

A Welcome.....
Lowndes High School, Cultures In Action Club

By: Mary Ann Hand
English Language Teacher, Lowndes High School
Adviser, Cultures in Action Club

Lowndes High School's Cultures in Action Club is dedicated to promoting understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of diverse world cultures in an effort to produce a spirit of global citizenship. We are so honored to be a special part of the Azalea International Folk Fair because it is the ideal accomplishment of our goal, our mission, and our purpose. Through our involvement in this amazing opportunity to serve as Cultural Ambassadors, the world is literally brought right to our doorstep and then we return the favor by bringing the world to others. It is as if we throw open the door, our arms, and warmly welcome new friends, new places, new ideas, and new experiences right into our hearts.

The Folk Fair gives us more than a chance to learn for a moment or for a day or two; it provides us with gifts that will last a lifetime. The LHS Cultures in Action Club members learn leadership and team-building skills through their participation in over fifteen hours of direct training in dozens of international arts, crafts, games, toys, puzzles, and unique food dishes. Every Ambassador learns the skills that he or she will then share with over 2000 children attending the Festival. This is indeed a very special opportunity for Cultures in Action **students** to switch roles and become **teachers** of younger adolescents and even of adults! It gives them the chance to be true role models and mentors to the children and preteens in our community. What is more, it gives them the chance to show adults just how amazing and wonderful today's teenagers really can be!

Our hearts, our minds, and all of our senses are fully engaged and actively employed: visual (seeing the arts, the displays, and the costumes), auditory (hearing the music, the presentations, and the languages), tactile (touching the fabrics, making crafts, folding origami, and solving hand-held puzzles), olfactory and gustatory (smelling and tasting the foods, the sweets, the spices), and kinesthetic (physically playing the games and participating in the joyful dancing)... The Festival is a **TOTAL** learning experience—for us and for all of the visitors!

The multicultural arts, crafts, games, toys, puzzles, foods, dances, presentations, and displays are activities that are far beyond what we as teachers and/or parents can hope to provide in school or at home. No school textbook, no geography or social studies movie, indeed no other opportunity can teach what can be learned during a single day in one trip to the Azalea International Folk Fair. The entire experience is an integrated, interactive, global, mind-expanding, **FUN** lesson for our children.

We especially thank Mrs. Serena Huang for all that she has done to make such an amazing experience available to so many thousands of people who enjoy the Festival each year. With her love and support, we hope that we may always serve to accomplish our mission: to promote understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of diverse world cultures in an effort to produce a spirit of global citizenship. “One World, One Spirit” becomes a reality for all through this wonderful program.