

# PARENT PERSPECTIVES

This issue of *Parent Perspectives* comes from Deb Morali of the Mississippi Affiliate. In this issue, Deb describes the connection between Social and Emotional development through FPSPi. Please enjoy!



## Social and Emotional Development through the Future Problem Solving Program, Part 2

(Find Part 1, published in 2/2015, [Issue 21](#), archived on [www.fpspi.org](http://www.fpspi.org), under PARENTS)



Mississippi students hard at work in service for others!

Social and emotional wellness in children happens when children understand what they are feeling and know what they can expect to receive from others. These concepts contribute to a child's self-confidence and empathy, the ability to develop meaningful and lasting relationships, and the sense of importance and value to those around them.

Students' social and emotional development influences all other areas of development: cognitive, motor, and language. Social and emotional development provides the foundation for how we feel about ourselves and how we allow others to make us feel. Community Problem Solving (CmPS) promotes the social and emotional

development of children by giving them the experiences

to interact with a diverse group of people within a community with the safety and leadership of a trusted teacher or other adult serving as coach.

Healthy social and emotional development is important because children with social and emotional problems may feel isolated from their peers. They may feel alienated and alone in a classroom. They may begin to question their own worth and as a result, they may experience feelings of sadness, anger and anxiety.



**Ryan LaSource is a hero to the Mississippi CmPS team. The team volunteered at his "Ryanman Triathlon" this year.**

The Future Problem Solving Program can nourish social and emotional wellness. As Mississippi Affiliate Director and a coach of the Future Problem Solving Program, I have seen considerable growth in students' social and emotional development, especially with the Community Problem Solving (CmPS) component. Many times children choose CmPS projects to help the disabled, the sick, the poor, and less fortunate. These are the projects that facilitate social and emotional growth--the human connection.

This program is different and meaningful because students select the CmPS projects they will work on. They "own" the project and work together in a team format to make a difference. The best affirmation of growth in our students is observing these students setting their solution ideas into action through interactions with peers and community. The students have a real connection to the concern they are addressing with the CmPS project. They form empathy for the person(s)/topic being helped.

Students working on CmPS projects will focus on one of the five domains. Many times there is a crossover in the category, but ultimately the project will fit into one of these five

categories: Civic/Cultural Issues, Education, Environmental Concerns, Health Concerns, and Human Services.

For those not familiar with CmPS, students choose the topic, students determine the main challenge(s), students develop solution ideas and devise a plan of action, and then they do it. All CmPS projects are successful because when students "do" - students grow, but Project TIM and Project HOPE are personally two of my favorite CmPS experiences.

Project TIM (Technology to Improve Motor Skills) was created by a group of four sixth graders. One of the members had a little brother with developmental delays and was really in touch with the specific struggles his brother faced each day. His passion for the needs of others was contagious. His team created a classroom manipulative to help students with special needs improve their fine and gross motor skills. These gifted students came together with severely disabled students, college physical therapy students, hospital staff, and special education teachers. They turned what started out as a "cool idea" to build a robot into an experience that they still carry with them today - six years later.

Project HOPE was a CmPS project that started very small and grew into an evolving project. The students were moved by a local toddler who was diagnosed with leukemia. They followed his battle daily on Facebook and experienced his ups and downs. From Facebook they learned about other children in our area who were also on their own journey with cancer.

These CmPSers formed a team to help those kids and their families. From research they learned how important it is for these kids to be in a germ-free environment after treatments. They worked with local businesses and wrote grants to purchase sanitary supplies for the cancer patients. They worked with the cancer charity organization LLS and hosted a penny drive to help researchers find a cure.



Even when the project deadlines were past and the project was technically over, these students wouldn't let it go. They continue to keep up with the children they met during the competition dates and they continue to support the charities and hospital. Even though they do not wish to submit their actions for competition, they still want to be involved and continue to help. They wrote a grant and received \$1000 in toys to donate to the hospital's treasure chest. They are again working with LLS to help raise money for research, and they still keep up with our special toddler - not for prizes, trophies, trips, or accolades, but because they want to.

CmPS projects do not end when the competition is over. The effects of CmPS projects are life-long. The growth for students is priceless. In addition to building social and emotional health, these students are learning valuable skills that will help them succeed in life. They experience team building, form real relationships, and develop a sense of worth. CmPS helps them to build communication and leadership skills through their very meaningful real-life experiences. CmPS gives them a sense of community and belonging.

Through CmPS, children can create projects that are meaningful to them. They grow socially and emotionally through the many steps of these projects. Ultimately, students will run into obstacles and those who tell them they cannot do what they would like to do in their action plans. These are the times students achieve the most growth. Finding ways to overcome these obstacles and to persevere helps them build life-long skills. When students persist and don't give up, they begin to believe in themselves. They gain confidence and begin to realize and appreciate the differences in themselves and others.



Parents and grandparents can coach a CmPS team and often are very fine coaches. Implementing CmPS can help children overcome negative behavior patterns such as poor peer relations, excessive self-criticism, perfectionism, and avoidance of risk-taking. CmPS offers students the opportunity to work with peers and to build self-confidence. Children need several peer groups because their interests are so varied.

Different educational experiences are required to foster social and emotional development in children. CmPS provides these experiences. Do consider helping someone coach CmPS or consider coaching a team yourself. Help is available, as well as many wonderful materials, at [www.fpspi.org](http://www.fpspi.org).

**Calling all FPS Alumni, Parents, Evaluators,  
Current Students and Affiliate Directors!**

Our annual Testimonial edition of *Parent Perspectives* is coming in April. Please consider documenting your personal FPS experiences and sharing them with us! We are especially seeking submissions from Alumni to inform us of "where they are now" and "how FPS affected their career or field of study."

Please submit all testimonials by **April 1, 2016** to:  
[lisa\\_quintana4@yahoo.com](mailto:lisa_quintana4@yahoo.com) or  
[april@fpspi.org](mailto:april@fpspi.org) or  
[dwoythai@gmail.com](mailto:dwoythai@gmail.com) or  
[rogers.cyd2@gmail.com](mailto:rogers.cyd2@gmail.com)

**ATTENTION PARENTS!**

It is time for many Affiliate Bowls! Please contact your coach or Affiliate Director to volunteer for your program or Bowl. Volunteers are needed as competition monitors, guest speakers, chaperones, and in many other capacities.



**We love parent volunteers!**