



CURRENT REALITIES: Every single person relies upon someone providing the products of food, clothing and shelter from the earth. With 80% of us now living in urban areas, the processes of production and the cultures built upon a heritage of production are often out of the sight and mind of the majority of consumers.

The future use of our environment will continue to be one of the most important issues we as a society will ever discuss. The tone of such discussions is dictated by the extremely different cultures of our urban and rural areas. It is imperative that we take the first step towards educated, respectful dialogue. That first step is meeting each other. There is now a new, exciting educational program that does just that – it encourages people to discuss their cultural realities, embrace their differences, and celebrate their similarities. It uses a unique, yet practical approach to natural resource education along with a series of intra-national student exchanges to accomplish this task. This program is Provider Pals®.

MISSION: Build a common-ground bridge of understanding and respect between urban youth, rural youth, and their natural resource providers.

PROGRAM: Provider Pals® is a 501c(3) non-profit education corporation with four program areas.

I. CLASSROOMS ADOPT A PROVIDER

Each school year, classrooms across the nation ‘adopt’ a Provider from the farming, ranching, logging, mining, fishing or other resource providing professions. The students not only learn about the resources their Pal provides and the culture they live within, but they also meet with them face to face at the end of the school year.

II. RURAL STUDENTS EXPERIENCE URBAN CULTURE:

Rural students spend five days visiting with their peers in an inner-city classroom, enjoying educational tours of the city, and attending urban cultural events.

III. URBAN STUDENTS EXPERIENCE RURAL CULTURE:

Students and adult chaperones from the schools that participated in the Provider Pals® program during the school year spend a week of their summer at Historic Raven Natural Resource Learning center located in beautiful northwestern Montana. The urban students are matched up with local, rural middle school students and the diverse groups of peers discover the culture of resource providing in an outdoor learning experience.

IV. PROVIDER PALS® ONLINE:

Our Web Site provides information on the Provider Pal® program, information pertaining to each of the resource cultures represented by the adopted Providers, and instructor access to standardized course curricula. It also hosts the *NEW*, groundbreaking educational gaming site called *Provider World*. Check it out at www.providerpals.com.

MEDIA RESPONSE: The program has received extensive and extremely positive reviews in over 100 Associated Press affiliate newspapers. *The Wall Street Journal* deemed Provider Pals® “the most exciting education initiative in years”.

PROGRAM HISTORY:

- ✚ **1998-2001:** Pilot program running in Montana & Washington D.C.
- ✚ **2002:** *Ford Motor Company* awards the initial, generous grant that set Provider Pals® in motion.
- ✚ **2002-Present:** Program expands to include *325 classrooms* and *10,000 students* in the U.S. and Canada
- ✚ **May, 2004:** Provider Pals® is awarded one of four inaugural “*Preserve America Presidential Awards.*” *The President and First Lady presented the award in a May 3, Oval Office ceremony.*
- ✚ **Sept, 2005:** The program is elevated to an international status thanks to the *Truck Loggers Association* in B.C.
- ✚ **Oct, 2007:** With the help of *Caterpillar* and *Monsanto Fund*, the educational gaming site *Provider World* became a reality. **January, 2010 marked the completion of *Provider World, Phase 2!***

THE FUTURE: The Provider Pal® program is expandable. Additional funding will both ensure the current levels of participation and more importantly, allow more classrooms, schools, and providers to benefit from the opportunities that this exciting program offers.

YOU CAN HELP BY:

- ✚ **Awarding Student Scholarships**
- ✚ **Sponsoring a classroom or school’s involvement**
- ✚ **Programmatic Donations**
- ✚ **Becoming our next Provider Pal**