

Walk-Jump-Shoot-A-Thon

By Karen S. Curtis



A team of 6th grade students raised money for a local homeless shelter through a walk/jump/shoot-a-thon. We presented the money to a shelter representative at a celebration luncheon attended by the top fundraisers. In the spring, we divided the students among our 3 or 4 local shelters and they helped the shelters with various tasks (i.e. plant flowers, scrub and clean, wash laundry, paint, do yard work, etc.).

Meet a recognized community need: Our project addressed a community need in our local shelters of a lack of funding. Our project on homelessness enabled the students to help the shelter financially and by donating their time.

Achieve curricular objectives: The homeless project was coordinated with an offshoot of our immigration unit. Students studied historical stories about underprivileged immigrants who've entered this country.

Reflect through the service-learning experience: The students engaged in reflection on the bus ride home by answering questions such as, "What did you do?", "How do you feel?", "What else can we do to make a difference?" Upon arrival at the school, students wrote a journal entry about their experiences and feelings.

Develop student responsibility: Students developed responsibility by raising money for the walk/jump/shoot-a-thon. They also brought in materials to donate to shelters or to take with them to use during our work/clean-up sessions.

Establish community partnerships: Through phone calls, we contacted agencies like Samaritan Shelter, Christian Shelter, Village of Hope, Seton Center and the Salvation Army.

Plan ahead for service-learning: When we left our work session, we let our shelters know we "would return." We called at Christmas and took gifts. We called 1- month prior to our spring visit and asked the shelters to start thinking about what they would like our students to do when we next visited.

Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service: We started with the "Baby Story" which reviews the various types of service-learning (direct, indirect and advocacy) because our 6th graders were unfamiliar with service-learning. We then showed them the "Shelter Boy" video and/or had them read "Fly Away Home" and did a completely integrated lesson around the theme of homelessness. We also did the Pretzel Activity which explores distribution of wealth issues and draw pictures reflecting our misconceptions about homelessness. We then visited the shelters and prepared for our one-day blow out of Have-a-Heart-for-the-Homeless. We raised \$2400.00 this year. Then we went to the shelters and worked willingly.