



Maryland State Department of Education Service-Learning Unit

Casey Cares – Helping Critically Ill Children

Primary Subject: Reading & Language Arts

Grade Level: 8th

Additional Subject Area Connections: Art, Math, Social Studies, Science, Health

Unit Title: Casey Cares - Helping Critically Ill Children and Their Families

Type(s) of Service: Indirect & Advocacy

Unit Description: Casey Cares is a local Baltimore organization that is dedicated to supporting the families of children who have critical illnesses. They cater to family needs by sending birthday bags to the child, sending all of the materials needed for a family fun night, and even sending families on fun trips. Casey Cares is unique in that it takes a family-centered approach to bettering the lives of these children who have critical diseases, even going so far as to continue services up to a year after the death of a chronically ill child for members of his/her family. Casey Cares recently suffered a set-back when its offices burned down in the first week of June 2007, and they lost everything from files and office supplies to donations. They have since relocated and are up and running again, but they are in serious need of more donations and help. This service-learning project will combine persuasive writing in language arts and a variety of projects in art class to benefit this organization. This can be used in any grade level, but it has been written for eighth graders.

VSC Indicators Met

Reading and Language Arts:

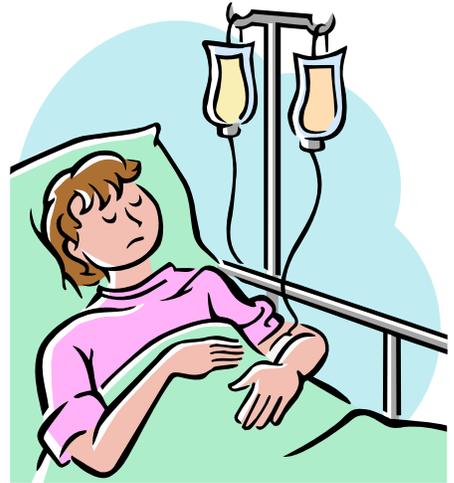
- 4.A.1 Compose texts using the prewriting and drafting strategies of effective writers and speakers.
- 4.A.2 Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade.
- 4.A.3 Compose texts using the revising and editing strategies of effective writers and speakers.
- 4.A.4 Identify how language choices in writing and speaking affect thoughts and feelings.
- 4.A.5 Assess the effectiveness of choice of details, organizational pattern, word choice, syntax, use of figurative language, and rhetorical devices in the student's own composing.
- 4.A.6 Evaluate textual changes in a work and explain how these changes alter tone, clarify meaning, address a particular audience, or fulfill a purpose.
- 4.A.7 Locate, retrieve, and use information from various sources to accomplish a purpose.
- 5.A.2 Apply knowledge of grammar concepts and skills to control oral and written language.
- 5.B.2 Comprehend and apply standard English usage in oral and written language.
- 5.C.2 Apply standard English punctuation and capitalization in written language.
- 5.D.2 Apply conventional spelling in written language.

Addition course VSCs on next page.

Potential Service-Learning Donations:

Casey Cares needs various items for these critically ill children and their families (*indirect*). Potential donations might include:

- Game boards
- Children's books (written and illustrated by students)
- Bookmarks
- Posters
- Decorative gift bags
- Stuffed bears or hearts
- Coloring books (illustrated by students)
- Creating My Legacy (children fill in the blanks)
- Movie Rental Gift Cards in \$5 increments
- Microwave popcorn
- Department Stores Gift Cards in \$10 increments or smaller (Target, Wal-Mart, etc.)



Additional VSC Indicators Met

Visual Arts:

1.2 Interpret and communicate the meaning of art works.

1.2.b Create narrative art works from observation, memory, and imagination that shows setting, characters, action, and differing points of view.

2.1 Compare and explain how works of art from various cultures communicate feelings, ideas, and universal themes.

2.1.b Compare images and forms that explore universal themes about human experiences from different times and places.

Math:

1.B.1 Write, simplify, and evaluate expressions.

1.B.1.a Write an algebraic expression to represent unknown quantities.

Alignment with Maryland's Best Practices of Service-Learning: *Casey Cares – Helping Critically Ill Children and Their Families*

1. **Meet a recognized community need**

Many families are overwhelmed by the emotional and financial stresses of having a child with a critical illness. During this project students will complete activities to benefit these families such as creating hard cover books and related board games to hand out to sick children, and collecting items needed by the organization for families. Another component could be to make birthday bags/fun kits for the siblings of the ill children to help make them feel special.

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

A variety of curriculum needs are met through student research into the rising cost of health care in America, completion of story books for younger children, and persuasive letters written to local organizations to solicit fundraising to cover the cost of the hard cover books.

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

Students will complete daily entries in their sketch book that detail their experiences in composing and completing their hard cover books. Students are responsible for choosing a book topic, completing the project, and writing a persuasive letter to a local organization.

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

Students will work together in committees to procure the funds necessary to complete the project.

5. **Establish community partnerships**

Students will contact Casey Cares to determine current needs and then contact local businesses in the area for donations for the project.

6. **Plan ahead for service-learning**

Students will view the "Learn and Serve" video as an opening activity. This video shows students working together to make their city a better place to live. This video will give students ideas of how to plan and carry out a project. A first



step should be contacting Casey Cares to identify their current pressing needs. This unit would be about 1-2 months in length. Students would begin the project in February (before MSA) and work on the completion of the project during MSA testing week.

7. Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service

Students will have opportunities to use the school media center for print sources. They will learn how to write business letters and ask for donations from businesses. They will also have access to art materials and an opportunity to apply art skills in their projects. Students will gain citizenship skills through engaging in and discussing civic action.

Procedures with Resources:

Casey Cares – Helping Critically Ill Children and Their Families

These procedures represent an example of 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 this unit 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 and citizenship with students and engaging in activities to explore those themes. A resource to support this topic can be found at www.servicelearning.org/resources/bring_learning/.
2. Read biographies or articles about people with critical illnesses and discuss the impact of illness on individuals, families, and society. Subjects for biographies include: Lou Gehrig, Michael J. Fox, Lance Armstrong, Montel Williams, Sheryl Crow, Mattie Stepanek, Dr. Ben Carson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jonas Salk.
3. In the computer lab, visit Casey Cares online (www.caseycaresfoundation.org). Contact the organization to learn about their current pressing needs.
4. Form committees and duty lists: Donation Committee, Project Committee, Supplies Committee, Research Committee, and Liaison Committee.
5. Choose committee chairs or co-chairs.
6. Meet with committee chairs or co-chairs weekly.
7. In math class, construct a graph that illustrates the amount of money a critically ill child needs for treatment over time. Chart a second line that depicts the amount of treatment commonly covered by insurance. The research committee is responsible for finding numbers.

Additional Interdisciplinary Connections



- **Math** – Create a budget.
- **Social Studies** – Students can research state of insurance for critically ill children in U.S. and other countries.
- **Health** – Students can study treatments and lifestyles of those with critical illnesses.
- **Science** – Students can study causes of chronic illnesses.
- **Foreign Language** – Students can write letters to local businesses and foundations in a language other than English.

8. Write persuasive letters in language arts class to local businesses and foundations for donations. The Donation Committee finds a list of likely businesses and foundations, addresses, email addresses, and contact people.
9. Create a wide variety of projects in art class to fill a birthday bag or fun kit. The Project Committee decides which projects will be completed, how many bags will be needed for siblings of critically ill children and critically ill children, and keeps track of project creations to ensure the proper number are created. The Supplies Committee decides what supplies will be needed for the projects, budgets the supply list, and keeps track of the supplies used throughout the project.
10. Decorate and fill bags with projects and donations.
11. Send items to Casey Cares with letters from students. The Liaison Committee maintains contact with Casey Cares to identify new needs which could be met.
12. Write thank you notes to local businesses and foundations for donations.
13. Reflection ideas include creating a storyboard of the process, re-budget (extra \$1,000, analyze strengths and weaknesses, decide where to allocate money), peer edit sketchbooks and keeping a running dialogue going about the project.
14. 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.

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