

**Crochet For Humanity**  
**A Del Norte Service-Learning Project**

**Grade Level:**

**Service Areas:**

**Academic Area:**

**Duration of Service:**

**Degree of Complexity:**

**Contact Information**

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**Introduction and Overview of the Lesson**

Crocheting pieces for senior citizens was a project developed at Margaret Keating School (MKS) in the rural community of Klamath, California in Del Norte County, located in the most northwestern tip of California. The upper grade teachers wanted to give students a hands-on project that taught students about caring for others and giving from the heart. After discussing ideas with students, the decision was made to teach students how to crochet and connect this skill to senior citizens at the Addie Meedom House in Crescent City, a town 30 minutes from Klamath. The plan was to match students with a senior citizen and have the student make a crocheted piece, such as a hat or a scarf, to present to the senior citizen each month. The students were enthusiastic about the crochet project and participated.

The 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Carolyn Seats, and the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Dawn Strom, got together in the 2003 – 2004 school year and continued the Margaret Keating School crochet project with service learning involved. Mrs. Seats' class

consisted of approximately 25 students while Ms. Strom had approximately 15 students in her class. The classes wanted to continue fulfilling the community need of helping senior citizens and continue with MKS' tradition of crocheting for them. So, students crocheted hats or scarves for senior citizens at the Addie Meedom House. The teachers arranged a field trip close to Christmas at the Addie Meedom House for students to meet senior citizens, listen to their stories of the past, present the crochet gifts, and learn the importance of providing companionship for the elderly.

After the field trip, students wrote reflections, which tied to Language Arts standards, about their experience. Many students discovered how senior citizens could feel lonely and abandoned when family members and friends got too busy to show they cared about the senior citizen. Given the students' excellent experiences with the crochet project, the plan was to continue giving students time to crochet pieces and visit the Addie Meedom House each month, but arrangements were not made due to schedule constraints. However, students really enjoyed the crochet project and wanted to continue crocheting each week. The 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher continued giving students time to crochet every week. In turn, students continued the gift of giving and presented their crochet pieces to family and friends over several months.

## **Instructional Process**

### **Preparation:**

Students identified the need to help keep senior citizens company based on a previous needs assessment facilitated by Margaret Keating teachers in past years. Students chose to continue helping senior citizens at the Addie Meedom House. The 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher collaborated with each other to plan and implement the crochet project. The teachers contacted the Addie Meedom House to see if the business would still be willing to work with Margaret Keating School regarding students visiting seniors and presenting crocheted gifts. The Addie Meedom House staff was willing to work with MKS

given their positive history of working together. Students learn to care for senior citizen social needs by interacting with them and giving a crocheted gift. The long-term goal is for students to continue caring for elders as they get older.

### *CDE Standards*

#### **Grade 6: Writing**

**Writing Strategies:** 1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:

- a. Engage the interest of the reader and state a clear purpose.
- b. Develop the topic with supporting details and precise verbs, nouns, and adjectives to paint a visual image in the mind of the reader.
- c. Conclude with a detailed summary linked to the purpose of the composition.

#### **Grade 6: Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards**

##### **2.0 Creative Expression**

Communication and Expression Through Original Works of Art

2.4 Create increasingly complex original works of art reflecting personal choices and increased technical skill.

2.5 Select specific media and processes to express moods, feelings, themes, or ideas.

2.6 Use technology to create original works of art.

#### **School to Career:**

Program Standard: Personal Skills

Grades 4 – 6 and 7 – 12 Performance Standards

Students will use appropriate social skills in a given situation.

When the teachers contacted the Addie Meedom House, they informed a specific staff member about what students planned to do and accomplish: make a crochet piece, give it to a senior citizen, and visit with the senior citizen to learn more about them. The teachers had to buy the crochet

materials for their students. Also, they had to get an Instructional Assistant (IA) who knew how to crochet to agree to come to the classrooms on a weekly basis to teach the students how to crochet. The IA gave photocopied instructions to the students and teachers on how to make caps and modeled the activity while assisting people where needed. Students were assessed using a pre- and post-test about service learning.

### **Action**

The identified community need was to give the senior citizens at the Addie Meedom House companionship and show them students cared about them. During the visit, senior citizens enjoyed visiting with the students and telling them about their past. They wanted the students to return again for more visits.

Language Arts: Students wrote a reflection about their experience with the crochet project involving the visit with the senior citizens at the Addie Meedom House.

Visual and Performing Arts: Students learned to make a hat or scarf using yarn and a crochet needle. They followed instructions and got assistance as needed. Each student created their own yarn design or color scheme for their crochet piece.

School to Career: Students learned to be respectful toward and carry positive and caring conversations with senior citizens.

Students selected their yarn color and crochet hook size for their crochet piece. The Instructional Assistant gave each student instructions on how to make a hat or scarf and provided students with written directions. As students worked on their pieces, the IA went around and helped students. When students finished one piece, they usually started a new piece. This part of the project went on for several weeks. Students went on the field trip to the Addie Meedom House. They visited with senior citizens and presented their crochet item to the seniors. Students also got to go on a tour of the facility and learn more about the seniors' living arrangements. The teachers assisted students with their projects during

class time. On the field trip, the teachers walked around the main visiting room, where students and elders visited, to make sure students stayed on task. Whenever student groups went on tours, a teacher went with them. Overall, supervision of students was not very difficult.

### **Reflection**

Before the activity, students discussed the companionship needs of the seniors at the Addie Meedom House. They wanted to make crochet pieces and visit with the seniors. They took a pretest on service learning.

During the activity, students compared their crochet pieces with other students and tried to do their very best. When and if they started a new piece, they tried to do it better than the first piece and improve their crochet techniques. On the field trip, students talked with the seniors and observed how much their crocheted gift and companionship meant to the seniors.

After the activity, students wrote reflections about their experiences. They also took a service learning post-test.

The students were asked to reflect on what they learned from making crochet pieces, giving the pieces to the seniors, and their visit with the seniors.

### **Student Assessment**

Students were assessed in the following ways:

Service learning pre and post-tests to determine the students' learning about service

Ongoing informal assessment through observations during the making of crochet pieces to determine student understanding of the process

Reflections written at the end by students to determine their personal learning from the crochet project

### **Grade 6: Writing**

**Writing Strategies:** 1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions

## **Grade 6: Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards**

2.0 Creative Expression

### **School to Career: Grades 4 – 6 and 7 – 12 Performance Standards**

Program Standard: Personal Skills

#### **Project Evaluation and Expansion**

The teachers observed how hard students worked at perfecting their crochet techniques during the making of the crochet pieces for the Visual and Performing Arts standards. For Language Arts, the teachers looked at the students' reflections to evaluate their learning process after the completion of the crochet project. A staff member involved in the visitation planning at the Addie Meedom House considered the activity successful. We discussed continuing the project each month, and the staff person was enthusiastic about continuing her role in preparing for the visits. The visits did not continue, but the staff person was willing to work with us in the future. The senior citizens were pleased with the students' visit and wanted them to come back again. Many seniors showed great appreciation for the crochet gifts given to them by the students.

Next time, I would do the following things to improve the project:

Do a KWL chart before, during, and after the activity to further assess student learning

Continue the project each month with the Addie Meedom House until school ended for the school year

Involve parents in the crochet activity

Match students up with specific senior citizens

Have students write a letter to their senior citizen each month

#### **Celebration and Public Recognition**

*The crochet project and class participation information was submitted to Del Norte County Unified School District's service learning coordinator for the year end Del Norte Schools in Service Achievements Forum. At this event, classes*

*and students are given certificates and shown appreciation for their service done in the school district for the past school year.*

*Del Norte Schools in Service (DNSS) writes a bi-annual newsletter about service learning projects and information that occurs in the school district. The DNSS also submits articles in the local newspaper, The Daily Triplicate.*

## **Materials and Staff Development Needs**

The instructions for a crocheted hat follow.

### **Crocheted Hat**

#### **Abbreviations Key**

**CH** = Chain   **DC** = Double Chain   **ST** = Stitch   **SC** = Single Crochet

#### **Directions**

1. CH 6, join to beginning
2. **ROW 1:** CH 3, 17 DC in ring, join to beginning of CH 3
3. **ROW 2:** CH 3, DC in same ST as joining, DC in next DC, \*2 DC in next DC, 1 DC in next DC, \* repeat around, join
4. **ROW 3:** CH 3, DC in same ST as joining, DC in next 2 DC, \*2 DC in next DC, 1 DC in next 2 DC, \*repeat around, join
5. **ROW 4:** CH 3, DC in next DC and around, repeat row 4 until hat is as big as you would like it, SC in each DC around

Del Norte County Unified School District has had service learning for 4 years. Half of the teachers have been trained in service learning techniques as well as one-third of the community partners.

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

The teachers spent \$20 - \$30 on crochet materials which included yarn and crochet hooks. Some of the yarn was donated by the community. The district's service learning grant provided the transportation fees. More grant money was available for reimbursing the teachers for their crochet project supplies.

The for-profit partner: Addie Meedom House at (707) 464-3311.