

SOPE SUDS Winter, 2001



We are not simply building an organization. We are creating an electronic grassroots community of everyday people who, together, will have a great influence on children of all ages and on the health of this nation!

SOPE IS FAMOUS!

SOPE is charming people in more than 15,000 locations in 45 states so far, and the number grows each day! More than 200 volunteers have placed SOPE in schools and colleges, pre-schools and daycare centers, senior citizen centers, blood donor centers, libraries, hospitals and clinics, banks, manufacturing plants, food service operations, airports, interstate rest areas, city parks, radio stations- and even the Harvard University Band room! Go SOPE!

ACROSS THE NATION'S HIGHWAYS

The SOPE Project has placed more than 11,000 posters in 40 states through department of transportation rest areas! We have had the privilege of one-on-one visits with transportation officials in 30 states since last August. We've driven over 25,000 miles and have rest area stories galore! Here is a quiz: Which state has rest areas with the sign "Livestock must be restrained at all times"? How about "Watch for snakes?" We've got pictures! We also heard from one DOT that said they needed to install soap dispensers before they could put up SOPE posters...and they did!!!! Talk about changing behavior!

SPREADING GERMS AND FEELING GOOD ABOUT IT

Our newly illustrated handwashing book *Germs on their fingers!* / *¡Gérmenes en tus manos!* is a big hit. Since publication this January more than 600 books have been placed in schools, libraries and daycare facilities. One elementary school principal wrote: "We have made your book a part of our health/safety curriculum for our primary grades." Cool. While elementary school teachers love it for health lessons and guidance counselors are using it to teach community involvement, we have found that high school ESL and Spanish language teachers are finding it useful, too. It sells for \$12.95 plus S&H. Can you believe SOPE Project Manager Richard sold 20 copies to his dentist during a tooth cleaning?

IT MADE OUR DAY!

Out of the mouths of... This is WHY we are doing this project: "*Dear Wendy, Thank you for my germ book. I really like it. I am a second grader. It really bothers me when we don't have soap to wash our hands at school. I'm glad you and SOPE are helping out. I'm teaching my baby brother how to wash his hands too.*" And then, while we were being seated at a restaurant, a hostess asked if Wendy was the woman on the radio talk show this week! She quoted many of our handwashing statistics and said she recognized Wendy's voice! Then she said she would like posters for the restaurant! She got posters!

YEA...TOM THUMB! ...etc. (WHEW)

When an executive with the Tom Thumb convenience stores in Florida saw a SOPE poster in a Florida interstate rest area, he emailed us and wanted to buy posters for each of their

115 stores...which he did. The next time you're in Florida, stop at a Tom Thumb and look for SOPE. Bet their restrooms are clean! Now Kroger is piloting SOPE in 19 stores! Home Federal Bank of TN, East Tennessee Business Investments, BlueCross BlueShield of TN, St. Mary's Health System (TN), and TN Rep. and Mrs. Doug Overbey have all stepped in to generously support this national citizen health education campaign. Whew...Wendy's meager retirement fund was just about exhausted! Thanks to all who believed we could pull it off!

SOPE SEAL PROGRAM LAUNCHED

If you've seen our Website, you've probably seen our SOPE Seal. Surrounding SOPE is the phrase "*We wash our hands before we touch your food!*" This handwashing program is for restaurants, fast food stores, grocery stores, school cafeterias, corporate food services and anywhere that serves food. For just \$100 per location, participants get SOPE Seals, posters, and illustrated employee training cards that go into **why, when, how and what if I don't wash**. Have a favorite restaurant or employee cafeteria in your neighborhood?

THE DOG ATE MY HOMEWORK...OR...DOG EATS DOG!

We ordered specialty soaps with our wonderful dog printed on the wrapper. The delivery person left the box outside, and the neighbor's dog decided it was his and ate it! If you ever send us anything and we don't acknowledge it, you can be sure our excuse will be "*The dog ate it.*" And if you ever have trouble finding us electronically...**TRY AGAIN!**

THE FIRST ANNUAL TNT AWARD

At its annual meeting the SOPE Board of Trustees approved a proposal to present annual TNT (Teacher, not Teacher) Awards to one or more individuals who have functioned as citizen health educators through their activity related to The SOPE Project. The Award is intended to publicize that all of us are teachers, no matter our profession and to reward "above and beyond the call of duty" behavior. Watch for winners in our next newsletter!

SOPE GETS A HOLIDAY GIFT!

Founding Director, Wendy Wakefield Ferrin was invited to speak to a local chapter of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control (APIC). They so enjoyed her "dog and pony show" that they took up a collection and presented her with their annual donation!

NEW SOPE READERS - WHAT DOES SOPE STAND FOR?

Society Of Playful Education. We believe learning is most impactful when it is relevant, playful and delivered at the point-of-action. Handwashing is our first focus, but not our last. We're thinking....litter is next! And **SUDS?** - statistics, utterances, details and such.

WHO NEEDS TO GET THIS NEWSLETTER EACH QUARTER?

If you don't want to get this newsletter any more, please let us know. We get enough unwanted mail ourselves; we certainly don't want to be part of the problem. Got a friend who does need one? www.sope.net