

Service Learning News



Cherokee students learned bicycle safety and teamed with senior citizens this Spring.

Register Now for the Service Learning and Civic Engagement Summer Institute!

Mark your calendars for June 4th - 6th, 2007! Florida Learn and Serve, State Farm, and Miami-Dade Public Schools are sponsoring a summer service learning conference, Service Learning and Civic Engagement- Building Citizens: Taking Action from Local to Global. The conference will take place at St. Thomas University, 16401 NW 37 Avenue, Miami Gardens, FL 33054. The featured speaker is Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., a National Service Learning Consultant and the author of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*.



The conference promises hands on interactive workshops filled with practical ideas to enhance your teaching. Each participant will receive \$200 of teaching materials! You must register for the conference by May 25, 2007. To register, apply for a travel scholarship or get more information go to: <http://www.fsu.edu/~flserve/slinstitute.pdf> or contact the OCPS Service Learning Coordinator, Wendy L. Doromal at doromaw@ocps.net.

A Look at Some 2006-2007 Service Learning Mini-Grants

From vegetable and flower gardens, to tutoring programs, to working with senior citizens, this year's mini-grants have involved thousands of OCPS students in meaningful service-learning projects. Over 2,000 students participated in this year's OCPS mini-grant service learning projects as servers or recipients! The mini-grants were funded by the OCPS District Learn and Serve Grant provided by Florida Learn and Serve.

Fourth grade special education students at **Cherokee School** under the leadership of physical education teacher, Jennifer NeSmith, and music teacher, Chris Shirk, created a unique project, "Revitalize Body and Soul." They combined exercise with music and senior citizens in this intergenerational project. Students received donated bicycles, and with the help of a community partner, learned bicycle repair, maintenance, and safety. They also learned how to play the recorder and kazoos. Students then rode their bikes several times to a nearby nursing home where they taught the seniors how to play the instruments and they all played together.



Winegard Elementary School students shopped for plants for their butterfly garden.

Continued on page two

Avalon Middle School and **Grand Avenue Primary Learning Center** students created welcome materials for new students. Media Specialist Gail Przeclawski of Grand Avenue presented story times with students from four first grade classes to teach them the difficulties new students face when they transfer into a school. Then students from different classes combined their talents to create a pamphlet that included a school map, pictures and captions, information about the school, and advice. Media Specialist Christine Woods at Avalon Middle School created a "Welcome Buddy" project with students preparing welcome packets with school supplies, a book, and welcome cards for their new students. The TV production students also created a welcome video that gave information about the school.

Several teachers and students applied their science and math knowledge to work on gardens this year. Jessica Long, agriculture teacher from **Timber Creek High School** partnered with special education teacher Darrelanne Sundeen, to create a vegetable garden for the homeless. ESE teacher, Richard Buhl, from **Freedom High** also created a garden for the homeless. His TMH students partnered with students from four other



Timber Creek High School students work in their vegetable garden for the homeless.

Freedom classes including an autistic class, life management skills, and graphic arts. Fox 35 news featured the Freedom Garden on a "Cool School of the Week" report! Their year-end celebration included servings of vegetables from the garden.

Mr. Buhl said, "Each parent in their own words said the garden was a key factor in their child's progress this year."



A student tills the soil at the Freedom High School Freedom Garden.

Susan Leed's **Howard Middle School** students read the books, *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleishman, and *Money Hungry* by Sharon Creech. Then created a hydroponic community garden. **Winegard Elementary School** Curriculum Resource teacher, Christine Morano and Parent Resource Teacher, Jill Reimer had the support of outstanding community partners in planning their Winegard Memorial Butterfly Garden. Lowe's, Home Depot, Hospice of the Comforter, Lancaster Florist, and the OCPS Grounds Keeping Department all contributed to make this garden a huge success. Working with fifth grade science club students and students from the grief group (students who have lost a loved one) students plotted the garden, made planters, and lovingly created the serene campus spot.

Lantanya Nicols of **Hiwassee Elementary School** led students in forming a Learn and Serve Club. Students served as peer mediators, safety patrol officers, worked as FCAT mentors, with senior citizens at a retirement center, and in creating a peer-to-peer newsletter. Also, working on a newsletter were **Windy Ridge School's** Student Ambassadors who created a non-bullying newsletter under SAFE Advisor, Barb Staggs. The newsletter aimed to improve school climate and promote conflict resolution.

Several service-learning reading projects impacted hundreds of students. Barbie Schessler of **Lake Silver Elementary** conducted “A Gift of Reading” where her kindergarten students taught reading to pre-kindergarten students at Zellwood Elementary School. Students and parents prepared backpacks filled with reading essentials to enhance their reading at home.



Reading partners check out what's in the reading backpack at Zellwood Elementary School.

Arbor Ridge School students from Ms. Frey (1st grade), Ms. Lampman (2nd grade), Ms. Zapata (3rd grade) and Ms. Bement (gifted) teamed up for an explosion of reading! Students showcased literature that encompassed global awareness by having students read and write about their favorite characters, carrying backpacks with books and character-related materials such as a stuffed Curious George, compass, atlas, and a Monkey Log. Students also shared their books with senior citizens at a care facility. One student reflected, “Reading to the old people was fun, but the old people went to sleep.” Parents were also involved in a Read-a-Thon, and other reading events at the school.

Seniors from LeeAnn Spillane’s **University High School** Service Learning Class worked with twenty-two Lawton Chiles Elementary School students visiting them once a week as reading buddies. Students read nonfiction with their buddy and then wrote/drew in response to their reading. Seniors completed a special book for their reading buddies and a class anthology of students’ writing.

University High School teachers, Deborah DeJesus and Casimira Alexandre created a family outreach program to address the needs of both students and parents focusing on reading. University students went to the Wentworth Apartments where they distributed books and reading logs. Parents received FCAT information. The next session included modeling reading to younger siblings, oral group reading, and reading techniques. The final meeting at the apartments continued reading skills and provided information on ESOL adult classes, and summer reading.

Twenty-two **Dr. Phillips High School** TMH students in the classes of teachers Colleen McElroy, Tommy Tucker and Maggie Hilt teamed for “Be A Winner: Read”. The students formed a Reading Rocks Club, partnered for peer tutoring, and conducted extensive reading activities. The teachers reported that the students were pleasantly surprised with accomplishments and excited about learning more!

At **Maynard Evans High School** forty-six BETA Club students interviewed homeless citizens at the Coalition for the Homeless. The University of Florida created a writing workshop especially for the Evans students who participated in an overnight trip! Teacher Jennifer Bohn worked with students to write a book that was published this Spring. Students demonstrated advances in writing and reflections at the end of the book showed how the project profoundly impacted the students.



Maynard Evans High School BETA Club members at the Coalition for the Homeless interviewing clients for their book.



Clay Springs Elementary School Classroom Museum.

Students in **Castle Creek Elementary School's** fourth and fifth grade Math Club planned a successful math night for parents. Teachers Jennifer Celentano and Heather Young led students in teaching parents how to play various math games using the Everyday Math Game Family kits. Inspired by the OCPS District Service Learning Conference, teachers created an additional project where fourth grade classes created book bags for the resource center. They spent a month reading the books, designing the activities, and testing them with kindergarten and first graders. Each bag contained a picture book, biography of the author, and two activities based on the book. Students filmed commercials to advertise the availability of the book bags for students to check-out of the library.

"Share the Care", was an intergenerational project by **Fern Creek Elementary** students in Sharlan Eng-Wilmot's first grade class. Students worked throughout the year to remember the elderly in the community. They shared poems, songs, autobiographies, and notes with the senior citizens at the Share the Care Facility in Parramore. Students not only improved reading, writing, and oral language skills, but learned tolerance, perseverance, and respect, as well.

A classroom museum was created by **Clay Springs Elementary School** teacher, Diana Eagles and 50 fourth grade students. Students conducted research, and created placards and displays to design a remarkable learning environment. Some of the museum displays

include shells, arrowheads, butterflies, feathers, and even a hornet's nest.

"Builders Building a Sense of Self" was the service-learning project adopted by Tammy Sexter's **Discovery Middle School** Builder's Club. Twenty-one students in the Builder's Club addressed the needs of eighteen autistic students by creating a multi-sensory environment for the students. They painted the room, purchased sensory material, and worked with experts to design the multi-sensory environment which encourages awareness, exploration, and learning.

Maitland Middle School Student Council students worked with teacher Arlene Ginn to conduct oral histories at the Manor Nursing Home and then create a one-of-a-kind "This is Your Life" Scrapbook to present to the residents. The students also celebrated Valentines Day at the Manor providing a party for the residents that including food, music and even polishing the senior's nails!

Drawing II students in Nicole Moitoza's **Cypress Creek High School** class worked on Memory Portraits. Students created paintings from



A Cypress Creek High School art student worked on a Memory Portraits.

photographs of children who live in orphanages around the world. The children have few keepsakes and the purpose of the portraits is to provide them with a special memory of their youth and to help them honor their heritage and identity.

Teacher Mary Lackey partnered with other special education teachers at **Union Park Middle School** to create "Puppets on Patrol." The exceptional education students took the

musical puppet show to the East Orange United Cerebral Palsy Center to perform for pre-school children. The OCPS Service Learning Mini-Grant funded the transportation for the performers.



Sunrise students interviewing senior citizens.

An interdisciplinary project at **Sunrise Elementary School** was performed by 42 ten and eleven year old gifted students. Under the direction of teacher, Tricia LaChance, students quilted blankets and made cards for the elderly. Students studied the needs of the elderly through research and guest speakers. Then they studied the history of quilt making and learned the craft from parent volunteers. Students interviewed the senior citizens and presented them with the quilts and card, and finally created a class book reflecting on the experience.



Sunrise Elementary students presented quilts to their senior citizen friends.

Some mini-grants were funded by the **Timber Creek High School** Service Learning Council under a Florida Learn and Serve school-based grant. Timber Creek High School Service Learning Academy American Sign Language teacher, Elise Perez and students joined Lake Sybelia Elementary School deaf students throughout the year on a variety of projects. Students taught American Sign Language through games at the Fall Festival and helped with the Easter Egg Hunt. Students also worked on an American Sign Language workshop that was presented at the Third Annual OCPS District Service Learning Conference.



TCHS students working on the Herps and Humans service-learning project.

David Gardner, Timber Creek High School Service Learning Academy science teacher and his zoology students worked to survey the reptiles and amphibians in wetlands on school grounds in their “Herps and Humans” project. The service-learning project shows the impact of the development on the environment. Students also studied global warming and marine habitats, and implemented a sea turtle service-learning project.

Spanish Honors students and Mrs. Gudrun Martyny of the Timber Creek High School worked with Azaela Park Elementary School ESOL students to improve their reading and writing. They also prepared poison prevention materials in Spanish for the limited-English speaking students.

Lynnette Elliott’s English students served as reading buddies to Avalon Park Elementary students and also were trained in leadership and sponsored a workshop at the district conference.

The Service Learning Academy implemented 64 diverse service learning projects throughout the year partnering with numerous community government and non-profit agencies.

The OCPS Service Learning Program at a Glance

The primary goal of the OCPS Service Learning Program is to provide opportunities for every OCPS student to participate in quality service-learning projects connected to curriculum and standards. These projects are created in collaboration with community partners to meet genuine school and/or community needs. For the last three years our program has been funded with grants from Florida Learn and Serve. The grants have provided funds that made it possible to award seed money to teachers throughout Orange County to implement meaningful service-learning projects in their schools. Exciting projects like the ones that are described in this newsletter! The grants have also funded the OCPS annual district service-learning conferences, training sessions for service-learning trainers and liaisons, monthly service-learning workshops, books and materials, money for substitutes, buses for students to perform service, and more!

Why is service-learning important?

Service-learning makes subject material relevant and meaningful to students. It allows them opportunities to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it in their communities. It is a way of teaching where students not only benefit from learning new skills, but community members benefit from the application of those skills through the service that the students provide.

Service-learning builds character, strengthens self-esteem, and reinforces democratic and civic principles. It provides opportunities for students to learn team-work, to utilize higher level thinking skills, to investigate a subject in-depth, solve problems, make decisions, and have a voice in their educational experience.

Service-learning has been proven by researchers to improve academic achievement, reduce discipline and attendance problems, and strengthen community partnerships. To learn more about service learning contact the OCPS Service Learning Coordinator: Wendy L. Doromal at doromaw@ocps.net.



Service-learning connects students to community.

A Message From the Service-learning Coordinator

The 2006-2007 school year has seen an tremendous growth in service-learning in Orange County Public Schools. Three years ago a handful of service-learning projects were funded by Florida Learn and Serve. This year we have 99 service-learning projects funded through grants provided by Florida Learn and Serve, and many more beneficial service-learning projects funded by individual teachers, schools, and other grants.

The service-learning program has witnessed not only growth in numbers of projects, but in the *quality* of the service-learning projects. As more teachers and administrators are trained in service learning methods, and distinguish the difference between volunteerism and service-learning, the level of excellence in all areas of our service-learning projects has increased dramatically.

I want to thank all of the teachers, principals, administrators, service-learning trainers, service-learning school liaisons, and our hundreds of community partners for making this a wonderful year for service learning. Wishing you a wonderful summer!

Wendy L. Doromal

Participate in
The Summer of Service!

Go to:
www.nationalservice.gov/summerofservice

Make a difference this summer!

Sea turtle study & beach cleanup



**Service Learning
Pre-Planning Workshops**
will be offered
in August 2007

Look for the announcement of
dates and times!

Planting butterfly plants



**Orange County Public Schools
Service Learning Program**

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