

Princess and the Penguin

By Hannah Mossman

The nursing center in the next town needed help connecting residents to youth in an effort to brighten the resident's days. In response to this need, our 3rd grade team selected our best 30 workers to prepare and present a play at the nursing center. The play, the "Princess and the Penguin," culminated the students' integrated study of weather and animals. This project also required students to use their writing, researching, and public speaking skills.

Meet a recognized community need: Our project was designed to reduce the isolation many senior citizens feel from others, especially young people. Students visited the nursing center on a Thursday morning, set up, performed and socialized with the elderly. Students shared hugs and hand shakes while the elderly commended them on their performances.

Achieve curricular objectives: The students read for all purposes and used writing to express their thoughts on the project.

Reflect through the service-learning experience: The students discussed what they thought about the project with each other and shared their thoughts with the residents. The students prompted the senior citizens with statements such as "if this... then...".

Develop student responsibility: The student developed responsibility through studying and learning their lines and gestures at home. They created and designed their own costumes and props.

Establish community partnerships: We established community partnerships through the parents who volunteered to help with stage set up and transportation of the props. The nursing center activity director assisted with organizing the project and soliciting businesses for props. We also work with Petsmart, Denny Morgan, a retired drama and music teacher, and Crabrochen.

Plan ahead for service-learning: We contacted the nursing center for suggestions of businesses to solicit for donations. We ordered scripts during the previous summer before school to give the student sufficient time to prepare.

Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service: To equip the students with the skills and knowledge they needed, we studied techniques for learning lines, and for staging movement and gestures with a theatrical consultant. The students reviewed the steps involved for service-learning, preparation, action and reflection, in teams and read the outcomes we were covering, so that they could see the connection.

