

# Future Problem Solving Program International Community Problem Solving Component 2014-15



## What is Community Problem Solving?

Community Problem Solving (CmPS) is a team or individual activity in which students identify real problems and implement real solutions in a community – local, state, national, or even global. Students use the skills of the problem solving process as they work on their project; however, since real life is not always as organized as an academic exercise, the process may not proceed neatly from step to step. CmPS can be pursued as an extracurricular activity or as part of the regular school curriculum and can be one or two years in length.

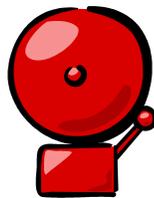
## Why Community Problem Solving?

Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI) provides the tools and strategies students need to face the challenges of today and the future. What better way to prepare students for their future than by teaching them to think systematically about problematic situations, to gather information to understand the situation, and to evaluate multiple solutions in order to best address the situation? Students involved in Community Problem Solving learn powerful lessons about creating change, about dealing with local authorities and organizations, and about making a positive impact. The implementation of real solutions gives students a strong sense of accomplishment and helps them to see the practical applications of the processes and skills that they have been learning. CmPS participation may fulfill service-learning requirements, although CmPS projects are typically more extensive.

Future Problem Solving Program International's six-step problem solving model is aligned with National Curriculum Standards, Common Core Standards, and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Standards. Through participation in Community Problem Solving, students refine critical and creative thinking skills, focus on a real community or school issue, produce solution ideas, generate criteria to evaluate solution ideas, determine the best plan of action, and implement the plan to resolve their problem.

## Who can participate in Community Problem Solving?

Students may participate in CmPS in three divisions: Junior (grades 4-6, or the equivalent), Middle (grades 7-9), and Senior (grades 10-12). Having a background in the Global Issues or Action-based components of FPSPI is a great start for students in CmPS, but this is not required. If students have not been involved with these components, they do need to learn the problem solving process as part of their community problem solving experience. CmPS can be pursued as an extracurricular activity or as part of the regular school curriculum.



### 2014 Beyonder Award Project Alert Auckland, New Zealand

Imagine the panic and sense of powerlessness of not knowing when there was a fire alarm. This was the reality for 14 deaf students at Mission Heights Junior College, a temporary satellite school for Kelston Deaf Education Centre. We met with the Deaf students to learn about their concerns. In response we have designed and now made personal portable vibrating alarms for them, which we have programmed to automatically detect the school alarm and alert the deaf students whenever an alarm sounds in the school. Now they can enjoy the same sense of security as their hearing peers.

## How do students participate in CmPS?

Individuals or teams of any size may participate in Community Problem Solving. For a team, you may want at least 3 or 4 students to handle all requirements; and for larger projects, the group may consist of more students. Complex projects often require substantial organization, with tasks divided among the participants. Please note that a maximum of 15 students on a team advancing to the International Conference may participate in the CmPS interview, but all team members may participate in the CmPS Fair. Since CmPS projects are long-term activities, lasting up to a year or more, students need to be committed to following through with the activity.

## How can I get started with students?

Training in the problem solving process is important for coaches of Community Problem Solving teams and individuals. Affiliate Programs often hold workshops in the problem solving process, and you can find resources for the problem solving process within the Global Issues Problem Solving or Action-based Problem Solving publications at [fspimart.org](http://fspimart.org). See the CmPS Essential Publications page for information focused on Community Problem Solving and the Tips for Coaches pages for ideas on working with your students. Contact your Affiliate Director for more information.

## How do I register students for Community Problem Solving?

Each Affiliate Program determines its own processes, fees, and due dates for registration and entries. Your Affiliate Director can provide you with registration and submission materials, and may be able to put you in touch with experienced CmPS coaches.

### 2014 Middle Grand Champions Project Education Station Magnolia, Texas

A looming quandary hovers over a state that has expectations of higher test scores but fewer dollars allotted for education. That quandary became the catalyst for Project Education Station - a classroom on wheels that provides peer tutoring and goes into the neighborhoods of students who can't stay after school for tutoring because budget cuts forced the discontinuation of after school busing. Peer tutoring has proven to be an economic and effective answer to helping students. This project has provided a successful solution for students whose teachers and parents have offered both praise and gratitude for students who showed they care.

## How are CmPS projects evaluated?



CmPS projects are scored by trained evaluators who consider all elements of the project. At the Affiliate level, these assessments usually includes evaluation of a six-page written report, supporting documentation

within an addendum, and a scrapbook. There are additional requirements for projects that qualify for International Competition: a table-top display, an oral presentation, a media presentation, and an interview. Affiliate Programs may also require one or more of these additional elements. In most Affiliate Programs, first place projects move on to the International Competition (IC). If deemed exceptional, second place projects at the Affiliate level may be submitted for consideration for an international invitation.

## Where can I find a sample project to view?

Please visit [www.fpspi.org](http://www.fpspi.org) and click the components tab to view a winning CmPS project report, addendum, and media presentation.