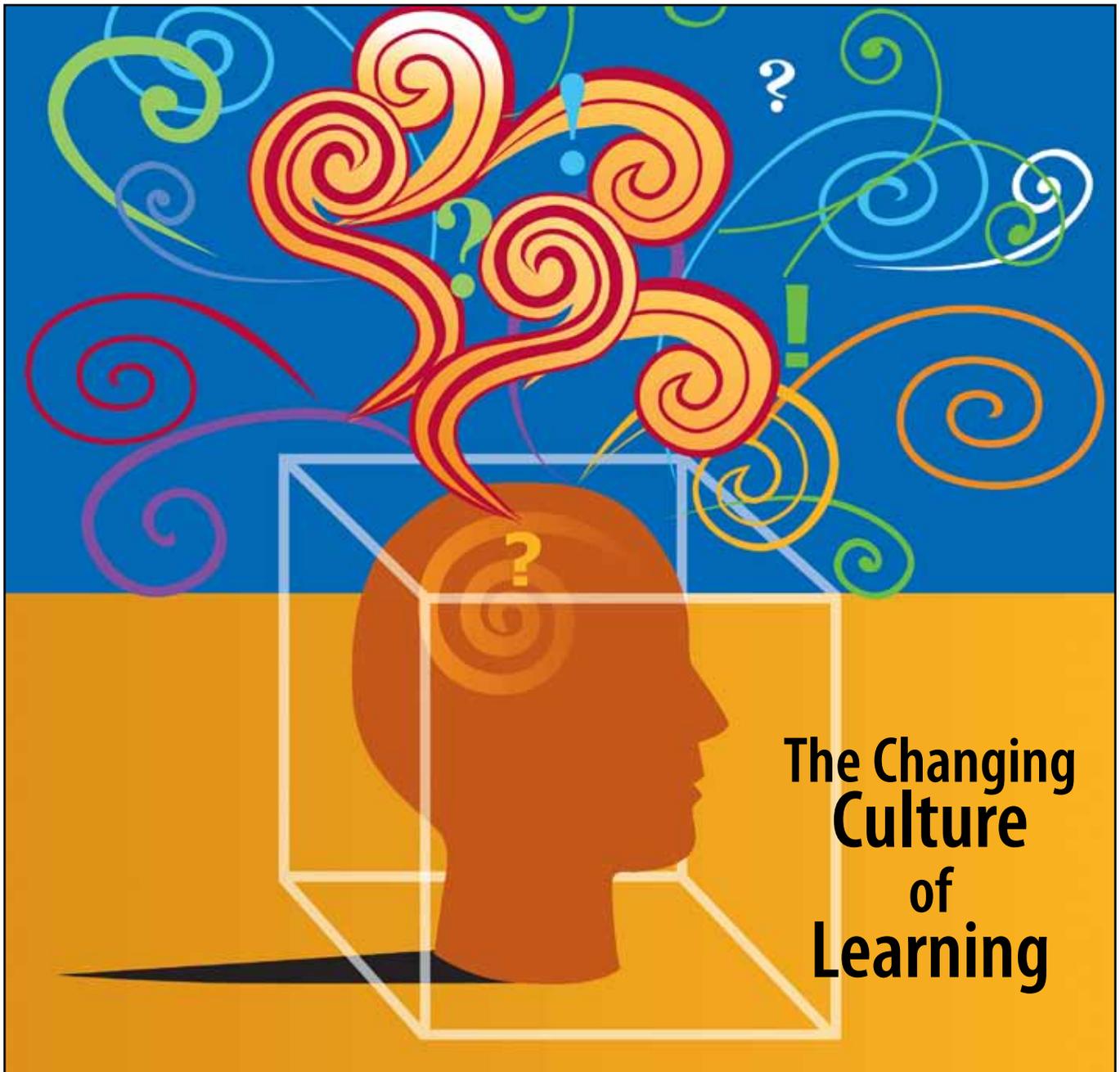


THE KETTERING FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

# CONNECTIONS

[www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org)

2011



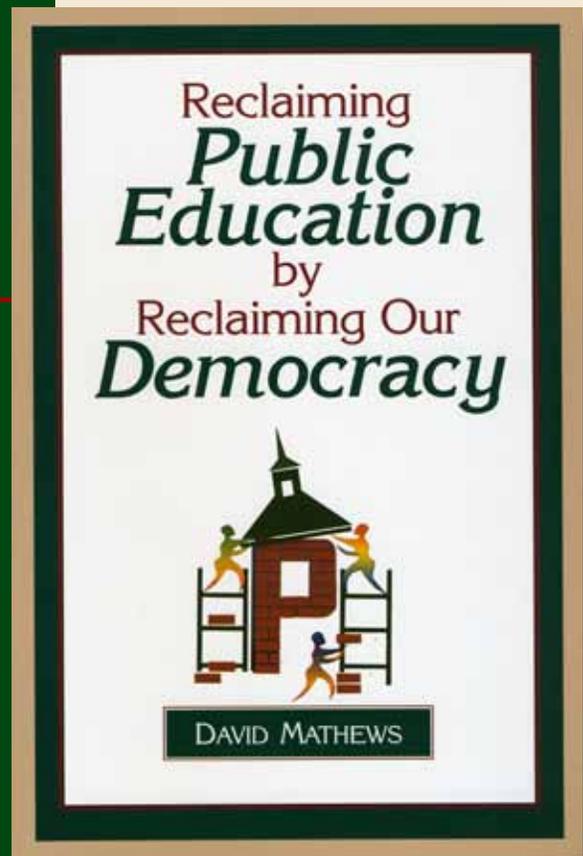
**The Changing  
Culture  
of  
Learning**

# Reclaiming Public Education by Reclaiming Our Democracy

By David Mathews

In his most recent book, Kettering Foundation president David Mathews considers what citizens and educators alike want from public education and how they might come closer to getting it. Mathews examines the obstacles that block them, beginning with significant differences in the ways that citizens see problems of education and how professional educators and policymakers talk about them. Discussions of accountability, the achievement gap, vouchers, and the like don't always resonate with people's real concerns. Mathews argues that this has resulted in a deep chasm between citizens and the schools that serve them.

*Reclaiming Public Education by Reclaiming Our Democracy* updates Kettering's research findings, restates and expands on ideas raised in Mathews' earlier book, *Is There a Public for Public Schools?* (Kettering Foundation Press, 1996), and adds material that illustrates how to build a public for public education.



Kettering Foundation Press | 2006  
165 pages  
trade paper \$9.95

To order this publication, contact **Agency for Instructional Technology** at 1-800-600-4060. You can also FAX your order to 1-812-333-4218 or send an e-mail to [info@ait.net](mailto:info@ait.net).

The Kettering Foundation, chartered in 1927, is a research foundation rooted in the American tradition of inventive research. Its founder, Charles F. Kettering, holder of more than 200 patents, is best known for his invention of the automobile self-starter. He was interested, above all, in seeking practical answers to "the problems behind the problems."

The foundation today continues in that tradition. The objective of the research now is to study what helps democracy work as it should. Kettering programs are designed to shed light on what is required to strengthen public life.

Kettering is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) research organization supported by an endowment. For more information about KF research and publications, see the Kettering Foundation's website at [www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org).

---

*Connections* is published by the Kettering Foundation, 200 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2799. The articles in *Connections* reflect the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the foundation, its directors, or its officers.

**Editor**

Phillip Lurie

**Copy Editor**

Lisa Boone-Berry

**Design and Production**

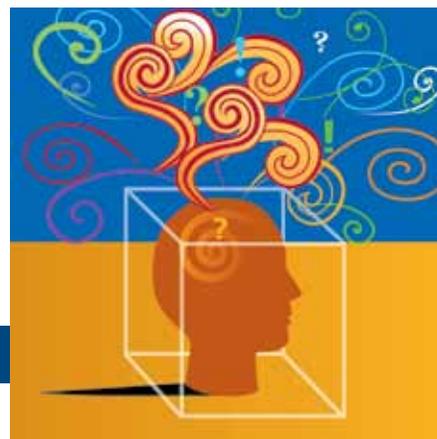
Long's Graphic Design, Inc.

**Illustrations**

Long's Graphic Design, Inc.

# CONNECTIONS

## C O N T E N T S



- 4 **Education, Community, and Democracy**  
*David Mathews*
- 6 **Community as an Educational Institution**  
*Amy Lee*
- 9 **Civic Capacity and the Community Role in Education**  
*Derek Barker and Alexandra Robinson*
- 12 **A Diagnostic Approach to Learning-Based Change**  
*Randall Nielsen*
- 15 **Learning Communities**  
*Harold Saunders*
- 18 **From “That School” to “Our School” —A Community Lesson in the Power of Partnership**  
*Elizabeth Sherwood*
- 21 **Mobile-izing Communities and Schools for Extraordinary Results**  
*Carolyn Akers*
- 24 **Remembering the Public’s Role: Early Public Education in Alabama**  
*Melinda Gilmore*
- 28 **Communities: A Resource—Broadening the Definition of Education**  
*Patricia Moore Harbour*
- 31 **Creating a Culture of Learning: Neighborhood Learning Communities in St. Paul**  
*Lisa Boone-Berry*
- 34 ***Extraordinary Results in Ordinary Communities: A Brief Review***  
*Phillip Lurie*
- 36 **Books Worth Reading**  
**The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods**  
*By John McKnight and Peter Block*
- 38 **The Year in Review**  
*Amy Lee*

# Extraordinary Results in Ordinary Communities

## A Brief Review

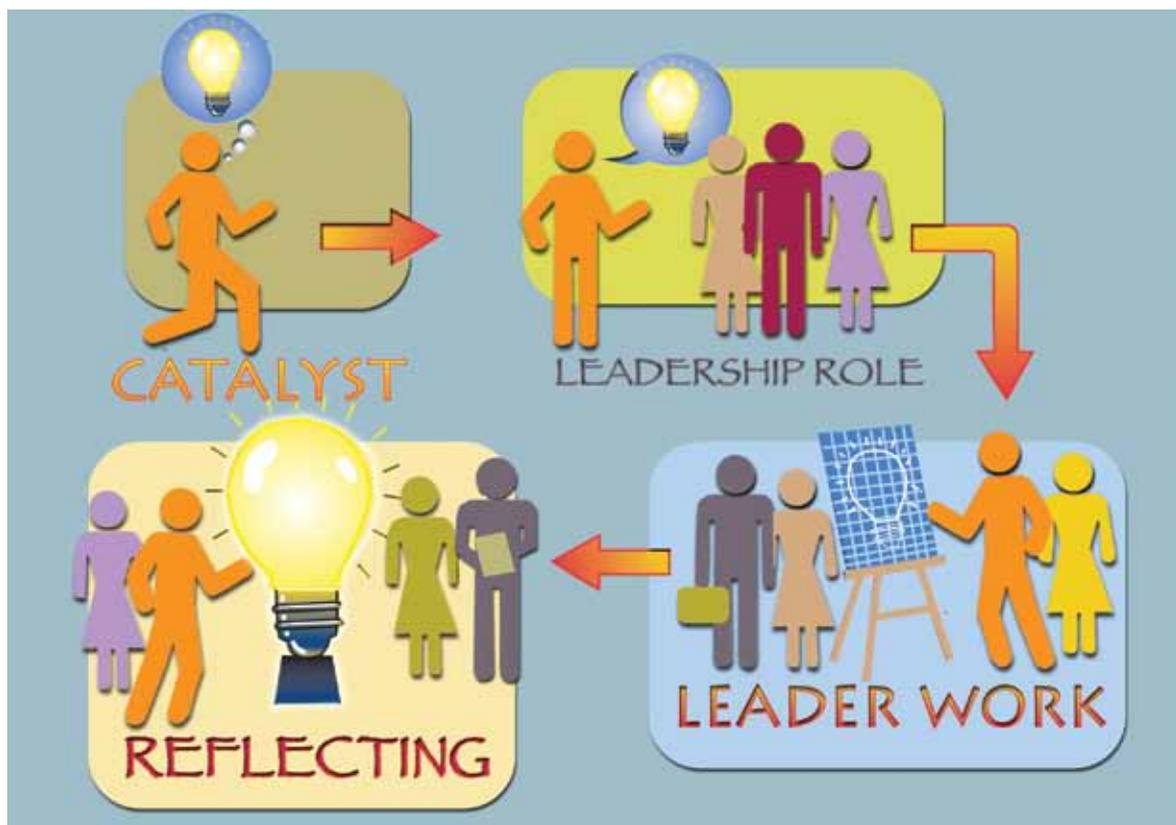
By Phillip Lurie

In the 2007 report, *Extraordinary Results in Ordinary Communities*, Vaughn Grisham Jr. examines how small towns and rural communities actually function in making decisions—particularly those decisions that are designed to address persistent intractable, community problems. A key question explores the role of the public, how people in communi-

ties come to know and understand the issues that affect them and how that understanding influences official decision making.

It is important to emphasize that this study is not an evaluation. Instead, the purpose is to gain insight and to understand community dynamics. With this in mind, there is as much to be learned from mistakes and setbacks as there is from progress and success. In any event, the findings of the report identify some common elements to community problem solving.

The first of these elements is a “Catalyst,” an individual who steps forward in order to get things done, in other words, someone “sick and tired of being sick and tired.” In the report, Catalysts are characterized as strong-willed, passionate, and more concerned with reaching organizational goals rather than on advancing their own self-images. This requires an ability to focus and make personal sacrifices. Of course, they are not without their limitations and they certainly can’t solve the problem alone. What they can do, however, is “create an environment in which things get done.”



Second, leaders, in their understanding that they can't solve the problem alone, encourage others to take leadership roles. The report refers to these communities as "leaderful," or containing many leaders. In the absence of institutionalized power, the power of these communities is derived from being inclusive. Similarly, leaders work hard to forge relationships, build coalitions, and create ever-expanding networks. Building and sustaining partnerships was noted as the key to community development, and treating it as an ongoing process is key to sustaining momentum for future issues.

The third element is a recognition that leaders do not work in isolation, but rather in the context of communities that have particular characteristics. These leaders appear to have a deep understanding of the culture of the community in which they're trying to solve problems. As such, they are able to get the right people or organizations involved. Moreover, when problems did arise, they were able to adapt to the circumstances, thereby uniquely tailoring their response and supporting an iterative process.

Finally, people in the community reflect on what their efforts have wrought, see real consequences, and begin to think about what they might do in the future. As we've seen from the articles in this issue exploring McKnight's research on community assets, people "pondered their own assets, looking first at the internal resources to which they had immediate access, and next, at how to pair these assets with resources that lay beyond the community but to which they could gain access."

Grisham's article on extraordinary communities demonstrates how people have changed the place where they live for the better. It does this by first identifying the problem as one of collective learning and then addressing how to go about making changes in collective learning. This, then, promotes a more fully realized notion of education, including what hinders or helps the promotion of that idea.

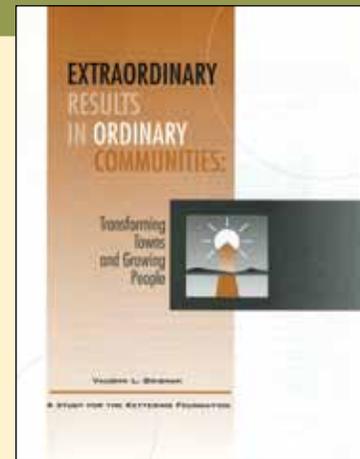
*Phillip Lurie is a program officer at the Kettering Foundation. He can be reached at [plurie@kettering.org](mailto:plurie@kettering.org).*

## ADDITIONAL READING FROM KETTERING

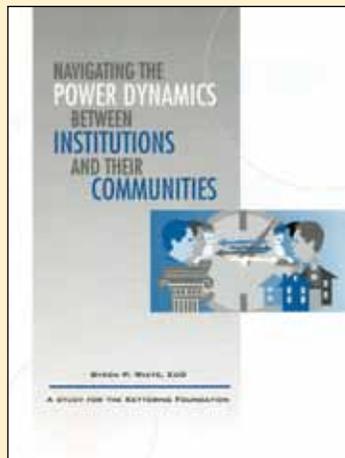
### Extraordinary Results in Ordinary Communities: Transforming Towns and Growing People

*By Vaughn L. Grisham*

This report tells the story of how citizens in four small rural towns worked together—one difficult step at a time—to breathe new life into communities beset by persistent problems that once threatened their very existence.



Kettering Foundation | 2010  
FREE • 32 pages



Kettering Foundation | 2009  
FREE • 24 pages

### Navigating the Power Dynamics Between Institutions and Their Communities

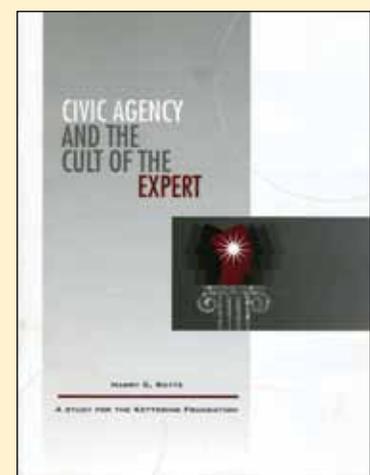
*By Byron P. White*

Institutions cannot take the friendship of their neighboring communities for granted. Equipping institutional representatives to operate in a way that responds to, rather than avoids, both confrontational and relational forms of community power is essential to getting it right.

### Civic Agency and the Cult of the Expert

*By Harry C. Boyte*

The author makes a coherent case for a democracy in which citizens can become the agents of their own destiny, presenting civic agency as an alternative to conventional ideological politics, on the one hand, and community service and volunteerism, on the other.



Kettering Foundation | 2009  
FREE • 44 pages

To order these publications, contact **Agency for Instructional Technology** at 1-800-600-4060. You can also FAX your order to 1-812-333-4218 or send an e-mail to [info@ait.net](mailto:info@ait.net).

# Hot Topics for Deliberation

## New NIF Guides

### Youth and Violence: Reducing the Threat

Violence has become a pervasive presence in the United States, especially violence involving young people. Far too many children are at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators themselves. Whether it manifests itself on the screen or on the streets, the central question remains: how can we reduce violence in the lives of young people?

12-page NIF Issue Guide **\$2.49**



### What Should Go on the Internet?

#### Privacy, Freedom, and Security Online

The Internet has become an integral part of American life. But as its presence in our lives has grown, so have concerns about its dangers. It's time to consider our priorities with regard to protecting privacy, preserving free speech, and ensuring security. Can we—or should we—regulate what goes on the Internet?

12-page NIF Issue Guide **\$2.49**



To order these NIF publications, contact **Agency for Instructional Technology** at 1-800-600-4060. You can also FAX your order to 1-812-333-4218 or send an e-mail to [info@ait.net](mailto:info@ait.net).

For a complete listing of NIF issue guides, visit [www.nifi.org](http://www.nifi.org).



© Copyright 2011 by the Kettering Foundation

200 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2799; (937) 434-7300

444 North Capitol Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001; (202) 393-4478

6 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016; (212) 686-7016

[www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org)

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Dayton, OH  
Permit No. 638

---

Kettering Foundation  
200 Commons Road  
Dayton, OH 45459-2799