

Citizenship Is A Way of Life

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

COMMITTEE ON RULES
AND ADMINISTRATION

May 20, 2021

Dear Our American Voice Students:

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on completing this year's program. The past year has brought unexpected challenges to all of us, but your participation in Our American Voice is a testament to your resilience and commitment to the democratic process. I am encouraged that young leaders like you are the future of America.

During your time with Our American Voice you have learned how to have conversations, how to compromise, and how to find common ground. You give hope in the resiliency of our democracy and are a reminder that our young leaders reflect the best of America. Our American Voice has given you a strong foundation, and it is now in your hands to stay engaged with your communities and continue to make your voice heard across Illinois and the United States.

Congratulations on all your work and achievements, and I wish you the best of luck in your futures.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Dick Durbin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dick" and last name "Durbin" clearly legible.

Sincerely,
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Governor JB Pritzker
Illinois

Citizenship Is A Way of Life

Hi, I'm Governor JB Pritzker and it's my pleasure to speak with you all today and congratulate you on completing your year in OAV.

While this has most certainly been a challenging school year for all, what you've achieved is truly remarkable because each and every one of you has gone above and beyond. You've not only been dedicated to your classes, but you've been dedicated to understanding the importance of civic engagement—and now, you're taking what you learned and turning it into action.

This year, you studied citizenship and the importance of working collaboratively. You learned that with our rights and freedoms, come responsibilities—and you've come to understand that when we participate in the democratic process, we're using OUR American Voice.

Your creativity and passion to learn helps define who we are in Illinois. I'm so proud of you; I would ask you to continue to work towards shaping a brighter future for our classrooms, for our communities and for our state.

While your time in OAV is coming to an end, this is only the beginning of your civics experience.

Be thoughtful and be bold—I'm looking forward to seeing all that you achieve.



Preparing the citizens of tomorrow today

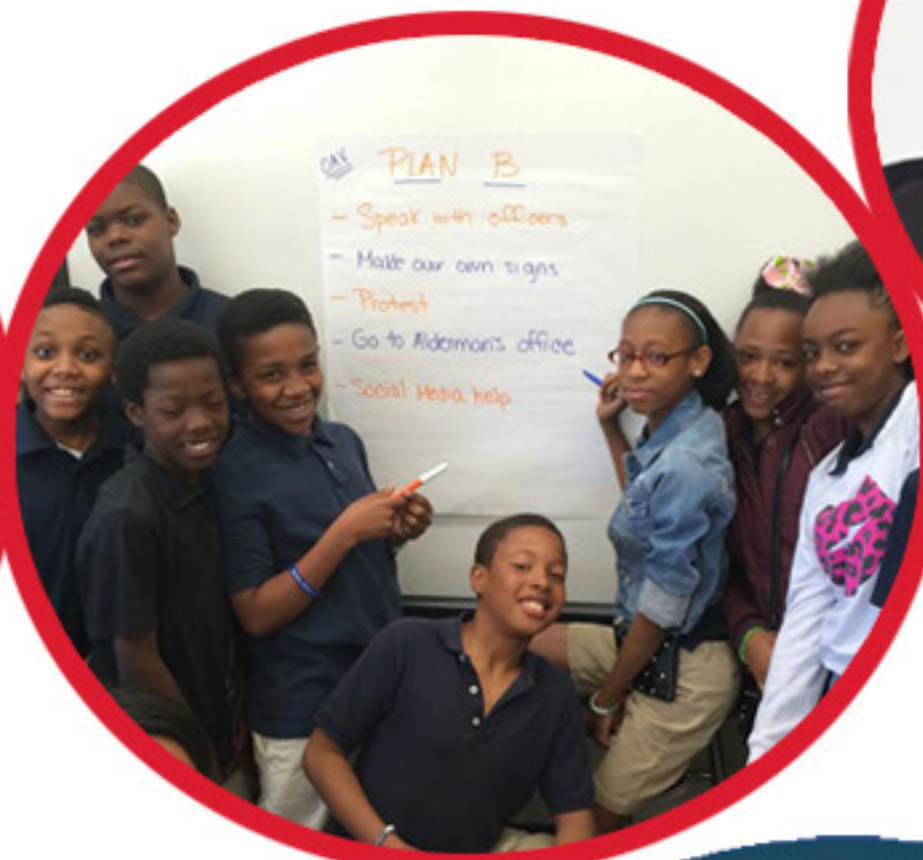
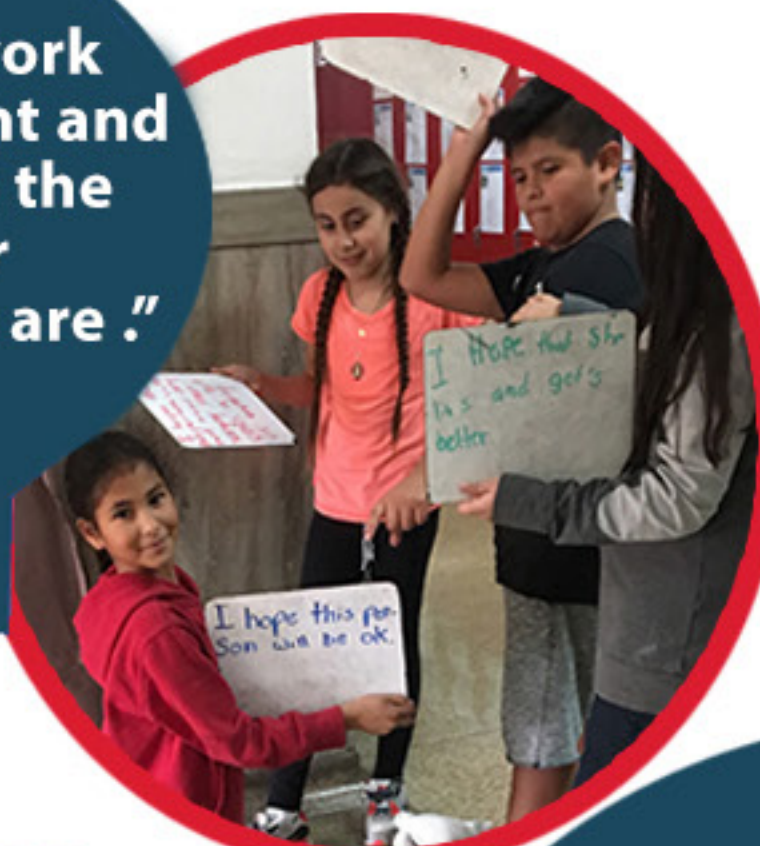
OAV Schools Program

OAV Schools Program

Preparing the Citizens of Tomorrow Today

"I know you have to work hard for what you want and it is important to help the **community**, no matter how young or old you are."

- OAV Student



"OAV has changed me to have the courage to talk to others. It helped me feel comfortable with my peers. It changed how other people looked at me, as a good **citizen**."

-OAV Student



"OAV has shown me how important **civics** is and changed my life by widening my mindset on politics and community problems"

-OAV Student

"OAV showed me a new perspective in my community – to help others in the community and we can make a **change** in the world."

-OAV Student



OAV Schools Program

Paving the Future in a Pandemic: The Urgent Need of Now

In this year of COVID-19, the OAV Schools Program operates in grades 4 through 8 in 21 schools throughout Illinois. Through innovation, passion, and determination, OAV teachers and students were committed to OAV principles and community improvement projects via hybrid and remote learning and social distancing practices. OAV is a two-part program conducted over 20-25 weeks.

Part I: Civic Learning centers on four core principles:

- Citizenship is a way of life, not a singular event
- With our rights and freedoms come responsibilities
- The success of the individual and community are interdependent
- The informed participation of the people shapes and sustains our democracy

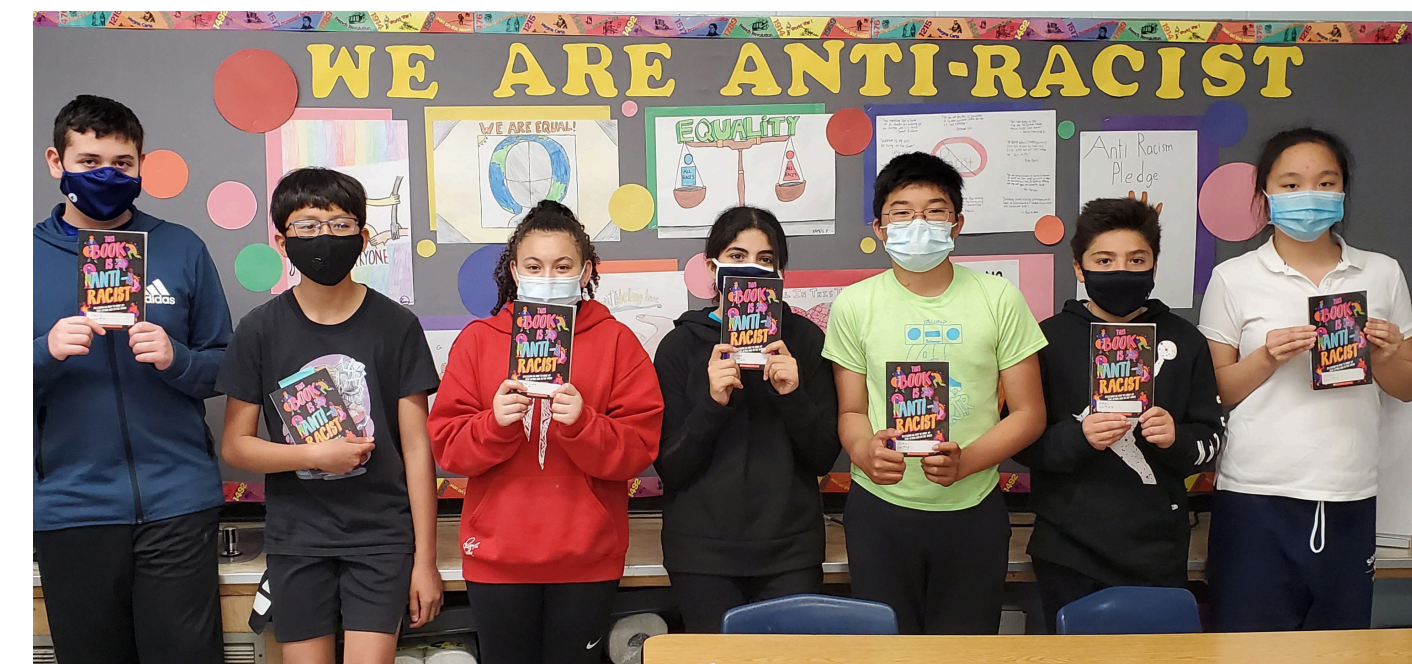
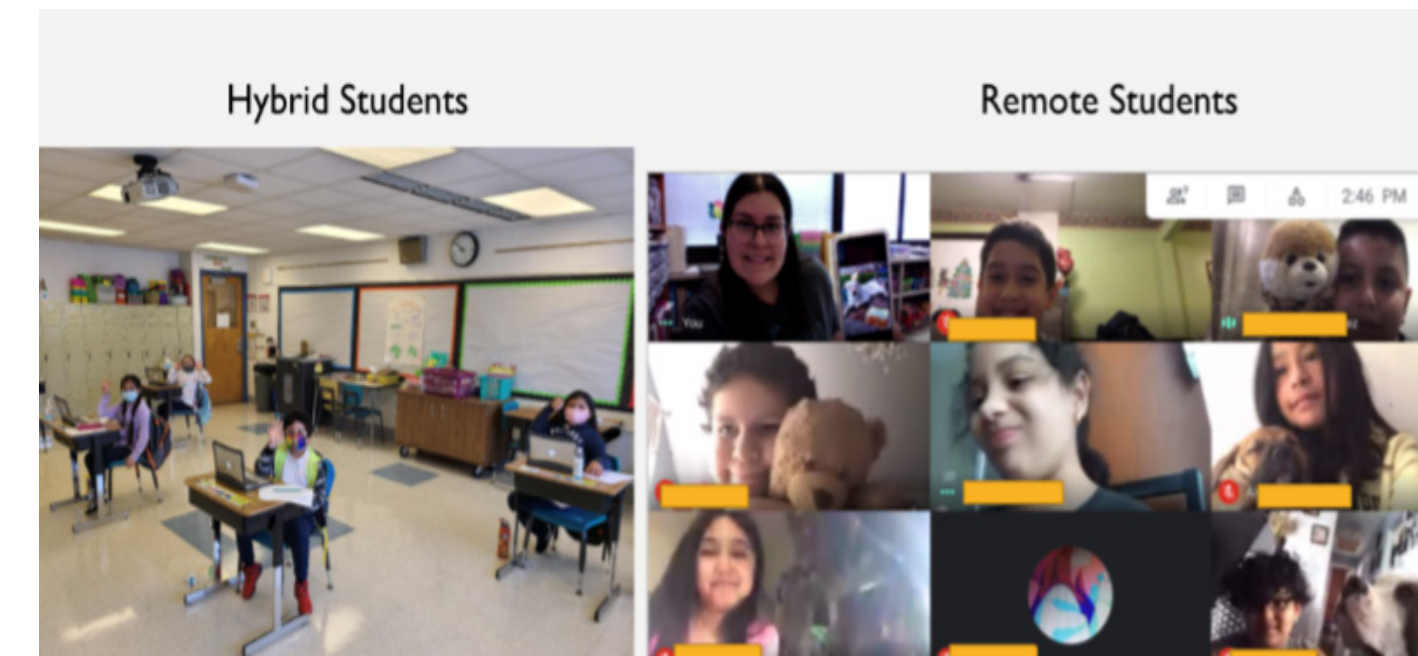
Part II: Community Improvement-Student Action Projects puts these principles into action.

The urgent need of now requires better civic education and engagement, highlighted by the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6 and the devastating educational and economic impact of COVID-19 on marginalized communities. The leadership of the Barat Education Foundation (BEF) has determined it is time take the successful OAV program model beyond the school to entire communities.

BEF has put together a development plan to accomplish this by revamping the OAV Schools Program into the OAV Schools and Communities Program this upcoming school year. This conversion will be implemented based upon the highly successful South Berwyn OAV Schools and Communities Model.

The Program will be implemented in two phases:

- Phase I: Enhancement Year—7/1/21 to 6/30/22, present in 21-30 schools and communities in Illinois.
- Phase II: Expansion Years—7/1/22 to 6/30/25, taking the Program nationally, growing it from 50 to 100 schools





Preparing the citizens of tomorrow today

2021 Virtual Summit

Presented By



ROBERT R.
McCORMICK
FOUNDATION



The Youth Wave is Here

"The civic engagement of 2020 is only the beginning — throw any notions of Gen Z apathy out the window. For politicians, brands, and organizations, and everyone in between, recognizing the power of this generation and deeply understanding what matters to them is critical.

Their voice is only going to grow louder."

-Mary Noel
Director, DoSomething Strategic



Emma Gonzalez
Parkland Shooting
Survivor, Gun Rights
Activists



Amanda Gorman
American Poet,
Inaugural Speaker



David Hogg
Parkland Shooting Survivor
Gun Rights Activists



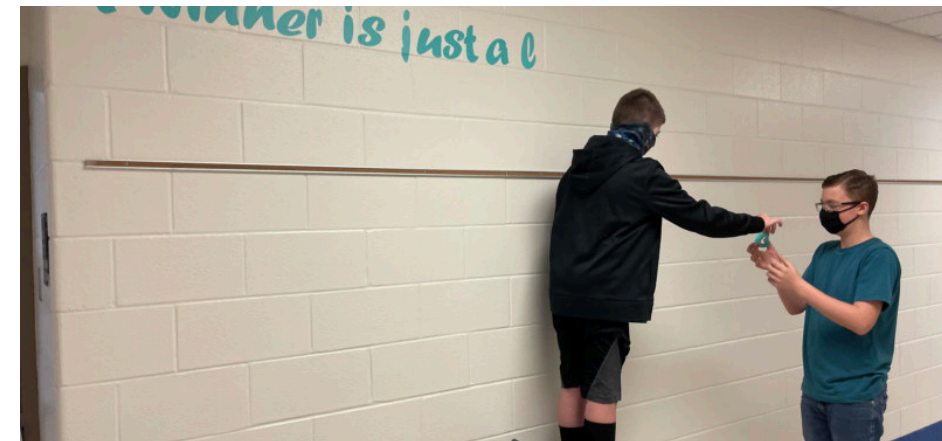
Preparing the citizens of tomorrow today

2021 Virtual Summit May 20, 2021

We "Z" People: Generation Z Paves the Future

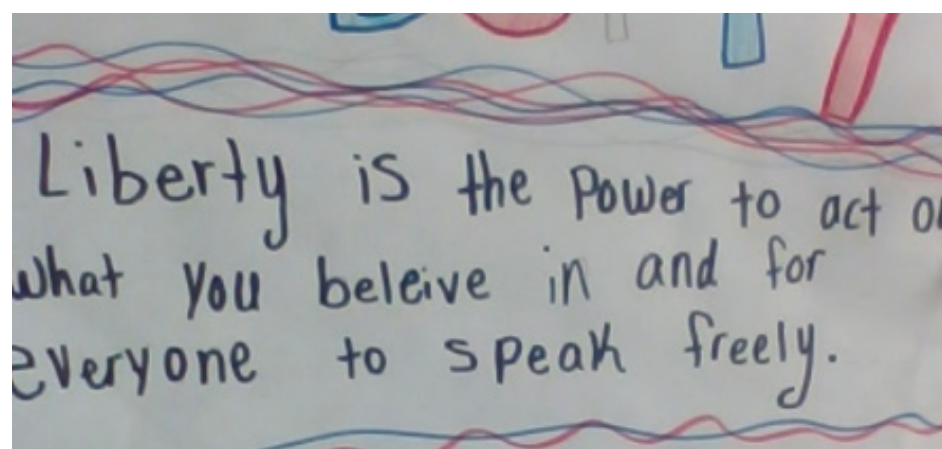
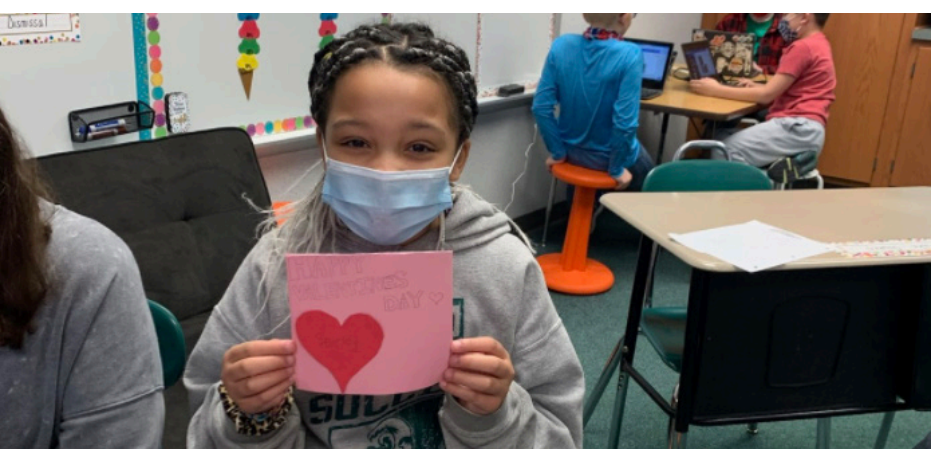
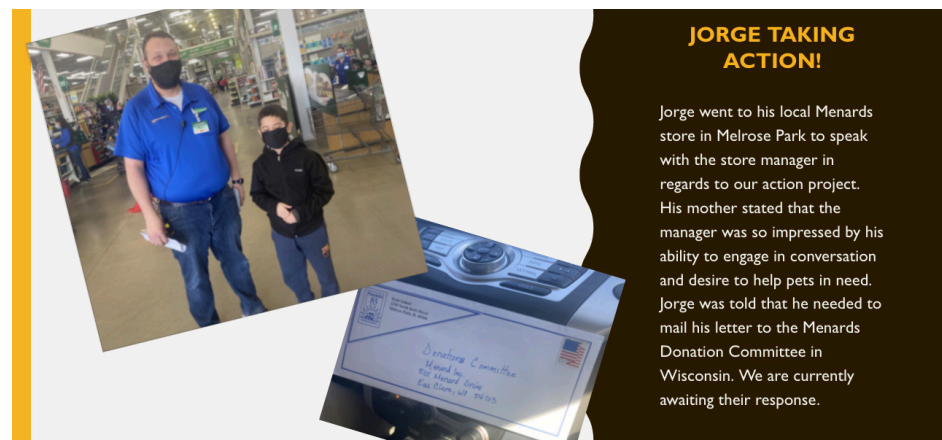
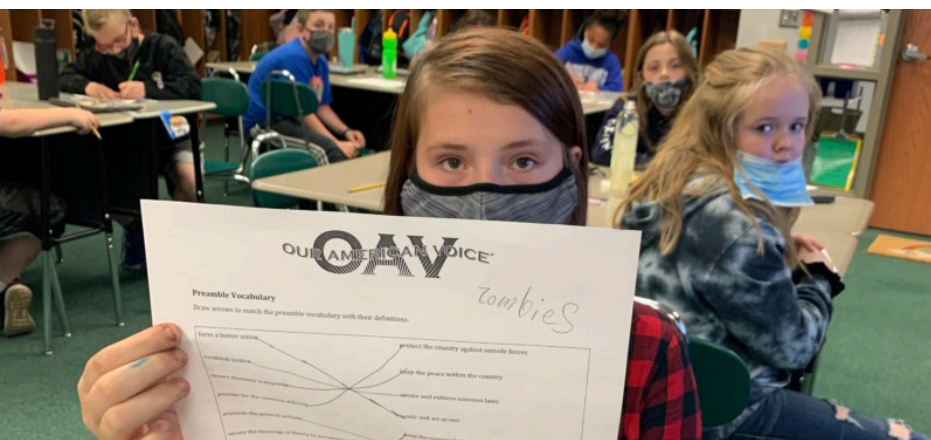


Greta Thunberg - Global Climate Activist



The Youth Wave is Here

OAV Students Pave the Future



Paving the Future - Student Action Projects





OAV 2021 Summit Agenda

PROGRAM PART I

OAV PAVES THE FUTURE-ZOOM WEBINAR PRESENTATION

(10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.)

- Welcome
- Summit Purpose and Year Reflections (3 min)
- Key-Note Speaker: U.S. Senator Dick Durbin OAV Paves the Future (2 min)
- Student Action Project Video Presentation (Pre-Recorded-15 min)

Break-10 minutes

PROGRAM PART II

CITIZENSHIP IS A WAY OF LIFE - BREAKOUT SESSIONS (10:40 a.m.-11:00 a.m.)

- Breakout Sessions (5 to 6 school small groups-20 minutes)

Theme: Unpacking Civic Engagement

- Unpacking Civic Engagement Video
 - > Discussion Questions - *Taking it Further: Student Action Projects from Civic Engagement to Community Social Responsibilities*
 - What does it mean to be actively engaged in civics?
 - What did you gain as a person from civic engagement?
 - How could the project you chose this year move into one of the other 3 areas of community social responsibilities?
- Each Group will list main conversation “takeaways” to share in large group

SUMMIT WRAP-UP (11:05 a.m.-11:30 a.m.)

- Break-Out Session Recap (5-7 minutes)
- Special Guest Message: Governor JB Pritzker - Citizenship is a Way of Life
- Summit Wrap-Up and Closing Remarks (5 minutes)

OAV Teachers

Shaping the Future

"Teaching is not just a job. It is a human service, and it must be thought of as a mission."- Dr. Ralph Tyler



OAV Teachers are special. This we know. This academic year their commitment was exceptional.

Throughout the educational and social challenges of remote and hybrid instruction, OAV teachers have excelled in their mission to support, enrich, and transform OAV youth and communities. They reimagined the possibilities, kept OAV students engaged, implemented student action projects safely and responsibly, and perhaps the greatest gift of all OAV teachers empowered our youth in a time when so many feel powerless.

For all that you do. Thank you!

"What greater or better gift can we offer the republic than to teach and instruct our youth?" – Marcus T. Cicero

Debra Liu

Lisa-Beth Patzke

Karla Schwarze

Abraham Scott



Kim Van Wyk



Breanne
Reinhard



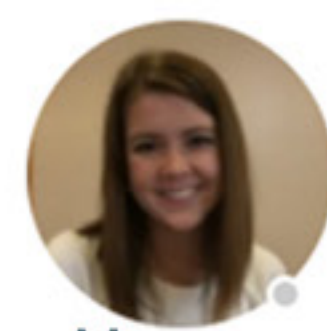
Stacy
Coglianese



Patrick
Shelton



Kristen
Caprarola



Maura
Raleigh



Mike
Della Croce



Karina
Bolivar



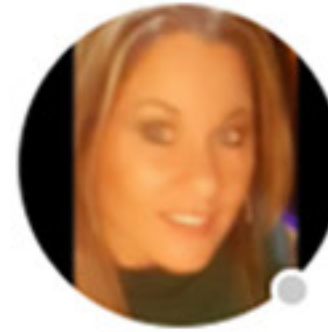
Rosie
Cardenas



Sarah
Matteson



Eric
Roberts



Tricia
Stevens



Nickie
Harris



Chrissy
Ivnik



Mike
Saracini



Shalanda
Gaines



Aprilanne
Lynch-Bolk



Barat Education Foundation

Board of Directors

Sheila A. Smith - CEO/Chair

Kathleen Gillespie - Vice Chair

Michael Dimengo - Treasurer

Sarah Highstone - Secretary

Maureen E. Ryan - Member

Barat Education Team

John Fontanetta - OAV Program Director

Jan Burdulis - Administrative Assistant - Barat CEO and Board

Julie Schaul - OAV and Citizen U Program Consultant

Community & Foundation Support

Computer Accounting, Inc.

Albert Pick Jr. Foundation

South Berwyn PTAs



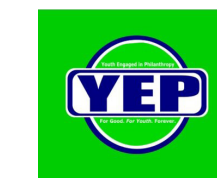
BUILDING AMERICA®



BERWYN SOUTH
SCHOOL DISTRICT 100



LESTER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL





OAV Institute Founding And Supporting Donors

Susan J. Allen
Karl Androes
The Alice B. Drake Family
Nancy Castle
Edward & Mary Coffey
Joan Luder Coffey
Ed T. Crego
Michael Dimengo
Loretta Durbin
Suzy Evans
Tom Finn
Kathleen Gillespie
Alan Gitelson

Sarah Highstone
Ward & Virginia Highstone
Frank Islam & Deb Driesman
Ed & Kris Kazemek
Nancy Kohn
Douglas & Marie Liu
Florabell Liu
Martin J. McFadden
William & Susan Moylan
George Munoz
Karen Munoz
Mary Lou Paxton
Ted Reed

Maureen E. Ryan
Danielle Scharf
Mary Ann Schwarzbach
Deborah Shore
Steve Singer
Sandra Smith
Sheila A. Smith
Denise Stauder
Charles Smith & Patti Turner
Laura Turner
Catherine Wilson & Robert Bicknell

Memorial Donations


in memory of

Charles Smith

"And I dream that something's coming, and it's not just in the wind. It's more than just tomorrow, it's more than where we've been. It offers me a promise, it's telling me BEGIN. I know we're needing something worth believing in."

- Harry Chapin
Remember When the Music

Sheila A. Smith, Catherine Smith Wilson, Edwin T. Crego, Lisa Crego & Patti Turner



Vivian Awumey
Charles & Margaret Bandy
Gene Brady
Jan Burdulis
Stacy Coglianese
Trisha Cohen

Edward Coffey
Diane Corbett
Michael Dimengo
Madeleine Doubek
Lissa Druss
Mary Farmer
Elizabeth C. Fay

John Fontanetta
Shalanda Gaines
Kathleen Gillespie
Alan Gitelson
Sarah Highstone

Memorial Donations

in memory of

Charles Smith

Ed & Kris Kazemek
Donna Kiel
Barbara Kirby
Judy Kislá
Heidi Kuharich
Debra Liu
Danielle Matson
George Munoz

Maureen Oster
Kristine Peterson
Ted Reed
Maureen E. Ryan
Betsy Sales
Julie Schaul

Cynthia Schiffrin
Matthew Serafin
Thom Serafin
Pat & Amy Souders
Denise Stauder
Rachel Stuart
Brooke Sydnor
Ken Wiesner



Preparing the citizens of tomorrow today