



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program
Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form
(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

Deadline for Nominations Extended to March 30, 2015

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (select only one):

- Community Health and Safety
Community Partnership
Community Sustainability
Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: History to Schools

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Anderson Township, Ohio

Jurisdiction population(s): 43,446

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: April Year: 2013

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Vicky L. Earhart

Title: Township Administrator Jurisdiction: Anderson Township, Ohio

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Vicky L. Earhart

Title: Township Administrator Jurisdiction: Anderson Township, Ohio

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**ICMA – 2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program
Community Partnership Award Nomination**

ENGAGING TOMORROW’S YOUTH WHILE CONNECTING WITH THE PAST

Amazing things happen when people come together with one idea in mind. What started out as a desire to teach township history to elementary school students grew into the “History to Schools” field trip. This program not only educates students and their families, it also fosters collaboration, helps to build a sense of community, and engages volunteers. Seem a lot to ask from one program? You may be surprised to find out how much your community has to gain from this one simple idea.

It all began when Anderson Township’s (Hamilton Co., Ohio) Board of Township Trustees decided to turn what had been designated a storage area at Anderson Center into a History Room for the community. The Board entered into an agreement with the Anderson Township Historical Society whose members operate the museum serving as docents and archivists. After the History Room was completed, the township reached out to the local school district in the hopes that a trip to the museum could be incorporated into their curricula. Teachers and administrators from the Forest Hills Local School District along with Historical Society volunteers were brought to the table to discuss the possibilities.

While all of the parties were interested in teaching local history, as is often the case, logistical issues began to get in the way. There were approximately 95 students in each second grade class but the History Room could only accommodate 20 at a time. How could we divide the classes into smaller groups and keep the students who weren’t in the History Room

occupied? The solution was to expand the program to include additional sessions that touched on second grade courses and shortly thereafter, the “History to Schools” field trip was born.

Annual direct costs associated with the program are limited to: a) \$2,055 for student giveaways [Arbor Day trees, Township-themed coloring books, history-related bookmarks, and a multi-page history challenge booklet], and b) \$700 for bus transportation. Indirect costs include: a) the transportation of Township equipment [fire engine, dump truck, Sheriff’s cruiser], and b) staff time as approximately ten Township employees and one Hamilton County Sheriff’s Officer are involved in presenting the program on each of the seven field trip dates. Anderson Township Historical Society docents volunteer their time. Similarly, the Forest Hills Local School District engages volunteers to assist teachers as chaperones.

“History to Schools” Field Trip

Upon arrival at Anderson Center, students are welcomed by a Township Trustee, Administrators, Department Heads, and volunteers who serve as their presenters. Students are then split into five groups and escorted to the first 25 minute class. 1) Costumed docents lead students through the History Room providing them with a tour of the museum and an opportunity to sit in desks from the 1800s, draw on slate boards and examine *McGuffey Readers*. 2) An outdoor nature walk allows students to examine the fish, frogs, and tadpoles that call Anderson Lake home. Students explore the natural habitats that surround the lake and visit the Township’s buckeye grove to discover Ohio’s state tree. 3) Historical presentations continue as volunteer docents explain how transportation and communications have evolved over the years. Artifacts from yesteryear are on display depicting the changes in technology over time. 4) Sheriff’s cruisers, fire engines, loaders and dump trucks are on display in the

parking lot. Safety services personnel explain how the equipment is utilized to provide services to Township residents. 5) Planning and Zoning staff engage students in an interactive mapping exercise. Various types of maps are placed on easels so that children can examine them while they learn mapping skills. At the end of each session, students place a “star” indicating the street on which they live. The maps are then given to teachers for use in their classroom.

At the conclusion of the day, all participants come together to celebrate Arbor Day through an interactive discussion about the benefits of trees. Students are provided with a sapling and instructions on how to plant it before loading their buses to return to school.

After the 2013 inaugural year, the township reached out to foster collaboration by inviting a neighboring village to participate. The Village of Newtown, which is also in the Forest Hills Local School District, sent representatives from their police, fire and historical society to participate in the 2014 program. The program was also expanded to include students from Immaculate Heart of Mary, a local parochial school. In addition, after having learned a bit themselves, Township staff, Historical Society docents and teachers came together to draft *Guidelines for Teachers and Chaperones*. These guidelines outline basic rules to ensure that students, teachers and chaperones gain the most from this fun and educational experience in a safe and welcoming environment. Several logistical changes were also made to reduce the number of volunteers or staff needed to escort students from one class to the next.

As a result of this simple idea, parents and teachers who participate in the field trip have become more aware of the services their local governments provide. In addition, visits to local historical sites increased as students encourage their families to explore. Now in its third year,

the “2015 History to Schools” will kick-off in late April. Over the course of seven days, 586 students and more than 40 adult chaperones and teachers will participate in the program.

Each local government can build their own “History to Schools” program on scale that is appropriate for their available resources. Simply begin by communicating with your local school district. There may be an opportunity for an elected official or historical society volunteer to speak to individual classes. Start small and watch it grow -- the benefits to your community will be numerous.

Respectfully submitted by:

Vicky L. Earhart, Township Administrator
Anderson Township
7850 Five Mile Road
Anderson Township, Ohio 45230

