



# Superintendent's Column

## *Schools must cultivate global citizens*

An important part of educating our students is heightening their awareness of global issues and providing them opportunities to actively demonstrate social responsibility. While we enjoy so many human rights in our country, many in the world don't. We must open our students' eyes to the worldwide struggles for human rights, prepare them to reach out on a broad scale in the name of justice and inspire them to make the world a better place.

Hamburg is on the cusp of just such a humanitarian outreach with its participation in the Summer Institute for Human Rights and



Dr. Mark J. Crawford Genocide Studies. Last summer, two of our Hamburg High School English teachers, Lori Raybold and Matthew Meader, along with Springville social studies teacher Drew Beiter, brought the week-long institute to our district. Some key sponsorship made it all possible: Buffalo for Africa, the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo, the Robert H. Jackson Center, the International Institute of Buffalo, Southtown Teachers' Center and Jamestown Teaching American History Grant.

Thirty-four students from 16 school districts, including five from Hamburg High School, heard national leaders who are working on the front lines to end genocide, as well as the personal accounts of Holocaust and Sudanese civil war survivors.

This included a presentation by Greg Peterson, chairman of the Robert H. Jackson Center; Judge Jackson was chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials. Students met Professor David Crane of Syracuse University Law School, former chief

prosecutor for the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal for Sierra Leone. They heard a story of hope from one of the "Lost Boys of Sudan." They attended the International Humanitarian Law Dialogs at the Chautauqua Institution, interacting with judges who prosecuted genocide and human rights cases at the International Criminal Court.

All these experiences were overwhelming on one hand, yet they did so much to expand the students' awareness of the degradation and deprivation suffered by many people in the world.

I'm delighted that next summer this worthwhile opportunity will involve even more students as the institute expands to two weeks at a larger site. Erie Community College City Campus, under the leadership of President Jack Quinn, will partner with the sponsors to host most of the sessions. Erie 1 BOCES District Superintendent Donald Ogilvie has also signed on with related programs for teachers and administrators. WNED-TV has expressed an interest in filming a documentary on the effort.

All this may be just a glimpse of things to come. The institute organizers say it's their goal to have a similar program in every major city. Just think — it will all have started in Hamburg.

And we're not done yet. It's my hope that working in conjunction with the institute sponsors, we will eventually provide our students the opportunity to build a relationship with students in Africa. This could lead to student exchanges and hands-on help with building a school or digging a well. Grants are being sought to send an adult delegation to Africa to begin this connection. This personal contact is essential if we are truly to make a difference. We must put our beliefs into action.

Only by cultivating global citizens can we ensure that the horror of genocide will "never happen again."