

## **Activity Bags for Hospitalized Children A San Leandro Service-Learning Lesson Plan**

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup>

**Service Areas:** Civic Action, Human Services and Social Needs

**Academic Area:** English Language Development

**Duration of Service:** Long-term

**Degree of complexity:** High

### **Contact Information**

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### **Introduction and Description**

McKinley Elementary School resides on the East Bay of the San Francisco Bay Area. The approximately 500 students come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and many are from low-income families.

Following a teacher-led discussion on community civic participation, 20 fourth-grade students decided they wanted to make a positive contribution in their community. The students brainstormed various community organizations as potential candidates and decided to work with the local Children's Hospital to create activity bags for children who were receiving long-term convalescent care.

The project began with a letter writing campaign to solicit local businesses for donations. The students also wrote press releases to local newspapers, and articles for the school newsletter. The students designed and distributed posters on the school grounds and presented regular announcements on their school intercom system. Once the donations streamed in, the materials were separated into age-appropriate groups and assembled into the activity bags. Students then collaborated with the local troop of the Boy Scouts of America to deliver the bags to the Children's Hospital. The students addressed the English-Language Arts Content Standards throughout this service-learning activity.

### **Preparation**

Students wrote a reflective journal entry on places or people within their community, which they thought needed assistance. In a class discussion, the students shared their journal entries and created a list of the places or people they could help and why that assistance would be beneficial. The Children's Hospital won the popular vote. The

teacher contacted the Volunteer Department at the Children's Hospital and learned the hospital needed age appropriate activity packets for the children residing in the Children's Hospital for an extended period of time.

In a variety of informal discussions, the teacher determined the students' current level of knowledge on the academic content standards relevant to the activity. The teacher then prepared mini-lessons on how to use reference materials, how to write an informational paragraph, how to present a speech, and how to speak over the phone when asking for information.

The teacher sent information and permission forms to the students' families for the children to appear in media photos. The teacher also made arrangements for the students to be a part of the collaborating organization's celebration at the end of the project.

### **California State Academic Content Standards**

Fourth Grade English-Language Arts: Writing Strategies 1.0, 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, Written and Oral English Language Conventions 1.0, 1.1, 1.6, 1.0, 1.1, 1.4,1.7, Listening and Speaking 1.0, 1.1, 1.4, and 1.7

### **Action**

Through guided practice and examples within the academic content standards in Written and Oral Language Conventions and Listening and Speaking, the students learned to identify main ideas and supporting details, provide clear expectations, and give directions to others. The academic commitments were accomplished from writing business letters, journal entries, and giving mini-speeches to classrooms.

The students developed a list of items needed for their activity bags and formulated methods to acquire the items on their list. The students worked in small groups that focused on different methods to solicit donations. The student groups participated in a wide range of facets to fulfill the project. They referenced the phone book and the local newspaper to help identify businesses as potential donors. They wrote letters to businesses, e-mailed information to television stations, and wrote an article in the school newsletter. There was also a lot of footwork involved. Informational flyers were put up in the school hallways. Students went class-to-class to give short informative speeches. And a donation collection site was established on the school grounds.

While requesting donations from local community organizations, the students learned that the local Boy Scout troop had already started on a similar project for the hospital. The students contacted the troop and formed a partnership. After the students organized the donated items by age appropriateness, work commenced on filling the activity bags. The students then presented the activity bags to the Boy Scouts for delivery to the hospital.

To ensure the quality of the project, the teacher provided close supervision for all facets of the activity.

## **Reflection**

Journal writing was the primary method of reflection for the students. Following a class discussion on civic responsibility, the reflection process began with individual journal entries on positive ways to participate within the community. As the activity proceeded, the students' journal entries reflected on the process of soliciting donations and the students' reaction to the partnership with the Boy Scout troop.

After the activity each student wrote a letter that described his or her thoughts about their contributions to the Children's Hospital from start to finish. Students read their letters aloud in class discussions and shared their thoughts on the success and challenges of the activity.

## **Student Assessment**

The teacher continually assessed students according to the academic content standards for writing, language conventions, and speaking skills through formal and informal tests. The teacher assessed the final reflective letter for paragraph composition, penmanship, sentence structure, and feelings about civic responsibility.

## **Project Evaluation and Expansion**

The teacher assessed the value and success of the activity through feedback from the hospital staff, input from the Boy Scout troop, and the students' letters. In the future, parent-provided transportation could allow the students to take the bags to the hospitals themselves.

## **Celebration and Public Recognition**

The local newspaper printed an article about the activity. The students attended a celebration with the Boy Scout troop at the end of the activity. The hospital printed an article in its employee newsletter about the activity bags and included a photograph of the students presenting their completed activity bags to the Boy Scouts.

## **Materials and Staff Development Needs**

Business donations provided all the necessary materials to complete the activity bags. The telephone company sent plenty of telephone books when requested.

## **Funding, Resource Support, and Sustainability**

The activity relied on donations from both the school and the local community, which alleviated funding requirements.

Collaborative Partners:

Boy Scouts of America

San Francisco Bay Council, <http://www.sfbac.org/>

1001 Davis Street

San Leandro, CA 94577-1514

(510) 577-9000, ext. 124

E-mail: [info@sfbac.org](mailto:info@sfbac.org)

Children's Hospital list of needed items:

1. Any playful items for kids from newborn to 21-years of age.
2. Activities kids can play from their beds, which could fit in a 1-gallon freezer bag.
3. New and unused items.

Items may include, but are not limited to:

1. Rattles
2. Books for all ages
3. Videos (G or PG)
4. Play Dough
5. Crayons, markers, colored pencils
6. Coloring books
7. Stationery, notebooks, journals, paper
8. Pencils and pencil sharpeners
9. Silly Putty
10. Crossword puzzles, mazes, Madlibs
11. Art kits (bracelet making, beads, etc.)
12. Slinky
13. Hand held balls to squeeze (during blood transfusions)
14. Small stuffed animals
15. Legos
16. Stickers
17. Playing cards
18. Paddle balls
19. Bubbles
20. Wash-off tattoos
21. Mini Etch-A-Sketch
22. Puzzles
23. Hot Wheels
24. Puppets