

The Civil Air Patrol's School Enrichment Program is "building a better tomorrow one student at a time."

This motto describes a new CAP program thriving in 13 wings as elective classes or after-school programs in 67 schools. Last year, the enrichment program touched the lives of 2,047 children from sixth through 12th grades. And, at the end of fiscal year 2006, 20 new programs were initiated, reaching 534 more cadets. These programs are complemented by a pilot program for grades K-5 launched in Philadelphia, and a curriculum for nationwide implementation is being developed for this age group.

"The earlier we can get our young people to set goals, a mission and a direction in life, the better it's going to be for them," said Susan Mallett, CAP's SEP manager.

The program is made up of four parts — aerospace education, physical fitness, character education and leadership training.

"In order to maintain America's air and space superiority, it is important we prepare our young people to bolster the aging workforce of the air and space industry by introducing them to aerospace topics," said Mallett. "The program's character education curriculum helps students overcome negative influences in their lives, exposing them to positive role models, and leadership training encourages them to uncover their hidden potential."

"The physical fitness component of the enrichment program," she added, "is necessary to develop a healthy



Susan Mallett, CAP's School Enrichment Program manager, and Russ Billings, a CAP aerospace educator from Michigan, discuss new educational programs during the recent CAP-hosted National Conference on Aviation and Space Education held in Washington, D.C.

physical and mental lifestyle for our future society.

"Principals are seeing improvement in attendance, discipline and respect for self and others. Thus, all-around school achievement improves," said Mallett of the program.

"We're seeing more and more of our young people in the enrichment program who have been lost and didn't know where to go, weren't doing well in school and weren't conforming to what they needed to do," said Mallett. "When they became a part of the SEP, they found it was possible to become a leader, and have become leaders,

and it has turned their lives around."

CAP is working to secure grants and other forms of assistance for program needs, such as instructors, guest speakers and free flights for students. Mallett said she also plans to promote CAP's top-notch MARS (Making Aerospace Real for Students) curriculum and to increase the number of CAP Aerospace Education Members "so we'll have more advocates for this program."

Long-range, CAP envisions an SEP program in all 50 states, reaching students in grades kindergarten through college in all educational settings.

"We have a long way to go and a short time to get there, but we have a lot of enthusiasm building throughout our volunteer corps," said Mallett.

"The miracles happening out there are awesome," she added. "What people are accomplishing on a shoestring budget and with very little extra time is just phenomenal, so I know with the proper funding and attention given to the program, there's nowhere to go but up." ▲

School Enrichment Program Lights the Way for Youth

By Kimberly Wright Harper