

Service-Learning Project Examples

Maryland 2018-2019

Maryland public school students from elementary to high school engaged in service-learning projects that allowed them to immediately apply what they were learning in the classroom to the real world.

The following narratives provide a snapshot of some of these projects. The tables below give an overview of the grade level, content area, and community issue these projects addressed.

Content Areas & Grade Levels Represented by 2018-2019 Example Projects

| Content Area/ Grade Level | English/Lang. Arts | Social Studies | Math | Science | Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success | Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps | Inter- disciplinary |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------|---------|---|--|------------------------|
| 3 | | | | | | | 1 |
| 4 | | | | 1 | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | |
| 6 | 2 | 2 | | 3 | | | 1 |
| 7 | | 3 | | 1 | | | 1 |
| 8 | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Multi Middle | | | | | | | 3 |
| 9 | 2 | | | | | | |
| 10 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | |
| 11 | | | | | 1 | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | |
| Multi High | | | | | | 1 | 1 |

Number of Projects Addressing Different Types of Issue Areas

| Issue Areas Addressed Through Projects | Number of Projects |
|---|--------------------|
| Anti-bullying/Anti-discrimination | 2 |
| Environment | 8 |
| Disability/Accessibility | 1 |
| Disadvantaged Youth | 3 |
| Historic Preservation | 1 |
| Poverty/Hunger/Homelessness | 5 |
| Safety | 1 |
| Senior Citizens | 1 |
| Veterans | 2 |
| Variety – Student Choice | 1 |



ALLEGANY COUNTY

Grade: 6

Content Area: **Language Arts**

Allegheny County Public Schools, in partnership with Lavale resident, Prabhat Sandhir, participated in a Christmas card recycling project designed to bring holiday cheer to senior citizens at the Lions Manor Nursing Home and to local veterans. Students also visited and delivered cards to other nursing homes in the county as well as the veterans hospital in Martinsburg, WV. The project was entirely funded by Mrs. Sandhir. All schools in the county were provided with card collection boxes, and staff and students brought in old cards for use on this project.

Students were responsible for creating new cards while recycling the old cards. Various projects were created by students using the recycled cards and project theme. New cards were made by adhering stickers over the signatures on the recycled cards, writing new greeting messages, and tying them with ribbon for delivery. Placemats were also created and designed by students to give to the nursing homes.

Students met English/Language Arts writing standards through the project as they worked to develop, revise, and finalize messages to the recipients of the Christmas placemats and cards. They also proofed each others' work and offered creative suggestions for the artwork.



ANNE ARUNDEL

Grade: **7**

Content Areas: **Science, Language Arts, Math, STEM**

Students engaged in a project to advocate for improved water quality. As part of a project on world nations, students researched and analyzed the water quality of their assigned United Nations (UN) country. They had to present issues, impacts, and reasons why water quality may be impacted in their assigned UN country in a position paper.

For Language Arts, students took on the role of a person living in their assigned country and wrote a personal narrative from the point of view of the person living with those water issues. Students took an eco-cruise to learn how to analyze and inspect the impact people can have on waterways and drinking water. After the field trip, students gave their school, and the surrounding area, a water impact assessment and created a water impact report card. Based on the findings, students developed strategies for improving the school's and surrounding area's impact on the water and the environment.

BALTIMORE CITY

Grade: **6**

Content Area: **Social Studies – Geography and World Cultures**

Refugees live in many communities throughout Baltimore and their children attend many Baltimore City Schools. Refugee students often feel isolated from other students in their classes due to language and cultural barriers. This project provided an opportunity for students to connect with their refugee peers and develop an understanding of their past, as well as welcoming them to the community. Students developed an understanding of their refugee peers through documented interviews and the resulting service-learning action experiences.

A variety of curriculum needs were met through reading primary and secondary sources and recording information to be used in their final project. Students worked in groups to research the history and culture of the refugees and the push and pull factors that led to their migration. They presented the information gathered through this process by creating a presentation board that illustrated the personal experiences of refugees interviewed. The exhibits were displayed in the school and presented in the community to promote awareness of the refugees living in many neighborhoods. For students who wished to dive deeper into the content, an opportunity was available to write persuasive letters to legislators in support of taking action on issues related to children's rights.

Schools worked with the local chapter of the International Rescue Committee to facilitate events related to these projects.

BALTIMORE COUNTY

Grade: **9**

Content Area: **Language Arts**

In the unit, *Coming of Age amidst Controversy*, or during the gifted and talented (GT) English unit, *A Hero's Journey*, students composed a personal belief statement and created an action plan advocating for a group/cause/belief based on what they know about themselves and what they discovered about their community. Once students developed these action plans, they presented their plan to peers in a format of the teacher's and/or student's choosing. These plans were designed to encourage peers to become aware of a community issue and to turn the awareness into action.

The service-learning project was a synthesis of literary and informational text analysis throughout the 9th grade course. Through this project, students were provided the opportunity to select a cause/issue that was personal to them and complete a service project based on their choice. This project required students to synthesize, interpret, and use content from units 1-3 for English 9, and unit 1 or unit 2 for GT 9 to successfully complete the project.

CALVERT

Grade: **8**

Content Area: **Science**

School: **Mill Creek Middle School**

Students completed various tasks in a community garden where all the produce grown was donated to a local food pantry. Students addressed the needs of living things and competition for resources. Students also learned about human impact on an ecosystem.

Students learned about the different tasks on the farm and determined what materials were needed. Students reflected in their science journals prior to the trip and created blog posts upon return to school.

Students were given a choice as to what projects to work on. Students also completed a variety of independent projects related to their school site or neighborhood.

CAROLINE

Grade: **3**

Content Area: **Social Studies, Science, Language Arts**

Students visited Linchester Mill, in Preston, Maryland, as they explored a unit regarding what makes a great person. At the mill site, students learned about the history of Hog Island School, the Underground Railroad, the War of 1812, Native American culture, the Linchester Nature

Trail and Preston Railroad, the history of Linchester Mill, and explored ecology topics. Students planted buffer zone trees to help preserve this historic site and protect the environment.

CECIL

Grades: **6 - 8**

Content Area: **All**

School: **North East Middle School**

The students fulfilled different community needs by cleaning up community parks and areas around the school; painting areas around and in the school; performing for elementary students; helping complete a Science-Technology-Engineering-Math (STEM) project; volunteering at a veterans hospital; planting trees and other plants at many different locations; and many other activities to help their community.

Students were presented with these various projects and determined the best ways to complete them. The students were able to create different groups at each site to make sure that every part of their project was completed before the end of the day.

CHARLES

Grade: **6**

Content Area: **English/Language Arts**

The 6th grade students participate in a unit about “character.” The physical, emotional, and intellectual changes that these students are going through need to be channeled in a positive direction. It is challenging to try to change the character of the outside community as compared to change coming from within both the individual student and the local school community. Throughout the unit, students completed readings and activities selected to identify their self-perception as compared to their perception of others. These perceptions were challenged throughout the project through various reading activities that supported the ELA curriculum. The culminating activity for this project involved the current 6th grade students doing a combination letter writing and oral presentation to the incoming 6th grade students at a Transition Night program. The current 6th grade students posted their letters about their growth during the school year in the areas of responsibility, cooperation, persistence, and other character education traits. This letter involved the sharing of advice on how to be successful in middle school. They also spoke to the students and parents of next year’s 6th grade class about the importance of these qualities in a school setting and as part of their transition.

Through their participation in the project, students achieved a variety of curricular objectives. The theme used for all of the project activities was personal character development. The reading of a fictional narrative as part of the project helped students begin to reflect on their actions towards others, while giving them an example of this form of writing as they were required to write their own narrative as part of the curriculum. Poetry and music activities were included in the project, which helped support the development of students’ skills in

analytically reading poetry.

DORCHESTER

Grade: **7**

Content Area: **Social Studies**

Students used reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events. They analyzed the main causes, effects, and solutions for the problem of homelessness. Based on the study of the topic, students organized and participated in a food drive for a local shelter that serves people who are homeless.

FREDERICK

Grade: **8**

Content Area: **Language Arts**

After researching human rights, women’s rights, or children’s rights, students wrote a speech to answer the weekly focus question: Are dreams universal? The speeches introduced and then supported the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the topic. The students used words and phrases to create cohesion and clarify relationships among claims, counterclaims, and evidence. As the unit progressed, students selected a project that celebrated diversity and helped to end discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, age, and religious beliefs (e.g. supported the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

GARRETT

Grade: **9-12**

Content Area: **JROTC**

School: **Garrett High School**



Projects were implemented by

students with a goal of making a difference within the community and included:

- recognition of the events on September 11, 2001;
- helping veteran nursing home residents to have a meal and be recognized on Veterans Day with the local Elks Lodge; and
- advocating the remembrance of 1,000 veterans in a local cemetery with flags for each of their graves.

The JROTC service-learning project was conducted for the cadets to learn by doing, and gave them the opportunity to explore the types of service opportunities that exist within their community. Service-learning was an active and experiential learning strategy where the cadets had a direct impact on an identified need that interested and motivated them.

In planning the projects, cadets sought to answer the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the project. Linking their answers back to the curriculum created a learning situation that was connected to not just the service-learning chapter, but to other components of the JROTC curriculum.

HARFORD

Grade: **10** Content Area: **Language Arts and Math** School: **Patterson Mill High School**

The project was designed to assist in building a socially conscious generation of young people at the high school through a new student-led group named SWEEP (Students Working to Effectively End Poverty). Students began the school year by sponsoring activities for Welcome One, a local shelter for people who are homeless. They collected various hygiene products such as shampoo, toilet paper, soap, etc., for residents in need of these items. They also collected and donated books to Anna's House, a women's/children's shelter.

In November, the SWEEP student group started researching the Thirst Project, as they were impressed with this non-profit organization. The Thirst Project presented to students at the school on the global water crisis. They shared with students how safe drinking water can decrease disease rates by up to 80% and reduce child mortality rates by up to 90%. The students watched a video afterwards and were permitted to carry a 45-pound Jerry can to experience the weight of the water container on their heads. Children in some countries carry these jugs for 6-8 hours daily, keeping them from attending school and receiving an education.

Students were motivated by the information Thirst Project shared. They planned car washes and other fund raising activities to support the Thirst Project efforts and made a \$1,000 donation for the building of a water well in an impacted country.

HOWARD

Grade: **7**

Content Areas: **Science**

School: **Thomas Viaduct Middle School**

Students studied the factors that have an environmental impact on the ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay. The students researched and developed a public service announcement (PSA) to raise awareness and change their classmates' behavior about one specific issue to improve the health of their local Chesapeake Bay Watershed area.

Students created a PSA to address the big question: *What actions can be taken to improve water quality within our community that will positively impact human and ecological health?* The goal of the PSA was to motivate the Thomas Viaduct Middle School community to take **one specific action** to improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

JUVENILE SERVICES EDUCATION

Grade: **7-12**

Content Areas: **Math**

One project carried out by students through the Juvenile Services Education program helped meet a need for youth placed in foster care. The project helped the students carrying out the project form a connection between school and the community by helping foster children when they are placed into foster homes. Students worked in pairs to create blankets to be distributed to children when they enter foster care.



MONTGOMERY

Grade: **10 & 11** Content Area: **Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES)**
Schools: **14 Area High Schools**

The Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) program is a collaborative effort between Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Montgomery College, and the Universities at Shady Grove. ACES coaches at the college, as well as the high school level, provide ACES students with academic and student support. The ACES program identified and neutralized barriers to student success.

To improve equity in their service-learning (SSL) program, the ACES students were able to access an opportunity to earn SSL hours during the school day. Students in the ACES program were identified based on their backgrounds as being from underrepresented populations in higher education and/or being the first in their family to attend college. MCPS collaborated with Montgomery College, MCPS Secondary School Student Government Associations, and Comfort Cases, a national nonprofit that provides resources for children in foster care. MCPS Student Government Associations and the ACES program collected personal care items for donation. All donations were brought to one of the three campuses of Montgomery College and MCPS. ACES students traveled to one of the three campuses to sort and package the personal care items for donation and wrote words of encouragement as a team, working collaboratively with ACES Montgomery College students. April 16th, 2019, the day before spring break, was a day of service and collaboration in MCPS.

During the introduction of the service-learning project, students were introduced to the needs of foster children and the purpose of Comfort Cases. A discussion was held with students to identify the needs of these young people and connect how their project not only provided young people with items but also with dignity and encouragement.

MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Grade: **Middle School** Content Area: **Science, Math, STEM, Robotics, English/Language Arts**

Students at The Maryland School for the Blind (MSB) have been involved in robotics courses and competition for about seven years. The school maintains and trains two First Lego League teams of all students who are blind or visually impaired. The programming language that had been required to engage in the competition is not accessible to visually impaired students.

Students from both MSB teams met with representatives from the First Lego League to advocate for changes to the programming structure, the hardware, and the competition mat in order to make the content and competition space accessible to all students.

Through this project, students developed and enhanced skills in self-advocacy, public speaking, persuasive writing, engineering and design, and application of technology tools.

This advocacy project has been many years in the making. Students have worked with teachers and community leaders to develop tools and strategies to compete on an equal field with their non-disabled peers. Students also met regularly with teachers in the weeks leading up to the event in order to prepare their information and presentation.

PRINCE GEORGE'S

Grade: **6**

Content Area: **Earth and Space Science and Environmental Science**

School: **Walker Mill Middle School**

Fats, oils and grease (FOG) are a by-product of cooking, either made from fried foods, cooked meat, cooking oils, or dairy products. As these contaminants are poured down the drain, they can clog pipes, restricting the flow of water. As a result, sewer back-ups and overflows occur, creating health hazards and harmful impacts on the environment, and sometimes entering storm water drains flowing into streams or oceans. These contaminants can cause a depletion of oxygen residing within natural waterways, causing harm to the aquatic life dependent on the oxygen. In addition to harming aquatic life, sanitary sewage overflows (SSOs) caused by excess grease build-up can expose wastewater. According to the EPA, hundreds of billions of gallons of untreated sewage flow into waterways, lakes, and coastal waters. SSOs can discharge to storm drains and creeks that ultimately flow to the Chesapeake Bay causing pollution. Unknowingly, many risk exposure of serious illness when this untreated waste seeps into recreational waterways; it is estimated that up to 3.5 million cases of illness are caused by SSOs every year (American Rivers).

Students met Next Generation Science Standards and gained knowledge about the issue through classroom instruction, conducting investigations, and the collection of data. At the conclusion of the FOG lesson, students analyzed and evaluated the results of their investigation of the issue. Students made conclusions based on their research, experiences, and data analysis, and considered alternative hypotheses. Students made preparations to communicate the results and conclusions to the community.

Students then engaged in restorative action projects on school grounds and in their community, which focused on increasing student civic engagement while reducing FOG.

QUEEN ANNE'S

Grade: **6**

Content Area: **Science**

School: **Matepeake Middle School**

Students were not properly utilizing the school's recycling program. It was determined that students would become more conscientious recyclers if they were given an opportunity to be more actively engaged in the program. Collecting, sorting, and measuring the amount of recycling in the school makes students more accountable for their environmental impacts. According to Next Generation Science Standard MS-ESS3-3, students need to apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing a human impact on the environment. Students gained mastery of this objective through designing and carrying out the service-learning project.

Grade: **4**

Content Area: **Science**

School: **Grasonville Elementary**

After learning about changes in the community and environment, students recognized that humans have an impact where they live (both positively and negatively). Since we are interconnected, limiting the negative impact and enhancing the positive became their goal. Fourth grade students from Grasonville Elementary School (GES), a Title I school in Queen Anne's County, participated in a year-long oyster education and restoration project that began in November of 2018 and concluded in May of 2019 with a field trip to the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center and Harris Seafood Company. This project complemented GES's pursuit of Green School Certification and was in addition to other activities including student-led construction and maintenance of a wetland on school property and the implementation of a student-driven recycling program.

The mission of the oyster restoration project was to build awareness of the dwindling oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and to identify, while participating in, restoration efforts. Oyster restoration was each Grasonville Elementary fourth grader's service-learning project for the year.

SEED SCHOOL OF MARYLAND

Grade: **6**

Content Area: **Dorm**

Students organized a Trunk or Treat event for the SEED school staff, students, and families as a safe Halloween activity. Students organized all aspects of the event, greeted participants, set up the event, cleaned up after the event, and overall ran the event. Students filled out a reflection form and documented what changes could be made for the following year to foster a more successful program.

SOMERSET

Grade: **6**

Content Area: **Social Studies**

Somerset County Public Schools (SCPS) is building a new technology school. To accomplish this, many trees had to be cut down. Social studies teachers saw this as an opportunity to help students learn about human impact on the environment, explore ways to lessen the negative human impact on the environment, and decrease our footprint.

Teachers were able to review with students how state laws are created. They also identified why it is important to reduce waste and help protect and preserve nature as much as possible. Students researched how laws impact our local area. They also formed debate teams to reflect on what they had learned.

Students, along with staff from the company that is constructing the new technology building, planted trees to try to offset the negative environmental impact created by the removal of trees for the new building.

TALBOT

Grade: **9**

Content Area: **English**

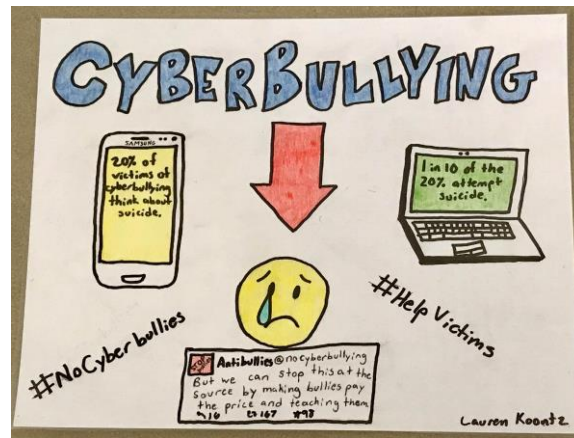
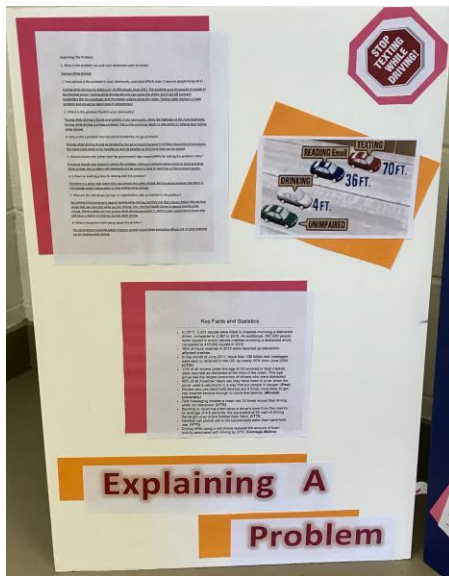
In their classes, students researched the issues of hunger and homelessness and the impact of hunger on a student's ability to learn. They engaged in numerous activities that helped them understand food insecurity issues. Students wrote persuasive letters to local businesses and organizations requesting donations of funds or items so they could create backpacks full of healthy foods and necessities for the Carepacks organization. The care packs were distributed to those experiencing food insecurity issues.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Grade: 7

Content Area: **Social Studies**

Students participated in Project Citizen and selected a community issue to explore and research. Once a greater understanding of the complexity of the issue was developed, students proposed solutions to those problems and advocated for change. Additionally, students took immediate actions in their communities to help alleviate the problem. Two areas students addressed during 2018-2019 were texting while driving and cyber-bullying.



WICOMICO

Grade: 6

Content Area: **Science**

School: **Bennett Middle**

Students addressed the Next Generation Science Standards by analyzing and interpreting data to provide evidence for the effects of resource availability on organisms and populations or organisms in ecosystems, as well as constructing an explanation that predicts patterns of interactions among organisms across ecosystems.

Students explored information on the significance of pollination, current honeybee population concerns and their impact on the environment, the importance of native resources, means of seed dispersal, and the importance of community involvement.

Students then researched and developed a “Bee-Bomb” ingredients list. Bee-Bombs are a native mix of wildflowers. Students created and cast Bee-Bombs within their community so those plants would grow and facilitate the development of local honeybee populations. Students were also tasked with handing out extra Bee-Bombs with handwritten instruction tags

to members of the community. They provided information to the community on how to assist in developing the local honeybee population.

WORCESTER

Grade: **8**

Content Areas: **Math, Science, Social Studies, and English/Language Arts**

Students met a host of curricular outcomes in many courses while working on a project focused on assisting people who are homeless. To prepare for the project, students learned about hunger and homelessness in their own community. They learned about the partner organization, Diakonia Homeless/Transition Center, and its various programs/responsibilities to help people who are homeless in the community. Students developed a plan based on the information given in the presentation by Diakonia. Students communicated with and worked with Diakonia staff in completing their numerous activities.

One project undertaken by students was collecting food for Diakonia's food pantry when they realized they needed additional supplies. Students organized the entire food drive, deciding on dates, collections means, and possible incentives for school-wide participation. Students determined what time of year the need for food is the greatest and what foods are needed. They created posters, announcements, and letters to inform other students and community members of their food collection plans.

Additionally, students worked on the garden at Diakonia created by last year's group of students. They decided what vegetables did well last year and redesigned the garden using a scale drawing. They decided what was to be planted by seed and what needed to be bought as a plant. A timeline was created to show time of planting, growth, and harvest for use by Diakonia. Students also rebuilt the parts of the outer bed lumber that were rotting.

At the Diakonia site, students helped in the food pantry. They were responsible for organizing, refilling, and checking food supplies in both locations.

Students worked in their content area classes to understand the issues in cooperation with Diakonia. Science teachers developed lessons to support the community garden. The logistics of raising and supplying the food was coordinated through the math classes. Social studies classes took the lead in developing student knowledge about homelessness. English/language arts led the reflection and advocacy elements with support by social studies. Special areas teachers assisted with art and tools for projects and the technical areas such as rebuilding the elevated gardens.

The project culminated with a display of the students work at the final parent conference of the academic year.