

Service Learning

Duluth

February 2004 - 8th Edition

A 2003-05 Minnesota Service Learning Leader District

A Collaboration That Works!

UMD's EI Ed Department, Lincoln and Nettleton Elementary Schools Work Together to Benefit Everyone

"I found out that I can make a difference in the lives of the children I teach. After being in this program, I know I want to continue with my dream of becoming a teacher."

Mary Callaban, UMD EI Ed student

"Everyone benefits from this program and it does so much to promote communication."

Jane Dietrich, UMD E/Ed Instructor

Current Members of the Committee

Karen Alworth - Parent Representative
Deb Anderson - ISD709 Violence & Harassment Specialist
Cal Barr - Faith Community Representative
Kathy Bartsias - ISD 709 Service-Learning Coord.
Sherry Boyce - U of M Extension Office
Amy Cook - Integ/spec/cult fac Assistant
Steve Dalager - Lake Superior College
Karen Frye - Duluth Millennium Group
Blair Gagne - Duluth YMCA
Matti Gurney - Service-Learning, VISTA
Lee Anne Heikkinen - Teacher, Nettleton
Marv Heikkinen - Service-Learning, VISTA
Rex Hein - Direct of Curriculum and Instruction
Carly Holland - UMD student
Cameron Krueger - Service-Learning, VISTA
Casey LaCore - UMD Darland Program
Jody Langseth - UMD instructor
John Mattson - ISD 709 Staff Development
Cruz Mendoza - Deseg. Committee Rep.
Lorri Michell - UMD Instructor
Dave Muckala - ISD 709 Community Ed. Director
Jay Newcomb - College of St. Scholastica
Catherine Ostos - Central Diversity Project Coordinator
Andy Peterson - Duluth Chamber of Commerce
Tonya Sconiers - Denfeld Assistant Principal
Julie Williams - UMD instructor
District Principal Representative
School Board Member Representative

Several years ago, Jane Dietrich, an instructor of Elementary Education at UMD met with Casey LaCore, Director of the Darland Connection at UMD to work on a public school practicum for elementary teacher candidates. Their plan was to create an "Adopt-a-Class" for Jane's EI Ed classes. This unique service-learning program created a partnership between UMD and the Duluth Public Schools. Jane's students, who are either Freshmen or Sophomores, spend 3 hours in the classroom per week, and spend at least 2 hours a week for 10 weeks in a practicum in Nettleton, Lincoln or Hermantown Elementary Schools. Casey LaCore works with the administrators of these schools to assign UMD students to individual classrooms. About 30 UMD students are placed in each school. This collaboration involves UMD students, elementary school administrators, teachers and students. It is a wonderful example of how higher education and public education can work together to benefit all parties. UMD students benefit by applying what they are learning to real classroom situations and learning from experienced classroom teachers. Elementary teachers and students benefit by receiving help from UMD students. Not only are the UMD students providing a service to the elementary

schools, this is part of their course work. They must become involved in classroom work. They are to collect data, keep a weekly journal, analyze and make conclusions related to teaching through group discussions, writing papers, and actually teaching a lesson. This 30 minute lesson in reading or math, must be planned by the student. The lesson is video-taped, and there is feedback provided by the classroom teacher. UMD also holds a "Teaching Extravaganza" in which students from Lincoln and Nettleton are taught lessons by UMD students. The UMD students are required to develop a portfolio which is used in an interview with school faculty, staff, administrators, parents or volunteers. Julie Johnson, School, Home and Community Liaison at Lincoln Park, coordinates the program at her school. She stated, "It has been so neat for the UMD students to come to Lincoln and find out that we have such a professional, caring staff and wonderful diverse students. We like many schools, have many needy kids. These UMD students were impressed with Lincoln and felt they were needed." In turn, Lincoln staff were also grateful for the efforts and accomplishments of the UMD students. ★

Above, a UMD student helps a Lincoln Park Elementary student.



Above, UMD students are interviewed by a representative of Lincoln Park after their "Adopt a Classroom" experience.

Committee To Assess Impact of Service-Learning

How successful is service-learning in the Duluth Public Schools? What impact does it have and how do you measure it? While it is generally perceived that service-learning renders a positive impact in our schools, there is a need to know more specific information that can be statistically measured.

In an effort to document and assess this information, a Service-Learning Assessment Committee has been created. Meetings have been held this fall and will be ongoing this school year. The following are members of the Assessment Committee: Kathy Bartsias, Service Learning Coordinator for Duluth, Sandy Woolen, instructor and Associate

Professor of Psychology at UMD, Jill Blodget, UMD research undergraduate student, Kate Beattie, Program Evaluator for the Duluth Schools, Marv Heikkinen, Service-Learning VISTA, and Cameron Kruger, Service-Learning VISTA. It was decided that the assessment for Duluth would take place in two phases. Phase One would consist of basic tracking of service-learning or community service.

A teacher survey was designed in which Duluth teachers are to indicate whether their classes participated in either service-learning or community service projects for the fall semester, 2003-04. Teachers are to describe the

project and also record the time spent on it. They are to also record who the service was provided for, and how many people were involved and served. If the teachers were involved in service-learning projects, they were to record the content area (language arts, social studies, math, science, music, art or physical education) addressed and the top desired impact on the student. (personal development, leadership skills, understand cultures, civic responsibility and to increase student motivation/attendance) Each of the schools in Duluth has a Service Learning Teacher Mentor. These teachers will distribute, administer and collect the surveys for their respective schools. The completed surveys are due by February 5, 2004.

The information from this survey will be helpful in determining how many Duluth teachers are practicing service-learning and the types of projects that exist. Also a good community service project can be developed into a service-learning project when it is incorporated into the classroom curriculum.

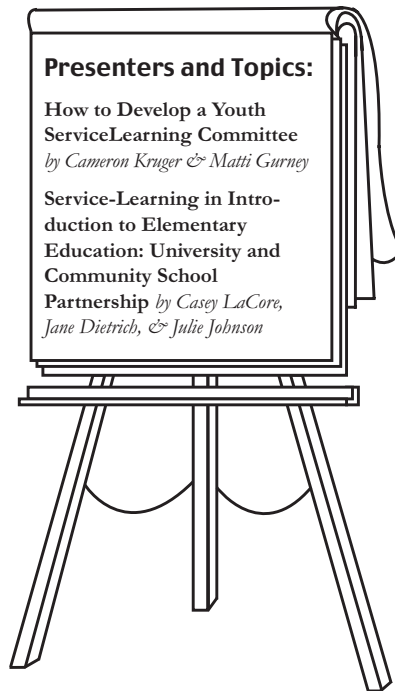
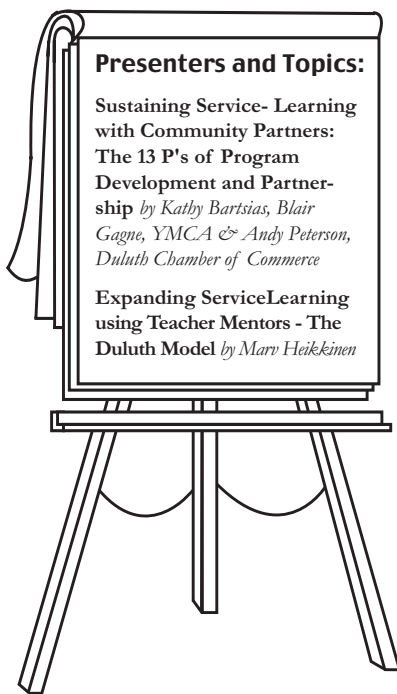
After the survey is completed and the results tabulated, Phase Two will begin. Classrooms using service-learning will be compared to classrooms which do not. Potential impacts will be compared and measured such as: (1) service learning helps to develop students' sense of civic and social responsibility and their citizenship skills, and (2) Service-learning helps students acquire academic skills and knowledge. (These impacts and others are listed in the Learning-in-Deed, Impacts of Service-Learning on Youth, Schools and Communities: Research on K-12 SchoolBased Service-Learning, 1990-99).

A pretest and post test will be involved in this process. A long range study may also be created which would measure the long range impact of service-learning on middle school students who participated in service-learning in elementary school. Results of the assessment will become public knowledge. ★

Service-Learning Duluth to Present at State and National Conferences

Duluth is a Service-Learning Leader District and its status is recognized not only in Minnesota, but throughout the nation. This has been verified by the fact that four Duluth groups will present at both the State Conference to be held on January 22, 2004 in Brooklyn

Park and the National Conference to be held March 28-31 in Orlando, Florida. There is stiff competition to present at both of these conferences, so the fact that so many Duluth people will present is evidence that Duluth is held in high esteem in service learning circles. ★



Broad Representation Helps Promote Service Learning

In 1999 the Duluth School District received funding through the Kellogg Learning-in-Deed Initiative. A leadership team of administrators, teachers, community members, higher education representative and students began to meet as a planning committee to figure out how to introduce service-learning as a best practice methodology to the district. By the fall of 2000, an official Service-Learning Committee was created.

The committee, Service-Learning Duluth, meets once a month. This is a very diverse group representing parents, high school and college students, teachers, administrators, School Board members, Community Education leaders, VISTA workers, representatives from Lake Superior College, UMD, and the College of St. Scholastica, plus representatives from the Duluth business community. Because of the diversity of the group, sub-committees were created. Today they include the following:

- Classroom Practice/Academic Excellence
- High Ed/Lifelong Learning
- Strategic Planning/Program Evaluation/Research and Policy
- Business/Community Partnership/Community Development
- Diversity/Social Justice/Spirituality/Character Ed/Smaller Learning Committee
- Community Youth Connection



Sherry Boyce, Dave Muckala, and Blair Gagne discuss strategy in their subcommittee meeting.

Service-Learning Duluth – Mission Statement

To facilitate the institutionalization of service-learning throughout the community

Service-Learning Duluth –Vision Statement

To provide every child the opportunity for service learning, the ability to reflect on that, and the potential to grow from that experience.

Kathy Bartsias, Service Learning Coordinator and chair of the committee states, “We are strong because of our diversity. We all bring the strength of different perspectives and resources. Because of this we reap the rewards of working together.” Dave Muckula, Community Education Director, when asked his viewpoint of the work the committee, said, “The understanding of service-learning is ingrained in me and brought back to other people. We have been able to

recruit others to understand the great benefits of service-learning through training.” Lorri Mitchell, an instructor at UMD gave her enthusiastic view of her involvement in the committee. She said, “With each meeting I come away inspired. It recharges my batteries and the meetings are a way to connect with others.”

Service-Learning Duluth members are listed on the front of this newsletter and are available service-learning contacts. ★

“Giving Tree” Project Symbolizes Service-Learning

One of the key components of service-learning is youth involvement. The idea for the “Giving Tree” project was created by 7 year old Robbie Baker. Robbie is a second grader at Lester Park Elementary School, His younger brother was burned by hot coffee and ended up at the Miller Dwan Burn Center. This experience left a lasting impression on Robbie - one which became evident when his mother Sue Baker asked him what the family should do as a community service project for the holidays. Robbie suggested decorat-

ing Christmas trees and giving the: to children at the bum center. Sue, who is



Students at Lester Park and Rockridge make ornaments and decorate Christmas trees to give to Miller Dwan and St. Mary's hospital.

a kindergarten teacher at Rockridge Elementary, asked her staff and the staff at neighboring Lester Park to make tree giving a school wide project. The students, K-5, soon embrace (the mission and expanded their gift list to St. Mary's Medical Center too.

The students raised \$200.00 for 38 table top Christmas trees. They hand-crafted decorations for the trees and delivered them to Miller Dwan and the pediatrics and hospice units at St. Mary's Medical Center. “What I wanted

See TREES on page 4

A Message from Kathy Bartsias ISD 709 Service - Learning Coordinator



Still confused about service-learning? Are you interested, but still don't know what service-learning is? You are not alone. Roper Starch Worldwide released the results of a scientific national study of American attitudes towards service-learning and found 61% of Americans were unfamiliar with the term service-learning. Once service-learning was explained to them, an overwhelming 90% endorsed the practice. Are you continuing to wonder about student impact; are your students learning when engaged with a service-learning project? Would you like more information? If so, check out www.servicelearningduluth.org. There are EASY links to website chalked full of information. It's merely a click away.

Do you want feedback regarding your service-learning projects, or help locating more resources? Please call at 336-8700 X1041 or email me at kathy.bartsias@duluth.k12.mn.us

Your service-learning teacher mentor or Community Youth Connection student representatives are also available to help you at your site. Not sure who this is? Check out the listing at www.servicelearningduluth.org

These questions may guide you in thinking about adding service-learning to your classroom:

- What topic do we study that my students could teach to others?
- What topic could by students learn about by working to help the environment?
- What topic relates to a current issue about which my students could take a stand?
- What topic could involve students working to help an older generation?
- What topic could my students learn more about by providing assistance to others?

Teachers – Get Your Students Involved In The 2004 Elections!!

A Kid's Voting - Service-Learning Inservice workshop will be offered this spring. Use the fall elections to get your students involved in the democratic system. This will be a hands on inservice geared to K-12 teachers with the emphasis on citizenship, voting and service-learning. Teachers will be provided with curriculum materials ranging from brief individual lessons to comprehensive school wide projects. Flexibility is the key, as teachers can pick and choose what is useful for their individual classroom, or perhaps collaborate with other teachers to promote school and community projects.

Stay tuned
for the time
and date
for this
inservice!



We know change is a process, not an event. There are resources to help you make the change in helping you provide your students an opportunity to experience service-learning. We are here to help no matter where you are in the process. ★

Trees *Continued from page 3*

them to know is the best gift is the gift of giving.” Sue Baker said. The tree decorations became part of the art curriculum. The collection of the money was integrated into their math lessons. The discussions at the end of the project became part of the language arts curriculum, as well as serving as a reflection and celebration.

Sue Baker said, “It was neat that our two schools could collaborate on his project. But the biggest plus was that

“We believe that assessment should not be conducted simply to prove that a project worked, but also to improve the way it works.”

*W.K. Kellogg Foundation,
Evaluation Handbook*

the children felt so good about giving.”

Did giving these trees make a difference? A patient at St. Mary's who received a tree, wrote this in a thank you note, “Thank you for turning a terrible Christmas into a miraculous blessed Christmas. I had been in the hospital for two surgeries when the nurses gave your tree to me. The love in your hearts when you made the ornaments is so precious to me.” ★