

# FPSP

# PARENT PERSPECTIVES



A monthly informational publication designed for the PARENTS of Future Problem Solving Program students across the globe!



## WE ARE THANKFUL FOR CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING!

A Message from our International CmPS Coordinator,  
Brenda Porter

CmPS, or Community Problem Solving, is the answer to many community's prayers for help. As each community faces the challenges that our modern economy presents, solutions to the challenges are being answered by creative students who are tackling the challenges that we, as adults often try to avoid because – it costs too much – there isn't enough time – there's no way to accomplish this – or whatever clichéd excuses that our minds can generate. Thank goodness that young people have not learned our cynicism and cannot see an obstacle that is insurmountable. This vision can be summed up with a statement made by a team of young boys who tackled the task of funding and building a playground for handicapped youth in their community. "We didn't know kids weren't supposed to be able to get grants – so we just did!"



Please send your questions or comments to the Parent Committee via Chair, Deb Woythal at [dwoythal@gmail.com](mailto:dwoythal@gmail.com)

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**"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."** –  
Albert Einstein



Thank you to the Australian affiliate for sharing photos for this edition from their 2012 national finals!

What does the typical Community Problem Solving team or individual choose as a project? First, let me say that there is NOT a typical CmPS team. The teams are as unique as the communities from which they come. Projects range from recycling plastic bottles to make school benches to the building of a playground for children whose community has been devastated by wildfires. The one constant that can be seen throughout these teams is the creative problem solving process that the teams use to solve what they have chosen as a major challenge for their respective communities.

How can you, the parents of CmPS team members, help the process? First, you must understand that your role is a facilitator – not a participant. You will need to provide transportation, research, and possibly even, facilities in which the team might work, or better yet, you may decide to coach a team. When your son or daughter becomes a member of a CmPS team, he/she will need lots of time to complete tasks that the team decides are essential for the completion of their projects. This may require that duties at home be shared with you – (You may need to take out the trash, Dad, so that your son can write a petition to the school board to fund the study of art within the district. Sorry about that! Mom, you may have to make one more drive to the local Wal-Mart to buy some more markers or printer cartridges to make signs to post on street corners, advertising a fundraiser at the local high school – Oh, and by the way, you will probably have to make some more of those great brownies for the team’s brainstorming session). Yes, your job is a behind-the-scenes-sort-of-guy, but the rewards that your son or daughter will garner are innumerable.

After the team has chosen the community problem that they are tackling, they will begin to set into action the required solutions that will ultimately enable them to make a difference in the community. These solutions may involve fundraising, grant writing, or codifying legislation to be presented to local or state governments. The solution may involve actively soliciting support from community leaders and volunteers to assist them in the completion of their solutions. All of these solutions are team-initiated and led. Adults provide support as required by the team for completion of their goals.

When the team has completed a major portion of their project, they will submit this project to the affiliate for evaluation. Various affiliates require different portions of the International submissions for affiliate evaluation. Two portions that are required universally are the submission of a six-page team-written and edited report and a six-page addendum which is basically a mini-scrapbook with supporting evidence for the information supplied in the report. (Please contact your local Affiliate Director for specific requirements and guidelines for these essential submissions).

After affiliates evaluate their local projects, top projects in each of the three divisions (junior, middle, and senior) may receive an invite from the International Office for competition at the International Future Problem Solving Conference held each June in various universities throughout the United States. When a team garners a bid to Internationals, the team will submit their report and addendum prior to the conference for pre-scoring by the cadre of International Evaluators. When they come to IC, they will compete in the appropriate division with a display of their project including a detailed scrapbook, a video presentation, and an onsite interview with an evaluation team.

Yes, Community Problem Solving is a competition and, of course, winning a trophy is great! However, the trophies will eventually gather dust and will be stored in an attic or basement, but the solutions that these teams or individuals create for their communities will not disappear. The rewards that the team members receive are only miniscule compared to the rewards that these lucky communities receive through the creative eyes of the youth of their community. Finally, to paraphrase an old song, **“Thank heaven for little community problem solvers. They solve problems in the most creative ways.”**

