Content Area Service-Learning Projects

Interdisciplinary Projects

Hunger Project: Freshman Academy students participated in a cross-curricular project on the issue of hunger in their core classes. Students then participated in a field trip to a food pantry, senior home, or shelter where they were able to prepare and serve food to the “hungry” in Chicago. Students also had the opportunity to pledge money and participate in a “Hunger Walk.” The money raised was later donated to the pantries where students served. The culmination of the project ended with a “Food Banquet” for 80 of the students hosted by Chicago Cares. Other students watched a movie connected to the hunger issue as the culminating reflection activity. At the conclusion of each phase of the project, students were required to write reflections and engage in meaningful conversations about their role in the project. (Amundsen)

Hunger 101: Students read and studied the effects and causes of hunger and food instability through a variety of disciplines. Students then collected non-perishable and canned goods. Students distributed thanksgiving food baskets to neighborhood families and donated over 4,000 cans to Casa Catalina. In English classes, students read The Absolutely True Life of a Part-time Indian, by Sherman Alexie, and nonfiction articles about hunger in the US while math students studied the nutritional values vs. volumes size and food dollars. To culminate the project students completed Hunger 101 online project and mapped food insecurity for Kelly community. (Kelly)

Race Against Hunger: Students learned about hunger through an interdisciplinary curriculum resource provided by Action Against Hunger, an international organization working on hunger relief. After learning about the dynamics of hunger, students organized a race against hunger. They gathered sponsorships and pledges, created educational materials, and identified local hunger relief organizations to support. (Waters, Belmont-Cragin and others)

Memory Bridge: Students participated in a program designed to understand the human brain and Alzheimer’s disease. Students were then paired with senior citizens (buddies) at Norwood Crossing Senior Center with early onset Alzheimer’s and made regular “buddy” visits. Students learned about deep empathy through the project while gaining knowledge about the human brain. (Taft)

Social Sciences

Peace Days: Students investigated the history of exploration, colonialism, the slave trade and the effects of these events/eras including atrocities committed during these eras. Students then researched different strategies for promoting peace and non-violence on a local and global level. Through student surveys, analysis, historical movements of non-violence and reflection, the classes were able to connect with the school and community to promote awareness and non-violence. In connection with the Erie Amundsen Health Center, students worked with trained psychologists on the topic of bullying and distributed information for the student body. The culminating event was a peace table on Earth Day, where students distributed items they had made, took others on a peace pilgrimage to Amundsen’s Peace Pole, and created a forum for visitors to artistically express their ideas of peace. The reflective piece of this unit was a written assignment that explored the unit from the beginning to the end and asked, in a letter to the president, for action. (Amundsen)

Youth Summit: Students completed surveys, read curriculum material, and constructed position statements individually and in groups to prepare for the Illinois Youth Summit at the end of April. Two students then served as Student Advisory Committee members and attended two workshops before the final summit; all students wrote letters to government officials and surveyed community members about issues for the government to address. (Hancock)

Election Judges: A.P. US Government and Politics class participated in the Mikva Challenge Elections in Action program. Students attended a Kick-Off event on Saturday, October 6, 2012, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. downtown. For the first two hours, students met with their peers from schools around the Chicago area to discuss the presidential candidates and their views on many issues. Each student then had the choice to go campaign for one of the candidates at their Chicago office. Volunteering entailed phone banking where students worked in teams of two and then individually to call people around the country and gain their support for the candidate. Students continued to phone bank on their own two more times before the November 6th General Election. Some students also attended trips to Wisconsin to help out with the campaign. (Hancock)

Immigration in America: Students studied the topic of immigration in U.S. History and visited the Hull House Museum to learn about Jane Addams’ work with immigrants. Students also presented a classroom project and wrote a letter to their Congressman articulating their position on current immigration reform. (Chicago Military)

Intergenerational Voices: Connecting to United States history curriculum, students studied various social, political, and economic issues, completed pre and post questionnaires about their perceptions about senior citizens, and then conducted personal interviews in the Curie Media center. Visitors came from Autumn Green and shared their life stories, gave...
advice about life, and connected with the students on a personal level. Students benefitted greatly taking a stronger interest in class after having this first-hand experience. (Curie)

**King Month of Service:** During the Martin Luther King Month of Social Action, students learned about the civil rights movement. Students visited Berry Manor Senior Residence to conduct oral interviews about their struggles, prepared them breakfast, and played bingo with seniors. (Dyett)

**Finish Strong Community Support:** Students learned about and researched several different shelters in Englewood. Students then participated in designing, organizing and creating a talent show for the students, faculty and community of Englewood. Students concluded the activity by hosting a talent show in which the students collected donation to help support Olive Branch Mission. (Lindblom)

**Kimochis:** Students in AP Psychology taught social-emotional skills to 5th graders through the use of stuffed animals called *Kimochis*. *Kimochis* is the Japanese word for emotions. High school students received a curriculum and a kit of stuffed animals to use for their lessons with elementary school students. They taught feelings identification and how to manage feelings effectively. (Juarez)

**World Wide Micro-Lending:** Students in a World Studies class learned about entrepreneurship and micro-lending. They researched small business enterprises in developing countries around the world then hosted an international night to raise money to support these ventures through [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org). Students were able to choose and track the loan they made. (Juarez)

**Community Peace Makers:** In an Honors World Studies class, students learned about the roots of violence. They were able to make connections to historical and contemporary violence with violence in their own communities. DePaul University recruited undergraduate and graduate students to co-facilitate these classes with the CPS classroom teacher utilizing a curriculum called “Something is Wrong: Exploring the Roots of Youth Violence.” Students then designed a restorative justice program for their school and helped with a local community garden as two expressions of peace-making in their own community. (Juarez)

**Civic Action Project:** In a Law and Sociology class, students utilized curriculum from Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago to design and develop a civic action project. Students chose a local issue and researched the root causes, created a proposal for policy change, communicated with stakeholders, and reported on the outcomes. Two projects that emerged from the process were the request for a stop sign in the community and recommendations to school leadership about healthy food alternatives in the school cafeteria. (Juarez)

**Autism Awareness:** In an AP Psychology class, students raised awareness of autism and collected money for autism research. They also organized a school wide trip to volunteer at the annual Autism Speaks Walk. (Juarez)

**Factory Food:** In World Studies classes, students learned about the development of the factory system and the movement to and the industrialization of food and the impact of corporate agriculture on farmers, the choices available to farmer and the resulting food products. Students then worked as farmers on local urban farm called the Iron Street Farm. (Kelly)

**Jane Addams Hull House Movement:** Students learned about the legacy of Jane Addams in Chicago and the Hull House movement as part of their studies about the progressive era. Students then visited the Jane Addams Hull House Museum on the campus of UIC then spent a Saturday morning helping immigrant students prepare for their citizenship exam. (Lincoln Park and others)

**The Dream Act:** In collaboration with a local community partner (Brighton Park Neighborhood Council), students learned about the process of making a bill a law (state and federal level). Students studied the costs of college for undocumented students, researched variations of Dream Act bills, followed current events and legislative votes. Students participated and facilitated phone banks, letter writing campaigns, rallies centered on Dream Act legislation and immigrant rights. (Kelly)

**Adopt-a-Beach:** Students learned about the history of Lake Michigan and surrounding land areas, including Hyde Park, learned about the problem with air and water pollution and then adopted 49th Street Beach and worked various Saturdays to clean the beach and check the water for e-coli and other water quality measures. The data were passed along to the Alliance of Great Lakes to assist in ongoing efforts to monitor the water quality of Lake Michigan. (Kenwood)

**Stitching Truth:** Students learned about important, influential events in the history of the United States. They then students created a “quilt” by sewing together patches that students created by “stitching” what they learned in the class (those events which were most influential for them). This quilt was spread through the entire school’s hallways, on display for the students and staff to look at and read to be informed about these events. (Kenwood)
Homeless Advocacy: Students partnered with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless through whom they were able to hear from formerly homeless individuals speak of their experiences. Then students learned about policy issues and took part in various outside opportunities where they spoke with elected officials from the state about affordable housing opportunities. (Mather)

English

Literacy Project: Survey Literature classes participated in a 15-hour service learning project focusing on literacy development at Budlong Elementary School. The class partnered with buildOn and created a literacy fair for the kindergarten and first grade students at Budlong. First, the class discussed the importance of literacy and the need to promote literacy engagement at a young age. The students formed groups and brainstormed fun, interactive, and engaging ways to practice literacy skills with the Budlong students. The students incorporated their own interests, such as soccer and drawing, and created stations that practiced using descriptive adjectives, counting from 0-75, and several other important skills. Students achieved their goal of creating a fun way for young children to engage in literacy development as well as teach our AHS students the importance of giving back to their community through service. This project was especially helpful to for the ESL students who also need to practice their literacy skills. (Amundsen)

Roots of Violence: Students read and analyzed columbinus, a play written by Stephen Karam and PJ Paparelli. The play looks at issues of alienation, hostility and social pressure in high schools and was developed in response to the April 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Jefferson County, Colorado. The wide variety of activities completed in this project provided many access points for students to engage in its content. Students learned about issues concerning the roots of school violence. During this project, students learned about the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut and connected it with the content within the play, columbines. Amundsen collaborated with the American Theater Company’s American Mosaic Project. Students had teachers and working artists come into their classrooms and work with them on theatre techniques and acting. Students learned how to put a theater show together, the value and impact of theater on communities, and the importance of ensemble/teamwork. Students read, analyzed, and completed a play outside of the classroom on Saturday, February 23. The audience consisted of Amundsen students, staff members, family, and community members. After the project, students also saw the adult actors perform the play and participated in a question/answer session with the actors and staff of the American Theater Company. Students reflected on the project in several ways. Students completed reflection worksheets after the viewing of the adult version of the play and the question/answer session. Students also participated in a debate about the topics within the play, using textual evidence and outside information learned during the project. Finally, students wrote reflections and participated in discussion after the student performance of the play. (Amundsen)

International Outreach: During a unit on narrative writing, students created books of writing devices that were sent to children in war-torn Uganda. Before creating the books, students read about and watched a Power Point about the children who would be receiving their books. They also wrote letters to the students who were receiving their materials. (Hancock)

Community Heroes: After learning interviewing skills and basic photography skills, students were grouped in teams of three to four. Students then interviewed three to four community members whose vocations or service efforts furthered social justice causes in the community or gave back to the community. After interviewing, students wrote expository essays about one of their interviewees and posted it on a blog along with a photo. Students then invited their interviewees to a Community Heroes Celebration at the school. (Hancock)

Bullying Awareness: During a unit on Community and Relationships, students created silhouettes telling the stories of students who have been bullied. Students also conducted a research project on seven types of bullying and then representatives from each class presented their information and the silhouettes to 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students at Pasteur Elementary School. (Hancock)

Dating Violence Awareness: Shortly before the school’s prom, students in Dual Credit and AP English classes participated in a dating violence awareness campaign. They researched dating violence, interviewed students, and then created reference cards that were distributed with the prom tickets. The cards provided information about dating violence as well as numbers and agencies that students could call if they were having trouble. (Hancock)

AIDS Awareness: Students read the novel Pedro and Me and then researched the impact of HIV/AIDS on the African American community. They created poster boards to inform and educate their peers on ways to prevent HIV/AIDS and the impact it has on young adults in their community. (Hyde Park)

Migrant Worker Awareness: Students read Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck, in freshman English classes. Students then read nonfiction articles discussing the contemporary working conditions of migrant workers in the United States
today. Students created informational posters education the school about migrant workers and the food companies that mistreat them. (Kelly)

**Cross Age Tutoring:** The Cross-Age Literacy program enables students to experience success as readers as they reinforce literacy attainment strategies using children’s books with younger children in local feeder schools. Teachers partnered with Reilly Elementary for three 9th grade/1st grade literacy sessions. Students read a children’s book and created their own book based on their Chicago experiences and planned and implemented reading activities for their “little buddies”. Freshman developed literacy skills and confidence, "little buddies” gained a mentor and friend and build their literacy skills and elementary schools built stronger relationships with their neighboring high school. (Kelvyn Park)

**Math**

**St. Jude Math in Action:** Students learned about cancer and its causes during a unit of exponential functions. They also learned about applications that relate to cancer, probability of contracting cancer, and cell growth. Students raised money by securing pledges for a walk-a-thon, raising over $4,000.00 for St. Jude. To culminate the project, students participated in a walk-a-thon at the school track. (Kenwood)

**Science**

**Eco-stewardship:** During a unit on ecology, students in freshman Environmental Science classes participated in forest preserve clean ups with the Friends of the Forest Preserve. They participated in a scavenger hunt and kept a log of the trash they collected at the preserves. (Hancock)

**Recycling:** In special education sciences classes, students watched the Story of Stuff video, read articles about pollution and recycling and videos concerning the effects of pollution on local marine wild life. In a variety of different disciplines students made posters and created drop off boxes form plastic store bag recycling, ran a paper recycling program during the entire year, collecting over 3 tons of paper waste, and created garbage journals and emailed alderman about making the 12th ward a recycle ward. (Kelly)

**CIMBY** (Calumet Is My BackYard): Students in freshman Biology classes learned about ecosystems, biodiversity, invasive species, plant growth and water and carbon cycles. Students adopted a “degraded” natural ecosystem in the Lake Calumet region then made regular visits to the site to conduct ecological stewardship activities including planting, gathering and broadcasting seeds of natural plants, removing invasive plants, and monitoring biodiversity of the ecosystem. Students also participated in monthly student environmental leadership activities with students from Calumet area high schools. (Corliss, Brooks, and others)

**CERAP** (Carbon Emissions Reduction Action Project): Students learned about climate change through curriculum provided by Facing the Future ([www.facingthefuture.org](http://www.facingthefuture.org)) then conducted carbon audits of their school buildings to determine the amount of carbon emitted by the school in a year. Upon analysis of the results, students generated ideas to reduce the school’s carbon footprint. Students created recycling programs, collected Do One Thing commitments, gathered commitments from teachers to reduce energy consumption in their classrooms, contacted congressional leaders to address climate change. (Multiple schools)

**Earth Day EcoFest:** Students learned about environmental issues and created games and displays for the elementary kids. They presented their displays and played games with area elementary schools pupils to encourage the value and importance of caring for our planet. Students wrote thank you letters to the elementary school students for attending the Eco-Fest. They also wrote a personal reflection in their journals.

**World Languages**

**International Night:** Students of various World Language classes designed and organized a fabulous showcase of cultural dances, food, and activities. For one week, students researched their country of origin and created culture boards showcasing highlights of their country. Students also learned a dance or song from the country. For the culminating event, they showcased boards, dances, songs, and food at Amundsen’s “World Café.” (Amundsen)

**Cesar Chavez Month of Service:** Students from a Spanish class participated in two activities for the Cesar Chavez Month of Service (March). After participating in the Cesar Chavez curriculum in class ([www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us/Curriculum.html](http://www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us/Curriculum.html)), one group volunteered at Our Lady of Tepeyac pantry to assist with food distribution. The other group of students partnered with students who is taking a Citizenship Class and helped them prepare for their mock interview. They had an opportunity to interview them and write their immigration story, which was later recorded at the Cesar Chavez Day of Reflection on April 6th. (Amundsen)
**Cultural Kitchen**: Students learned about cultural differences with a focus on Jamaican culture. Students visited Hostelling International Chicago and made a presentation to visitors about their selected country. Students prepared and served a Jamaican meal to visitors. Students learned about the visitor’s cultural norms by interviewing them. (Dyett)

**Immigration Reform**: Students learned about current issues dealing with immigration and immigrant workers, especially migrant farmers. The learned about the life and work of Cesar Chavez, attended the *Coming out the Shadows* event to help undocumentated immigrants get their voices heard, attended an Immigration Stories event to tutor adult immigrants who are learning English and are preparing to take the Citizenship test and also interviewed these undocumented immigrants to get a better understanding of their story. These stories were duplicated and spread to other classes and members and people in the school. Finally, students attended the Cesar Chavez day of Celebration and Service to honor the life and work of Chavez, where they painted a Cesar Chavez mural in the school hallway to honor the life and work of Chavez and to teach the school body about an important person in history. As a final reflection activity, students wrote advocacy letters to President Obama and other government officials asking for immediate, comprehensive immigration reform. (Kenwood)

**Fighting Hunger in Chicago**: Students learned appropriate vocabulary and unit concepts related to food and healthy living. They then learned about poverty rates in Spanish speaking countries, the U.S., Illinois, and Chicago, analyzing reasons for the problem, effects of hunger/poverty, and worked together to brainstorm solutions to the problem. Students participated in a healthy-food food drive, collecting and donating over 500 food items. They also created bilingual healthy food brochures to distribute to the school and their neighborhoods. As a reflection exercise, students wrote advocacy letters to the administration, which were presented to the LSC to promote healthier food options in the school cafeteria. (Kenwood)

**Share Our Soles**: Students learned about then described the culture of Mexico, including cuisine, history, and poverty and also identified reasons for poverty and solutions to the problem. Students organized a school-wide shoe drive to donate shoes to Tijuana, Mexico, collecting and donating over 1,000 shoes. (Kenwood)

**Italian Seniors**: On December 19th, the Italian I and AP Italian students set out on a joint service-learning project at the Villa Scalabrini Senior Home in Northlake. The students sang carols, greeted the seniors in Italian and Spanish, played cards and checkers, and spread so much holiday cheer. The students’ patience and care truly shined bright and they brought many smiles to the seniors! (Schurz)

**Physical Education/Health**

**Special Olympics**: Students learned about proper training methods, sports programs, and working with people with special needs. Students volunteered 20 hours at local park districts training athletes for the Special Olympics. Students then participated in Special Olympics kick-off day as cheering section and coaches. (Kelly)

**Fine Arts**

**Community Orchestra**: Students learned the craft of playing string instruments in the classroom for a semester and used that experience to teach Budlong Elementary School students to play the instruments. Budlong currently offers no instrumental music and employs a part-time music teacher. The students gave their time after school every Thursday to mentor and teach stringed instruments to 2nd - 5th graders who lacked essential art exposure. The students were rewarded with lifelong lessons of humility, empathy and humanity. The infrastructure being in place, it is our hope that this renewable service learning project becomes a model for underfunded/non-existent programs throughout the city. (Amundsen)

**Community Walls**: Students in the Studio Art classes created silk screen images that represented their community. A group of students then went to Chicago’s Hostelling International to present the art to travelers from around the world. In addition, students created a presentation to provide travelers with additional insight into the life of a Chicago teenager. (Hancock)

**Community Peace Makers**: Students participated in the *Something is Wrong* curriculum with DePaul students weekly during second semester. Students then participated in the Youth Service day by cleaning up two playgrounds and removing graffiti. They subsequently attended the Service-Learning Peace Rally. Students also prepared display boards and attended the Restorative Justice Youth summit. (Farragut)

**Empty Bowls Project**: Students learned about throwing clay and then created hand-made bowls to be sold to raise money for local soup kitchens in the Mather area. Students partnered with Northeastern Illinois University to create their ceramic bowls then auctioned them off at a community event at their school. (Mather)
AVID

**High School Heroes:** After completing an eight-week program on career success skills, sophomore AVID students participated in the High School Heroes Program. Students were trained by Junior Achievement to teach personal finance lessons at local elementary schools. The curriculum was built around the Illinois social studies framework with grade appropriate themes of personal economics, business, work force readiness and importance of staying in school. Students then wrote reflective essays that were shared with other AVID instructors. (Amundsen and Hancock)

**International Solidarity:** Nyaka Service Project- students read articles concerning the realities of AIDS in central Africa and the problems orphans face after losing their parents. Students sold goods made by the orphans to fund raise for schools and medicine. (Kelly)

**Pay It Forward:** Students read articles regarding urban decay and conducted discussion groups in which students shared their experience and feelings about areas of disrepair. Students spent two Saturdays “Sprucing up” blocks and park areas around Kelly High School. (Kelly)

**IB Program**

**Exchange Neighborhoods:** Amundsen IB juniors paired with students at Chicago Academy for the Exchange Neighborhoods program with Hostelling International Chicago. Students from the neighborhoods near Amundsen were able to build pride around their own culture, while opening their minds to learn about a new neighborhood and culture of their peers at Chicago Academy. Participants of Exchange Neighborhoods completed the program with greater respect for themselves, their peers, and with a greater understanding of the cultural diversity in Chicago and the world. Students participated in cultural awareness and diversity curriculum before preparing a cultural presentation of their own community to students from Chicago Academy. (Amundsen)

**ETC**

**Basic Automotive Awareness:** Students in the automotive classes researched, collected, and evaluated information about basic car care. They then developed informational brochures and distributed them to the parents during report card pick up day and the Maker Faire Event to help parents and community members understand basic automotive maintenance practices.

**Special Education**

**Community-Based Clerical Program:** Students volunteer for the Women’s Medical office at Illinois Masonic Hospital and the Resurrection Medical Center. The students learn clerical and vocational skills within a community environment. (Northside Learning Center)

**Community-Based Recycling Program:** Students go to Northeastern Illinois University and Northtown Academy High School where they work in teams to collect and sort paper and cardboard materials, then transport and load them into commercial dumpsters for pickup. (Northside Learning Center)

**School Garden Project:** Students worked at germinating seeds for the Northside Learning Center garden. Bean seeds were sprouted in small cups and data was recorded on their growth. Once they developed into small plants the students planted them in the garden. (Northside Learning Center)