

Kenya Fundraiser

By Becky Milhollan

Our 6th grade students completed an indirect service-learning project September through November 2001. It was our goal that students understand the needs of students around the world. We had our students work in groups to raise money to purchase school supplies to be sent to Kenya so that students there would be allowed to attend school. Best practices:

Kenya has been plagued with drought for many years negatively impacting their economy and producing serious poverty issues. In order to ensure that students in Kenya would be able to attend school, despite a lack of resources to purchase school supplies, the Red Cross created a School Chest project to collect necessary school supplies for students in Kenya. We felt that our students would benefit greatly by understanding the importance of education and how, in some parts of the world, students who want to go to school can't because of lack of resources.

The following content areas were involved with the project and various Maryland Learning Outcomes were achieved through our service-learning project.

- Social Studies: Outcome: Analyze examples in which individuals and groups bring about civic improvement. By helping people who are in need in other countries, our students learned a great deal about civic involvement and the country of Kenya.
- Math: The boxes were divided up according to the cost of those things to be put in the box. Students had to work with money as they did projects to raise the funds they needed to purchase items and then they worked with other groups to make up any deficits.
- English: Students read non-fiction articles as they researched the country. They wrote letters to the recipients of the box telling them about schools in the United States and the life of 6th graders.

We did a pretzel activity (distribution of wealth/food simulation) to help students reflect on the concept of poverty and how they would like to deal with this problem in the future. We also took pictures throughout the project and displayed them in the classrooms. This led to reflections on the job that the students had done and how it made them feel.

Each group of students was assigned a list of school supplies with an approximate cost. They were responsible for coming up with a way to raise the money needed to purchase the supplies. When the money was raised each group was responsible for purchasing the supplies and bringing them in.

Our community partners for this project were The Red Cross and the student body. We had a great deal of parent support as well.

We prepared and planned for the project by watching a video that was sent to us by the Red Cross. Students analyzed the project and discussed why this was an important contribution to the Kenyan children. We also did a great deal of research into the country and the people. We discussed why life was so difficult and how education would help with possible solutions to the problems that these people faced.

Circumstances beyond a person's control contribute to poverty, and this is why it is so

important that community members become involved in helping people get back on their feet. Students also learned that an education is something that they should cherish. Students used creativity to come up with ideas for raising the necessary funds to purchase the supplies that they sent to Kenya. If one



group did not do their job, the box could not be sent; this was a very important lesson in group responsibility.