

## Project Plan

**Title of Project:** *From Homelessness to Hope*

**Grade Level:** 8

**Number of Students Participating:** 140

**Contributed by:**

**Teacher:** Lynn Doucette, Leah Akland, Maura Goddard, Melissa Zachery

**School:** North Junior High School

**District:** Boise

**Overview/Description of Project:** Research study of issues related to homelessness looking at distinct sub groups (i.e: veteran, women& children, men, drug addicts, etc.) Students became informed, discussed cause/solutions/ Chose **Education** as focus/ Developed an Academic Activity Book for homeless or low-income elementary school children to prevent “Summer Slide”. Collected donations and filled 450 backpacks with school supplies and personal hygiene products.

**Goals:** To raise awareness of a community issue (homelessness) and delve into the background of both cause and solution. To actively engage in the solution process and come to the realization that we can be *Agents of Change* in our community.

**Core Content Areas:** English, World Studies, Math

**Civic Responsibility:** Outreach to eight different Title I schools in the Boise School District and City Lights (Homeless Shelter) in the city of Boise, Idaho

**Literacy Connection:** Students researched topics related to homelessness, displaced persons camps and refugee status; developed higher order questioning skills using Bloom’s Taxonomy to direct research; participated in a discussion forum refining communication skills in speaking and listening; wrote donation letters and thank you cards to build the capacity of etiquette; developed a myriad of activities in all core subject areas for three different age-appropriate academic activity books; ranked backpack supplies to determine the importance of acquired supplies and wrote reflections to support their new understanding of the issue and their ranking ideas. Participated in the coordination of filling all 450 backpacks with age-specific supplies.

## PARC MODEL STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

### STEP 1: PREPARATION

**Community Contacts:** Social workers and guidance counselors at eight Boise School District elementary schools and *City Lights Homeless Shelter*

**Preparation Activities:** Coordinated needs at each school location and tallied required supplies to order. Sent out donation requests. Coordinated Academic Activity Book assignments for each class. Formed a Teen Leadership Team to help facilitate proof-reading and other tasks. Arranged for the director of *City Lights* to speak to all students. Co-ordinated math classes to search and produce strong math activities for the academic activity books. World Studies teacher broadened understanding through research of homelessness to include refugees and displaced person camps across history and the world.

### STEP 2: ACTION

**Possible Actions:** Writing and research skills taught along with speaking and listening activities. Instruction in Bloom's Taxonomy and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory to support why/how we think, question and act. Develop an appreciation of audience in the design and construction of age-appropriate activities for an academic book. Deep reflection of issues using ranking of supplies and using this ranking to also defend a decision. Incorporation of evidence into a personal reflection to support an argument.

Coordination of all supplies:

#### Preschool (50)backpacks

Horse book- original student written  
Academic activity book to prevent "Summer Slide"- All Core Subjects  
New age-appropriate *Scholastic* book  
A healthy snack  
Measuring cups for science experiments and healthy recipes  
Toothbrush  
Toothpaste  
A globe beach ball- Social Studies activity and "FUN"  
Crayons  
Thunder sticks-donated Steelheads  
Lego magazine- donated - Lots of fun activities  
Sidewalk chalk (3) in Ziploc  
Construction paper in manila folder  
Flashcards  
Card game  
Educational Bookmarks- Reading Strategies  
Bug Discovery Kit  
White bag with "Making a Puppet" instruction

#### Kindergarten (49) backpacks

Horse book- original student written  
Academic activity book to prevent "Summer Slide"- All Core Subjects  
New age-appropriate *Scholastic* book  
A healthy snack  
Measuring cups for science experiments and healthy recipes  
Toothbrush  
Toothpaste  
Card game  
Bug Discovery Kit  
A globe beach ball- Social Studies activity and "FUN"  
Flash cards  
Crayons  
Pencil  
Construction paper in manila folder  
Thunder sticks-donated Steelheads  
Lego magazine- donated - Lots of fun activities  
Sidewalk chalk (3) in a Ziploc  
Pencil  
White bag with "Making a Puppet" instructions

**1<sup>st</sup> grade (63) backpacks**

Horse book  
 Academic activity book to prevent “Summer Slide”- All  
 Core Subjects  
 New age-appropriate *Scholastic* book  
 Snack  
 Measuring cups  
 Toothbrush  
 Toothpaste  
 Card game  
 Bug discovery kit  
 A globe beach ball- Social Studies activity and “FUN”  
 Flashcards  
 Crayons  
 Construction paper in manila folder  
 Thunder sticks  
 Lego magazine  
 Side walk chalk  
 Pencil  
 White bag with “Making a Puppet” instructions

**2<sup>nd</sup> grade (49) backpacks**

Horse book  
 Academic activity book to prevent “Summer Slide”- All  
 Core Subjects  
 New age-appropriate *Scholastic* book  
 Pencils  
 Snack  
 Measuring cup  
 Toothbrush  
 Toothpaste  
 Deck of cards  
 Money counting activity  
 Flashcards  
 A globe beach ball- Social Studies activity and “FUN”  
 Construction paper in manila folder  
 Lego magazine  
 Sidewalk chalk (3) in a Ziploc  
 Watercolors  
 White bag with “Making a Puppet” instructions

**3<sup>rd</sup> grade (50) backpacks**

Horse book  
 Academic activity book to prevent “Summer Slide”- All  
 Core Subjects  
 New age-appropriate *Scholastic* book  
 Pencils  
 Snack  
 Measuring cups  
 Toothbrush  
 Toothpaste  
 Deck of cards  
 Flashcards  
 A globe beach ball- Social Studies activity and “FUN”  
 Crayons  
 Construction paper in manila folder  
 Thunder sticks  
 Lego magazine  
 Side walk chalk (3) In Ziploc bag  
 Watercolors  
 White bag with “Making a Puppet”

**4<sup>th</sup> grade (50) backpacks**

Academic activity book to prevent “Summer Slide”- All  
 Core Subjects  
 New age-appropriate *Scholastic* book  
 Pencils  
 Snack  
 Measuring cup  
 Toothbrush  
 Toothpaste  
 Deck of cards  
 A globe beach ball- Social Studies activity and “FUN”  
 Thunder sticks  
 Lego magazine  
 Sidewalk chalk(3) In ziploc  
 Watercolor  
 Pen  
 Notebook  
 Flashcards  
 Mr. Bo’s comic book

**5<sup>th</sup> grade (50) backpacks**

Academic activity book to prevent "Summer Slide"- All Core Subjects  
 New age-appropriate *Scholastic* book  
 Pencils  
 Pen  
 Snack  
 Measuring cups  
 Mr.bo's comic book  
 Toothbrush  
 Toothpaste  
 Deck of cards  
 Frisbee  
 Thunder sticks  
 Lego magazine  
 Notebook  
 Flashcards  
 Watercolors

**6<sup>th</sup> grade(50) backpacks**

Academic activity book to prevent "Summer Slide"- All Core Subjects  
 New age-appropriate *Scholastic* book  
 Pencils  
 Pen  
 Snack  
 Notebook  
 Toothbrush  
 Toothpaste  
 Deck of cards  
 Frisbee  
 Thunder sticks  
 Lego magazine  
 Notebook  
 Flashcards  
 Water colors  
 Mr. Bo's comic  
 Measuring cups

**STEP 3: REFLECTION (Reflection is not sequential: rather it is encouraged throughout the lesson)**

The choosing and ordering of age-appropriate supplies for the backpacks became a large task. Students utilized an on-line brain-storming program to generate supply ideas. This was then collated into top choices before ordering. Utilizing on-line discount stores and Scholastic, Inc helped defray costs. We worked diligently to maximize our grant monies. Often when buying in bulk, we were able to purchase items at highly reduced costs. The backpacks, for example, were discounted from \$ 4.95 a piece to 50 cents each after negotiating with a store manager. With the number of backpacks we were determined to fill being so large, we had our work cut out for us. My classroom soon became filled with boxes and supplies.

**STEP 4: CELEBRATION/DEMONSTRATION**

**Service Celebration:** The *Night of Inquiry* is a true celebration of our projects. I enjoyed sharing my project and receiving positive feedback from other teachers. Very special! The students found the filling of backpacks a fun and a celebratory activity. I love their excitement and enthusiasm as they personally took credit for collecting the supplies to be put into each backpack. Pictures taken afterwards showed some very BIG smiles.

## Teacher Reflection

*Reflection is a vital component of the service-learning experience, and isn't just limited to students. At the end of your service-learning project, please take a few minutes to reflect on your experience. Answers can be brief or detailed; the goal is to get a sense of your overall feelings regarding your experience with this service-learning project. If additional space is needed, please attach to the back of this form.*

**Name and School:** North Junior High School

**Project name and brief description:** From Homelessness to Hope

An Academic Supplied Summer Backpack to prevent “Summer Slide” for homeless and low-income children in the Boise School District.

**What impact did this project have on your community?** We are providing academic and personal hygiene supplies for low income and homeless students in the Boise School District. There are 450 backpacks distributed between eight schools and one shelter. Long term, it is our hope that the recipients of the backpack will engage in fun activities throughout the summer that will have a lasting effect on their academic skills and give them HOPE that life can improve.

**What impact did this project have on your students?** Throughout the unit, students came to understand the issue of homelessness from not only a theoretical perspective but also a very human perspective. In an urban setting, it is not uncommon for students to “see” the homeless, but how they “see” them today is different than what they “saw” before. Thru research, students dug more deeply into why people are homeless and they debunked many myths. As we discussed minimum wage salaries and the difficulty of making-ends-meet, students came around to the idea that they have to make good choices in their own lives. The unit became more personal. Students discussed the power of education and how decisions they are making today to study or not study is building a habit that will impact them in their future. Beyond the beauty of making a difference in their community, students started to apply lessons from the unit to their own life. Finally, the word HOPE took on new meaning as they reflected on this word and how it applies to their life as well as how it applies to others. Interestingly, the word HOPE began to appear in their writing more and more.

**What impact did this project have on you?** I love the transformative nature of service-learning especially when it is tied to my unit on The Holocaust. When students learn about man’s inhumanity to man during WWII, it is a dark time. But, by integrating service-learning, students see that the world can be a good place full of hope. Teaching kindness through service is teaching a life lesson that resonates with students as they journey through a project. They come to see the world not as essentially evil, but rather capable of such goodness. When I witness this growth in students, it is so inspiring. Basically, transforming through education is why I teach.

**Do you have any advice to offer other teachers who are incorporating service-learning? Were there any lessons learned that you would like to share?** We discussed the difference between doing service to help US feel better, or doing service to help others. There is a big difference. We also discussed how we choose to serve can actually sometimes hurt more than help a problem. I highly recommend that any service is tied to research and deep reflection that encourages students to not just put a “band-aide” on a problem but instead have a truly transformative impact. This can be challenging, but far more meaningful.