

Summary of the Earth Charter Community Summits

(The following summary of the community summits was prepared by Jan Roberts, the National Summits Coordinator, and includes contributions from local coordinators around the country. Jan can be reached at 1-888-254-8454, or Roberts@transformworld.org.)

"I tend to get cynical about the state of the world, so I need events like this to remind me to have hope, and that individual actions are important to create change". This statement expressed by a participant in Portland, Oregon sums up the importance of the Earth Charter Community Summits, which are held annually to spark grassroots involvement and initiatives with the Earth Charter, an international people's agreement to sustain the planet. Most people do want to make a positive difference. The annual summits give them an avenue where they can connect with good-hearted folks who embrace the same inclusive, compassionate and just world view that they do. The Earth Charter Community Summits combine festivities, music, art, inspiring speakers, and dialogues for understanding and using the Earth Charter.

This year's summits were held in 24 cities in the United States on Saturday, September 28 and were connected via a webcast. Each city hosted an event customized to its locale with the opportunity to download keynote speakers from other participating cities and joined in a webcast round-robin so that participants could see the others, generating a collective energy for positive change. This was the first year that webstreaming was used and despite some of the flaws, it made keynote speakers available even to people at home and created the framework for an on-going Earth Charter Web Channel.

The Institute for Ethics & Meaning is an all-volunteer grassroots community building organization that coordinates the summits. Summit organizers are volunteers who simply want to spread the word about the Earth Charter in their hometowns. Many do not have organizing backgrounds but are guided by their passion for the Earth Charter.

With the Earth Charter as the centerpiece, each summit had its own unique spirit and combination of activities. In addition, to the 24 "official" summit cities, other gatherings were held on the same day focused on the Earth Charter. In Calgary Canada, Jean Robertson celebrated the opening of her bookstore by hosting a discussion on the Earth Charter that included downloading David Korten's speech and a group reading and discussion of the Earth Charter. On-going Earth Charter events are being planned there and a board member of the Calgary Sustainable Indicators Society is pursuing the integration of the Earth Charter into their work. In San Francisco, Sister Rosemary McKean reports that the Sisters of the Presentation hosted an informational/educational day for 100 participants on justice issues that emphasized the Earth Charter. The group was encouraged to become active in promoting the Earth Charter principles through discussion, education/raising awareness of others, and contacting legislators on every government level to "prod our nation to do its part".

On the day of the summits, hurricane Lily hit west of New Orleans causing a turnout of one lone "community activist extraordinaire" as described by summit organizer, Jean Vegas. However, a committed group is planning on-going Earth Charter events and discussions building towards the 2003 community summits. Prescott, Arizona held a small summit, which included several members of the John Birch Society who challenged the Earth Charter according to Maya Jones, summit organizer, which took the morning off track. However, folks stayed afterwards to discuss building a public awareness of the Earth Charter in that city and planning for next year's summit. The President of Prescott College has also endorsed the Earth Charter. Brief reports from some of

the cities that participated this year follow. More details can be found at www.earthchartersummits.org. The 2003 summits will be held on Saturday, October 11.

Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Andrew Robson, Summit Organizer.

The Earth Charter Community Summit at University of Wisconsin Oshkosh began with an environmental fair ("GreenQuest") on Saturday, 21st September, and continued through the following week with daily lectures, panels, and other events each late afternoon and evening. We began with a Drum Circle, led by a community performer, who succeeded in turning about 60 people into a cohesive, tribal ensemble. It was a lot of fun and got our event off to a good start. The presentations that followed (Monday-Thursday, and then Saturday) were all extremely well-attended, with the total audience easily exceeding 1000. The attendance at GreenQuest was at least this many again. It's hard to pick highlights, but the presentations by John Stauber (Center for Media and Democracy) and Deborah Toler (Institute for Public Accuracy) on the politics of food were terrific, as were Doug LaFollette (Wisconsin Sec. of State), Mike McCabe (Wisconsin Democracy Campaign), Steven Picou, and Bron Taylor. The atmosphere created at the Summit was friendly, engaged, and exciting. Because the rooms were always crowded, there was a certain energy, and because we served wine, juices, and nice (vegan and vegetarian) hors d'oeuvres between events we didn't lose many people to hunger! The audience consisted of students, faculty, and community members, and there was a lot of informal conversation on the issues during and between events, including a bonus opportunity when a fire alarm drove us out of the building for almost an hour on Saturday. The two keynote speakers on the 28th were both terrific, and made a big impression. Almost without exception, it was a great success, and everyone is determined to build on this to create new opportunities for action and debate throughout the year.

Following the endorsement of the Student Government Association, the Faculty Senate and the Academic Union, at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, I'm confident that we have secured the continued and enthusiastic support of the university administration and many others. Currently, peace issues predominate, and the Earth Charter group is supporting a number of activities. We haven't met formally since the Summit, but we shall do so soon, and then we'll develop more concrete plans.

Hartford, Connecticut, Tom Malone & Claire Markham Summit Organizers

Under the auspices of several institutions of higher education, and with support from Connecticut's TALENT program, 150 participants gathered at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford for a Symposium and Breakout Discussions centered on role of the Earth Charter in the pursuit of Our Common Future. Keynote presentations by Harvard's Dr. Robert Corell and Yale's Prof. Stephen Kellert were disseminated over the web site www.earthchartersummits.org. The title of the event, "Our Common Future," was selected to relate to the theme of the 1987 Report by the World Commission on Environment and Development. Generally known as the "Brundtland Report" after its chair (Gro Harlan Brundtland), that document was a clarion call to scientific groups and nongovernmental organizations to join forces with governments and intergovernmental organizations in pursuing their common future. Dr. Corell, who had been in Johannesburg, eloquently described WSSD and the significance of the new Type II collaborations that will build on the kind of partnerships originally urged in the Brundtland Report. He underscored the importance of science in those partnerships and described graphically the Polar Regions as the "Canaries" of global change. Professor Kellert presented an illuminating discussion of the mutual interaction between the quality of life and the quality of the environment.

Levels of enthusiasm and commitment among participants were high. They left with deepened commitments that Earth Charter holds the key to realizing a vision of a global society in which all

of the basic human needs and an equitable share of human wants can be met by successive generations while maintaining a healthy, physically attractive, and biologically productive environment. They agreed that action on those principles requires “a change of mind and heart” and realization that once basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more.” Follow-up activities include a website for youth that was funded by the TALENT Program in Connecticut, which encourages young people in science. The website will host student papers on how the moral imperatives of the Earth Charter can be implemented.

Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota Nancy Dunlavy, Summit Organizer

We pulled together a very meaningful, inspiring, and well-received Summit in only 9 weeks with 230 participants in attendance! In addition to SGI-USA, 24 organizations, plus the 43 organizations of the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers and the 80 organizations of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership were co-sponsors, and contributed significantly to the program planning, financial support, and promotion of the event. People were definitely inspired, and created many strong connections with each other. We were able to catch Steven Rockefeller’s eloquent speech via download from the webcast. Artistic performances (dance, instrumental and vocal performances) added a significant dimension to the day. The mayor of Minneapolis proclaimed September 28th to be “Earth Charter Day”. We had a very significant program for elementary and junior high children running all day. Those that attended enjoyed themselves and learned much about EC principles. We stayed within a budget of just under \$2000. We did a good job for only 9 weeks, but we’re starting NOW to expand the network.

Planned follow-up activities include: (1) “Report-back” meeting with core Summit steering committee members and: follow-up meeting to continue the momentum built from the Summit; (2) all Summit attendees invited to join (we have over 200 e-mail addresses from the Summit “registration cards”); (3) Our goal is to form an “Earth Charter Initiative, Minnesota Chapter”. This group would create a “strategic action plan” for continuously getting the message of the Earth Charter communicated in our community – through the media, in schools, corporations, governments, and to local citizens. Then sub-committees would be formed to carry out actions that fulfill the strategic action plan.

Some of the ideas that have come up so far: (1) Promote study circles or other actions that grow out of the Summit’s Action Circles; (2) Encourage the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers’ “Trajectory of Change Revisioning Dialogues” to include significant use of the Earth Charter (45 local organizations involved); (3) Give talks to faith communities, and encouraging them to form “Eco-Spirituality” groups, with the Earth Charter as a foundation; (4) Conduct seminars on the Earth Charter at the “Living Green Expo” that is being held in the Twin Cities on April 12-13, 2003. The Expo has an expected audience of 10,000; (5) Strive to get a monthly or weekly series in the local Star Tribune newspaper “Faith and Values” section, each month covering one of the Earth Charter principles from #5-#16; (6) Encourage local chapters of Women for International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) to conduct seminars and workshops on the Earth Charter principles; (7) Continue to work with the staff of the “Green Cities Initiative” programs in various cities of Minnesota, with the eventual goal of each city formally endorsing and applying the Earth Charter with all city programs.

Boulder, Colorado Cy Englert, Summit Organizer

The Summit participants watched the live webcast of David Korten's speech, held a group reading of the Earth Charter, and engaged in dialogue groups formed to answer the question: “How do we involve (1) Local Businesses and the (2) City of Boulder?” Key Action Items: (1) Next Earth Charter Community Meeting: late October/early November; (2) Core Team of EC Volunteers formed; (3) Host EC dialogues with Peace and Justice Center, Horizon Dairy, Boulder Food Co-

op and Wild Oats; (4) Assemble a Naropa University sponsored Ethics in Business Forum; (5) Explore using the EC in Environmental Studies; (6) Create a series of EC Forums at and for the Naropa Community.

Additional notes from the CITY focus group: (1) What does signing/endorsing the EC mean? Key question to ask: What would change? (2) What would change? Homeless shelter would be improved, jobs and food given more freely; Elderly and children would not be put into institutions to be 'moved out of our vision'; our consumption patterns would be more sustainable. (3) Plan for Task Force to create a 25 year vision of what needs to change. The task force would be multi-generational, multi-cultural, multi-economic. (4) Challenge the economic assumption that 'growth' is 'good.'

Additional notes from the LOCAL BUSINESS focus group: (1) Dialogue and education are key actions to promote a new paradigm or change of view; (2) Underlying basic belief: More Money is the goal of business. What does it mean? It is based upon perspective and values. What is 'ethical'? Exploration of business ethics is needed; (3) Questions of Ethics: What is the result or impact of your business? Develop a new 'score card' for evaluating ethical businesses and research the Global Reporting Initiative. What is the total cost of production (cradle-to-grave) that includes environmental costs? Look at cost models such as Thermarest, Interface Carpets and Whole Foods. Point out 'common goals; (4) Many of us hold stock. Exercise your voice as a shareholder and owner of the company. (5) Create the Boulder Center for Sustainable Business Education to help businesses with the transformation.

Mobile, Alabama Jim Dees, Summit Organizer

Tropical storm Isidore hit just west of Mobile 2 days before the summits causing flooding and affecting the turn-out for the summit. But, undaunted, the group of enthusiastic souls that did turn out enjoyed two crates of mixed organic apples, 70 lbs of organic bananas, 120 locally baked organic "meal-in-a-muffins" (w/walnuts & dates) and 5 lbs of organic, bird-friendly, shade grown, fair-trade "Mother Earth Blend" coffee. "We may not have the biggest budget, but we ate well- and 99.5% of our waste was recycled or composted at days end." Highlights were speaker John Stith from the Alabama Green Party and our panel discussion on What Does It Mean to Live Sustainably? with Roald Hazelhoff (Director of Southern Environmental Center), Craig & Lisa Kalloch (Middle Earth Healing Center), Charlene Lee (Sustainable Development in Fairhope), and Laurie Orso (Community Earth Network). The Earth Kids led everyone in closing with the Earth Pledge. Even though, Mobile did not come "on board" for the summits until just two months before, the event sparked real interest in the Earth Charter and was an informative and fun day. Follow-up plans include a core group for planning next year's summits and strong interest in participating in the Earth Scouts.

Honolulu, Hawaii, Joshua Cooper, Summit Organizer

Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights sponsored a week-long series of activism and advocacy in honor of the Earth Charter bringing students and community together. The first event on Maui was a service learning project for sustainable development where students cleaned a courtyard and began a peace and ecology garden. The courtyard was cleared and indigenous plants were placed in holistic designs. Students now study in the space. Earth Charters are also available for students to read at the seating spaces. Another event was an Ecological Justice Film Festival on Oahu featuring the Earth Charter, Defending Those Who Defend the Earth and Chico Mendes: The Burning Season. The final event on September 28 was a five island interactive forum via teleconferencing focusing on the Earth Charter: Values and Principles for a Sustainable Future. Students and community members discussed principles of traditional Kanaka Maoli (Hawai'i) in comparison with the Earth Charter and ways to develop a sustainable society.

Indianapolis, Indiana John Gibson, Summit Organizer

First the numbers-250 attended (75 of these under 16). There were 46 sponsors, exhibitors, and donors plus 26 volunteers (Americorps and others) who made the event successful. Highlights of the day included great weather, a vibrant demonstration of youth making a difference such as the Kings Kids Oratorical Team (7-11 year-olds), All Species mask making and readings by elementary and middle schoolers, and the keynote speaker, Jason Crowe, age 15, who told about remarkable things he and his friends are doing toward a better world. Interactive theater, poetry reading, and a panel of civic activists connecting local issues to Earth Charter values helped attendees get into the challenges of implementing EC principles in the workplace, the neighborhood, and the home. The grand finale was a parade and pageant of universal harmony around the beautiful fountain on the Marian College campus. The music of a small percussion band, a talented soloist, a creative narrator, and professional dancers led the attendees of all ages and capabilities in a series of flowing movements that symbolized the interdependence of all living things and culminated in a circle dance around the fountain. Follow-up meetings to maintain the momentum of the Summit are being planned.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Susan Curry & Carol Collins, Summit Organizers

The Philadelphia 2002 Earth Charter Summits was an energetic and enthusiastic event which drew together over 350 people onto the UPENN campus to meet in eight caucus groups to plan how to work together to bring the Earth Charter alive in our lives and communities and to use the Charter as a guideline for regional policy in the areas of the caucus interests. Many of the caucuses are continuing as coalitions organized for unprecedented results. In our theme of "Recognition and Inclusion", we honored six awardees in the areas of Education, Responsible Business, Democracy in Action, Peace and Nonviolence, Energy & Climate, and Earth Charter Summits Leadership.

We acknowledge publicity, technical, and financial difficulties which have left us with a \$4,500 debt. We have learned many lessons about event production, and wonderfully, we have tripled the number of people participating in organizing and producing the Summits in the Philadelphia area. We have scheduled a follow-up meeting on November 2 for all participants and a "Future Search" retreat Feb. 14-16 for cosponsors and other major players in regional sustainability.

A sampling of two caucus reports follows to give more of the Philadelphia flavor: Approximately 40-45 people in the Peace and Nonviolence Coalition addressed principle #16 of the Earth Charter. Professor Ashok Gangadean, Philosophy Professor at Haverford College and Co-Founder of the Global Dialogue Institute moderated a panel of three peace experts for the first hour of the caucus. His introduction emphasized the spiritual dimension of peace and the importance of deep dialogue. Our expert panel then discussed peace issues ranging from the personal to the global. The second hour of the Peace caucus consisted of brief mini-presentations from an assortment of area peace groups who informed us of their peace actions. Represented were: Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, People for a Democratic and Effective United Nations, Peace Action, Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia Peacemaking Committee, Brandywine Peace Community and Soka Gakkai Buddhist fellowship. The Peace Coalition has held two additional meetings so far to design action plans specifically directed at preventing war in Iraq.

The Responsible Business Caucus of about 30 people shared local initiatives such as the Sustainable Business Network of Judy Wicks and Alan Barak, and the Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities. Abbreviated summary follows: (1) Take Local Action Join the Sustainable Business Network (Judy Wicks; www.SBNPhiladelphia.org); (2) Purchase locally; (3) Local

job/hiring resources in the area of responsible business; (4) Learn from other sustainable businesses and from others' mistakes; (5) Buy sustainable energy; (6) Local investment - find the investment funds that allow you to invest in your region rather than support the problematic aims of multinational corporations. (7) Join an organization focusing on business sustainability; (8) Take one step forward and think "Whole Systems." Look for solutions that solve multiple problems, not just one.

San Francisco, California Sue Zipp Summit Organizer

David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and co-author with Daisaku Ikeda of the new book "Choose Hope: Your Role in Waging Peace in the Nuclear Age", was the keynote speaker at the Earth Charter Community Summit in San Francisco. The auditorium was packed to full capacity (about 500 people) for his presentation and he received a standing ovation both when he began and again at the conclusion of his speech "Choose Hope and Change The World". Overall, more than 230 people participated in the daylong activities that included viewing the video "A Quiet Revolution", reports from the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, and discussions on Water Rights and Media Empowerment with follow-up questions and answers between the audience and speakers.

Youth performances opened the day, including the girls and boys Hoop of Hopes and Dreams, and a choral reading of the Earth Charter principles. Cultural presentations were sprinkled throughout the program including a closing sing-along of "One World" led by musician/writer Roberta Donnay. Afternoon facilitated small group dialogues were held using well-prepared discussion questions and included reports back to the full assembly. A useful Program and Resource Guide was distributed to all participants that featured follow-up activities, related publications and resources, and contact information for the US President and Congress. Joseph Firmage, Chair and CEO of ManyOne Networks, which uses the principles of the Earth Charter as a foundation for his company, introduced Dr. David Krieger to a standing ovation. Dr. Krieger spoke about the importance of recognizing our individual power to choose hope over despair. He cited many examples of daily actions each person can take to incorporate the values of the Earth Charter to win over any obstacle no matter what. Dr. Krieger addressed many current issues including the impending war with Iraq.

Immediate follow-up action initiated by the participants included a group that planned to visit their U.S. Representative's office, Earth Charter organizing meetings, and networking activities. Participants were encouraged to network with others, communicate with their elected officials, and to take community action based on their beliefs using the Earth Charter principles and values as a foundation. They were very pleased with the Earth Charter Community Summit San Francisco's display of confidence and heart, and felt a renewed recognition of their personal empowerment and role as a citizen in a democratic society. Thank you notes continue to arrive.

Santa Rosa, California Marlane Spillinger, Pat Bocca & Craig Ellis, Summit Organizers

The SGI-USA Redwood Coast Community Center was host to the Earth Charter Summit on Saturday September 28th. Participants from both SGI and local community organizations gathered together to play a part in the Earth Charter activities that were held nationwide that day. A link to the Earth Charter webcast connected those who attended to the national broadcast of speakers, enabling attendees to hear the address by Dennis Kucinich, Congress Representative from Ohio. Participants were engaged with four speakers whose presentations included 95 year old local peace activist Gertrude Kern, Sonoma State University student Wes Pepper, Ann Hancock, Coordinator of the Sonoma County Climate Protection Campaign and Maceo Campbell of the Peace and Justice Center. The Earth Charter participants split into smaller discussion circles to discuss the principles amongst themselves. Their thought-

provoking dialogues were recorded by a facilitator from each group, and these perspectives were shared when the groups reassembled later in the day. Many people reflected upon their determination to bring the Earth Charter into their daily lives

Members of the SGI-USA Jr. High and High school division performed a stirring choral reading of the first paragraph of the Earth Charter preamble, providing a vibrant reminder that the future of our planet and its inhabitants rests squarely on the shoulders of our youth. Speaking in closing, SGI Redwood Coast YMD Region leader Craig Ellis presented his viewpoint on "The Way Forward".

Summit participants agreed to return on November 3rd in order to advance the progress that the summit had generated, and left with a refreshed and renewed commitment to the principles of the Earth Charter. St. Joseph's Centers for Social Change has joined our effort and already contacted the mayors of Sonoma County asking how they're adopting the EC into their policies. An interfaith group dialogue on the EC is also on the docket. We are going to have continuing Earth Charter meetings at our SGI-USA community center, approximately every other month. We are hoping to be able to utilize the recorded and saved videos from the Earth Charter summits in some of the meetings.

Portland, Oregon, Heather Carver, Summit Organizer

We had a lovely event. 60 people signed in, but in actuality, I think it was probably more like 80-90 (including volunteers). We had refreshments out in the parking lot, and some people went there first, bypassing the main entrance where the registration table was. Some people stayed for the whole time, others just stayed for a short while. So maybe there were even more. Food is very important in Portland, so the refreshments were a significant part of the event. The food was organic, mostly locally produced, and donated. Mary Priem, who coordinated the food educated the suppliers about the Earth Charter, and they were happy to contribute. Equal Exchange fair trade coffee not only donated coffee, but the timing was perfect -- the Peruvian farmer who started the co-op that grew the coffee was in town, and he conducted a discussion group.

Our first speaker was Lisa Manning, of Self Enhancement, Inc., an organization that works with at-risk kids, teaching them life skills. (EC Principle #14) Their motto is "Life has options" meaning other than the usual options of poverty, violence, drugs, etc. Ninety percent of the kids in this program finish high school, a much higher rate than the state average. The next speaker, Tom Hastings, a lifelong peace activist, teaches conflict resolution at Portland State University, and is on the board of Oregon Peace Institute. The young people were especially inspired by him. Finally, Deborah Rodney Pex read several of her poems, ranging from humorous to heartbreaking observations of the world around us. The plan to download the webcast to video did not work out, so we showed the video "A Quiet Revolution." In addition to the Peruvian coffee grower, we had 4 breakout discussion groups, done in a modified version of Open Space, Earth Charter and * Education * Creative arts * Individual actions for the environment, and * Bicycles. We are planning to do a workshop with Tom Hastings in a couple of months on Nonviolent Response to Terrorism as a way to uphold the Earth Charter.

Louisville, Kentucky John Hartman, Summit Organizer

Although we did not reach our expectations for attendance, the folks that came got their time's worth and a lot more as our participants were full of spirit and greatness. Creating beautiful music at the beginning of the Summit was the wonderful Harry Pickens and the PeaceJazz Project. Poetry and song then filled the air. The Terpsichore Dance Company designed a performance and costumes especially for the event, which brought joy to the audience. Mark Steiner was dynamic with his thoughtful, heartfelt, and moving key note address. Mark's use of analogy using the

accumulation of snowflakes and a momentum of grassroots activism was inspiring and renewing. The panelists, Grace Koenig, Dr. Jim Holladay, Emily Weixler, James E. Johnson and Mark Steiner, and moderator Russ Barnett, were articulate, honest, on target and excellent. Brady Yocom, an eighth grader volunteer from Collegiate Middle School was helpful from the start. Her motivation, activated by her dedication to her value of our environment was a motivator for me all through the couple months we spent making this event happen. Brady put her efforts into letters notifying all the private and independent schools in our community of this event, creating a flyer and distributing it in the community, enlisting her helpful family to aid in publicizing the Summit, and Brady also captured the event on video. The fine folks who got up on an early Saturday morning to serve the community and promote the fine organizations that they represent included Kate Cunningham with the Habitat for Humanity, Lee Wells and his father Dewy Wells, representing the Greater Louisville Sierra Club, and Mark Steiner and his friend who represented the Creation Spirituality of Louisville community and Cultivating Connections. Carol Behr of the City of Louisville proclaimed the day Earth Charter Summits Day in Louisville and helped advertise the event to the City of Louisville's employees. Our sponsors were; Women Studies Department, University of Louisville; Philosophy Department, University of Louisville, Kentucky Institute for the Environment and Sustainable Development, University of Louisville; Adena Institute; Communicas; Cultivating Connections; Creation Spirituality of Louisville; West Jefferson County Community Task Force, and the Greater Louisville Sierra Club.

Interest in the Earth Charter has definitely been sparked in Louisville. There have been phone calls including parents with children at Chance School wanting to get involved. In addition, our conversational café will focus on the Earth Charter.

Tampa Bay Area, Florida Jan Roberts, Summit Organizer

"I've been waiting for this all my life," spoken by a participant upon reading the Earth Charter at the summit. That alone made the day worthwhile. The day began with children and youth giving their "take" on the Earth Charter. When asked, "Why is the Earth Charter important?" Four year old Augustine Haile responded, "Because people live on the Earth". Simple, yet that does sum it up. David Korten's and Steven Rockefeller's speeches were downloaded with some difficulty stemming from the deficiency of the sound system locally. The afternoon dialogue groups and initiatives were very well attended with people arriving especially to participate in them. Facilitated dialogues were hosted on the EC & Me, EC & Education, EC & Government and EC & the Arts. The group members were animated, enthusiastic and made solid contributions. Follow-up meetings are being held in November to assure that the energy does not dissipate.

Workshops on Earth Charter initiatives were Earth Scouts, League of Earth Charter Voters and the Florida Clean Elections Act. The Institute for Ethics & Meaning is "incubating" these initiatives until they can stand on their own. The Earth Scouts got a boost with the influx of new volunteers and continues to grow. Funding was received for a part-time coordinator who will complete an Earth Scouts manual and oversee the development of badge templates. A training for volunteer parents, educators and others who want to "try out" the badge templates with youth in order to see if they are "kid friendly and meaningful" is being held later in November. This training will also be offered to interested people in other cities via video and phone conversations. The League for Earth Charter Voters got off to a good start with lots of enthusiasm and good ideas. The purpose is to have a visible political presence of voters who support the Earth Charter, educate candidates and legislators about EC principles and issues and publish a Voters Guide on how legislators vote on legislation relative to the Earth Charter. Email list serve and meetings scheduled in November will keep the folks in touch as they develop this initiative. The Florida Clean Elections Act is modeled after Maine's grassroots campaign finance reform, which publicly finances candidates for office at the state level. This resulted in 53% of those elected last time

being publicly financed and opened the door to more minorities and women running for office. The group agreed to get the requirements re: getting a ballot initiative on the ballot; talk with people in Maine about their process; talk to people who got successful ballot initiative on this year's ballot; and research how to build publicity for the project.

This year's summit attracted 300 people, which was due to at least to two factors--a lack of "name" speaker and getting good alternative press but missing out on the mainstream media. For this and other reasons, the Institute is focusing on building its infrastructure over the next year to fund some core staff members, which will include a media relations person. The summit was successful in a different way this year from last. We missed out on inspiring speakers but the groups and initiatives are very solid and look like they will be fruitful. In addition, the technology was a risk and it wasn't perfect but it has given us a way to make grassroots connections around the Earth Charter low cost and effective.

Washington D.C./Maryland/Virginia. Steve Smith for the organizing committee.

Under the sponsorship of the University of the District of Columbia, Soka Gakkai, Mid-Atlantic Chapter, and the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, The Community Summit for DC/MD/VA drew about 125 participants for a day of "enlightenment, entertainment, and engagement" around the Earth Charter. UDC proved to be an excellent location for the summit, and the University was very generous in providing facilities and other support to us. Our morning plenary session opened with spirited African drumming, followed by welcoming remarks by UDC Dean Rachel Petty and an invocation by Penny Gamble Williams of the Wampanoag Nation. The SGI chorus (some 30 voices strong!) sang "Can You Imagine Peace" by Mollen Fowlkes. Leanne Nurse, of the USEPA, and Dan Durrett, of the National Council for Science and the Environment, shared Master of Ceremony duties. Dan spoke eloquently about the WSSD, and opportunities for minority youth. A group of 17 young people gave a dramatic reading of the Earth Charter principles, under the leadership of Jackie Jeter and Diane Middleton. Following a viewing of "The Silent Revolution" Rick Clugston, Executive Director of Earth Charter USA spoke about "good globalization" (his remarks will be available at www.earthcharterusa.org and www.earthchartersummits.org). The SGI chorus closed the morning with "Let's Work Together", also by Mollen Fowlkes. We then participated in the round robin, which went fairly smoothly for us, despite a number of technical snafus.

Following a leisurely lunch, the crowd had diminished considerably. We consolidated ourselves into 4 dialogue groups, which met for about an hour and a half. We then reconvened and each group reported back to the whole. In parallel with the plenary session, Lou Niznik and Jane Blewett held a video festival. Latter that afternoon Susan Cournoyer and Jeannette Stewart provided a lively children's program. Gail Goodwin and Mollene Fawlkes closed the summit with a lovely song, "I Have a Dream."

In general we were pleased with how the summit went. We were especially proud of the diversity of our audience and the extensive accommodations we made for people with disabilities. All plenary events, for example, were interpreted for the deaf, and we were able to provide Braille copies of the Charter if needed. Among the key outcomes was the establishment of a core group that plans to pursue a referendum in DC that would ask the voters to endorse the Charter. A variety of other more informal connections were also made. We were pleased to have held the summit at all, since we had a late start and a relatively small planning group. Still, the turnout was less than we had hoped for. One factor may have been that large demonstrations were planned against the IMF/Globe Bank, and the local police had actively discouraged people from coming into town. One large group that was planning to come to the summit from rural Virginia

cancelled for this reason. Ironically, our location was some distance from the demonstrations (which were smaller than expected), and we felt no direct impact at all. Otherwise, we learned some good lessons about outreach, which we'll be discussing as we all go forward. Thanks to everyone, locally and nationally, for your inspiration and hard work

Exciting community summits were also held in Austin, TX; Burlington, VT; Chicago, IL; Los Angeles, CA; and Ventura, CA. Reports from them will be put on the website www.earthchartersummits.org as soon as they arrive.