

INVESTIGATION EXAMPLE

At a high school in Philadelphia, the community partner assisted the teacher in helping students to develop a short community survey asking middle school students and community members to identify the top five problems facing their neighborhood and community. The students identified multiple problems and narrowed their interests down to two: helping children who were in the foster child system due to abuse or neglect or helping young people avoid underage drinking. The community partner then arranged for guest speakers on the two topics. The guest speakers on the foster care system included an agency representative that worked to place foster children and a person who had been a foster child and now was a successful lawyer and child advocate. The guest speakers on underage drinking included a community agency representative who discussed the extent of the problem and a physician who discussed how drinking affects the brain and impairs driving ability. After the speakers presented to the class, the students engaged in a dialogue about what to do and what they could best affect in the time they had available within the school year. They decided to see what they could do for foster children. The community partner helped the students brainstorm by reviewing a survey of foster children's needs and the students also conducted Internet research and interviews of children living in a homeless shelter. The students found out that the children often were rescued in the evening or night time and removed from the setting with only the clothes they were wearing, so in the new setting, they had only used clothing and little of their own. The students decided that the foster children needed to have their own things, so they developed a service project to collect used suitcases to give to the workers who rescued the children. In addition, they collected stuffed animals and storybooks, and raised money to buy t-shirts and other clothing of various sizes. *Philadelphia, PA*

(from RMC Research Corporation. K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit. Scotts Valley, CA: National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2006.

http://www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/K-12_Service-Learning_Project_Planning_Toolkit.pdf)