

The American Promise

A growing program



At home and abroad, *The American Promise* is finding many uses inside the classroom and out.

For a little more than a year, teachers have been working with *The American Promise* in classrooms across the country. Thirty-five thousand copies of the first edition of the teaching kit have now been distributed free to teachers and members of the educational community as well as to community leaders. The second edition, including a special service learning section, will be released soon.

The program is finding many different uses: In some classrooms, the program is used to enrich curriculum and spark discussion. In other classrooms, the program has become a way to organize curriculum. Some education professors distribute it to their students. In Milwaukee there are plans to use the program to train a special corps of teacher/entrepreneurs.

Recently, *The American Promise* appeared on the Internet. Our Web site (www.americanpromise.com) carries the latest in story updates, teacher input and news on training sessions. It also provides an easy way for teachers to order copies of the teaching kit.

Sharing Opportunities Abroad

By special arrangement with the United States Information Agency (USIA), WORLDNET, USIA's global satellite televi-

sion service, premiered the English version of *The American Promise* in June 1996, and to date has reached viewers in 351 cities in 159 countries on six continents.

Here are some highlights of how *The American Promise* is being used abroad:

- The Spanish version was broadcast to Latin America for use by U.S. embassies and consulates during the Regional Education for Democracy Conference that was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- The Peruvian University, Universidad San Palo in Arequipa added the Spanish version of the series to their student resources.
- Currently, USIS Belgrade is translating the series into Serbian to be broadcast locally in Serbia and Montenegro.
- USIS Kiev broadcasts a Ukrainian translation.
- 2M Television in Morocco broadcasts the series in French.
- USIS Yangon's (Rangoon) American-language teaching program uses *The American Promise* to help introduce Myanmar to community action groups and to show a more positive side of America.

The USIA's English teaching staff uses the series for an online distance education course in civic education for teacher trainers. Representatives from as many as 13 countries, including Peru, Armenia,

Indonesia, Egypt, and Burma have participated online, sharing their thoughts on the themes presented in *The American Promise*. Here are few quotes from their discussion centering on "opportunity":

"I think we have a sort of contract with the young where learning is concerned; we have to make opportunities for knowledge available to the young, within the limitations and structure of our own culture."

"In talking about the Giraffe activity (page 102 of *The American Promise Teaching Guide*) ... useful for exercising critical thinking. To my mind, this is the essential link between information and opportunity. The worth of information is measured in terms of our ability to use it."

"Too often I hear that our students (and teenagers in general) don't have a cause, that they only care about themselves. When our students are given the opportunity to teach others, when they're given a challenge to promote something they believe in, and when they're confident about the information they're going to share, it's amazing what results we can obtain."

If you would like to participate in an international discussion, the Classroom-to-Classroom program will link classrooms in the United States with classrooms around the world, so that teachers and students can learn about each other. Teachers and students exchange letters in English, as often as possible, so that the connected classrooms may find answers to questions, gain knowledge and understanding about the principles of democracy, history, politics and current events of their counterparts' country.

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