

I. INTRODUCTION

What is a Penny Harvest School of Excellence?

Penny Harvest Schools of Excellence is an annual distinction awarded to a select group of schools that have demonstrated their commitment to and understanding of all phases of the Penny Harvest: Gathering Pennies, Making Grants and Taking Action.

Schools of Excellence exemplify the very best of the Penny Harvest, ranging from creating a student leadership team that engages the school community and builds connections with the greater community, to creating opportunities for student leaders and other students to develop their skills and community-mindedness.

Schools of Excellence submit applications that are reviewed by the Common Cents New York City Advisory Board. A Penny Harvest School of Excellence is a year-long honor of ongoing recognition opportunities.

What distinguishes a Penny Harvest Schools of Excellence?

At Common Cents, we are always trying to keep up with our coaches and students. Last year, we recognized 27 Penny Harvest Schools of Excellence for exemplary approaches to the Penny Harvest. Each award winner added a new dimension to the program, which we now are disseminating to the entire Penny Harvest family across the country (Go to the “Schools of Excellence Page” under the “Schools” menu at www.PennyHarvest.org/NYC). For example, last year, a school in Manhattan creatively adapted the roundtable lessons to make them age appropriate for all elementary age students, proving that no student is too young to become a philanthropist!

How were the twenty-seven 06/07 Penny Harvest Schools of Excellence honored?

- An exclusive invitation to inaugural celebrations at the Penny Harvest Field at Rockefeller Center
- A special distinction on school listings at the Penny Harvest Field at Rockefeller Center
- A celebrated profile on the Schools of Excellence webpage highlighting one of the school’s innovative strategies to maximize student and community outcomes
- A framed certificate of recognition sent to the school
- A public announcement in a press release
- A special highlight in the 06/07 Penny Harvest Yearbook
- An acknowledgement at local Professional Development Training sessions

How can my school be honored as a Penny Harvest School of Excellence?

Every school can be a Penny Harvest School of Excellence! Read the following application and find out how your school can qualify to be a 07/08 Penny Harvest School of Excellence. Applications, along with supporting documentation, are due on Wednesday, May 7th, 2008.



II. APPLICATION

Complete applications with supplementary materials are due on **Wed, May 7th, 2008.**

By Mail:
Common Cents
570 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10024
Attn: Melissa Rozon

By Fax:
212-579-3488
Attn: Melissa Rozon

Schools will be selected based on both the quality of their program and the quality of application. Qualified schools will be notified of their Penny Harvest Schools of Excellence Award in early June 2008.

A complete application includes:*

Part I: Penny Harvest Process

This portion of the application will help us understand your year-long Penny Harvest, from Gathering Pennies to Making Grants and Taking Action.

- Background information about you / your school
- Checklist of all the strategies that apply to your school's Penny Harvest
- Details of your school's year-long Penny Harvest

Part II: Penny Harvest Innovations

This portion of the application is your opportunity to showcase a creative Penny Harvest practice. Choose one or two of the challenges presented and describe in-depth how you successfully tackled the roadblocks with a creative solution.

- Detailed description of Penny Harvest innovation (approx 1 page)
- Supporting documentation (i.e. student reflections, student artwork, photographs, testimonials from parents/families/CBO's) that demonstrates this innovation

Part III: Supplemental Materials

- At least one photograph of Penny Harvest student leaders, caption included (Captions should include names of individuals, description of picture and date)
- At least one sample of student work (artwork, written reflection, journal entry) or testimonial from two or more students
- Signed parental consent forms for all students appearing in pictures, quotes, written work or artwork depicting or created by students (enclosed – translations available)

Part IV: Endorsement

Your signature and your principal's signature endorsing your application and committing the ideals of the Penny Harvest Schools of Excellence

*To qualify, you should have already submitted your school's Penny Harvest Evaluation Report (in February) and Roundtable Decision Report (in April).



PART I: PENNY HARVEST PROCESS

Tell us about yourself:

Name: _____ Role in school: _____

Number of Years as PH Coach: _____

Tell us about your school:

Region: _____ School Name: _____

Principal: _____ Grades in School: _____

Number of Students in School: _____

Number of years your schools has participated in the Penny Harvest: _____

- Check here if you are a *06/07 Penny Harvest School of Excellence*

Tell us about your school's Penny Harvest:

Check all that apply to your school's Penny Harvest.

Gathering Pennies

- Penny Harvest Leaders are recruited from at least 2 grades
- Penny Harvest Leaders take on active leadership roles during gathering of pennies
- Students Neighbor Harvest (Neighbor harvesting is connecting with neighbors through the collection of pennies)

Coach and leaders engage the school in school-wide activities. These may include:

- Assemblies, including the Kick-off and Tally Rally
- Activities, including the Penny Olympics
- Curriculum integration, including school-wide use of Curriculum Connections (i.e. Wheel of Caring Lesson) or connecting Penny Harvest activities to classroom learning

Making Grants

Coach and leaders actively engage community based organizations. This may include:

- Site visits to organization(s)
- Inviting organization(s) to assemblies/events
- Partnering with organization(s) on service projects
- Working with organization(s) to learn more about community issues
- Looking for opportunities to volunteer with organization(s)
- Sending letters to organization(s) to update them
- Asking organization(s) to workplace harvest

Coach and leaders engage the school in school-wide activities. These may include:

- Assemblies, including Check Award Presentation



Coach, leaders and school actively engage the school and greater community. This may include:

- Students interviewing community members for their opinions on issues
- Inviting student body to participate in Roundtable meetings/activities
- Inviting student body to participate in service activities
- Keeping the school/greater community informed about Roundtable decisions/progress

Neighborhood Service

- School completes at least one Neighborhood Service activity

Party and Plan

- Leaders reflect on their experience and plan for next year's Penny Harvest through art, writing and/or discussion.

Describe your school's year-long Penny Harvest:

On a separate piece of paper, please respond to the following question.

In a narrative (approx. 300 words total), please summarize your school's year-long Penny Harvest process starting from how your school gathered pennies in the fall, to how students identified grant recipients and participated in neighborhood service projects in the spring, and finally to how your students reflected on their experiences.

The following questions can be used as a guide:

I. Gathering Pennies

How did you recruit student leaders? How did students collect pennies for the Penny Harvest? (i.e. neighbor harvesting, jar collection, etc.) How did your student leaders engage the entire school and greater community (i.e. bulletin boards, Kickoff Assembly, classroom presentations, etc.)?

II. Making Grants

How did the students decide which issues to focus on and which organizations to donate to? How did your student leaders engage the entire school, community-based organizations and the greater community during the Philanthropy Roundtable (i.e. assemblies, site visits, interviews, etc)?

III. Taking Action

How did students plan and implement a neighborhood service project?

IV. Party and Plan

How did (or will) student leaders reflect on their experience and plan for next year? (i.e. Check Award Presentation, essays, artwork, etc).

PART II: PENNY HARVEST INNOVATIONS

Penny Harvest Schools of Excellence stand apart because they develop creative solutions to maximize student and community outcomes within the time and resource constraints faced in schools. This year we have listed some of the challenges to implementing the optimal Penny Harvest. Show us how you have successfully tackled one (or two) of these challenges by **selecting one or two questions to respond to.**



Your response(s) - approx 1 page in length - should detail 1) your innovative Penny Harvest practice as well as 2) the roadblocks you faced in implementation and 3) how you overcame them. Your response(s) **must be accompanied by documentation** (i.e. students' journal entries, reflection essays, artwork, photographs of students in action, or testimonials from students, CBO's, parents or other supportive adults) that evidence the innovative practice(s) you describe and/or demonstrate the student and community outcomes that come from it.

1. The Penny Harvest Field demonstrated the accomplishment of the entire city's children. **Tell us how you used the Penny Harvest Field to benefit your school's program.** How did you use the installation and/or the event to motivate the school while gathering pennies? How did students/student leaders visiting the field increase their understanding of themselves as citizens and/or leaders? How did you/your leaders utilize students' experience visiting the field to impact the grant-making and service that followed?
2. Good leaders represent their constituents and keep them informed. **Describe how the roundtable 1) gathered the input of the entire school/student body in grant-making and service, and 2) kept everyone informed of its process and decisions.** Did you/your leader use any creative strategies to "get the word out" or give everyone a voice (i.e. videos, newsletters, online blogs, press releases, etc)?
3. A strong student leadership team enables an authentically student-driven process. A diverse group of student leaders from two or more grades promotes cross-age peer mentoring, provides progressive leadership opportunities, and ensures continuity in the leadership of the Penny Harvest at your school. **Describe your process of recruiting student leaders and how you ensure overlap in the student leadership team year-to-year as a way to institutionalize the Penny Harvest in your school.**
4. There are many ways to successfully implement the Penny Harvest. Often, a coach's success depends on his/her position at the school. **Tell us how you effectively took advantage of your school role to maximize student and community outcomes in the Penny Harvest.** Include the challenge(s) you often face with implementing the Penny Harvest because of your role at the school, and the innovative solutions you used to overcome them.
5. Knowing one's neighbors -- and being known to one's neighbors -- enhances to a young person's sense of community and wellbeing. **How did you encourage neighbor harvesting as the primary way that students gathered pennies?** Did you equip students with the tools provided (i.e. Penny Bags, Caring Family Calendar, "Dear Neighbor" Letter, translations of these tools, etc)? Overall, please explain how you promoted student-family connections and student-neighbor connections?
6. Community-based organizations often have wonderful and helpful experts who will willingly help you to deepen your students' understanding of community problems. **Tell us how you/your leaders partnered with organizations to (1) deepen students' learning about the issue(s) they care about and/or (2) extend their**



philanthropy beyond grant-making to taking action in the form of service or advocacy.

7. Knowledge is power. The more informed students become about the community issues, the smarter their decisions will be – and the greater their impact. **Choose one issue area the roundtable focused on and describe (1) why students chose this issue, (2) how they deepened their learning about this issue and (3) how they used their knowledge to address this issue through grant-making and service.** How did you and your students use resources in the community (i.e. experts on the issue, library or online resources, classroom learning) to extend their learning and their impact?
8. The Penny Harvest is not just about community connections, but also classroom connections. Penny Harvest activities inspire many ‘teachable moments’ to reinforce academic lessons and skills in subject areas of math, ELA, social studies and others. **Describe how you integrated the Penny Harvest with classroom learning by using/distributing Penny Harvest Curriculum Connections, engaging your colleagues, or deepening the academic skill-building around Penny Harvest activities** (i.e. researching community issues, writing ‘Dear Neighbor’ Letters, etc). Which *Curriculum Connections*, or other academic lessons did you use to connect to Penny Harvest activities and how?
9. The Penny Harvest encourages students to consider all the communities they belong to and their role as community change-makers. Students have the opportunity to make community connections and act locally, but also to think (and act) globally. **How did you broaden the worldview of your student leaders and the school to contribute to issues of global significance?** Did you use educational and philanthropic opportunities provided by Common Cents around the global relief issue? How did you integrate this with your core roundtable process?

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS (please attach)

PART IV: ENDORSEMENT

- I agree that all of the information provided in this application is accurate and enthusiastically submit this to Common Cents for consideration for the honor as a Penny Harvest School of Excellence.
- I will commit to my school’s Penny Harvest participation in the 07/08 year.
- COACH: If selected as a School of Excellence, I am interested in the possibility of being a resource for other Penny Harvest schools to consult, and be available for contact to advise other coaches around the city. (*optional*)

Penny Harvest Coach Signature: _____

Principal Signature: _____



Penny Harvest

a program of **Common Cents**

07/08 PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

On behalf of myself and my minor child, _____, I hereby consent to and waive all rights regarding the use and publication by Common Cents New York ("Common Cents") of

1. my child's image, likeness and appearance in photographs taken at my child's school or while participating in programs or activities sponsored by my child's school or Common Cents,
2. any statements made by my child regarding Common Cents, its activities and/or programs, and any writing or artwork as described in more detail below, and
3. my child's first name and affiliation with Common Cents, its activities and/or programs (including my child's participation in a specific activity or program and the borough in which my child's school is located),

any of which I understand may be distributed, published and publicly displayed worldwide in any form of media, including brochures, newspapers and the Internet, to promote the activities of Common Cents.

I understand that any information from my child's school record, including academic, guidance, permanent or cumulative records (e.g., grades or attendance records) will not be published. I also understand that my child's last name, address or other biographical or identifying information will not be published unless I give my consent in advance.

Parent/Guardian Name:

Signature:

Date:

Child's School:

School's Region /Borough:

Child's Grade:

Penny Harvest Coach:

