

FEA Europe HCR Update



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OCTOBER 2015 – Courses for credit, HHM resources, HCR Building Reps

COURSES FOR CREDIT - Your Europe HCR program is prepared to bring multiple for-credit trainings to FEA Europe this school year. Dates are being finalized and specific dates and locations will be shared as soon as the coordinators for each division confirm the dates. Be on the look out!

- **Teacher Leadership and Diversity in 21st Century Schools - Two day, 1 credit course - POCs Lisa Ali and Alina Rozanski.** Your FEA Leadership will be presenting skills training focusing on developing diverse leaders in a 21st century school setting, including organizational structure, nuts and bolts of organizing for a team of diverse educators, and conflict resolution. We are also bringing in experts from the DoDEA Europe Equal Employment Opportunity Office who believe that "preventing employment discrimination from occurring in the federal workplace is preferable to trying to deal with the consequences of discrimination. We believe that discrimination can be averted if federal agencies and their employees know their legal rights and responsibilities." These experts will be tailoring their training to address issues often brought up in educational settings. We have TENTATIVE dates at the Stuttgart Complex on Dec 5/6, SHAPE/Brussels on February 6/7, Kaiserslautern/Ramstein on March 12/13, the Lakenheath Complex on March 26/27, and Bitburg/Spangdahlem on April 23/24. We must have at least 15 people signed up to ensure a session is a "go." Sign up at: <http://goo.gl/forms/oqKj2UOVP9>
- **Teaching Tolerance: Holocaust Pedagogy Basics - Two day, 1 credit course - POC Patricia Hannon, Museum Teacher Fellow, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.** This course will address the best practices and challenges inherent to teaching the Holocaust, as well as responsible use of memorial sites and documentation centers. We will begin on Saturday at the Documentation Center in Nurnberg with a tour of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds, then continue into the permanent exhibit at the center. Sunday's experiences will revolve around the Palace of Justice (location of the Nurnberg Trials). The course is scheduled for February 20/21, 2016, and has a limit of 30 people. FEA members are free, while non-members will incur a 50 Euro fee. Reserve your seat in the class at: <https://goo.gl/ZH5p01>



What is the purpose of the HCR Program?

To encourage ethnic minority members to become actively involved in our union, and perform other activities deemed necessary to advance the cause of ethnic minority involvement and interests.

A THOUGHT ON SPIRIT DAYS – Does your school have Spirit Days? Are they based on identities such as “redneck days” or “jock vs nerd” or “hobo day”? Take a moment to read the following article from tolerance.org entitled “Just Say No to Identity-based Spirit Days” by Maureen Costello, courtesy of FEA Director Brian Chance:

As sure as October brings pumpkins and pep rallies, I know I’m going to hear dis-spiriting news about some school’s choice of spirit week theme. The details vary, but the story is depressingly familiar. Around homecoming time, schools designate a day—or even a full week—for activities intended to build school spirit. Organizers come up with ideas for “dress up” days where students can come to school in, say, the team colors or costumes to reflect a theme.

In years past, we’ve heard about students donning “afro wigs”, about “red neck” days and, when the class color was white, about a student wearing a pillowcase with eyeholes that bore a striking resemblance to a KKK hood and taunting a biracial classmate. This year’s version comes from West Virginia and involves “hobo day,” originally “homeless day.” Despite the name change, reports describe pictures posted on social media of teens in tattered and dirty clothes, someone pushing a shopping cart and “two women wearing knit caps and holding a cardboard sign that reads ‘will teach for food,’” suggesting that teachers participated, too.

In a response that’s second only to “no comment” in the category of What Not to Say to the Press, school officials claimed that “the event was not meant to make fun of people living on the streets.” After reiterating that the intent was not “malicious,” the principal dug the hole a little deeper, suggesting that students might have been dressed as “a migrant worker from the late 1800s.” Because so many 19th-century migrant workers pushed shopping carts.

The heart of the matter is that the response to these spirit-day blunders should not focus on intent, but on impact. I can’t imagine the officials’ claim of innocent intent meant much to a student with a relative on the streets or whose family has experienced homelessness. Here’s a list of questions school officials might ask themselves before signing off on theme days that invite kids to ridicule, mock or mimic people’s identities:

- *What is the message we’re sending or endorsing?*
- *Are we reinforcing the stereotypes we know exist about the reality of life as a _____?*
- *What’s the actual educational value of this day? (Yes, my true colors emerge: I HATED pep rallies and spirit days—and the accompanying sugar consumption—when I was a high school teacher.)*
- *Is this day in accord with our school mission statement and core values?*
- *What’s the worst that could happen? (And really use your imagination.)*

Want to promote good feeling, school spirit and support the kinds of outcomes that are probably aligned with your school’s mission and values? Think about banishing days that promote stereotyping in favor of an event that encourages understanding.