



Maryland State Department of Education
Service-Learning
Special Education Unit
Patience with Patients

Primary Subject: Health and Life Skills

Grade Level: 6th -12th (Alt-HSA)

Additional Subject Area Connections:

Science, English, Math, Social Studies,
Technology, Visual Arts

Unit Title: Patience with Patients

Type(s) of Service: Direct and/or Indirect

Students participating in service-learning projects have a wide range of abilities, challenges, and needs. Teachers and parents may provide a greater amount of guidance and assistance before, during, and at project completion. Procedures and steps described in the unit may be enhanced, modified, or excluded, as dictated by the needs of the students. Various assistive technologies may be used to meet the individual needs of students in order to complete the project.

Unit Description: In every community, citizens deal with long term illness whether as a patient, family member, or companion.

Often when a patient is identified as needing chemotherapy, dialysis, or emergency hospitalization, individuals involved may be consumed with the fear of the unknown and basic needs might fall by the wayside. "Patience with Patients" teams the special and general education students together to provide activity baskets that are intended to lift the spirits of people in the community (any age) as they go through various medical procedures. In this project, the students will create baskets with an assortment of items including snacks, books, magazines, crafts, activities, fidgets, etc. which help distract the patient and fill the time needed to complete the medical procedure.

Potential Service-Learning Action Experiences:

- Students will collect basket items, sort them, and assemble baskets. (*indirect*)
- Students will deliver baskets to patients and help at site(s), as allowed. (*direct*)
- Students may begin a "pen pal program" with patients where written or picture messages are sent and received. (*direct*)

Maryland State Curriculum Indicators

Health:

3.B.1 Investigate resources that provide valid health information concerning consumer health issues and services.

6.E.2 Determine strategies to maximize positive influences and minimize negative influences.

6.E.3 Determine a plan of action to address areas targeted for improvement.

7.A.1 Describe risk factors and behaviors that influence contraction and transmission of communicable diseases.

7.E.1 Examine the roles of the individual and society in preventing disease.

Alignment with Maryland's Best Practices of Service-Learning: *Patience with Patients*

1. **Meet a recognized community need**

Waiting, for any reason, is difficult. Often patients who must participate in various medical procedures (chemotherapy, dialysis, etc.) are forced to wait long periods of time as the process is completed. Boredom, temperature irregularity (hot or cold), hunger, and various noises can exasperate the tension. The baskets created will provide the patient and their family/companion with snacks and activities to pass the time and provide a positive distraction.

2. **Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning**

This project has direct links to health and life skills goals (see Maryland State Curriculum indicators listed on previous page), but, depending on how implemented, could meet existing course objectives in English, math, science, social studies, technology, and visual arts.

3. **Reflect throughout the service-learning experience**

Students will discuss how this project helps the community and how people should help one another. Students may journal their involvement with the patients as they participate. This journal of the project could be a photo or picture journal.

4. **Develop student responsibility (Students have opportunities to make decisions about the service-learning project.)**

A pair of general education and special education students will form a team. The teams will develop the plan for project completion that addresses:

- a. How to solicit peer involvement
- b. What to include in the baskets
- c. How to create the baskets
- d. How to, and who can, deliver the basket
- e. How the baskets will be replenished throughout the year



5. **Establish community partnerships**

Students will work on this project with a variety of community organizations including local merchants, the Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC), physician services and local hospitals, clinics, and dialysis and chemotherapy centers.

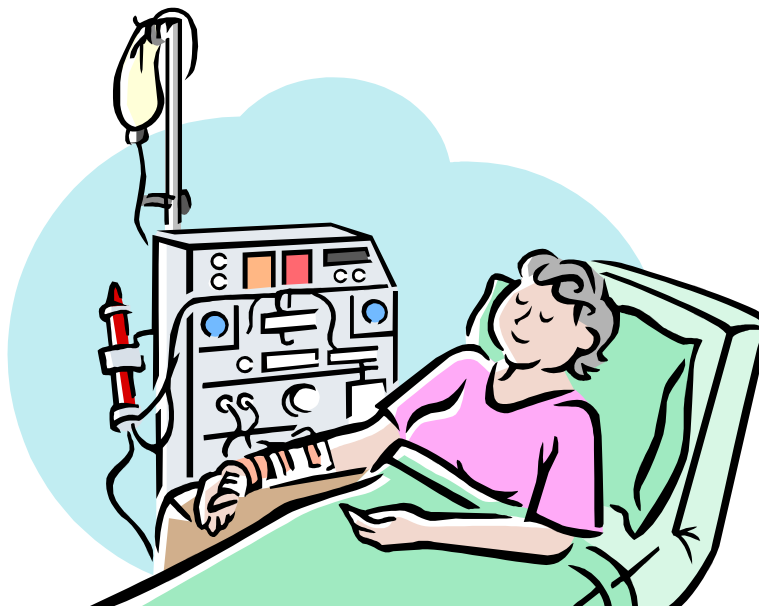
Students (with teachers' assistance, as needed) may contact local organizations associated with certain illnesses such as the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and The Kidney Foundation.

6. Plan ahead for service-learning

Students will contact local medical professionals (oncologists, nephrologists) to get suggestions for items to include or not include in the basket (no high sodium snacks) and for suggestions of sites at which to distribute the basket. Letters to parents should be sent home explaining the project and its goals.

7. Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service

Students will learn about various diseases, disease processes, and illnesses which require medical intervention to manage, if not cure. Students will learn about cancer and cancer-causing practices (smoking) which they can avoid. Students will explore what it means to be a good citizen and each individual's responsibility to help others.

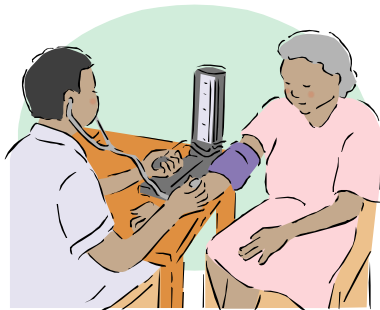


Procedures with Resources: *Patience with Patients*

These procedures represent activities that can be incorporated into a service-learning lesson on this specific topic, but can be changed to meet individual classroom interests or varying community needs. You are encouraged to adapt these procedures to fit your unique classroom and community and to solicit student input in planning and decision making.

1. Introduce the service-learning project by discussing service-learning, citizenship, and direct, indirect and advocacy projects with students and engaging in activities to explore those themes. A resource to support this topic can be found at http://www.servicelearning.org/lsa/bring_learning/fullvideo.php
2. Create a partnership between regular and special education students by pairing classes or school groups (Student Government Association, Best Buddies, the football team, etc.). Engage in team building and get-to-know-you activities with the regular and special education students.
3. Select books and various media to discuss what happens when someone is diagnosed with an illness requiring long term care.
 - a. Book titles on various medical topics:
<http://www.maginationpress.com/bbytopic.html#medical>
 - b. Adapt books through the use of a tool like Boardmaker.
4. Learn about the health issue by contacting an organization that provides resources on the topic to be addressed by the project. You could contact the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society which can provide a Charlie Brown DVD about leukemia appropriate for students, or other organizations like the Kidney Foundation to obtain resources to learn more about related health issues.
5. Begin to create the journal of the experience (write responses to questions, take photos, cut out pictures, draw, etc.).
6. Have student teams plan their project based on the preparation needed (e.g. Who will be the recipients of the basket? What disease/condition do they have? What age group is impacted? What are the appropriate types of items to include in a basket for this group? How will needed items be collected or purchased? How will baskets be assembled? How will materials in the basket be replenished throughout the year? How, and by whom, will baskets be delivered and restocked? etc.) Additionally, baskets could be created for family members (waiting room resources).

7. Develop and distribute (with teachers' assistance, as necessary) a list of items to be collected for the patients' basket. Collect the items needed and create the baskets.
8. Deliver the baskets. When the baskets are delivered, the students may make connections with the patients, if possible. A potential extension of the project is creating a pen-pal relationship between the students and the patients.
9. Review the impact of the project and what students learned and how they helped their community.
10. Reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of the project by completing the *Rubric for Assessing the Use of the Maryland's Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning* which can be found at www.mdservice-learning.org.
11. Additional resources:
 - American Cancer Society www.cancer.org
 - Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults <http://www.ulmanfund.org/> (Maryland Organization)
 - Maryland Skin Cancer Coalition <http://www.sunguardman.org/>
 - American Heart Association <http://www.americanheart.org>
 - American Diabetes Association www.diabetes.org
 - Hepatitis Foundation International <http://www.hepfi.org/> (Based in Silver Spring)
 - Maryland Ronald McDonald House <http://rmhc.org/who-we-are/chapter-search/>.
 - Johns Hopkins Children's Center has a Child Life program (this group assists patients with the social and emotional well-being of children and families being treated by the hospital) (<http://www.hopkinschildrens.org/childlife.aspx>)
 - WebMD www.webmd.com
 - Kids Health <http://kidshealth.org/>



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