

MEANINGFUL SERVICE EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE ONE: The Flashcard Company was a busy place at Roosevelt Elementary School in Kenosha. Third graders were busy all year making vocabulary flashcards to donate to second grade students. The flashcards help give the second graders a head start on their learning while allowing the third grade flashcard makers to review the vocabulary words. Students surveyed the second grade teachers first, to investigate need. They discussed multiple solutions, but arrived at the flashcard idea because it could easily be done without a lot of teacher direction. This project built upon the service-rich culture of Roosevelt Elementary School and was designed to serve the school community. The goal of this service-learning project was initially to make plenty of sets of flashcards using the sixty word second grade district word list. The teacher saw this project as a great way for third graders to review high frequency words in a way that made learning meaningful to them – through helping younger students. It was a great review for the third graders and a learning tool for the second graders. After the students finished those cards, they decided to move on to the second phase, which was making flashcards with the third grade word list. These are words that all third graders are expected to recognize by the end of third grade. The process of writing them as they make card sets helps the students learn, and these new sets will give the second graders a head start on their learning. The second grade teacher claimed that the fact that the cards were made by older kids gave the second graders reason to try even harder.

Kenosha, WI

EXAMPLE TWO: Eighth grade Mahone Middle School students in Spanish 101 classes not only wrote a book, but they did it in two languages. As part of a service-learning project, students picked a topic, wrote, and illustrated a bilingual children's book while keeping in mind the essential questions of the unit- what makes a good book? Who can benefit from translated reading materials? The project helped students master vocabulary and grammar concepts as well as technology skills as they put their books together. The books were donated to the children's ward at local hospitals as well as the Ronald McDonald House. This project allowed the 8th grade Spanish teachers the opportunity to address learning outcomes in building vocabulary, verb usage, sentence structure, non-adjective agreement, punctuation, pronunciation, intonation and storytelling techniques. This project was an opportunity for students to choose a topic of interest and develop their skills in discussing and writing in the target language. Students also drew on their knowledge and experience with technology through the use of computer software and accessing websites. The community for this project was the larger Kenosha community (local children being treated in local hospitals) as well as the larger Wisconsin and even global community of sick children served by the Ronald McDonald House in Milwaukee. The students learned that there are many bilingual children in the community who could benefit from a bilingual book. The service was meaningful to the students because they were challenged to think of a topic that would be both interesting to them personally and of interest to a child receiving treatment in a hospital. The visible outcome of the project was a self-authored and illustrated children's book written in both English and Spanish. *Kenosha, WI*

EXAMPLE THREE: Harborside Academy is an Expeditionary Learning high school in Kenosha Unified School District. Students participated in an expedition on the 1918 Influenza Pandemic to the modern day projected Avian Influenza Pandemic. Students in biology class were placed in stake holder positions (school district, community government, state government, private citizen) and asked to plan

for a pandemic. Students were asked to consider questions from various perspectives, such as how would schools deal with prolonged absences? Students were then asked how they would get the word out to the community. They determined that postcards could be sent out to the community to reinforce the three main objectives of the health department: cover your cough, wash your hands, and stay home if you're sick. The postcards are available in both Spanish and English. Students used pandemic preparedness survey information (from pandemic.gov) and class discussion to identify groups within the community who might be adversely affected by the influenza pandemic. School age children and the at-risk population (elderly living alone and in assisted living centers, as well as those who don't necessarily read the paper or watch television) were chosen as the focus of the "Get the word out" campaign. The service was meaningful and personally relevant in part due to the onset of the swine flu outbreak last year. The outbreak occurred right after we had completed our project/expedition on the Pandemic of 1918. Our original plan was to save the postcards until the fall of '09 and disseminate the postcards through interoffice mail to the different schools in KUSD. The populations identified were given simple readable information for prevention. The students felt great satisfaction in knowing that they had the ability to "make a difference" based on information they had learned in class. ***Kenosha, WI***

EXAMPLE FOUR: Middle school students decided that they wanted to learn history from the 1800s to 1850s by cleaning up an old cemetery near the school and investigating the lives of the people buried there who lived during that period. The students gathered rubbings from the headstones and then studied the town records to learn about the person they chose. Students uncovered records that told of an indentured servant who ran away, was captured, and stood up for herself as being subject to unfair capture and labor practices. There were records of the trial, and the students were able to trace the lineage of the woman to a family that currently lived in the next town. When they shared the story with the descendants, the family showed them pictures of the woman and discussed what happened to her. Students retained knowledge of that period of history, policies that shaped people's lives, and how experiences in that period still affect people today.

Unpacking What Works in Service-Learning:

Promising Research-Based Practices to Improve Student Outcomes

Available from the NYLC Resource Center at www.nylc.org

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