

North Adams Public Schools
Service-Learning Project Narratives 2008-2009

* indicates project connection with Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)

~ indicates connection to the Garden Mosaic Project in collaboration with the community Target: Hunger Initiative that strives to increase awareness of food security issues, increase access, provide relief and develop sustainable solutions. Harvested food is donated to the Berkshire Food Project (community free meal program). Additional community partners include the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, REACH Community Health Foundation and MCLA.

DRURY HIGH SCHOOL

* ~Allen, Paul; LaViola, Cosmo – “Composting”

Twenty-eight students in the high school Conservation classes have made a long term commitment to oversee and maintain the composting program for the school gardens initiative. Activities included composting bins, weeding/maintaining gardens and announcements of the project.

Boulger, Patrick – “Mock Election

Eighteen students in standard senior Sociology classes brought awareness to the national election by creating public bulletin boards about the candidates and the issues, engaging in debate from the various points of view, and holding a school-wide mock election at the high school.

Boulger, Patrick – “Be Our Guest”

Eighteen students in standard senior Social Studies assisted the local “Be Our Guest” annual holiday dinner for those without family or friends to share the holidays with by selecting names of children in families needing help with gifts, shopped wrapped and delivered the gifts, and decorating the hall.

Boulger, Patrick – “Senior Citizen’s Prom”

Forty-Four students in Senior Sociology class succeeded in bringing 90 elderly into Drury High School to recreate the 60’s at the 15th Annual Senior/Senior Prom. In an effort to appreciate each other, students researched the needs of elderly and organized a dance based on the theme of the 1960’s. Recipients experienced an enjoyable evening with food, dancing and conversation.

*~Davis, Keith – “Garden Tool Shed”

Nineteen high school students in the Computer Assisted Drafting class have embarked on a yearlong project to consult, design and construct a tool storage shed that will contain the supplies for the school garden efforts being developed in collaboration with the Food Bank of Western Mass. “Target:Hunger” initiative and the REACH Community Health Foundation.

*~Durand, Danielle; Callahan, Tim – “Utopian Gardens”

Twenty-three students in 9th grade standard English classes addressed the topic of hunger by researching local issues and creating steps to improve living conditions. Connected to literature, students grew vegetables as part of their designed utopias and donated all food to The Berkshire Food Project. There was one student teacher from MCLA involved in this project.

Girouard, Aldonna; Allen, Paul; Sadlowski, Donna; Moitozi, Judi – “Move Up Day” Eighty-Seven students from a myriad of subjects – Chorus, Conservation, Math I and Foods II - collaborated to provide an enjoyable and education experience for incoming 8th and 9th graders. Working with a variety of teachers and administrators, students organized a structured morning where they served as positive role models to incoming students.

Lewis, Shelby – Drury ‘Green’ Devils”

Two students in grade 12 21st Century Careers Class raised awareness in the community about environmental issues and how every day practices can be altered with little effort to help the environment. To reach this goal, students wrote a pledge to have the school sign relating to the concept of a ‘carbon footprint’.

*~Lewis, Shelby – “Eats for the Earth”

Fourteen students in 21st Century Careers Class committed to changing eating habits in order to help the environment and local farmers in an effort to create healthier lifestyles. Students research locally grown and organic products as where to purchase them so they could create a recipe based on these ingredients. All food prepared was distributed to the 21st Century After School Program along with a handout of tips for how to eat in a more eco-friendly manner. Local restaurants and grocery stores were also involved in this process.

Lewis, Shelby – “Green Tees”

Twenty high school students in 21st Century Careers Class constructed re-usable grocery bags out of tee-shirts in order to raise awareness about environmental issues and a ‘carbon footprint’. Pledges written by other high school students were placed in the bags and distributed to students and teachers.

Lewis, Shelby – “Recycling”

Seven students in 21st Century Careers Class addressed the lack of awareness in the community regarding how recycling helps the appearance of the school and the environment as a whole. After researching the availability of recycling to community members, students supplied classrooms with bins for recycling water bottles. In addition, students wrote letters to teachers to establish a schedule to collect and remove items.

*~Lewitt, Steve – “Drury Garden Project”

Sixty-eight 9th grade Earth Science students studying soil conservation analyzed the school garden soil. Students planted vegetable seeds and transplanted seedlings to the garden. Harvested food is donated to the Berkshire Food Project.

Meczywor, Molly – “Clothes 4 Kids”

Twenty-four high school students in Honors Grade 9 English researched basic needs of families in North Adams and organized a community-wide clothing drive where all clothes collected would be donated to the three elementary schools. In addition to collecting the clothes, students designed and built clothing shelves/units for two of the elementary schools to house the clothes.

*Meczywor, Molly; Chilson, Sue; Solak, Jen; Pinsonneault, Krista – “Dining For Darfur”

Thirty-seven high school students in English, Spanish, and History ranging from grades 9 through 12 were asked to participate in a project with MCLA to raise awareness of the conflict and genocide taking place in Darfur. Students researched the conflict and asked local businesses to donate a portion of their proceeds to SaveDarfur.org; students did all of the advertising for this project. There were three MCLA students involved in this project.

Meczywor, Molly – “Safety Bulletin Board”

Eighteen grade 9 English students designed, researched and created a bulletin board featuring school and community resources for students after reading Tears of a Tiger. Throughout the school year, students have committed to post current issues facing teenagers today and maintain the bulletin board with phone numbers and contact people.

*~Moitozo, Judi – “Hunger Banquet”

Five students in a Foods II class used their knowledge of the six major nutrients to develop a nutritious meal to be served to the three socio-economic classes enacted during the community Hunger Banquet. Using the Food Guide Pyramid, students researched the importance of proper nutrition and the effects on the body when those nutrients are not ingested and prepared food based on those needs.

*~Moitozo, Judi – “Monthly Goods to Berkshire Food Project”

Eight students in the high school Family and Consumer Science Foods class have established a year-long commitment to their partnership with the local Berkshire Food Project, which provides free lunch weekdays to anyone who enters their doors. Through each of their various units on nutrition, meal planning, budgeting and cooking, students provide freshly made goods for the lunch program once per month.

*~Moitozo, Judi – “Garden Mosaic”

Five students in Foods II class were involved in ordering materials and the building of six new garden beds for the Drury Garden. They were also instrumental in calculating the amount of soil needed to fill the beds and ordering it from Trimarchi Nursery. When the beds were ready they put the beds in place and shoveled in the special garden soil. Also, these same students planted garlic in the fall in bed 3 and grew squash and parsley seeds in the classroom in April to plant in the beds in June. Along with Mr. Lewitt's science classes the Foods II students planted vegetables and herbs in June for harvest and use by the Berkshire Foods Project.

Moitozo, Judi – “Preparing Nutritious Meals for Special Athletes”

Five high school students in the Foods Class serviced the Special Olympic Athletes from UCP and BFAIR by preparing well-planned, nutritious meals for the athletes to take with them on their journey to the Sate Games in Worcester, MA. These lunches will ensure the athletes will have properly balanced lunches during the two days of competitions without having to worry about nutrition or finances for food.

Pepper, Phoebe – “ORIGINS” Murals

Twenty-four students in upper level high school arts classes continue to work on a multi-year project to complete six wall-sized murals in the halls of the high school to commemorate local history and ancestry.

*Pinsonneault, Krista; McCarron, Marie – “Social Defenders”

Thirty students in grade 10 US History II and grade 4 raised social awareness of historical and local individuals who are or were committed to defend social justice. Working collaboratively with the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum, students wrote about social defenders and sold books to local community members; funds were donated the Susan B. Anthony Museum. The teachers completed the project as part of the graduate course in service-learning offered in collaboration with MCLA.

Pinsonneault, Krista – “Thanksgiving Books”

Fifteen students in high school history class explored the facts and myths surrounding the origins of the Thanksgiving holiday, and created picture books with child-friendly language and illustrations depicting true events. HS students then read and donated the books to third graders in the local elementary school.

*~Pious, Brian – “Hunger Banquet”

Eleven high school Seniors in “American History Through Film” class organized the banquet, create advertisements and research the issue of food security – both locally and globally – in order to raise awareness and donations for local food projects.

*Yinger, Leanne; Reifsneider, Abby – “Random Acts of Kindness”

Thirty students at the Off-Campus Transitional Program connected with the local Adult Day Health Center to provide companionship through weekly visits, interviews, writing and conversation so they could create ‘then and now’ books to provide for the members. The teachers completed the project as part of the graduate course in service-learning offered in collaboration with MCLA.

CONTE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Beauchemin, Karen; Goodwin, Melodie – “Science Fair Helpers”

Three students in grade 7 and 8 After School Program set up the MCLA gymnasium for the Regional Science Fair by using geometry, measurement and number sense.

LaRocca, Joan – “iMovies for People and Pets”

Eighteen middle school students created iMovie public service announcements, posters and newspaper articles to raise awareness of the local needs for food for low-income families and their pets. Students then ran a collection for non-perishable foods for both people and animals and donated the supplies to the Berkshire Community Action Council, and the Berkshire Humane Society.

LaRocca, Joan; Dickson, Laurie – “Conte Youth Council Mentoring Project”

Four students in grade 8 mentored Brayton Elementary School 3rd grade students by helping them to understand the needs of the Berkshire Humane Society by writing lessons for Grade 3 students on pet care, creating a video and wrote public service announcements.

Lincourt, Rich – “Cards for Shut-Ins”

Eleven middle school students in the Transitional Program that assists them with addressing the social emotional issues that hinder their success in school, students created poignant hand-made Christmas cards and delivered them to elder shut-ins before the holidays. Students reflected on the health standards of interpersonal relationships, art, and ELA composition with empathic consideration for their audience.

Lincourt, Rich; Beauchemin, Karen – “School Auction for Enrichment”

Twelve students in 7th and 8th grade in an Academic Support class collaborated with students in science class, the Transition Program, teachers, college students and community volunteers to organize a school wide auction. The entire school community has been concerned about the extent of budget reductions each year in this struggling economy, and has seen long-established community-building programs diminished. Students did PR, designed and set up display space and item descriptions, assisted the auctioneer and the

delivery of goods. Proceeds will be used to enhance the MCAS snack program, support a speaker on cyber bullying, and off-site enrichment field trips.

Quirk, Melissa – “Geometry Pictionary”

Twenty Five Seventh graders created Geometry term pictionaries and brought the picture dictionaries to the elementary schools to teach 3rd graders about different shapes, angles, terms and facts relating to Geometry

BRAYTON ELEMENTARY

*Burdick, Jessica; Gilamn, Susan – “Holiday Gift Shop”

Forty Three students in second and third grades collaborated to organize the annual holiday gift shop to allow students to buy presents for family members at little to no cost. Students collected goods to be sold, did PR, created signage and pricing, set up the shop, and helped younger students make appropriate selections. Proceeds from this event went to benefit the local fuel assistance program, as well as the Goodrich Foundation for humanitarian services in Afghanistan. There was one student teacher from MCLA involved in this project.

Burdick, Jessica; Plante, Sarah – “Pinwheels for Peace”

Twenty students in third grade realized the importance of peace – not just during times of war – by creating pinwheels and planning them at the front entrance of the school to increase the idea of peace relating to intolerance, violence, and peace of mind.

* Cellana, Karen; Gallagher, Nancy – “Bullying – We can work together to stop it.”

Fifteen fourth graders researched if bullying took place in their school and created a video that taught positive problem solving steps in a difficult situation which was eventually shown to both parents and students. Working with the local cable television studio, students edited and finalized the video. There was one student teacher from MCLA involved in this project. The teachers completed the project as part of the graduate course in service-learning offered in collaboration with MCLA.

Farinon, Marcia – “The Bear Necessities: A School Run Book Store”

Ten students in the Title I reading program assist the school by working at the school store, keep track of inventory, collect/count money and report all findings to school administration. This is a year long program.

Fruscio, Joyce – “Snack Pantry”

Having established a school-wide snack pantry last year due to the high number of low-income students in their elementary school, third graders are sustaining the program using math skills and regularly rotate shifts to cover the responsibilities for ordering and purchasing, stocking goods, checking on classroom needs and delivering snacks. There are approximately 13 students assuming the responsibilities.

Fruscio, Joyce – “School Book Store”

In an elementary school that has consistently struggled with improving students’ reading scores, 20 fourth and fifth graders are sustaining a school-wide book store. Students use both math and literacy skills to gather input from teachers and students about new books to have available, make recommendation for appropriate reading material at the various grade levels, and handle purchasing responsibilities for buying and selling books at low cost to students.

Johnson, Linda – “Elder Buddies”

Seventeen third graders established a long term relationship with elders living in local senior housing, creating regular activities involving reading, crafts and games to share on a bi-weekly basis.

Lawson, Robyn – “A Little Kindness Goes a Long Way – Helping Our Furry Friends”

Fifteen Grade 3 students were impacted by presentations by The Berkshire Humane Society regarding the conditions of pets affected by poor economic conditions. Students raised funds and collected supplies for the shelter through class, school and community support. Students sold planted flowers for Mother’s Day to raise funds.

Poplaski, Dina; Nicholas, Michelle – “Thanksgiving Baskets”

Seventy Eight Pre-Kindergarten students met representatives from the local food pantries to inquire about food needs for local families. Students then collected, counted and sorted donations specific to the needs for Thanksgiving dinner baskets for shut-ins, and delivered them to the Berkshire Community Action Council for distribution.

*~Rusek, Melissa; Lawson, Robyn; Johnson, Linda – “Brayton Bears Bountiful Bloomers”

Ninety Grade 3 students realized the need for food assistance in the local community due to the depressed economy and created their own school garden where the food harvested will be donated to local agencies such as Berkshire Food Project and Northern Berkshire Community Action. Students planned, built raised beds, maintained and harvested the garden throughout the school year. There was one student teacher involved in this project.

*“Pennies for Patients” – Forty Four students from grade 3 and School & Youth Programs for Leukemia and Lymphoma Societies teamed together to raise \$531.17 for local student survivors. Using sorting, counting and math skills, students encouraged the entire school to get involved. Involved in this project were ten students from MCLA.

GREYLOCK ELEMENTARY

SULLIVAN ELEMENTARY

Farnham, Jane – “Hands to Paws”

18 fifth grade students concerned about the plight of homeless animals in this struggling economy and harsh winter, invited school-wide participation in read-a-thon garnering pledges for books read. Seventy-one students were active readers, raising \$850 that was donated to the Berkshire Humane Society.

Saldo-Burke, Anna; DeMayo, Joy – “Food Bank Sort and Pack”

Thirty third graders partnered with the Northern Berkshire Community Action Council and the local Salvation Army to enhance the annual food drive efforts. Using math skills, they then participated in organizing and sorting the donated goods to create nutritious, non-perishable parcels of food to be delivered to families in need community wide.

Saldo-Burke, Anna – “Water is Essential!”

Fourteen students in grade 3 produced a documentary to create awareness and inspire action of others in relation to water conservation issues and potable water in developing countries. Students also created “Colors of Water” paper bead necklaces to be sold to raise funds to bring water to West Africans via the Barka Foundation. The teacher and students presented this project at two conferences and inspired other schools to get involved, including a school-wide project at Gabriel Abbot in neighboring Florida, MA.

OFF-CAMPUS ‘GREENHOUSE’ ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

Baran, Jerome; Lewis, Molly; Wojciek, Julie

Eight students in the Off-Campus Alternative program have engaged in several projects that allowed them to gain deeper understanding of various populations, programs and events, and relative needs in the local community. Applying math and engineering skills, students then designed, constructed and delivered:

- Centerpiece planter boxes for the annual regional s-l conference, depicting local landmarks
- Stools for use in the Physical Therapy Program
- Numerous white boards and easels for classrooms throughout the district
- Furniture for Brayton Elementary
- Planting for ‘Week of the Young Child’, REACH and downtown North Adams
- Assisted in the building of clothing shelves and bookcases
- Built a sign for Greylock Elementary School

*~Eight students in the Off-Campus Greenhouse alternative program have committed to constructing raised garden bed frames for the schools and partners involved with the “Target:Hunger” school garden initiatives.

Fourteen students in the Off-Campus Greenhouse alternative program planted, transplanted, watered and cared for the flowers grown on Main Street, Heritage Park, and Route 2. In addition, these same students planted 400 pots to sell for the Humane Society, donated decorated pots to the High School Senior/Senior Prom, and decorated for a Memorial Day Service at Conte Middle School.

MENTORING PROGRAM MINI-GRANTS TO OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Buckley, Brian; Harford, Gina; Grady, Kimberly - “TestFest” (Pittsfield High School)

Fifteen students identified the importance of a nutritional breakfast on test days and committed to influencing their peers to eat healthy before important tests such as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NEAP). Students provided statistics about hunger, administered a survey regarding current breakfast practices and reflected via a post survey to see if the students noticed a difference in their concentration and energy during testing.

*Dupre, Kara – “Students helping students” (Pittsfield High School)

Thirty Six 9th graders identified the need for 8th graders to understand the academic and social expectations of high school students. Students surveyed their classmates to establish the areas of need and created a program/presentation, pamphlet and a movie to show the 8th

graders during a visit to the local middle schools. The teacher completed the project as part of the graduate course in service-learning offered in collaboration with MCLA.

***Romeo-Leger, Karen – “Berkshire County Sites & Lenox Walking Tour” (Lenox Memorial Middle and High Schools)**

Sixty Five students in grade 7, unaware of local history and important historical sites, made it a priority to educate community members of the rich traditions and history which surround them in Lenox. Researching particular sites, students created postcards to donate to The Lenox Chamber of Commerce and produced a quilt which was turned into a traveling exhibit available to hang in a variety of Lenox establishments. The teacher completed the project as part of the graduate course in service-learning offered in collaboration with MCLA.

UNITY YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM, Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (NBCC)

Through a special grant, North Adams Public Schools partnered with NBCC’s youth leadership program to develop, promote and award mini-grants to the following out of district and out-of-school time projects:

- ***Chad O’Neill - Holocaust Awareness -** Forty students from McCann Technical and Clarksburg Elementary School fostered understanding and awareness about the Holocaust by creating a Holocaust Website for the Clarksburg Elementary School Annual Holocaust Exhibit. Students mentored 8th graders in website development. The teacher completed the project as part of the graduate course in service-learning offered in collaboration with MCLA.
- ***Dawn Vadnais - Girl Scout Badge Day –** Twenty high school sophomores and Juniors in Office Technology shop at McCann Technical High School worked along side 75 Girl Scouts to teach the scouts the necessary skills to receive the Technology Badge. The teacher completed the project as part of the graduate course in service-learning offered in collaboration with MCLA.
- **Jenna Cece - Active! –** Twenty students ages 6-13 explored issues of general health and fitness by being active – running and completing a ‘marathon’ – and kept track of all of their mileage. The youth will engage community members and lead activities within their neighborhood to promote fitness.
- ***Lori Austin – “Water, Water Everywhere and Not a Drop To Drink” –** One Hundred Ten students ranging from Pre-K to 8th at Gabriel Abbott Memorial Elementary School in Florida, MA studied the water crisis and water conservation. They created brochures, PowerPoint Presentations, and a documentary to show the entire Town of Florida. Focus was included ways to conserve water, how to keep water safe and more about the global water crisis. AmeriCorps/SCA/MassParks collaborated with teachers to facilitate the project. The teacher completed the project as part of the graduate course in service-learning offered in collaboration with MCLA.
- **Eunice Tassone – Digitalizing Literacy –** Twelve high school students from local high schools worked with thirty students from Kids Upward Bound Academy and worked in outdoor classrooms to help children increase their verbal capacity by fifty words per day. While outside, students took photographs of their surroundings, uploaded them to the computer and chose three that would help them build their word power.