

PARTNERSHIPS EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE ONE: In September of 2008 two teachers in Clintonville, WI were continuing the yearly tradition of reading the local newspaper weekly to their third grade students. During the first weekly reading, the teachers and students came across a letter to the editor from a local resident. In the letter, the individual questioned why the time capsule buried at city hall in 1978, had not yet been dug up, though it was intended to be unearthed after 25 years. The students calculated that this project was 5 years overdue! Students spend the year working with City Council to dig up the capsule and engage the community in preserving their town history. The local radio station was happy to be one partner in the project. The project provided them a locally “hot topic” to report on. They trained the Promotions Committee on how to make a radio commercial. A few local businesses were used when the class purchased decorations, ordered the cake, and designed the plaque for the site. The City of Clintonville’s elected officials were important partners as the class shaped a shared vision for the project. Local business leaders came into the classroom and helped the Promotions Committee design and create media advertising. The business leaders felt a hand in teaching tomorrow’s work force, and students had real-life been there, done that teachers. Communication was maintained via phone, email, and written correspondence. Partnerships were crucial to the success of this project!

Clintonville, WI

EXAMPLE TWO: 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. This project helped build a sense of community between the second and third grades. The second and third grade teachers were in regular contact to make sure the cards were meeting the needs of their students. In addition, the students learned to make donation requests to support their project. A local printing company, Active Printing, as well as the KUSD copy center responded to students’ requests for scrap paper for the flashcards. The students sent thank you cards to the donors and made the community partners aware of their progress. *Kenosha, WI*

EXAMPLE THREE: 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. 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. Community partnerships were formed with a local Children's Hospital as well as the Ronald McDonald House in Milwaukee. In communication with the Ronald McDonald House, the students learned that some of the families come from around the world, so books in Spanish would be very popular. The RMH staff were in tears when they received the beautiful books as they knew how much the children would enjoy them. In addition, the local Office Max store helped with the laminating and binding of the children's' books. *Kenosha, WI*

EXAMPLE FOUR: Students in an alternative school had been conducting water studies in the nearby watershed for years and received consistent recognition from the Bureau of Land Management for their efforts. The Bureau counted on these students to keep track of progress being made in reducing pollution. The students learned valuable skills in measuring various aspects of stream health. When the school district put the alternative school on the list for closure, due to budget cuts, the students and the Bureau partnered to develop a campaign for the school board to keep the school open. They went door to door to voters to tell them of the need for the school and the benefits for the community of having the school in place. Voters passed a tax levy and the board was convinced to keep the school open.

Unpacking What Works in Service-Learning:

Promising Research-Based Practices to Improve Student Outcomes

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

Excerpted from "Growing to Greatness 2007"

Copyright © 2007 National Youth Leadership Council. All Rights Reserved