

Service-Learning Update

Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance

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"You're either part of the solution or you're part of the problem." -Leroy E Idridge Cleaver

www.pitt.edu/~psla

Picking the Perfect Partner

--by Jessica Friedrichs,

PSLA Pittsburgh AmeriCorps*VISTA

Service-Learning projects need a community partner. The community partner puts the 'service' in the service-learning. Partners provide great information, ideas, suggestions, and resources and may also be the group receiving the service such as shelters, parks and highways, or retirement communities.

During the design phase of a project, students can think of creative partnerships within their community that will benefit from their services as well as educate the students. Partnering involves a symbiosis between students and community members. Ideally, partners are organizations, services or people in need that are a part of the local community.

Sometimes finding a unique and exciting partner to participate in a service-learning project can be difficult. Who are some creative partners beyond those that typically receive volunteer services? How do we find and connect with these partners? Here are some suggestions for finding partners that can help make the service-learning experience interesting and worthwhile:

Local Professionals

Professionals, from offices in business, government, social service work and other areas in which your students may have a career related interest, make great partners. For example, create a project with your students in which they develop an office gift

(such as a plant grown in a community garden) to bring to various professionals. On the day of the event, schedule shadowing and interviewing time with each professional, so students can provide and receive an educational experience.

International and Diverse Communities

Partner with groups of people from diverse countries or ethnic and religious backgrounds. Whether it be through an organization such as Immigrant and Refugee services, a local Italian restaurant, a mosque or a temple, there are tons of opportunities to create projects that enhance your students understanding of various cultures.

Artistic Communities

Many artists, museums, studios and galleries could involve your students in a service-learning project. Visit one of these locations to talk with an artist and view their work, and then partner to create a way for students to create their own artwork. For example, students could create artistic brochures for the next event or exhibit at the gallery.

Local Community Members

Wouldn't local bus drivers, restaurant staff, sanitation workers, police, shop owners and others like to receive appreciation for the work they do every day to keep your community running? Create a project to learn about the many occupations that make up your community. Invite speakers. Educate others about these roles through creation of a booklet or computer website.

Social Service Agencies

Many social service agencies would love to work with your students on creating publicity

about the work they do, websites or other materials to further their causes. They are also great resources for your students, as they can provide lectures, information, and contacts to issues in the community.

Medical Health and Hospitals

Many hospitals already have ways to provide service to their clients. You can take these opportunities a step further by creating a service-learning project to study a particular disease or mental illness in a class and then create a service project to educate others about this issue. For example, the hospital may be interested in distributing posters on preventive medical practices or CPR.

Environmental Spaces

Look around at the parks, playgrounds, highway systems and other public locations in your community. All of these are run by an agency that may have great ideas for a service-learning project. Creating a student maintained garden in one of the local parks is just one idea.

Be creative in selecting your perfect partner. The community partner provides your students with a million opportunities for service and learning!

On Tuesday, March 5th the PSLA Pittsburgh office will be conducting a workshop on building community partnerships! Don't miss this workshop if you need some help developing community partnerships for your service-learning program! To learn more, visit the PSLA website:

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

The PSLA Website is full of great ideas for integrating your curriculum with service-learning! Visit the site today and see what you've been missing!

www.pitt.edu/~psla

Service-Learning Tips and Ideas for Black History Month

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

Black History Month is an opportune time for students and communities to celebrate issues of diversity and recognize issues of related to the African-American experience. Service-learning is an excellent activity for driving home the many messages of Black History month.

Here are some ideas to get your service-learning "think tank" started:

Black History Poster Contest

Art and History students can team up to start a district-wide poster contest to celebrate Black History Month throughout the school district and community. In preparation for the contest, students can visit elementary schools and teach young children about the importance of Black History Month and give a short history about some famous African-Americans. Older Art students can also be onhand to help young children put together their Black History posters. After the contest is over, the posters can be displayed throughout the district on bulletin boards, in the community on kiosks and in store windows of local businesses.

Black History One-Acts

English students can research African-American playwrights and host a community festival of one-act plays written by African-Americans. Students could even partner up with a community theater company on this project and get a diverse variety of community members involved in the event!

Black History Website

Computer students can create a Black History Website for their community. Not only would students use their computer skills and creativity to design the website, they could research famous African-Americans from their community or state. Once created, the website could be hosted on a community

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server or links to the site can be placed on local websites to encourage community members to learn more about and celebrate local black history.

Black History Musical Tribute

Music students (band, orchestra, choir, etc.) can put together a concert at the local senior citizen center in honor of Black History Month! A musical performance featuring songs of African-American composers can get the senior citizens in your community tapping their toes and dancing up a storm!

Black History Poetry Reading

There are many famous African-American poets that English students could highlight via a community poetry reading event. Whether the students read poems at a local senior citizen center, a local elementary school or at the local library, community members would enjoy hearing young people pay tribute to poets from the past and present.

*For more service-learning inspiration, visit any of these **Black History** websites:*

Celebrating Black History

<http://www.philly.com/packages/history/>

Black History Pages

<http://blackhistorypages.com/>

The Encyclopedia Britannica Guide to Black History

<http://blackhistory.eb.com/>

Education First: Black History Hotlist

http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/bh_hotlist.html

Education World: A Black History Treasure Hunt

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson052.shtml

Stamp on Black History

<http://library.thinkquest.org/10320/Stamps.htm>

CNN Black History Month

http://www.cnn.com/EVENTS/black_history/index.html

Service-Learning Story Hour : African-American Children's Books

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

This month, in honor of Black History Month, consider having your students plan a story hour for children. There are many children's books that celebrate the African-American experience. Child Development, English, Family and Consumer Science or even Life Skills students can research children's books that highlight African-American themes or characters and put together some story hour programs at local libraries and Head Start centers.

Here is a book list to get you started. Follow the link for each book to read an online book review!

Granddaddy's Street Songs

*Written by Monalisa DeGross
Illustrated by Floyd Cooper*

Miss Viola and Uncle Ed Lee

*Written by Alice Faye Duncan
Illustrated by Catherine Stock*

Clean Your Room, Harvey Moon!

Written and Illustrated by Pat Cummings

Bigmama's

Written and Illustrated by Donald Crews

Not Yet, Yvette

*Written by Helen Ketteman
Illustrated by Irene Trivas*

If a Bus Could Talk: The Story of Rosa Parks

Written and Illustrated by Faith Ringgold

Allie's Basketball Dream

*Written by Barbara E. Barber
Illustrated by Darryl Ligasan*

Faraway Drums

*Written by Virginia Kroll
Illustrated by Floyd Cooper*

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Painted Dreams

*Written by Karen Lynn Williams
Illustrated by Catherine Stock*

To learn more about African-American books for children, visit any of these websites:

African-American Voices in Children's Fiction

<http://als.lib.wi.us/AACLlist.html>

African-American Bibliography: Books for Children

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/mulafro.htm>

Black Books Galore!

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

Great Kid's Books

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

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

--by Cynthia Wetmiller,
PSLA Assistant Director

In keeping with our theme of "Black History Month," we highlight news about the African-American experience worldwide. Follow up the reading of these articles with a discussion about racism and a service-learning project to address racism and other forms of discrimination in the students' local community.

Norway Jails Racist Killers

<http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/01/17/norway.racists/index.html>

Who is Cornell West?

<http://www.cnn.com/2002/fyi/teachers.ednews/01/10/west.harvard.ap/index.html>

The Secrets of their Hard-Earned Success

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0115/p15s1-lehl.html>

MLK Day No Holiday for Most

<http://wire.ap.org/?SLUG=KING%2dDAY%2dOBSERVANCE>

Civil Rights Advocate Jim Lester Recalled as Philadelphia Hero

http://inq.philly.com/content/inquirer/2002/01/20/local_news/PLESTER20.htm

A Slave-Labor Force of Youths

http://inq.philly.com/content/inquirer/2001/06/24/front_page/SLAVERY24.htm

History Always in the Present for those Teaching Black Culture

http://www.realcities.com/rc/reports/black_history.htm

Special Days and Events to Celebrate with Service-Learning

--by Cynthia Wetmiller,
PSLA Assistant Director

Anniversary of Freedom Day is February 1st

On February 1, 1865, the passing of the 13th amendment to the US Constitution abolished slavery. In honor of Freedom Day, discuss with your students the significance of this amendment, and help them brainstorm some service-learning project ideas that can help people in the community recognize the value of living in a free society.

February is Library Lovers Month!

The local library could also use a hand! There are many ways that English, Computer Science, Life Skills, Learning Support or Emotional Support students can help out the local library with projects such as story hour, stocking shelves, computer lab aides, etc. Challenge your students to brainstorm the many ways they can help

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support the local library during Library Lover's Month!

February is Wild Bird Feeding Month!

Science students can adopt the birds this month and set up a plan for feeding them throughout the community! From building bird feeders to getting local stores to donate bird feed, there are many things that students can do to help support the local wild bird population.

Groundhog Day is February 2nd!

Whether the ground hog sees his shadow or not on February 2nd, Pennsylvanians are bound to experience more snow, ice and cold days! Physical Education students can put their strength and exercise abilities to the test as they shovel snow for local seniors. Health students can put together a brochure for shut-ins about space heater safety and where to turn if the furnace breaks down or the power goes out.

Winter Olympics Open on February 18th!

The opening of the Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City can be a great excuse to get your Physical Education students planning ways that they can support the local Special Olympics program! Since the Olympics are such an international extravaganza, World Cultures students can help educate younger students in your school district about the history of the Olympics and the many countries represented this year.

Lost Penny Day is February 12th!

This day, set aside for all of us to gather all of our pennies and spend them so that they get back in circulation, would be a great day for Math students to launch a "penny drive" to raise money for a local community agency such as a homeless shelter, a food bank, a free medical clinic or an animal shelter. Just imagine all the math lessons that could be incorporated into such a project!

Anniversary of Ansel Adams' Birth is February 20th!

Photographer Ansel Adams' is probably best known for his photographs of nature. A great environmental service-learning project this month would be one where Art, Computer

and Science students could team up and create a calendar of local parks and nature spots in the community. Using digital cameras, Computer Science students could take care of photographing all the environmental spots Science students identify as being nature's gem in the local community. Art students could be in charge of the calendar layout. Proceeds from the sale of the calendar could be donated to local environmental organizations or the local parks program.

No Brainer Day is February 27th!

While this is really a day set aside for all of us to "slack off," encourage your students to do the opposite and help someone in the community instead!

Solanco Students & Service-Learning: An Intergenerational Success!

--by Diana Williams, Solanco Middle School

Smith Middle School is located in the Solanco School District, in rural southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The learning support program has been involved in service learning for many years. One of the community projects that they help with is decorating Holiday boxes for Senior Citizens in the community. These boxes are distributed with food and gifts in them to the senior citizens in our area. Students paint Christmas and Holiday scenes on the boxes. A new idea this year was to incorporate cartoon characters in our holiday themes. This year, we tied the project into the English curriculum for the 8th grade learning support students.

Each student was "assigned" a Senior Citizen to interview regarding his or her life as a child and teenager. We contacted the Solanco Senior Citizen center and had people volunteer to be interviewed. Also, some staff members had relatives that lived in the area and they were interested in volunteering. In total, there were 10 Senior

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Citizens from our community that were involved in our project.

Students interviewed their “friend” regarding many different topics. These included School Days, Music, Memorable Experiences, Jobs/careers/ and Childhood. Students were given a list of suggested questions for each topic but they could certainly come up with other questions on their own. Students recreated time- lines of their friend’s life and drew family trees. They drew maps of the area in which their friend grew up. These interview topics were then turned into a “notebook interview” where students developed well-written paragraphs and essays on each of the covered topics. The notebook was embellished by any small tokens of memorabilia or photos that the senior citizens shared.

While students were interviewing, some students used a tape recorder to collect their information. Other students had a Para educator with them to help them write the answers to the questions asked. Students were surprised to learn about iceboxes, lack of transportation, and the things that their friends did for fun when they were young.

After several planned visits, the Senior Citizens were invited back for one more day. This was the “PLAY DATE” that everyone looked forward to. The senior citizens were asked to bring to school a game or toy that they used to play with when they were young. Our learning support students were asked to do the same thing. On the actual play date, the seniors taught their student friend how to play their game, and vice versa. We had a wonderful time, learning how to play with wooden tops, checkers and marbles. The seniors were treated to Playstation, Nintendo and the Internet.

The students agreed that the holiday box project became more meaningful when they were actually meeting with people face to face. From a teacher’s point of view, I had students excited about writing, and motivated to do their very best. Their communication and social skills were

enhanced as they had the opportunity to talk to an older person in their community.

For more details on this project write to:
Learning Support Classroom
Smith Middle School
C/O Smith Middle School
645 Kirkwood Pike
Quarryville, PA 17566
Email: diana_williams@solanco.k12.pa.us

If you are involved with a service-learning project and would like to share news about it via the Service-Learning Update, send an email to: psla@pitt.edu

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

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

Pittsburgh

To register online 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.

Recycling Workshop (Act 48)
Friday, February 8th
University of Pittsburgh
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This workshop will be an exciting opportunity to learn about recycling and how to incorporate lessons on recycling into your curriculum via service-learning. Hal Kaufman from the Pennsylvania Resources Council will be on hand to discuss recycling. During this hands-on workshop we will make paper and other art from recycled materials. You won't want to miss this exciting opportunity! Secondary Education teachers

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only please! Contact Sarah at (412) 648-1481 or backstromscool@hotmail.com for more information.

[Sign me up!](#)

Service-Learning & Conservation (Act 48) February 22nd

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

University of Pittsburgh

Sheryl Bruce from the EPA, Ann Gerace, Executive Director of Conservation Consultants Incorporated, and Tom Fitzgerald from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Forestry will talk about education and service opportunities in the field of conservation and natural resources. Deadline to register is February 20th!

[Sign me up!](#)

“The Eleven Essential Elements of Service-Learning: What they are and how to incorporate them into all of your service-learning projects!” (Act 48)

February 26th

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

University of Pittsburgh

This workshop will give an overview of the eleven essential elements of service-learning and tips for incorporating these essential elements into all your service-learning projects. There is no cost to attend and lunch will be served. Deadline to register is February 22nd!

[Sign me up!](#)

“Building Community Partnerships: A Look at What to Do and What NOT to Do!” (Act 48)

Tuesday, March 5th

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

University of Pittsburgh

Partnerships in the community are essential to service-learning. Sometimes, however, lack of time and lack of know how makes it difficult for teachers to make these important community connections. Come learn more about what works and doesn't work in terms of building community partnerships! Lunch will be served. Act 48 hours will be given! Deadline to register is Friday, March 1st!

[Sign me up!](#)

For information and details about these events visit the PSLA website:

www.pitt.edu/~psla

Philadelphia

To register online for any of the workshops in Philadelphia, go to:

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

If you have any questions about the workshops or events in Philadelphia, contact the person listed with each event or call (215) 573-6535.

Using and Creating

Service-Learning Databases (Act 48)

Monday, February 11 - 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Thursday, February 14 - 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Monday, February 18 - 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Thursday, February 21 - 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Come to the Gratz Youth-Driven Service-Learning Center and learn how to use and create databases! This course will guide users through a "real-life" Service Learning database called Gratz Bank. Participants will learn how to access information, input additional resources, and design a basic database for their own purposes. You must attend all four sessions to receive ACT 48 credit. Please register by Feb. 4th, 2002. For information about this event visit

www.delawarevalley.org/psla/database.html

Designing Web Pages:

A Service-Learning Tool (Act 48)

Monday, February 25 - 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Thursday, February 28 - 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Monday, March 4 - 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Thursday, March 7 - 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.

Learn the basics of designing web pages with this hands-on, user friendly workshop at the Gratz YDSL. While you're at it, learn how you can support students who are developing their service learning projects. A student-designed web page can meet project exhibition requirements. You must attend all four sessions to receive ACT 48 credit. Please register by Feb. 18th, 2002. For more information about this event visit www.delawarevalley.org/psla/webpages.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:

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