

Kids Helping Hopkins Linda Caron



Kids Helping Hopkins is an educational program sponsored by the Johns Hopkins Children's Center. The Program is designed to provide students of all ages the opportunity to help others without personal gain and to teach the values of compassion and respect for others. Involvement in Kids Helping Hopkins is an excellent way for students to learn the value of service to the community.

The Johns Hopkins Children's Center is a 159 bed facility at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institution. It is Maryland's regional pediatric trauma center. With more than 40 divisions and services, the Children's Center treats more than 7,500 inpatients annually with approximately 76,000 outpatient visits.

Schools partnering with Johns Hopkins decide what type of project they want to do. Our school decided to do a fundraiser for the Children's Center and to create kits for children so they could have something fun to do in the hospital. Any extra money was given as a donation to the center. Our school ended up raising approximately \$7,000.00. With the money we purchased supplies and made at least 1,000 kits and then we gave the Center a check for \$5,000.00 to spend how they saw fit to enhance the services that the Center provides.

Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project (e.g. health, education, environmental or public safety need)?

This project enabled students to demonstrate an awareness of service and to focus on the needs of others. The activity kits we created and the money we raised benefited the many children who use the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore, Maryland.

Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to school curriculum (e.g. what course outcomes were met and/or how did the project reinforce or enhance student academic learning)?

This project was interdisciplinary and involved math, language arts, social studies, SGA, and Builders Club. In social studies, the focus was on the importance of civic and personal responsibilities to society such as volunteering and public service. The math department collected the money, counted it and did various activities related to skills students were learning in math classes. Finally, some of the language arts classes concentrated on writing pieces that supported personal expression. The SGA and Builders Club helped with publicity, announcements, and any other needed services throughout the project.

Best Practice 3: How did you reflect on your experience throughout the project?

Students reflected on the progress of the fundraiser through class discussions. They talked about how the money would benefit the children in the hospital. They also discussed how the money could be used. As the project continued, students became more willing to talk about their own personal experiences, or the experiences of friends and family, in the hospital. At the end of the project students completed a reflection sheet (an acrostic poem using the word CHILDHOOD) to express their overall feelings about what they learned and the experience of doing this service-learning project. For example, "C" could stand for "caring about others".

Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project?

Students were encouraged to take an active role in this project. This meant that each one of them needed to feel that they could make a difference and contribute to the project-

Students were involved with publicity for this project (making posters, flyers, newspaper releases, bulletin board of project). Additionally, students collected money and assembled kits for the children in the hospital. Lastly, discussions were held in social studies classes about the importance of service-learning and how we can learn from our experiences.

Best Practice 5: What community partners did you work with on this project (e.g. non-profits, civic organizations, business that provided donations, etc.)?

We worked with Johns Hopkins Hospital throughout our project.

Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project?

Initially, the different departments met to discuss each of their roles with this project. One of the main objectives for this project was for students to understand the process and purpose of service-learning. We discussed what each department wanted to do.

The math department was in charge of collecting the money from students. As they collected the money, students performed activities that supported the curriculum. An ongoing activity was to calculate the averages for each class based on the number of students and the amount of money collected.

The social studies department introduced service learning as an important component of civic responsibility. They provided students with background knowledge about the Johns Hopkins Center.

Through the language arts department, students wrote stories for children to read in the hospital.

The SGA and Builders Club consisted of smaller groups of students who were willing to work after school to support the project (posters, develop announcements, cut up supplies needed for kits, develop flyers, etc.)

At first we wanted to raise money to give to the Center. If there was enough money raised we also wanted to purchase supplies to put together craft projects that children could do while in the hospital. We felt making the craft projects would personalize this project for our students and for the children at Johns Hopkins.

Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project?

Students learned responsibility, organization, and how to motivate other students to participate in service-learning activities. Students also identified and examined the purpose of service-learning and developed a sense of civic duty and personal responsibility to their community. Lastly, students learned about the impact of illness on a child's family and gained an appreciation for the quality of their own lives.