



AIDS: A Day, A Difference

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On Friday, June 14th, 2002 Baltimore City Career Academy Diploma Plus Students hosted "AIDS: A Day, A Difference," an AIDS education and awareness event. Seven students were responsible for organizing a day that included dramatic skits, presentations, dialogues and informational games about how AIDS affects our communities. The entire Career Academy population, community advocates, other invited youth groups and employees of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development attended the event. See www.oedworks.com.

Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project? Health Education (Communicable Disease Prevention) The students researched community needs and discovered the AIDS statistics for this particular area and felt there was a dire need for AIDS education amongst their peers and residents.

Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to the school curriculum and curricular objectives? The project required research, reflection as well as creativity, problem solving skills and teamwork. Each student was also responsible for developing flyers, press releases, PowerPoint presentations, brochures, programs, posters, and the development of the actual June 14th program (agenda). This project instilled in the students a sense of civic responsibility and an understanding of the value of being proactive. Additionally, it helped students develop a sense of empowerment and provided them with the opportunity to apply research and problem solving skills in a real-world context.

Best Practice 3: How did participants reflect on their experiences throughout the project? Students were required to develop project journals and participate in group discussions about their feelings as it related to the project and to the topic.

Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project? The planning, promotion and presentation of "AIDS A Day, A Difference" primarily fell into the students' hands. They were responsible for every aspects of the project from the very first day the concept was approved. The students developed matrixes, assigned tasks and when necessary worked as a team to pull the project together.

Best Practice 5: What community partners were worked with on this project? NAACP donated an AIDS informational video entitled "House on Fire", Baltimore City Health Department provided brochures and handouts, Adolescent and Young Adult Center volunteered to deliver an AIDS awareness presentation and facilitate a game, and McDonald's donated food coupons.

Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project? The students planned and prepared for this event from September until June. Each Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. students held planning sessions facilitated by the Youth Career Specialist to prepare for the event.

Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project? Students learned the value of teamwork but more importantly they learned the value of teaching and educating. Most have admitted that they have a greater respect for teachers and (health) prevention in inner cities.