

Collington Square Memorial Garden Gazebo

Fairmount-Harford High School Building Maintenance students, under the supervision of their instructor, Mr. Ronnie Cole, built a 10' 1" octagon gazebo, that is now the centerpiece of a Memorial Garden in Collington Square, dedicated to Erica Durant, the deceased daughter of long-time community residents. This project is an excellent example of how Fairmount-Harford High School and the Collington Square community are connected through service-learning.

Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project? This project enhanced the appearance of Collington Square, an urban neighborhood, and provided a place where residents could sit and quietly reflect. Ms. Karen Glenn, Administrator of the Collington Square Non-Profit Corporation, approached the instructor because she was aware that Fairmount-Harford had been involved in beautifying an abandoned community lot in another neighborhood of the city as part of a school-wide service-learning project. The residents and visitors of Collington Square were helped by this project.

Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to the school curriculum and curricular objectives? Building Maintenance students were able to apply knowledge and skills learned in class to a real world activity. This hands-on, life-size project provided an excellent learning experience for the students, including many challenging math and building problems such as cutting and assembling wall panels and other parts to specifications. Students were able to practice communication skills as they interacted with suppliers, neighborhood volunteers, and residents.

Best Practice 3: How did participants reflect on their experiences throughout the project? As part of the reflection, a videotape and pictures were taken throughout the project which students periodically reviewed. Several students and the instructor attended the dedication ceremony of the Memorial Garden in July 2001.

Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project? Students discussed the purpose and design of the gazebo. A class discussion of each phase of the building of the gazebo in the classroom established group leaders and maintained focus on the project.

Best Practice 5: What community partners were worked with on this project? As a symbol of "a community coming back to life," Karen Glenn, Administrator of the Collington Square Non-Profit Corporation, and Ella Durant, who is president of the Collington Square, created this project. It was undertaken in partnership with the Neighborhood Design Center, who developed the architectural and landscape design, Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition, a 22 year old resident and member of the church, and Dara's father, Simon Hewat. Bruce Durant, and other community and church volunteers also assisted the Fairmount-Harford High School students and teachers.

Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project? It was necessary for the instructor to design units and academic and skill development lessons and activities that would lead directly to the erection of the gazebo in the classroom. The instructor was also able to incorporate daily and weekly Math Moments and Writing Across the Curriculum activities.

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

Students were able to develop and practice skills, such as cutting, assembling, positioning, joining, and installing as they worked with varieties of lumber, hardware, and other building materials.

To learn more about the project contact Norma A. Cole, Service-Learning Coordinator; Ronnie Cole, Building Maintenance Instructor; Darline C. Lyles, Principal School/CBO; "A Community Comes Back to Life" School: Fairmount-Harford High School, Baltimore City Public Schools. Phone: 410-396-6241

