

Case Portrait of the Service-Learning Program in Seven Springs Middle School (SSMS)

I. Overview

Location: New Port Richey, Pasco County

Type and Age of School: A progressive public block-schedule middle school (grades 6-8) that opened 1996

Size of school: 1,290 students

Name of Program: Lead the Pack

Web Site:

<http://ssms.pasco.k12.fl.us/SSMS/leadthepack/leadthepack>



II. Origins

A. Impetus/Need

- A middle school guidance counselor at SSMS expressed the need for some type of character education program.
- Mr. Rick Koop, former Principal of Gulf Middle School, created the drama class at Gulf Middle School.
- Ms. Cindy Tehan attended the Florida Service-Learning Institute for the first time in 1997.
- Ms. Tehan began to develop a character education program as part of her drama teaching responsibilities.

B. Initial Phase: Character Education (1998-2005)

- 6-8th grades students participate in service-learning projects and activities as part of Ms. Tehan's Drama/Chorus classes.

C. Next Major Development: Youth Council (2006-07)

- Ms. Tehan recognized the need for greater student choice and voice in school service-learning activities.
- Ms. Tehan went to Mr. Christoff, Principal, to expand this program into a school-wide service-learning grant. He gave her full support and autonomy to do this and helped her create the project.



Ms. Cindy Tehan

- Mr. Christoff helped to create the Leadership class at SSMS.
- 7- 8th grades students began enrollment in this elective Leadership class in 2006.
- Service-learning was included as a Goal Area 4 in SSMS School Improvement Plan for 2006-07.



Lead the Pack Class Photo – 2007-2008

D. Funding History and Program Support

- **Principal Involvement and Support:** Mr. Christoff, Principal, gave Ms. Tehan authority to develop and expand service-learning offerings at SSMS. He has been an advocate of reading and pairing SSMS students with younger students. He established a Leadership class and supported curriculum writing for this class over the summer. He supported the preparation of a grant proposal to Florida Learn & Serve for broadening their service-learning program. He encouraged students to take ownership of the program and brought outsiders in to observe “Lead the Pack” projects.
- **School District:** Inclusion of service learning in 6-8th grade classes, including equipment and material support, transportation, and guidance from district dietitians, and support from the Information and Media Services video expert.

- **Grant Funding from Florida Learn & Serve:**
School-base Projects in 1998-2000
Model School Expansion and Dissemination Project in 2003-2009
- **Program and Project Contributions:** University of South Florida, YMCA of the Suncoast, Trinity Rotary (Rotary International), Wachovia Bank, Toys for Tots, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Pasco County Recycling

III. Operating Features

List of Major School and Program Features

- All 6th graders participate in a “Wheel Program” in which they change classes each grading period. Most 7 & 8th grade classes run for a full term or the school year.
- **School Schedule:** Class periods run for 50 minutes on Mondays and Fridays and 80 minutes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.
- **Youth Service-Learning Council:** Received training in class on the grant-writing process and on how to facilitate groups successfully. Council roles and responsibilities include participating in their own mini-grant project first and then assisting other students and classes throughout the school (2006-).
- **Major Subjects:** Required: Reading (6th grade), Science, and Social Studies; Electives: Leadership (year-long), Drama, Chorus, Visual Arts, Graphic Arts, and Orientation to Business (students develop program Web pages using HTML code and C-Monkey, review material as a class, and revise based on customer feedback)
- **Extra-Curricular Clubs and Activities:** National Junior Honor Society
- **List of Major Projects:** Graphics Supporting School Functions; Good Habits, Good Health; Recycling Batteries; Arts for Multiple Sclerosis; Social Inclusion Project; Character Education through Drama; National Junior Honor Society; Re-Read; and Paper Recycling



Teamwork day for Lead the Pack.

- **Major School/Program Awards and Recognition for Service Learning:** Teacher of the Year at SSMS in 2006-07 (Ms. Cindy Tehan)



Description of Project A:

- **Name of Project:** Character Education through Drama
- **Teachers and Students Involved:** Cindy Tehan and Rebecca Musselman (chorus teacher); 120 students in 6-8th grades
- **Subject Areas:** Drama and Chorus
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** At SSMS for Seven Springs Elementary School (SSES), Trinity, Trinity Oaks and Longleaf; Perform plays that teach tolerance respect and non-violence
- **Uses of Reflection:** Before, during, and after service through class discussions and reflective writing, including a reflection section of reports on service-learning activities
- **Grading:** 50% of the grade for this class comes from service-learning
- **Student Outcomes:** Students learned acting and singing skills, and improved presentation and writing skills.
- **Recognition or Celebration:** Perform plays

Description of Project B:

- **Name of Project:** Good Habits, Good Health
- **Teachers and Students Involved:** Cindy Tehan; 28 students in 7-8th grades
- **Subject Area:** Leadership (Lead the Pack)
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** At SSMS and SSES; Teach healthy living—proper nutrition and daily exercise
- **Uses of Reflection:** Continuous engagement in reflection through class discussion and journals, including what students got out of their service-learning activities
- **Grading:** 100% of the grade for this class comes from service learning
- **Student outcomes:** Greater awareness of healthy lifestyles, more active choices made during leisure time

- **Recognition or celebration:** Principal treated to End-of-Year Breakfast.

Description of Project C:

- **Name of Project:** Re-Read
- **Teachers and Students Involved:** Janet Tolson; 50 students in 6th grade
- **Subject Area:** Reading
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** Longleaf Elementary School; Tutor young readers on a weekly basis (January through May)
- **Uses of Reflection:** During planning and preparation, students identify goals and questions; during implementation, (comprehension checks tutor to tutee); journal entries and exit summaries
- **Grading:** Less than 25% of the grade for this class comes from service-learning, typically as a substitute for a missed assignment or grade
- **Student Outcomes:** SSMS Students improved reading fluency and comprehension skills
- **Recognition or Celebration:** End of Year celebration of tutors and tutees



Character Education through drama backdrop for Lead the Pack.

Description of Project D:

- **Name of Project:** Arts for Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
- **Teachers and Students Involved:** Jan Mallett; 15 students in 7-8th grades
- **Subject Area:** Art
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** SSMS students make jewelry and sell it to assist Multiple Sclerosis patients with daily living costs. Profits go to the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.
- **Uses of Reflection:** Discussion of brochure about MS with each buyer
- **Grading:** 100% of the grade for this class comes from service learning
- **Student Outcomes:** Students improved their artistic skills, and become aware of techniques for marketing and selling art. They learned about MS and the reward of giving.
- **Recognition or Celebration:** The students received a letter from the MS Foundation, thanking them for their donation. Also, the remaining jewelry pieces were kept by their

creators and these students were thrilled. The students were also the focus of a great newspaper article about Lead the Pack.

Description of Project E:

- **Name of Project:** Social Inclusion Project
- **Teachers and Students Involved:** Leslie Frick; 30 students in 8th grade
- **Subject Area:** Social Studies
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** At SSMS; pair up physically and mentally handicapped students with non-handicapped students for social events—bowling, movie trip, socializing
- **Uses of Reflection:** A speaker from the district office conducted disability training with the students. During implementation, the students frequently discussed how to handle difficult situations.
- **Grading:** This was a voluntary activity beyond the normal curriculum.
- **Student Outcomes:** Students showed greater tolerance of handicapped students. In addition, the servers developed greater teamwork and more acceptance and appreciation of each other.
- **Recognition or Celebration:** The students attended an End-of-Year Bowling Trip to celebrate. Also, at the final 8th grade dance, the students made every effort to include the disabled.

Description of Project F:

- **Name of Project:** Recycling Batteries
- **Teachers and Students Involved:** Sue Stokke; 80 students in 7-8th grades
- **Subject Area:** Science, starting in February; once every 6 weeks
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** At SSMS; recycle batteries, pick up buckets from classrooms, and create iMovies on recycling
- **Uses of Reflection:** Substantial reflection during planning and preparation of iMovies; some reflection as part of these iMovies
- **Grading:** 0% of the grade for this class comes from service learning, although students are graded on their iMovie
- **Student Outcomes:** Students showed greater care/concern for the environment and expressed a greater need to educate and involve community members
- **Recognition or Celebration:** Principal Christoff sat on the seat in a Dunk Tank during an event to celebrate this project

Description of Project G:

- **Name of Project:** Paper Recycling
- **Teachers and Students Involved:** Cindy Tehan; 28 students
- **Subject Areas:** Lead the Pack class, Leadership Skills
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** At SSMS; collect recycling bins and take to collection area for pick-up

- **Uses of Reflection:** Journal writing during and after
- **Grading:** 100% of the grade for this class comes from service learning
- **Student Outcomes:** Students became more aware of the need for recycling and the difficulties involved.
- **Recognition or Celebration:** End-of-Year Breakfast

Description of Project H:

- **Name of Project:** Graphics Supporting School Functions
- **Teacher and students involved:** Dorothy Taylor; 170 students in 7th grade
- **Subject Area:** Graphic Arts, once a week (4 hours) per month
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** At SSMS; design and create posters to advertise school events
- **Uses of Reflection:** Pre-poster graphics and post-poster portfolios
- **Grading:** 20% of the grade for this class comes from service learning
- **Student Outcomes:** Students become more aware of school events and advertising techniques
- **Recognition or Celebration:** Projects were displayed which increased pride in the work of the students

Description of Project I:

- **Name of Project:** National Junior Honor Society
- **Teachers and Students Involved:** Tracie Hand and Russell Hand; 50 students in 7th grade. National Junior Honor Society are required to maintain a 3.5 GPA
- **Service Sites and Nature of the Service Activities:** At SSMS; collect toys for children at Christmas time, tutor other students every Monday from October through mid-May
- **Uses of Reflection:** Continuous engagement in reflection including how to improve projects
- **Grading:** N/A
- **Student Outcomes:** Students realized how fortunate they are.
- **Recognition or Celebration:** End-of-Year induction of new members and recognition of teachers who made a difference.

IV. Program Benefits and Impacts

A. Longer-Term Impacts on/Benefits to Participating Students

- “You can definitely see how these students took ownership in this program. I really do believe that they will invest more in this school, because they feel like they are part of it.” (Mr. Chris Christoff, Principal)
- According to teachers involved, students in many projects showed (a) high levels of motivation and an increased sense of responsibility, (b) a growth in their ability to apply

what they are learning in Service-Learning classes, and (c) the development of a commitment to the community through community service.

- According to teachers, students involved in the Leadership class developed leadership qualities and skills more than other students.
- Supports academic growth of the students by offering weekly after school tutoring to those in need of it.
- The following data show a correlation between the Lead the Pack class and success on the FCAT:

<u>Percentage of Increase in FCAT Achievement Levels</u>		
Math	Students in Lead the Pack Class	38%
	Students at SSMS	18%
Reading	Students in Lead the Pack Class	14%
	Students at SSMS	6.3%

B. Major Impacts on/Benefits to Coordinator, Teachers, and Other School Personnel

- The students are more fully engaged when they can see that what they are learning has a direct impact on others. As coordinator, Cindy Tehan felt very proud to be part of a school that has so many teachers who teach the values of respect, tolerance, and caring. The success of the first year of the program was overwhelming. The teachers involved mentioned many times how much they learned from working on the mini grant projects. They learned how much young people want to give when provided an opportunity.

C. Major Impacts on/Benefits to Service Sites and Other Community Partners

- **Character Education through Drama**: Support for character education at four elementary schools and one middle school in Pasco County
- **Re-read**: Help teach reading and healthy living (proper nutrition and daily exercise) to students at Seven Springs Elementary School and Longleaf Elementary School
- **Arts for Multiple Sclerosis**: Support for the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation
- **Recycling Batteries** and **Paper Recycling**: Support Pasco County Recycling in the recycling of batteries and paper
- **National Junior Honor Society**: Support for the Toys for Tots program

V. For Further Information

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