

## COLUMBUS EAST HIGH SCHOOL

# SENIOR PROJECTS AID ALL RESIDENTS

### THE ISSUE:

SENIOR PROJECT SYSTEM AT COLUMBUS EAST

### OUR POSITION:

EAST SENIORS HAVE ALREADY HAD AN EFFECT ON THEIR COMMUNITY WHILE STILL IN SCHOOL

Approximately 260 Columbus East high school students completed their senior projects this year. Many of those projects focused on the students' day-to-day lives - a hobby or some particular form of self improvement. Many of these students were focusing on the familiar, something in which they had experience and confidence. Others tackled community issues. There have been critics of senior projects, individuals who bridled at what they viewed as a departure from traditional principles of education.

It is difficult to understand their position when looking at senior projects such as that completed by Bryce Fathauer. He reported on a project he undertook in the country of Ghana last summer while working with a church group trying to bring entrepreneurial skills to people in developing countries.

In talking with villagers, Fathauer came across their

need for money to start any entrepreneurial effort but also noted that a nut that falls from trees three months each year is one of the key ingredients for shea



butter, which is used in the manufacture of luxury lotions and cosmetics. Working with others in the church group, he devised a business plan and wrote grant requests to fund items such as vehicles.

He spent more than 700 hours on the project, a sacrifice of time that flies in the face of charges that senior projects are an escape

from the drudgery of learning. Fathauer benefited from his project. If the grant request he helped write is approved, the residents of the village in Ghana will benefit as well.

They are not the only ones who have been helped by east senior projects. This year McKayla Barber helped organize a diversity unit summit, which drew more than 100 students from area schools to talk about issues such as racism, sexual orientation and gender bias. Stephanie Santos served as a volunteer coordinator at the Volunteers in Medicine clinic, convincing fellow students to give of their time in aiding the free clinic. This year's dance marathon to benefit Turning Point shelter raised more than \$100,000. It was the ninth year for the event that was launched by east seniors Lindsey Wilkins and Dilhana Paranavitana in conjunction with the Turning Point board.

It was their senior project.