
Project Name: **Children's Books**

School: Greendale Middle School

1. Provide a brief description/narrative of your project (include purpose/goals, a brief timeline, the "story").

The seventh grade students decided that they wanted to write and donate children's books in their Comm. Arts classes. The project started late November and ended mid-December. We started the unit off by looking at different children's books and discussing the stories, illustrations, and genres. The students then brainstormed ideas as a class on what a successful book includes and started to write, edit, illustrate, and type their very own children's book. One set of classes even had their books published. Once the children's books were complete, the students took a fieldtrip to Clarke Street Elementary School, a Milwaukee Public School, to read, share, and discuss their books with fourth and fifth grade students. The Greendale students then presented their books to the students at Clarke as holiday gifts. All students had a wonderful and educational experience.

2. What opportunities were available for youth leadership and voice?

This project was spawned when a few students approached me about reading our books to an elementary school. As a class, we then sat down and started brainstorming what we could do and we came up with the idea of sharing and donating our books to a school that really needed them.

The students completed their children's books on their own. I explained the project to them and gave them a timeline, but they then decided how much effort they wanted to put into their books. I was just the supervisor that helped guide the students and explain the project, and then the students worked on it making it the success it was. I helped them along the way, but they were the ones that challenged themselves each and everyday. Each student's individual needs were met by this project.

The students were role models to the fourth and fifth grade students at Clarke Street.

Two students were chosen to present their service learning project to superintendents, principals, administrators, and board members at the State School Board Convention. These two students did a wonderful job of promoting service learning and representing Greendale Middle School.

3. What "community" need did this project address?

This project not only challenged and helped show the students of Greendale a sense of accomplishment, but it also helped to give the students at Clarke Street a more joyous holiday where normally some of the students at Clarke Street do not receive any gifts for the holidays.

4. How was your project linked to the curriculum and how did it further academic achievement of students?

The students are required to write various papers throughout the school year. Children's books are one of those requirements. The students were able to review, discuss, and write their very own children's book. They went through a three-week process of writing, typing, editing, and illustrating their books. The six traits were discussed and incorporated into the entire unit. We also talked about authors and different types of storybooks and children's books.

5. How did participants have the opportunity for reflection?

The students had the opportunity to take a fieldtrip to Clarke Street to present their books to the students. The students were able to read and discuss the books, play bingo and go to a sign-a-long with the students at Clarke Street. Friendships were made. After the trip, as a class, we discussed the project and the trip to Clarke and it seemed to be a wonderful experience for all that were involved.

6. What were the materials, money, and “connections” needed to complete this project?

This project was done completely in the classroom and computer lab. The only money that was needed was money for the school bus to take the students to Clarke Street School.

7. Upon reflection, what are some revisions you would make should you attempt this project again?

When I do this project again I would like to try and get all of the books professionally bound. I would also like to take all the students to visit Clarke Street and present the books. Visiting Clarke Street was a great opportunity for the students and they were able to see how much their books were needed and appreciated. The students from Greendale also had the opportunity to visit a school and a student body very different from their school — a rich experience they may not have had if we invited Clarke Street to Greendale

8. What were your key project successes?

The entire project was a success. The students were able to see the entire process of writing the book. They had a feeling of accomplishment for completing the books and feeling of warmth and satisfaction for donating their books. The students were able to help make the holiday season a joyful and memorable one for the students at Clarke Street. The students showed tremendous growth and **maturity** throughout this entire unit.

Two students had the opportunity to present at the State School Board Convention in Milwaukee. These two girls did an excellent job of promoting Service Learning but at the same time they did a great job of representing Greendale Middle School.

9. What were your key project challenges?

At first, a challenge, or I should say a minor speed bump in the road, was that I did not know how I would be able to transport the students from Greendale to Clarke Street. After many e-mails and talks with Mr. Lodes he explained and informed me about service learning grants. I am very thankful and appreciate for the money that paid for the bus to take the students to Clarke Street.

10. What lessons were learned about trying to implement service learning in the classroom?

I learned that service learning is an amazing way to help student’s make connections between school — curriculum and academic studies and real life experiences. I also learned that service learning is a way to show our students that they have a voice and they can make things happen in their community even though they are students. This service learning project was something that started off with just an assignment, a few students then approached me about reading the books to an elementary school. As a class, we then sat down and started brainstorming what we could do and we came up with the idea of sharing and donating our books to a school that really needed them.

Participants

Teacher(s)/Advisor(s) Name(s):
Marlo Dentice

Subjects/Grades Taught:
Comm. Arts / 7th grade

Additional Staff Involved:
Susan Bush

AmeriCorp Volunteer/GMS Math

School Name:
Greendale Middle School

Total Number of Students Involved in the Project (by grade levels K-5, 6-8, 9-12):
K-5: students at Clarke Street Elementary in MPS
6-8: 87
9-12: 00

Any additional populations you included? (state number if applicable):

AmeriCorp Volunteer X

Number: 1 (Susan Bush)