

# Service-Learning Update

*"Any genuine teaching will result, if successful, in someone's knowing how to bring about a better condition of things than existed earlier." --John Dewey*

[www.pitt.edu/~psla](http://www.pitt.edu/~psla)

## Wanted: Service-Learning Partner for Nepal Project

--by Jessica Friedrichs,

PSLA Pittsburgh AmeriCorps\*VISTA

The 2002 Nepal Service-Learning Program at the University of Pittsburgh wants to partner with your classroom! The Nepal Program is a service-learning course offered through the English Department. Pittsburgh students research the literature and writing of Nepal and then conclude the semester by participating in a three-week service project in the Khumbu region of Nepal in the foothills of Mt. Everest. The project will be to renovate a Nepalese elementary school. What a perfect opportunity to partner with a Pittsburgh elementary school and build ties between young people in Pittsburgh and Nepal.

**The Project:** We would like to build a project that will enrich your students' classroom experience. In March or April 2002, the University of Pittsburgh students would visit your classroom before their journey to Nepal and present information about the Nepalese school and culture. Your students would teach the University students about their school as a comparison – for example, they could put on a presentation describing what a normal school day is like for them.

Before the University students leave for Nepal, your class would have the opportunity to create a project that could be brought to the Nepalese elementary students. This project is very flexible and

could incorporate both character education and service-learning (potential ideas are listed in the section below). The University students could visit once again to collect the letters, books or other creations your students have made to take to Nepal.

Upon their return to Pittsburgh, the University students would visit your classroom to give a presentation about their experiences in Nepal. This would include photography as well as posters and other information prepared as their final work for the project. They could also bring back letters, drawings, or other projects created by the Nepalese students.

**Potential Ideas:** What could your classroom create and send to a Nepalese elementary school? These ideas meet standards, build character and function as service-learning projects as well. The details of the project are up to you. Here are a few suggestions to discuss with your students:

- Create a book about Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and the United States. Include information, drawings, photography, poetry and interviews with people in the community.
- Each student can write a letter to tell the Nepalese students what it is like to live in Pittsburgh. Include a family photograph/drawing and information about the kinds of food eaten, games played, transportation used, weather, etc.
- Create an artistic piece that celebrates Pittsburgh and the United States, so Nepalese students could visualize what America is about. For example, make a collage full of pictures inspired by this theme.

**Partnering!** Jessica Friedrichs of the Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance, located at the University of Pittsburgh, will coordinate this project. Contact her at [jxf243@hotmail.com](mailto:jxf243@hotmail.com) or 412-648-1481. Fax the PSLA office at 412-648-1404 with your name, address, phone and email address. Christopher Boettcher of the University of Pittsburgh will teach the Nepal Service-Learning Program. You can contact him directly if you have questions: [ceb22+@pitt.edu](mailto:ceb22+@pitt.edu). Please contact us by January 14<sup>th</sup> if you are interested!

**Wait, I'm not from Pittsburgh!** Think about similar projects you could do with your students. Use local organizations with international programs such as the Rotary Club, the study abroad department at nearby universities, or international exchange students in your school district. With these partners, create a service-learning project that involves your students in connecting with students abroad. Other opportunities exist for students to share information with people around the world through the Internet as well.

**Check out these useful websites for more information and inspiration:**

**Int'l Pen Pals Website for Teachers**

[http://www.europa-pages.com/school\\_form.html](http://www.europa-pages.com/school_form.html)

**Article on Web-Based Pen Pal Program Established by President Bush**

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/showStory.cfm?ArticleID=3200>

**Connecting your classroom to a Peace Corps Volunteer**

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wvs/service/>

**Friends and Flags**

<http://www.friendsandflags.org/>

## Service-Learning Tips and Ideas for MLK Day Projects

--by Cynthia Wetmiller,  
PSLA Assistant Director

### Environment

Even though there may be snow on the ground and ice floating down the river, there are plenty of environmental projects to consider for the month of January. When the weather is frigid, look to the indoors for inspiration! For example, how does your school recycling program fare? How about indoor air quality—does your school know if the air you and your students breathe is healthy and safe? Visit any of these websites for ideas that could inspire an MLK Day project with an environmental focus:

**EE Link**

<http://eelink.net/>

**EPA Office of Environmental Education**

<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/>

**EcoNet**

<http://www.igc.org/igc/gateway/enindex.html>

**GLOBE**

<http://www.globe.gov/>

### Technology

Despite our best efforts, there are still plenty of people in all of our communities that remain unfamiliar with technology. A great digital divide MLK Day project would be one that gets the word out about the many programs in your community that help bridge the digital divide! Computer Science students can put their fingers to the keys and create a website or publish a brochure that highlights all the local community technology programs. In addition, students could interview local community members who have played a leadership role in the development of technology programs in the

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community. Visit any of these websites for ideas about creating a website or starting a newsletter:

### **Great Website Design Tips**

<http://www.unplug.com/great/>

### **Webmonkey**

<http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/>

### **Website Tips**

<http://www.websitetips.com/designer/>

### **About Desktop Publishing**

<http://desktoppub.about.com/mlibrary.htm>

### **Getting Started in Desktop Publishing**

<http://desktoppub.about.com/cs/gettingstarted/>

## Health

In honor of Martin Luther King Junior and his African American ancestry, encourage your Health students to research diseases and health conditions that have a high incidence in the African American community. For example, Sickle Cell Anemia is primarily a condition found in African Americans. Other health conditions for which African Americans are at risk include Hypertension and Diabetes. Once the students compile their research, presentations could be made at senior citizen centers, medical clinics, shelters and hospitals. Or, if your students are so inspired, they could partner up with a Computer Science class and create a website full of links to health on the web for African Americans. Visit any of these health websites for inspiration:

### **African American Health Care and Medical Information**

<http://www.blackhealthcare.com/BHC/Index.asp>

### **Black Health Network**

<http://www.blackhealthnetwork.com/>

### **Closing the Health Gap**

<http://www.healthgap.omhrc.gov/>

### **Multi-Cultural Health Clearinghouse**

<http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu/multiculturalhealth/african/african.html>

## Human Needs

When it comes to human needs, there are so many it is sometimes hard for students to decide where to start lending a hand. This MLK Day, encourage your students to design and implement a community needs assessment. The results can be used to design a service-learning projects that addresses "real" needs in the community.

## Arts and Culture

This MLK Day why not consider hosting an "MLK Day Concert" in the community with your music students? What a great way to honor Martin Luther King Junior—with music! Students could plan the event and invite senior citizens, children and anyone else who is off of work or school on MLK Day. Afterall, this is supposed to be a "day on" not a "day off!" At the concert, students could create awareness for a variety of needs in the community, including hunger (concert goers could bring canned food to donate to the food bank), homelessness (concert goers could bring gently used coats and blankets to donate to a local shelter), literacy (concert goers could bring gently used childrens books to donate to local shelters and Head Start programs) and safety (concert goers could bring smoke alarms to donate to the local fire department).

## **News You Can Use: Current Events Can Inspire Service-Learning Projects!**

**--by Cynthia Wetmiller,  
PSLA Assistant Director**

This new section of the Service-Learning Update is all about connecting students with projects that mean something in terms of current events. Don't forget, current events don't necessarily have to mean national news. Local current events also can inspire your students to take action.

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Take a look at some of the Pennsylvania news we found to connect to service-learning projects this month:

### **Girl Chained in**

#### **Herndon is United with Family**

<http://www.washtech.com/news/software/14479-1.html>

**Service-Learning Idea:** Get your computer science students talking about and taking action to address the issue of kids staying safe online!

### **Lansdale Man Dies in Crash**

[http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=2911603&BRD=1672&PAG=461&dept\\_id=33380&rft=6](http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=2911603&BRD=1672&PAG=461&dept_id=33380&rft=6)

**Service-Learning Idea:** Drinking and driving is bad for your health, safety and future! Students can partner up with Mothers Against Drunk Driving and promote the anti-drinking and driving programs in the community!

### **Screening Donors' Blood Reveals Illness**

<http://www.post-gazette.com/healthscience/20020106donors3.asp>

**Service-Learning Idea:** Students can help in a local effort to raise awareness about AIDS and other diseases commonly discovered during blood screening such as Hepatitis, Sickle Cell Anemia, and various STDs.

### **Stepfather Praises Son**

#### **Who Died in Slippery Rock Crash**

<http://www.post-gazette.com/regionstate/20020105slipperyrock0105p5.asp>

#### **Hoping to Save Teen Drivers' Lives**

[http://inq.philly.com/content/inquirer/2002/01/06/front\\_page/JDRIVER06.htm](http://inq.philly.com/content/inquirer/2002/01/06/front_page/JDRIVER06.htm)

**Service-Learning Idea:** As new drivers, teens need to practice safe driving and slow down! Students could partner up with the local police department and spread the word about the fatal consequences of unsafe driving.

### **Water in Area Lacks Quality**

[http://inq.philly.com/content/inquirer/2002/01/06/front\\_page/DRINK06.htm](http://inq.philly.com/content/inquirer/2002/01/06/front_page/DRINK06.htm)

**Service-Learning Idea:** Get your Earth Science students involved with a local

environmental organization that helps save local watersheds and assure safe drinking water!

## Special Days and Events to Celebrate with Service-Learning

--by Cynthia Wetmiller,  
PS LA Assistant Director

The holidays this month provide many opportunities to take service-learning out into the community:

### **January is March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month**

Did you know that birth defects are the leading cause of death in infants under one year of age? Did you know that each year 150,000 babies are born with birth defects? These and many other compelling facts give you and your Health students a reason to get out in the community and help the March of Dimes this month during Birth Defects Prevention Month. Visit any of these websites for ideas on how to take action:

March of Dimes

<http://www.modimes.org/>

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/>

National Center on Birth Defects

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/>

### **January is National Volunteer Blood Donor Month**

Hosting a blood drive is a great way for students to learn more about many health issues and various health career paths. Whether the blood drive is a part of the biology, health, school to work or special education curriculum, there are many ways to make important connections between this valuable community service and the curriculum. For tips and ideas about hosting a blood drive, visit any of these websites:

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Facts about blood donation

<http://www.wphs.org/w07healthinfo/w07blooddon.htm>

American Red Cross: Blood Donation

<http://www.redcross.org/donate/give/>

New York Blood Center

<http://www.nybloodcenter.org/>

### **January is National Eye Care Month**

Keeping our eyes healthy involves more than just a trip to the eye doctor every year or two. Many environmental factors, such as UVA/UVB rays and pollution, also play a role. During National Eye Care Month, get your Health students involved in a project that helps educate the community about the importance of keeping our eyes healthy. More information can be found at any of these websites:

Eye Care Info

<http://www.eyecareinfo.com/>

Vision Checklist

<http://www.children-special-needs.org/parent.html>

How the Eye Works

<http://www.aoanet.org/jfk-how-eye-works.html>

### **January is National Mentoring Month**

Mentoring projects are great service-learning activities for older students (7-12) to help younger students (PreK-6). Since January is National Mentoring Month, consider starting an academic mentoring program, so that your high school or middle school students can tutor younger children in whatever subject you teach. These sites will provide you with excellent mentoring resources:

National Mentoring Center

<http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/>

Cross-Age and Peer Tutoring

[http://www.indiana.edu/~eric\\_rec/ieo/digests/d78.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/ieo/digests/d78.html)

Students Mentoring Students

<http://www.nea.org/helpfrom/places/s2000/resource/res31.html>

### **January 13<sup>th</sup> is**

#### **Stephen Foster Memorial Day**

Stephen Foster was a great musician born and raised in the city of Pittsburgh. Many children learn some of his music in grade school, and a great way they can share some of his music is to visit a local nursing home or hospital to provide much-needed cheerful entertainment for the patients. Visit any of these sites for facts about Stephen Foster:

American Experience: Stephen Foster

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/foster/>

Stephen Foster Home Page

<http://www.bobjanuary.com/foster/sfhome.htm>

Stephen Foster Songs

<http://www.stephen-foster-songs.de/>

### **January 20-26 is Healthy Weight Week**

Physical Education could use this week to help educate the community about the role of exercise in keeping our weight down. The local YMCA or community fitness center would be a great place to hold a "get healthy" symposium. Students could invite a variety of speakers (doctors, nutritionists, dieticians, etc.) to address the many issues involved with healthy weight and exercise. Visit any of these sites for ideas on how your physical education students can take action:

Shape Up America

<http://www.shapeup.org/>

Diet and Exercise: Healthy Balance for a Healthy Heart

<http://familydoctor.org/handouts/288.html>

Why Exercise is Cool

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay\\_healthy/fit/work\\_it\\_out.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/fit/work_it_out.html)

### **January 21<sup>st</sup> is Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

Earlier in this issue we gave you lots of ideas for service-learning MLK Day projects. Here are some more websites that might help you educate your students about the lessons to be learned from Martin Luther King, Junior:

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Who is Martin Luther King, Junior?  
<http://ak.essortment.com/whomartinluthez.htm>

The Life and Time of Martin Luther King, Junior: Redeem the Dream  
<http://www.mccsc.edu/~kmcglaun/mlk/mlkin dex.htm>

Martin Luther King, Junior:  
A Biographical Sketch  
<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/hum/mlk/srs218.html>

### Training Events with the Staff of the Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance

The PSLA has a lot of great workshops planned for January and February in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Note the dates and register soon!

#### Pittsburgh

To register for any of the workshops in Pittsburgh, go to:  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~psla/PSLA/WesternPennsylvania.html>

If you have any questions about the workshops or events in Pittsburgh, contact the person listed with each event or call Cathy at (412) 648-1440.

#### Starting January 14th: Act 48 Computer Workshops

Sponsored by the PSLA and Faith Tech, teachers can register to receive basic technology instruction and earn Act 48 hours in the process. From how to turn on the computer to tips on email and web searches, these basic computer classes will be very helpful for teachers with limited computer skills. **There is no cost to take a Faith Tech class!** Classes will be offered in Penn Hills and the North Side starting in January. To receive a schedule and registration materials, contact Cathy at (412) 648-1440.

#### Special Ed Workshop (Act 48): “Funding Service-Learning Projects: Where to Look and How to Look for \$” Wednesday, January 23rd

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

#### University of Pittsburgh

This workshop is for special education teachers who want to get service-learning going in their classroom but can't afford it. Learn about writing grants and looking for money in the community and on the web. There is no cost to attend this workshop and lunch will be provided. Four Act 48 hours will be given to teachers who attend the entire workshop! [Register online!](#) Questions? Call Cyndi Wetmiller at (412) 648-1673.

#### Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>:

#### Let's Go to the Park!

#### Rescheduled Workshop!

Well, we thought teachers might want to come to a Saturday workshop, but we were wrong. We're going to try again—this time on a Friday! Bob Hanke, Schenley Park Foreman, will help the PSLA facilitate this experiential workshop. Designed for K-6 teachers, this is the opportunity to learn more about how students can get involved with environmental projects in Schenley Park. If the weather allows, an outdoor hands-on activity will be incorporated into the workshop. Time: 9am – 3pm; Place: University of Pittsburgh/Schenley Park. Lunch is included and Act 48 hours will be given. **Deadline to register is January 21<sup>st</sup>!** [Register online!](#) **Call Sarah for more information: (412) 648-1481 or send her an email: [backstromscool@hotmail.com](mailto:backstromscool@hotmail.com)**

#### Special Ed Network Meeting

#### Wednesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>

12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

#### University of Pittsburgh

A chance for special education teachers to come together and learn from each other about the many benefits of service-learning! Deadline to register is January 28<sup>th</sup>!

[Register online!](#)

#### Upcoming Events in February:

**For information and details about these events visit the PSLA website in January:**  
[www.pitt.edu/~psla](http://www.pitt.edu/~psla)

**February 8<sup>th</sup>: Recycling Workshop**  
**February 18<sup>th</sup>: Community Gardens**  
**Presentation at the East End Food-Coop**  
**by PSLA VISTA Volunteers**  
**February 22<sup>nd</sup>: Environmental Workshop**  
**with the EPA**

## Philadelphia

**Wednesday, January 16th**  
**Philadelphia YDSLC Grantee Meeting**  
**3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**  
**J.F. Kennedy Center**  
**734 Schuylkill Avenue**  
**6th Floor, Room 641**

The theme for the meeting is \*Technology\* and the agenda will include:

- \* Discussion of the success and challenges at the centers.
- \* Overviews of the YDSLC grant requirements.
- \* Preview of a variety of school district initiatives that teachers may want to take advantage of, including online courses with Connected University, Web Projects for YDSLCs, and CTEC courses which provide classroom computers for teachers.
- \* Short lesson in using Gratz Bank, a dynamic database of service-learning projects and partners created by the Gratz Cluster, YDSLC.
- \* Details of opportunities for service-learning and technology workshops for teachers at your center. Act 48 hours provided!

Please RSVP regarding your attendance to Faith Goldstein, [faithg@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:faithg@sas.upenn.edu),

**The January/February training calendar for the PSLA Philadelphia office is still in the process of being finalized. So, keep an eye on the PSLA website's Eastern PA Workshop and Event section for postings about upcoming workshops:**

<http://www.pitt.edu/~psla/PSLA/EasternPennsylvania.html>

## Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance Contact Information

To learn more about the efforts of the Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance, contact the offices of the PSLA in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia:

### Philadelphia:

[Cynthia Belliveau](#), PSLA Director  
(215) 573-6535

**PSLA Philadelphia Fax: (215) 573-1134**

### Pittsburgh:

[Cynthia Wetmiller](#), PSLA Assistant Director  
(412) 648-1673

**PSLA Pittsburgh Fax: (412) 648-1404**

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