

NHD

NATIONAL

HISTORY DAY

Life-changing

If you are reading this,
chances are you care deeply
about young people...

...your children and grandchildren, your students, your neighbors. You are concerned about their futures. You want them to be prepared for the challenges they will face.

Today's schools are flooded with growing academic demands and new policy requirements. The emphasis on standardized tests leaves many teachers feeling their only option is to "teach to the test."

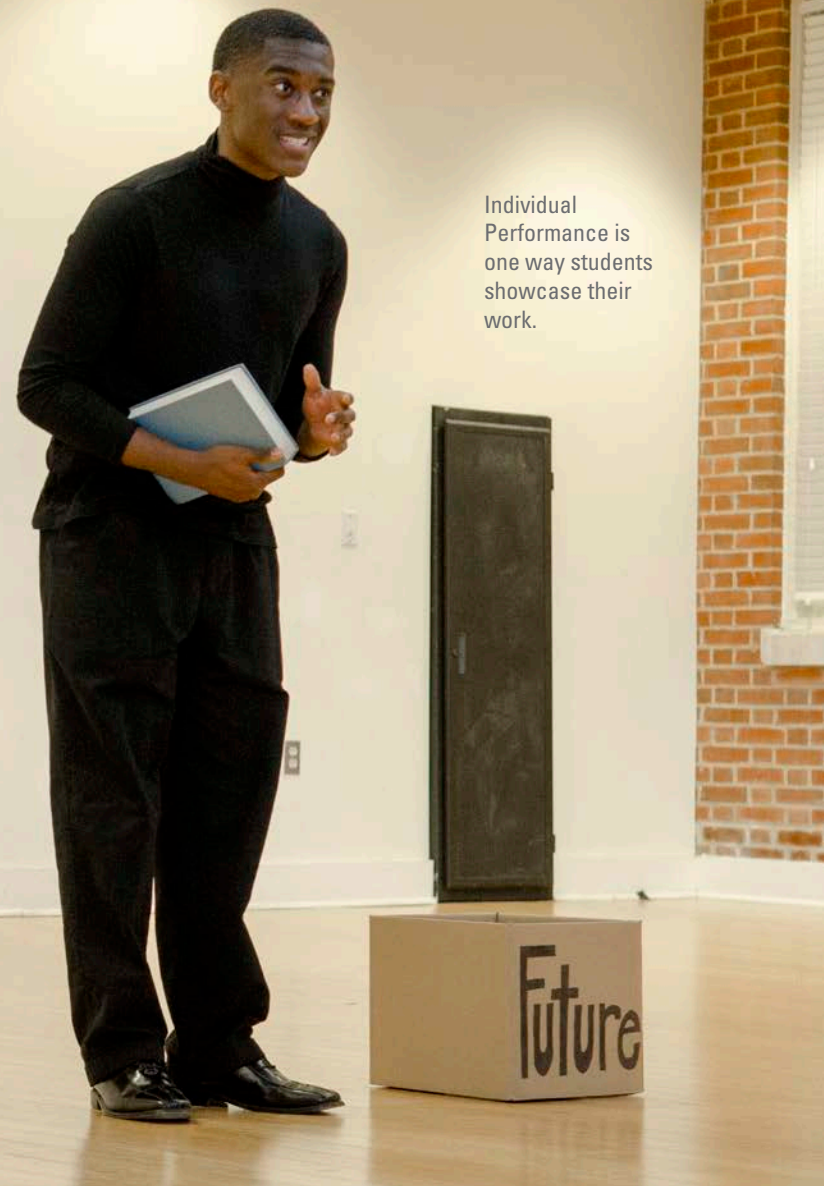
Many school programs don't provide opportunities for students to discover subjects that excite them, to dive into their own research, or analyze and reflect on what they find. Too often, there is not enough time for the kind of one-on-one mentoring that works so well to inspire a thirst for knowledge and understanding.

Middle and high school teachers across the country and around the world are looking for a better approach.

Some have already found it.

"We cannot teach kids everything they need to know, so what we must do is teach them how to learn and think. National History Day does that."

What is National History Day?



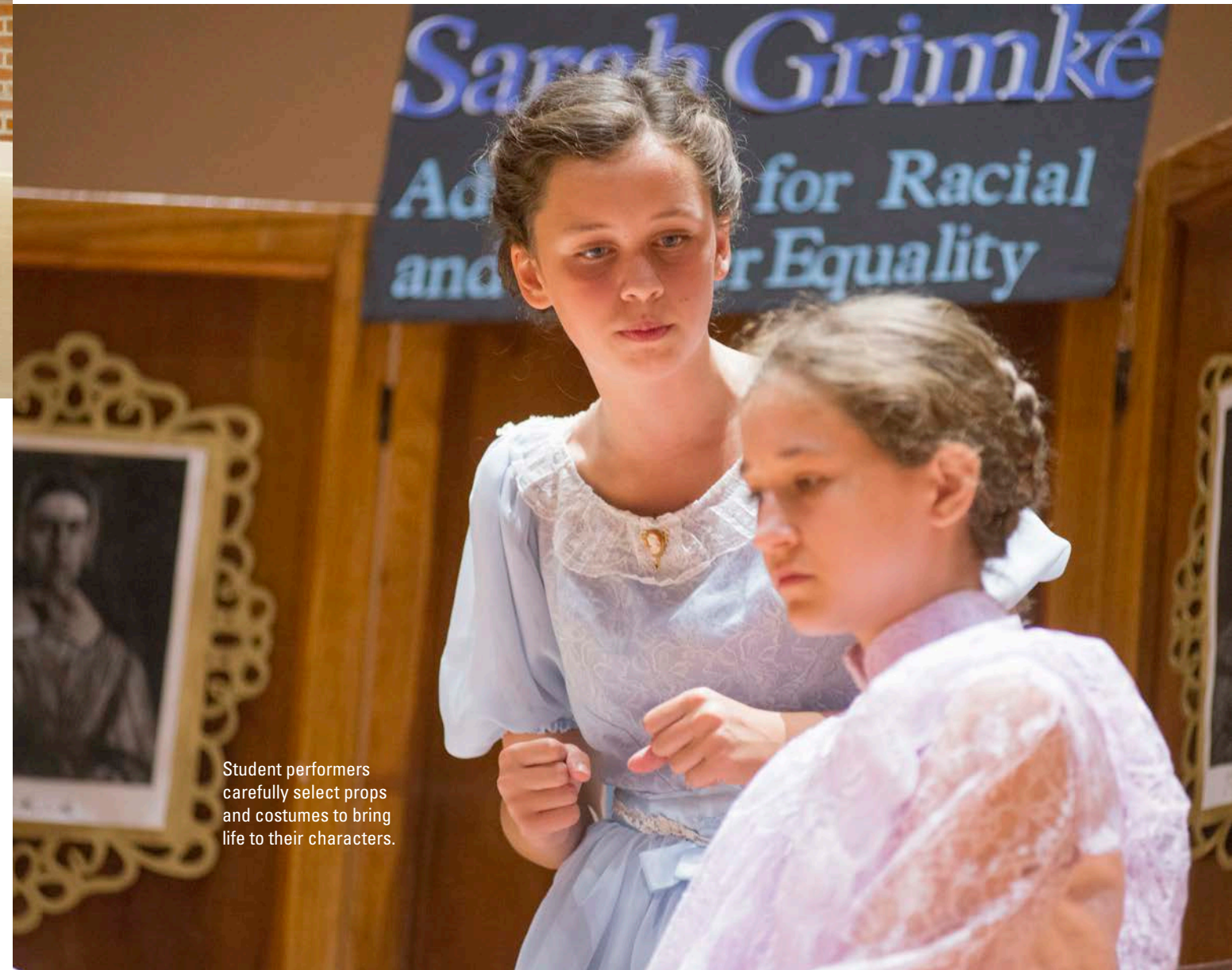
Individual Performance is one way students showcase their work.

Here's how it works {The short version}

Every autumn, in every state across the country—and in a growing number of other countries around the world—over 600,000 6th- through 12th-graders undertake a significant history research project. In the spring, students enter their work into local contests with their peers. Nearly 3,000 participants win the opportunity to advance to the worldwide competition in June, where dozens of proud students are awarded honors, prizes and scholarships.

It's a yearlong history program for kids who love a challenge. It's mind-expanding. It awakens intellectual curiosity. It improves academic performance and standardized test scores. National History Day builds communication and social skills, boosts self-esteem and develops the competencies kids need to succeed in tomorrow's workplace. It opens doors.

Briefly said, National History Day changes lives.



Student performers carefully select props and costumes to bring life to their characters.



IN MORE DETAIL:

Some teachers use the National History Day framework as part of their history and social studies classes. Others offer the experience as an extracurricular activity. Unlike most school assignments, the program encourages students to lead their own learning. This makes it exciting and empowering from the first day.

Choose a topic

Students have the freedom to choose their topics. It doesn't have to be a traditional topic like those they study in history textbooks, although it can be.

Kids have done projects on topics as varied as the causes of the Viet Nam War, the creation of Pakistan, and the invention of the personal computer. Many students choose a topic related to an experience of a relative—a great grandparent's struggle during the Dustbowl, for example. One student recently did a project on the Americans with Disabilities Act, because she wanted to better understand the life experiences of her aunt who has Down's Syndrome.

Students conduct in-depth, original research on their topics using a range of resources—everything from primary texts to personal interviews—just as professional historians do.

Choose a presentation medium

There are five contest categories and students choose the medium that most appeals to them. Papers are solo efforts, and the other four categories—exhibits, documentaries, performances and websites—can be done independently or as part of a group. There's something for most every kind of kid—the writer who prefers to work alone, the dramatic performer, the aspiring designer and the technology wiz.

Teachers make it happen

Dedicated teachers—over 20,000 worldwide—guide students through the History Day process—teaching advanced research and analysis skills, helping to problem-solve, working through the group dynamics and encouraging the kids to soldier on when the going gets tough.

It's not easy, but teachers do it because they believe that nothing inspires the incredible growth and enthusiasm for learning the way National History Day does. "It's a powerful and engaging way to get students excited about learning, specifically—but not only—about learning history," says Rory Dippold, a teacher from Virginia.

Competition! From local contests to the finals

There's something about competing that brings out the best in kids. It pushes them to reach higher and achieve more.

Students begin the competitive phase of the program by presenting their projects at local contests—in their school, region or state. The best projects in each category are selected to continue on to the finals in June at the University of Maryland.

After nearly a year's dedicated effort, students receive glory and awards for the most accomplished projects from each state and country. Not everyone wins (it's a contest after all!) but the most frequent response you hear if you ask any student about the experience—winner or not—is: "National History Day changed my life!"

The Gift of Her Own Voice

EMMA, SENIOR FROM KENTUCKY

YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT IF YOU MET HER TODAY, but when she was in first grade, Emma was diagnosed with an auditory processing disability. In other words, her brain has difficulty processing what she hears.

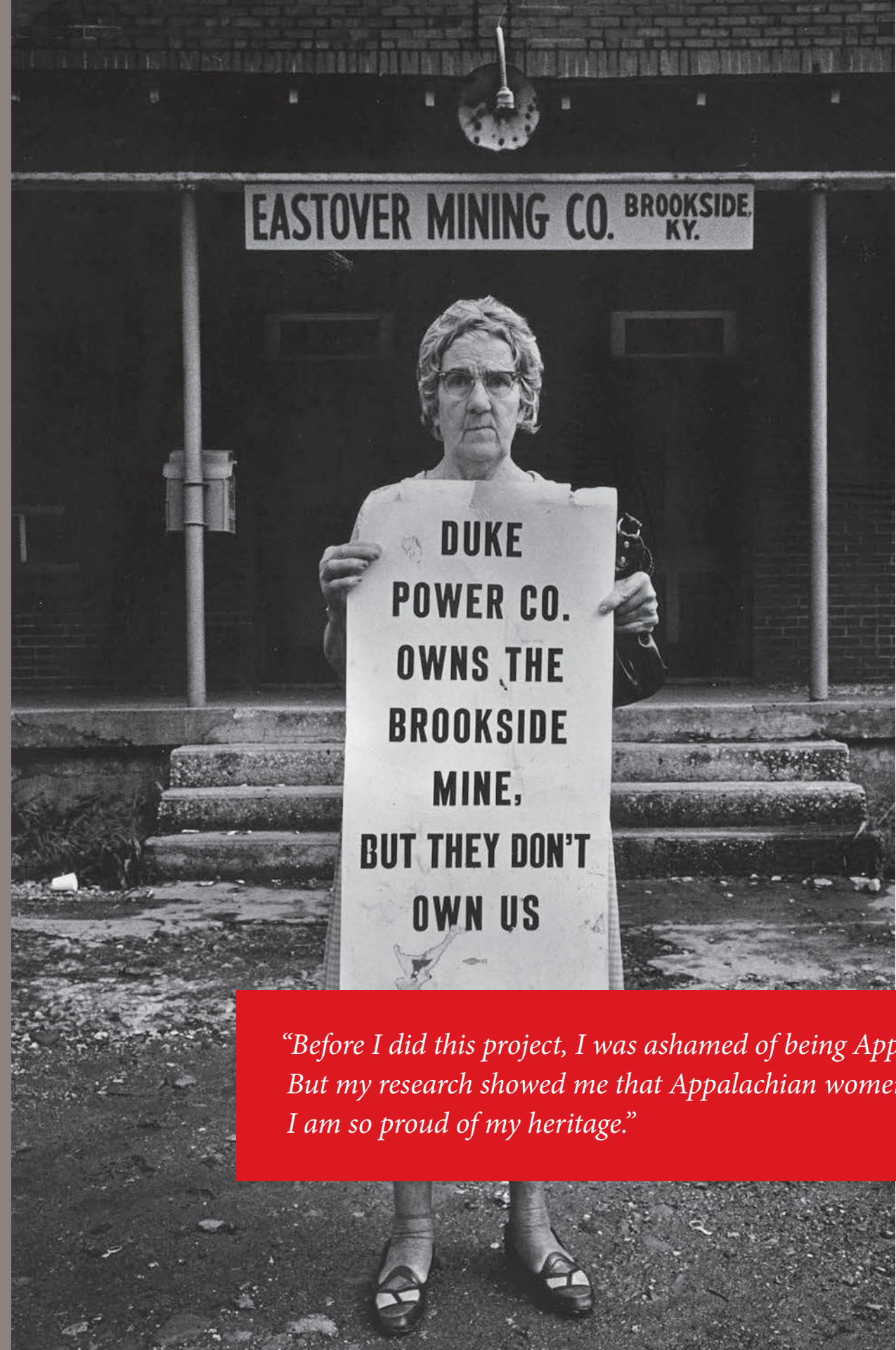
Learning to read was a daunting challenge, and she lagged behind her classmates for years. A speech impediment—a symptom of her condition—made her painfully self-conscious. She hated to speak in public or have her voice recorded.

Then she discovered History Day. It offered Emma a unique opportunity to combine her interest in video documentary production with her passion for history. The experience was life-changing.

“Her transformation is amazing! The confidence she developed from gaining expertise on her topic enabled her to narrate her videos and defend her research publicly. National History Day gave my daughter the gift of her own voice,” recalls her Mom.

And here's hard proof of the impact National History Day had on Emma's academic abilities: her reading ACT score increased by 10 points during that one academic year!

As if all that wasn't enough, Emma's research on the 1973 coalminers' strike in Harlan County, KY, gave her a new sense of pride in her heritage. “Before I did this project, I was ashamed of being Appalachian. People would say things like, ‘Are those your real teeth?’ and ‘Do you have 20 brothers and sisters?’ But my research showed me that Appalachian women are strong and fight for what we believe in. I am so proud to be a descendent of strong Appalachian women.”



“Before I did this project, I was ashamed of being Appalachian. But my research showed me that Appalachian women are strong. I am so proud of my heritage.”



National History Day has a lot to offer our young people...

Character traits and abilities that lead to success

Joy and passion for learning. Self-confidence and poise. Persistence and grit. These are what it takes to succeed—whatever you do, throughout your life. The format and requirements of National History Day are designed to cultivate these traits.

Twenty-first century skills

“National History Day teaches the skills needed for the jobs that have not even been created yet,” says Deborah Nelson, a History Day mom from Minnesota. Communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity—often referred to as “the 4C’s”—are standard ingredients in every National History Day project.

Improved academic performance and higher test scores across all subjects

This is not speculation or hyperbole. It’s been proven in studies by an objective, nationally-known, educational research organization. National History Day students outperform their peers on state standardized tests in multiple subjects including reading, writing, science, math, and social studies.

for our teachers...

A powerful way to teach—and all the tools needed to succeed

Publications, curriculum resources, professional development institutes and a network of enthusiastic educators provide everything teachers need to transform history lessons into life-changing educational experiences that meet state and national standards. Most of these resources are low in cost, and many of them are free.

...and even for our society.

Building better citizens

National History Day students offer more than improved skills to their future towns and communities. They also bring empathy—the ability to see things from other points of view. “National History Day broadens their perspectives, encourages them to learn about different cultures and values and how people face different challenges,” according to teacher Rory Dippold. “That’s what it will take to solve our most serious problems.”

Raising the Bar For Our Kids

MAUREEN, TEACHER FROM MISSOURI



“WE’RE IN CRISIS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION. We have too many passive learners—students who do only what they have to do to get a good grade. There is tremendous pressure on teachers to teach to the test. National History Day is the antidote to that,” says teacher Maureen Funk.

Maureen has been in education as a teacher and administrator for nearly four decades, working with students of all ages—from the youngest through college.

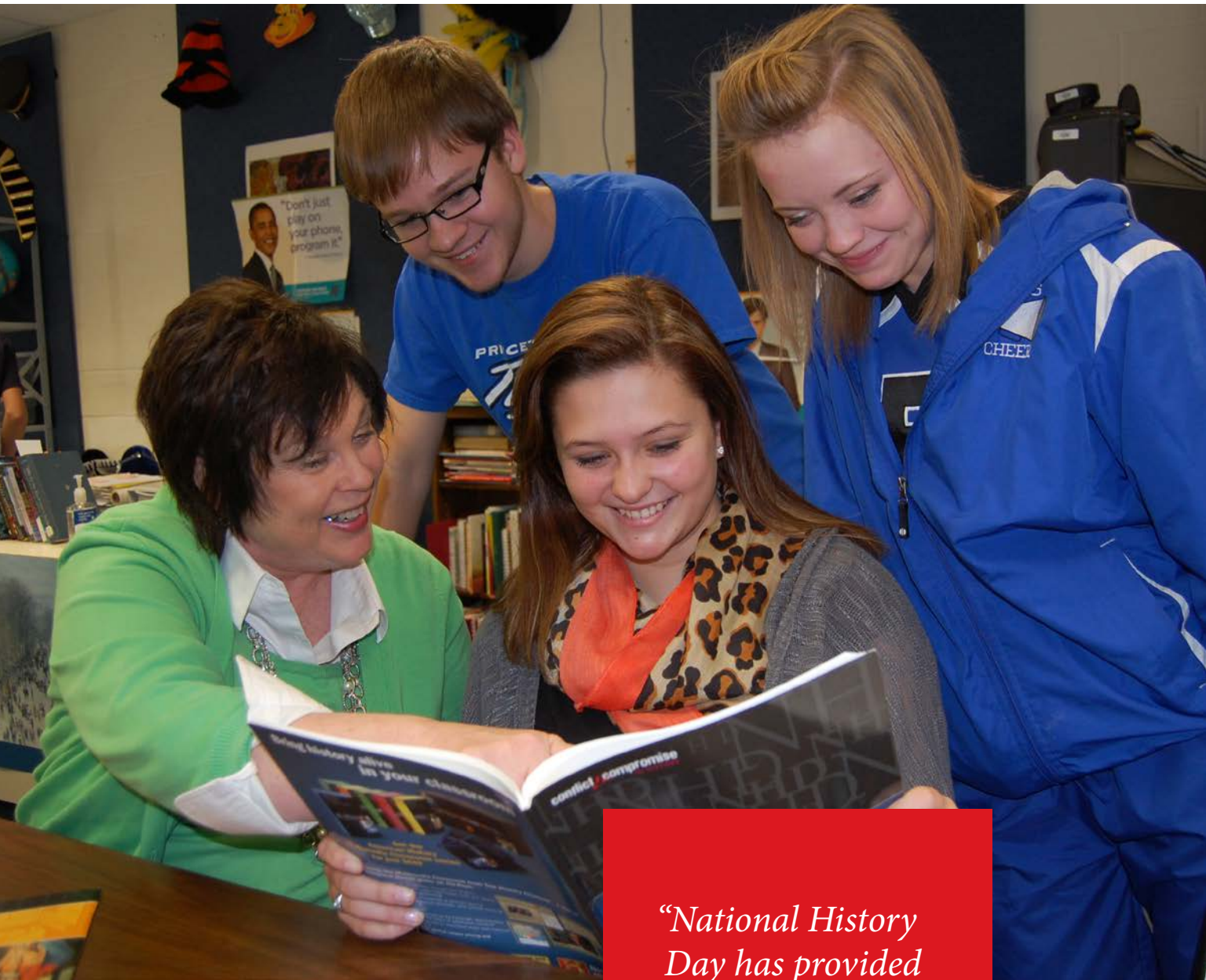
“I think National History Day is the most outstanding project-based learning program that I have encountered in 38 years,” she declares. “It raises the bar.”

Maureen believes there are several key aspects that really set the program apart. Allowing students to choose their own topics and genres forces them to take ownership of their projects. Passive learning simply isn’t an option with National History Day.

And even though test preparation plays no part in National History Day, studies have shown that participating significantly raises standardized test scores. “The nationally-based research showing that it improves our test scores has really helped me persuade administrators and school boards of the value of the program,” Maureen says.

“National History Day teaches real life skills—the kind kids need to succeed in the workplace—planning, gathering research, delivering a product.”

But equally important, Maureen believes the program develops abilities that will literally strengthen society. “Democracy only works if we have an educated populace who can think critically about important issues, understand complex problems, and see the world from alternative viewpoints. National History Day actually teaches kids to become better citizens.”



Maureen Funk shares her enthusiasm about NHD with her students.

“National History Day has provided a platform for me to tie in everything I know to be important as an educator.”

If National History Day is already getting such great results, why do we need your help?

The answer is simple: National History Day is dependent upon generous gifts from donors like you—individuals and organizations who care about our youth and believe in the transformative power of education—to operate and deliver our program.

Thanks to private donations, more than 600,000 students participate in a transformative educational experience each year. Over 20,000 teachers receive the training and resources they need to transform their classrooms into inspirational, life-changing learning environments. And with your help we can do even more.

But without your support... National History Day simply wouldn't exist.



NHD students take ownership of their project, learning all they can about a topic that interests them.



What your generosity means to students and teachers across the country and around the world

- Your gift funds the development of new programs to enhance the reach and impact of National History Day—including new categories using emerging technologies and workshops in locations around the world where students can walk in the footsteps of important historical figures.
- Your gift pays for a wide range of professional development resources to help our teachers learn how to implement the National History Day approach, including publications, webinars, workshops, courses, and guidance on aligning the NHD framework with state and local standards.
- Your gift makes the national contest possible each year on the campus of the University of Maryland, where we bring together approximately 3,000 students and 1,000 teachers for five days to have one of the most exciting experiences of their lives.
- Your gift inspires students to love learning and increases their self-confidence. It opens their minds to new disciplines and possibilities. It improves their academic performance and raises their test scores.

Your gift is life-changing.

Connecting the Dots with History

ERICK, NATIONAL HISTORY DAY ALUM FROM NEW JERSEY

WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF HIS TEACHER, Erick created a performance in 11th grade that won 3rd place at the National Contest. The following year NHD selected him to perform before an audience of VIPs in Washington, D.C. Erick credits his NHD experiences as a large introduction to “deep analysis, understanding, and critical thinking.”

As a sophomore in college, he finds himself at a turning point -- faced with a decision that will test his analytical skills. He is nearing the end of his Associate's Degree in Engineering at a local community college and must choose a 4-year college from the many options that are available to him. The challenge? NHD has fueled a passion for the Humanities. For fun, he indulges in reading, writing, and researching, and he volunteers as a mentor to students at his former high school. He is hooked on the Humanities. Will he pick up a minor in Humanities to complement his Engineering major or completely shift gears and change his major to Humanities?

Erick speaks passionately about history and, in particular, about research and writing. Developing his own perspective on a topic makes him feel like an authority as he produces secondary source material that may help future researchers. As he says, he looks to history for guidance in “connecting the dots.” With this impassioned spirit, whatever he decides, he will succeed.



For one of his NHD projects, Erick portrayed an African-American soldier in WWI.”

“Developing my own perspective on historical events makes me feel like an authority, producing material for future researchers.”



If you care about our young people, you can make a dramatic impact on their lives and futures. Here's how.

- **Visit** the NHD website to learn more about our program, see samples of student work and instructional materials or read what students and teachers have to say about us: www.nhd.org.
- **Call** Cathy Gorn, Executive Director, at 301-314-9739 to learn about the ways your gift will be put to use changing lives right now.
- **Be our guest** at a contest and see NHD in action for yourself: visit www.nhd.org to find out where and when.
- **Make a generous donation today:** www.nhd.org/donate.

Please join these partners and supporters who generously invest in changing lives through National History Day:

Kenneth E. Behring
Patricia Behring
The WEM 2000 Foundation of the Dorsey and Whitney Foundation
Albert H. Small
HISTORY
Joe Weider Foundation
National Endowment for the Humanities
National Park Service
Jostens
Southwest Airlines

NHD partners with some of the most highly respected institutions in the field of history including:

American Association for State and Local History
American Battle Monuments Commission
American Historical Association
Federation of State Humanities Councils
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Center for History in the Schools
National Council for History Education
National Council for the Social Studies
Organization of American Historians
Society of American Archivists

National History Day is a proud recipient of the 2011 National Humanities Medal.

The National History Day endowment is managed by Glenmede Investment Management, founded by the Pew Family as the fiduciary of the Pew Trusts.

National History Day

—It's happening all over the world.
—It's about the past and the future.
—It spans a year and lasts a lifetime.



Participants at National History Day gathered in Maryland to celebrate each state's achievements and participate in the national competition.

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