

Title of Project: Refugees

Grade Level: 4th – 6th grade

Number of Students Participating: 50

Contributed by: Gayl Loutzenheiser

Teacher: Ms. Orlor & Mr. Franz

School: Highlands Elementary

District or County: Boise School District

Overview/Description of Project:

Several classes brainstormed on how to help the ever increasing refugee population (Bantu, Somalia African and Turks) in Boise. The refugee population would be at nearby Lowell Elementary. 4th & 5th graders organized meetings with the refugees to create friendships and “buddies” throughout the year. The 6th graders decided to do a bike drive to help the refugees with transportation.

Goals:

Students would learn global citizenship, acceptance of diverse populations, while meeting real needs of refugees.

Core Content Areas:

(teacher completes this section)

English/Language Arts: Reading & writing skills. Learning new languages: learning a few phrases in Russian and Swahili. Public speaking skills and demonstration skills teaching bike maintenance.

Social Studies/History: Geography & culture: learned about the cultures of the New Americans’ homeland. Learned why refugees come to the U.S.. How to become a U.S. citizen, and resettlement issues for refugees. Do we have a civic responsibility to these people?

Math: Puzzles, calculated money at bake sale.

Art: Created posters and advertisements for bike drive & bake sale. Various art projects included: collages, banners, bookmarks.

PARC MODEL STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

STEP 1: PREPARATION

The Director of The Agency for New Americans came and spoke about the needs of local refugees. He explained to the students the refugees’ basic needs for clothing, transportation, household items, and their need to fit into the American culture. The school counselor met with the students and discussed diversity and the many anxieties refugees may have. There

were also several meetings with Highland parents and English Language Learner instructors at Lowell Elementary where the refugees are enrolled.

The students in each class brainstormed areas where they wanted to help. The 4th & 5th graders decided on the activities they wanted to plan with their "buddies". The 6th graders chose the transportation need by getting donated bikes, repairing them, giving them to refugees, and teaching on bike maintenance.

STEP 2: ACTION

4th & 5th grades: They met 5 times during the school year and worked with their "buddies" doing art projects, reading books and doing puzzles together. From the refugees they learned how to say simple phrases in Russian and Swahili.

6th grades: Students prepared goodies for bake sale, made announcements, handled cash flow, collected gently-used bikes, advertised in the school newspaper, repaired bikes, and delivered bikes. A repair clinic was held to repair flats on bikes. A bike "rodeo" was done working with refugee kids on bike safety and maintenance skills. They also raised \$400 from a bake sale for gift cards at Christmas.

6th graders planned a Thanksgiving feast to help refugee family become familiar with the American Thanksgiving holiday and customs. Wrote and performed a Thanksgiving play.

STEP 3: REFLECTION (Reflection is not sequential; rather it is encouraged throughout the lesson)

Before the meeting, reflected on what are the needs? Does the same need exist in both our refugee communities (Turks & Samalians)? Students reflected by written exercises on several questions after their meeting with their "buddies". They wrote reflections on their experience and then posted them on the school bulletin boards.

STEP 4: CELEBRATION

Written exercises, and poster reflections along with photos were displayed at both Lowell and Highlands.