

## YNI Annual Conference Report



*Beth Lasure, Art Teacher  
Mallard Creek High School  
CTI and YNI Steering Committee Member*

The eighth Annual Conference of the Yale National Initiative (YNI) was held Oct. 26-27 in New Haven, CT to disseminate the Teachers Institute approach and collaborate with school and university colleagues from across the country. The weekend was filled with discussions about the impact YNI and Institutes like CTI can have on the quality of teacher professional development. From leadership, evaluation models, content enrichment and Common Core – our conversations were deep and invigorating. There was also much celebration as the city of Richmond, VA is now set to embark on the development of their own Teachers Institute. Congratulations, Richmond!

Charlotte's Yale National Fellows Jashonai Payne, Nicole Fraser, Deb Semmler, Matthew Kelly and myself enjoyed a great reunion with our summer Initiative fellows from across the country. (Summer teaching fellow, Tiffany DiMatteo was unable to attend – she and husband David are busy, proud new parents to baby Emory!) At the Annual Conference I was pleased to share images of my students' artwork created as a result of the curriculum unit I wrote in the YNI Summer Institute seminar on *Consumer Culture*. CTI's amazing and witty Matthew Kelly presented at the conference's opening panel discussion on Friday. He shared his experience teaching his unit on *Narratives of Citizenship and Race since Emancipation*, along with a heartfelt testimonial about what YNI and CTI have provided him as a professional educator.

Also representing CTI were Ann Fox, Davidson College associate professor of English and CTI's designee to the YNI University Advisory Committee; Christina Efird, director of professional development for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; and Scott Gartlan, CTI executive director. Ann presented with Yale Professor Joseph Roach in a session, *Teaching Cultural Geography*. We were especially happy to bring Christina to Yale. She also led a session, *Implementing Common Core Standards through Teacher Institute Seminars*. Christina was very impressed with our program and together we began to brainstorm our newest challenge: How do we extend our CTI leadership experience to work collaboratively with CMS professional development offices while maintaining the integrity of our program as originally designed? How do we make this opportunity available to more teachers, and how do we expand the use of curriculum units we have written into classrooms other than our own?

The YNI Annual Conference is an important opportunity for Fellows, Institutes and their partners to network more broadly and work together to strengthen our local schools.



### National Fellows Share New Curricula at Yale Conference

During the 2012 Yale Annual Conference in New Haven, CTI Fellow Matt Kelly (*third from right on panel*) shared the new curriculum he created this summer as a Yale National Fellow.



## Learning and Networking at Yale

*Christina Efird  
Director of Professional Development  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*

Stimulating conversations around teaching and learning, integrated curriculum units and networking with teachers, school leaders and college professors—these are what I take away for my first Annual Conference of the Yale National Initiative (YNI). It was exciting to see teachers gain a deeper knowledge of the subjects they teach through seminars offered by the Yale National Initiative to strengthen teaching in public schools. Glowing with passion and enthusiasm, teacher fellows talked about how they were able to add rigor and relevance in their classroom instruction. School district leaders honored their teacher leaders by encouraging and supporting their professional growth through this collaboration with Yale.

Through collaborative conversations, I was able to make a tighter connection to how the Teacher Institute model can be a more integral part of CMS' teacher leadership development program. With dreams, possibilities and plans in my mind, I am energized by working with a team of committed CMS teachers and honored to be part of this exciting journey. Thank you for inviting me to the 2012 Yale Annual Conference, Charlotte Teacher Institute.



### Exploding Canons: Sustainability in Charlotte and Beyond

CTI's most recent *Exploding Canons* event Oct. 16 drew over 250 guests to learn about sustainable living.

The Sustainability Expo featured 30 community partners, and faculty speakers included: Dan Fogel, business, Wake Forest University; Ross Meentemeyer, geography/earth sciences, UNC Charlotte (*both pictured above*); Brett Tempest and Helene Hilger, engineering, UNC Charlotte; Graham Bullock, political science, and Cindy Hauser, chemistry, both from Davidson College; and CTI Fellows Deb Semmler and Jashonai Payne. City of Charlotte Sustainability Manager Rob Phocas moderated.