



## JOURNEY MAPPING

### Chicago Area Project's Practitioner Certification Program

The Youth Development Practitioner Certification Program of the Chicago Area Project (CAP) provides structured training and career development opportunities for youth development practitioners. As a critical form of feedback to the program and as a unique practice of self-reflection, participants are asked to report and assess their own progress using SEED's Internet-based tool, Journey Mapping. This feedback process includes periodic e-journaling, and sharing insights from course work and fieldwork, in addition to structured self-reflection on the journal entries.

Twenty four classes averaging 25 students each have benefited from this process.

The first class of "Level I, Basics" was introduced to Journey Mapping as part of their orientation in February 2002. That class graduated in mid-July 2002. There have been two classes each year since then. The first class of "Level II, Advanced" began mapping in September 2003 and graduated in December 2003. There has been one class each year since then.

CAP needed an evaluation that focused on the people themselves. They were not interested in "counting bodies while missing souls." Rather they wanted to capture the human drama and opportunities to impact individuals in profound ways. Journey Mapping has enabled the project to capture the "spirit" as well as the data resulting from the CAP classes.

For program participants, the requirement to make monthly updates to their individual journals has made them acutely self-aware of what they are learning, and how and why they are acting differently as a consequence of this learning. Their monthly entries vary in length from a single paragraph to multiple pages of text. Students also respond to probes about what they have learned, how they are personally benefiting, applications to their work with youth, and impact in their organizations. In addition, students self-assess their growing comfort towards mastery of 15 skills promoted by the CAP program.

Data, reviewed monthly by instructors, has been used on several occasions to immediately modify the design and implementation of the program. The rich and varied reflections collected from student journals and self-assessments have served as the primary source of evidence of program value. Through presentations to stakeholders and written reports, Journey Mapping has helped insure continued funding and expansion since 2002.