

Wonders Of Wildlife In Our Backyard
Learning About and Rescuing Wildlife Around Our Community
Palo Alto Unified School District
Service-Learning Project

Contact Information

Palo Alto Unified School District
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Lesson Plan

Introduction and Description of the Lesson

First grade students will assist in gathering and preparing materials needed for the rehabilitation of animals serviced by the Wildlife Rescue Center in our city and provide information on protecting wildlife in our area, to families in our school. The idea came about based on our classroom study of services provided in our city and our ongoing study of different animals and plants that inhabit different kinds of environments around our community. Students wanted to be able to help injured and orphaned birds and squirrels found around their homes in the spring, summer and fall seasons. They also wanted to find ways to reduce the chances of neighborhood animals becoming injured and/or orphaned. This lesson describes how the students learned what animals inhabit our neighborhoods, how they were able to assist the Wildlife Rescue Center and educate our school community about keeping neighborhood animals safe.

Instructional Process

1. Preparation

Based on our study of wild animals that inhabit our neighborhood and the experiences many of the students had in finding injured and orphaned animals in their own yards they wanted to assist these animals in some way. When the students discovered that our city has an organization, Wildlife Rescue, Inc., that helps these animals the students wanted to help support the efforts of the organization in some way.

Community members such as the Wildlife Rescue Center staff collaborated on this project by providing information, via a comprehensive presentation, about the center and describing ways the students could help support the Center's work. Classroom parents also assisted by providing help with academic classroom tasks, homework assignments related to the project and supporting the students with the donation activity.

Academic content Standards addressed in this lesson plan:

Science/Grade 1

Life Sciences 2.a, 2.b, 2.c, 4.a, 4.b, 4.c

History/Social Studies/Grade 1

Citizenship/Civics 1.1.1, 1.5.1

Language Arts/Grade 1

Reading 2.0

Writing 2.1, 2.2

Listening and Speaking 2.4

Math/Grade

Statistics, Data Analysis and Probability 1.1, 1.2

Prior knowledge of the students about the animals, their needs and habitat was identified using a KWL chart. Based on this information the students completed a science unit on neighborhood animals and their adaptations to their environment. Simultaneously, the class studied the concept of community and its components. Based on these studies the students have the motivation and knowledge to support the service project.

At the end of the lesson, students and community partners, will know that students are expected to know the kinds of animal wildlife that inhabit our community, their needs to survive and ways to assist their safe and productive survival.

No issues or needs must be addressed prior to the service, beyond scheduling the Wildlife Rescue Center presentation for the class.

2. Action

To ensure that the service will be high quality, it is necessary for the students to acquire knowledge of what kind of animals inhabit our neighborhoods and some of their adaptations to the environment. Activities to accomplish this goal included: Studying common birds in the neighborhood, observing their behaviors (especially the raising of their young), their food source and kinds of nesting habits. Studying common mammals in the neighborhood, particularly squirrels and raccoons, observing behavior, raising offspring, food source and shelter. The students also need to acquire an understanding of community and the wide variety of available services in a community. District science and social studies resources and materials (based on content standards) provide ideas for lesson formats and activities to present these concepts.

By helping to prepare and collect materials and presenting them to the Center, the students identify the civic/social responsibility areas that are addressed in this lesson. Also by providing other students at school with information on how to help neighborhood wildlife strengthens the accomplishments of civic/social responsibility. How the information is to be presented is decided on by the students. Some ideas might be putting on skits, puppet shows, making a video, creating a pamphlet or newsletter. By sharing their knowledge of rescue and preventative ideas the students are increasing the chances the wildlife has to survive successfully and naturally.

Students participate in the lesson activities individually and in the classroom group. All students will be present during the presentation by Wildlife Rescue, Inc. The Center presentation will help guide the students in what they can do; what materials to prep, how much, by when, etc. Students individually help to prep Center-needed materials, choosing which materials they would like to make from the suggestions, in the classroom setting, assisted by adults, if necessary. Students help to compose a letter to solicit donations of materials needed by the Center (i.e. paper goods, towels, clothes, baskets, some food items, etc.), take the letter home and collect the materials. At school, students help to inventory the donations, sort and classify them recording the amounts for 'balance' of needs for specific items. Students discuss and decide on a way to present information about neighborhood wildlife and keeping it safe, to other classrooms in the school. All the students participate in presenting the information. All the above activities take place in the classroom, during class time, most likely during allotted times for science and/or social studies learning. Some activities related to the learning of the animals can take place during reading time. Writing time can be used to create the presentation material for the other classes. Math time can be used to inventory and organize the donations. The classroom teacher assists and instructs students. Parent helpers will be used as needed.

3. Reflection

Students will reflect before, during and after the service activity through classroom meetings and discussions, while doing the related activities (prepping materials, organizing donations, creating classroom presentations). These reflections are oral discussion about the Center and what it does, how the students are helping and which ideas and/or activities are the most interesting to them. Students are assigned to illustrate and write in their writing journals what they learned, enjoyed, or was a favorite part, etc. of their service learning experience. During Writer's Workshop the students rewrite these reflections into a letter to be given to the Wildlife Rescue Center and to our school newsletter.

4. Student Assessment

Students are assessed through informal and formal observations during class time. Informal observations consist of the teacher circulating, observing, and asking questions during class time. Students are also assessed on the accurateness of their products; materials, journal entries, contributions in discussions and ideas for the cross-classroom information project.

5. Project Evaluation

The quality of the service-learning activity is evaluated by the students themselves and the staff at Wildlife Rescue, Inc. Students observe and record amounts of materials that were prepped and their quality. They also record and analyze the materials donated by reviewing the amount and variety collected. Lastly, they reflect and discuss feedback from classrooms regarding their presentation of information.

The project could be expanded to include other first grade classes on site, thus resulting in more aid to the Center.

The project could be expanded by the children performing the same service learning activity format but for another organization. For example, a food kitchen. This could be tied into a health unit the class is studying. The class would participate in a service project each semester, using a similar structure both times.

6. Celebration Public Recognition

Students will celebrate the service by going to the Center and presenting the materials and letters to the staff. A special picnic luncheon at a park right next door to the Center can take place.

Students help to compose a 'newsy' article, that describes the service, for the school newsletter and our two city newspapers.

Pictures of the service activities taken by our school's student historians will be placed in the school's annual yearbook.

Publicly post, in the classroom, the thank you letter from the organization.

Students present their preventive information to other classes, in one of the forms previously mentioned.

7. Materials and Staff Development Needs

Materials necessary to complete this activity:

- lessons and activities from district science and social studies units to teach animal and community concepts and the materials needed to teach them

- materials to prep for the Center (berry baskets, rags, sheets, clothes, nets, toilet paper, blocks, paper towels)

- materials needed for presentation decided on by the class for the other classes (may be paper, art materials, costumes, puppets, video equipment)

- Books (optional)

 - "Raptor Release," by Sylvia A. Johnson

 - "Night of the Pufflings," by Bruce McMillan

 - "In Good Hands: Behind the Scenes at a Center for Orphaned and Injured Birds,"
by Stephen R. Swinburne

 - "Island Baby," by Holly Keller

 - "Washing the Willow Tree Loon," by Jacqueline B. Martin

 - "Ducks Disappearing," by Phyllis Reynolds

 - "Backyard Rescue," by Hope Ryden

Staff Development Needs/Knowledge

-inform the Center of the age level of the class, in order that the presentation is appropriate.

8. Funding and Resource Support/Sustainability

Materials for the project will be mostly provided by the school (i.e. paper, art supplies, printing, etc.) and district resource office (instructional videos, posters, etc.) for the science and social studies lessons. Materials for the Center prep activities can be provided by the center and/or the students.

Part II - Lesson Plan Profile

Section A: Contact Information and Lesson Abstract

Contact Information

Sponsoring Organization: Santa Clara County Office of Education/Palo Alto Unified School District/El Carmelo Elementary School

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Superintendent Region 5

Abstract

'Wonders of Wildlife In Our Backyard; Learning About and Rescuing Wildlife Around Our Community'

First grade students will assist in gathering and preparing materials needed for the rehabilitation of animals serviced by the Wildlife Rescue Center in our city and provide information on protecting wildlife in our area, to families in our school. The students will learn what animals inhabit our neighborhoods, how they are able to assist the Wildlife Rescue Center and educate our school community about keeping neighborhood animals safe.

Degree of Complexity for Implementation of Service-Learning Project

Medium

Section B: Educational Setting and Participant Information

Educational Institution

Public

Comprehensive Schools

K-3

Participant Configuration

Whole Class Project

School Schedule

Traditional nine month

Section C: Service Provided

Overview of Service

Level of Service

Indirect Service

Advocacy

Service Issue Areas

Environment

Duration of Service Activity

Short Term (2-6 Sessions)

Specific Service Activity Areas

Civic Action: Fundraising

Environment: Wildlife

Section D: Lesson Content

Subject Area(s)

Language Arts

History/Social Studies

Mathematics

Science

California State Academic Content Standards

Language Arts/Grade 1

Reading 2.0

Writing 2.1, 2.2

Listening and Speaking 2.4

History/Social Studies/Grade 1

Citizenship/Civics 1.1.1, 1.5.1

Mathematics/Grade 1

Statistics, Data Analysis and Probability 1.1, 1.2

Science/Grade 1

Life Sciences 2.a, 2.b, 2.c, 4.a, 4.b, 4.c

Civic/Social/ Personal Responsibility Goals or Standards

Civic Responsibility

Social Responsibility

Section E: Collaborating Partners

Community Based Organizations (CBO)

Environmental Organizations

Individual Partners

Parents

Teacher

Section F: Reflection

Reflection
Journals
Video/Pictorial presentation
Artistic presentation
Oral presentation