

# Service-Learning Update

## Brush Up on Service-Learning!

-by Jessica Friedrichs

It might be the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night, but how often do you really think about brushing your teeth? For the women at Miryam's Shelter in Pittsburgh, even this simple activity can be a daily struggle. Maria Lavrinc, a caseworker in charge of volunteers at Miryam's, has a great service-learning project suggestion for students of any age, and it has to do with this very subject--the daily essentials of toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, soap, and shampoo. She asks students to think about these items in a new way.

When people think of homeless shelters, the first projects that jump to mind are food and clothing. Maria reminds us that toiletries are another essential part of life for women in the day program as well as residents at Miryam's. Women need toothbrushes and other toiletries for many reasons. Some are on extremely tight budgets of only two hundred dollars a month, and if Miryam's can provide them with basic toiletries, they can use their money for food. Also, some women simply drop by during the day to shower, and Miryam's wants to provide dental supplies to them. Other women who recently were released from prison have no supplies to start out on their new life. For women meeting with caseworkers or job interviewers, these supplies are essentials.

As Halloween approaches with its sugar-laden sweets, the American Dental Association has declared October as National Dental Hygiene Month. What better way to promote good dental hygiene and healthy lifestyles among students than

with a service project donating toiletries to Miryam's? Get the whole school involved in a toothbrush and toothpaste drive! Have a Health or Family and Consumer Science class put together "healthy living" care packages with donated toiletry items for Miryam's residents! Miryam's is asking for travel or trial sized toothpastes, shampoos, deodorants, soaps and travel toothbrushes. Other useful toiletries include dental floss, hand lotion, disposable razors, cosmetics, and perfumes. Yet the most useful donation you could make to Miryam's would be your students themselves --as volunteers!

Miryam's coordinates programs throughout the day for the 30-60 women using the shelter every day. These activities include art therapy, music, educational programs, recovery groups and of course, serving two square meals. Yet, their favorite activity is having community members or students come in to do a program with the women. Project examples include: preparing and serving a meal, providing a holiday program for adults and children, tutoring a class or teaching a skill, organizing games, or putting on plays and entertainment. A great project would be for students to perform a skit about keeping teeth clean -- a subject they could research and write a play about. Students could also learn about homelessness, mental illness, and many other community issues through this lesson.

This month, challenge your students think about teeth brushing in a whole new way! Create a service-learning project, and remind students that both teeth brushing and a commitment to service are important everyday.

Miryam's needs your dedicated service-learning students! Maria Lavrinc would be

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happy to coordinate a project for your school or class and set up a tour of the shelter. Contact her at (412) 471-0155. Donations of toiletries and other items are accepted from 11 am – 7 pm every day at 1410 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA, 15219.

Not from Pittsburgh? There are shelters all across the state in need of supplies and volunteers – find one near you!

*--Jessica Friedrichs will become an AmeriCorps VISTA member in November and serve one year with the Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance in Pittsburgh. Jessica, a native of Allentown, PA, is a recent graduate of Penn State University. In addition to having a strong interest in the teaching methodology of service-learning, Jessica has a passion for international studies and international service-learning projects. Feel free to contact Jessica at the PSLA: (412) 648-1481. Or send her an email: [jxf243@hotmail.com](mailto:jxf243@hotmail.com)*

### Autumn Service-Learning Tips and Ideas

#### Environment

Autumn can be one of the most beautiful seasons and it is the perfect time to get your students out to enjoy the splendor of those breathtaking Fall days. Just as leaf-raking is a popular Autumn chore for homeowners, it is also a chore that many state and national parks must do as well. Trail blazing is the more popular term for removing the debris (leaves, branches, etc.) from popular hiking trails. Whether you teach Physical Education or Earth Science, a hike through the woods can be a real physical workout, a great educational experience, and an important opportunity for students to help the park service tackle an important chore. For more information on trail blazing opportunities in Pennsylvania state parks and forests, or for information on national park

trail blazing programs, visit any of these websites:

#### **Parks in Classrooms**

<http://www.nps.gov/interp/parkclass.html>

#### **Cook Forest State Park**

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/cookforest.htm>

#### **Grounds for Learning**

<http://mvsd.neiu.k12.pa.us/trail.htm>

### Technology

If your students aren't able to get to a state or national park to blaze some trails this Fall, consider all the many ways students can bring the state and national park to fellow students and community members:

- Students could put together a brochure listing all the local, state and national parks that need volunteers and information about the different volunteer opportunities. Contact information and directions could be listed for each site. This brochure could be displayed at local sporting goods stores, libraries, fitness centers and community centers.
- Students could solicit digital photographs of the local, state and national parks in the region from nonprofit organizations such as the Sierra Club, the Adobon Society, or a local explorer's or hiking club. These images could be displayed on a website that is created by students in an effort to encourage community members to become more actively involved with the many parks in the region. In addition to having online maps of each park, students could list volunteer opportunities and service-learning project ideas so that fellow students and teachers can make the learning connections between park volunteer projects and curriculum such as Earth Science, Environmental Education, etc.

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### Health

Many Health students learn a lot about the importance of healthy diets and eating right. Fall produce brings to the table some of the most nutritious and delicious fruits and vegetables. Students enrolled in a Health class or Family and Consumer Science class can help educate the community about the nutritious aspects of fruits such as apples and vegetables such as squash. Tips for cooking these nutritious items on a budget can also be a great service to those on a limited income. Visit any of these websites for information about online recipes and nutrition:

#### **Food Fit**

[http://www.foodfit.com/healthy/archive/healthyBook\\_july26.asp](http://www.foodfit.com/healthy/archive/healthyBook_july26.asp)

#### **Northeast Regional Food Guide**

<http://www.nutrition.cornell.edu/foodguide/seasoning.html>

#### **Hair to Toes Nutrition**

<http://www.hairtotoes.com>

### Human Needs

Older students helping younger students improve their reading skills is always a great service project. This Fall, consider having your high school or middle school English students put together a Fall reading series for a classroom of local elementary students. The high school or middle school students can research children's books that have an Autumn theme and maybe even get a high school or middle school Art class to prepare a craft to go with each book. By visiting the elementary classroom once a week during October and November, the older students will help foster an interest in reading in the elementary classroom, and the mentoring experience will no doubt be beneficial to the younger and older student alike. Visit any of these websites for information about children's books and mentoring programs:

#### **Children's Literature Webguide**

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/>

#### **Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site**

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

#### **Fresno Reads**

<http://www.csufresno.edu/scs/reads.html>

#### **Amazing Kids**

<http://www.amazing-kids.org/>

## Fall Conferences and Events Worth a Look

### Service-Learning/National Service/ Experiential Education

#### **Pennsylvania**

*October 29<sup>th</sup>-31, 2001*

*Tenth Annual Conference on Integrated Learning: The School-to-Career Connection  
Penn State Conference Center Hotel, State College*

--The conference is designed to share successful strategies that encourage the implementation of educational initiatives to enhance learning opportunities for all students.

Website:

<http://www.pde.psu.edu/staffdevelopment/10annual.html>

#### **Nationwide**

*November 1-4, 2001*

*Association for Experiential Education's Annual International Conference  
Charleston, West Virginia*

--The 29th annual conference for AEE

Website:

<http://www.aee.org/conferences/confupdate.html>

## Technology

### Pennsylvania

#### **Various Dates in November Assistive Technology Expo**

-- An opportunity for teachers to learn more about assistive technology devices and issues.

Website:

<http://www.pde.psu.edu/specialed/AssttechExpo.html>

### Nationwide

#### **November 17<sup>th</sup> Tech to Go!**

*New York, NY*

--The conference will provide a wealth of valuable resources helping teachers to further integrate the use of technology into their classrooms.

Website:

<http://www.convergemag.com/edevents/>

## Environment

### Pennsylvania

#### **October 13-20, 2001 Exploring the Watersheds and Sustainable Communities of Westmoreland County**

*Westmoreland Intermediate Unit,  
Greensburg, PA*

--This is an Act 48 course for Pennsylvania teachers. To learn more about how to register for this course, visit the Intermediate Unit's send an email to:

[cwagner@wiu.k12.pa.us](mailto:cwagner@wiu.k12.pa.us)

## Teaching/Professional Development

### Pennsylvania

#### **October 14-17, 2001 Pennsylvania's Family Involvement Conference**

*Lake Harmony, PA*

--The 27th Annual Family Involvement Conference for educators and parents from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Connecticut and Maryland

Website:

<http://www.pde.psu.edu/staffdevelopment/faminvolv.html>

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

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Halloween is not the only holiday with service-learning possibilities this month! Check out these holiday connections:

### Computer Learning Month

What a great excuse to get your Computer Science involved with a local Community Technology Center! Visit any of these websites for details:

### **Community Technology Center's Network**

<http://www2.ctcnet.org/ctc.asp>

### **Alliance for Technology Access**

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

### **CompuMentor**

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

### Diversity Awareness Month

In honor of Diversity Awareness Month, challenge your students to celebrate diversity in their school and community. Art students could develop a community mural that depicts that many cultures represented in the community. World Cultures students can survey the community to determine what countries and cultures are represented and put together a guide to these cultures so that community members learn more about the various religious beliefs and traditions of the diverse population. Visit any of these websites for more information about diversity issues:

### **Cultural Diversity Resources**

<http://www.ceismc.gatech.edu/busyt/refs.html>

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### **Multicultural Pavillion**

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/multicultural/>

### **Knowing the Community:**

#### **Ethnicity Activity**

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/multicultural/activities/activity2.html>

### **National Crime Prevention Month**

Are students in your classroom concerned about the safety of their school and community? Well, this is the month to have them take action! During National Crime Prevention Month there are many service-learning projects that can be implemented in order to address community and school safety issues. Math students could develop their knowledge of statistics by researching and learning more about crime statistics for their school and community. Once they understand the statistics, the students can highlight those statistics that concern them most and create crime awareness posters that inform the school and community about crime and what they can do to stop it. For more information about crime prevention, visit any of these websites:

#### **National Crime Prevention Council**

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

#### **LAPD's Crime Prevention Tip of the Month**

[http://www.lapdonline.org/bldg\\_safer\\_communities/tip\\_of\\_the\\_month/tip\\_main.htm](http://www.lapdonline.org/bldg_safer_communities/tip_of_the_month/tip_main.htm)

#### **Philadelphia Police Department's Crime Prevention Website**

[http://www.ppdonline.org/ppd8\\_prevent\\_month.htm](http://www.ppdonline.org/ppd8_prevent_month.htm)

### **National Pasta Month**

Soup kitchens don't always serve just soup and bread to the hungry and homeless. Consider getting your Family and Consumer Science or Life Skills students to prepare a Spaghetti Dinner at the local soup kitchen or homeless shelter this month in

honor of National Pasta Month! Not only would students be helping meet a real need (hunger) they could learn more about health issues such the Food Pyramid and carbohydrates. For more information, visit any of these websites:

#### **What is a healthy diet?**

<http://www.globalgourmet.com/food/foodfun/fffdiet.html>

#### **The Food Guide Pyramid for Kids**

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay\\_healthy/food/pyramid.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/pyramid.html)

#### **Homeless Shelters and Soup Kitchens: A Searchable Map by State**

[http://4homeless.hypermart.net/soup\\_kitchens.html](http://4homeless.hypermart.net/soup_kitchens.html)

### **National Popcorn Month**

Popcorn is not only an inexpensive and easy to prepare snack, it is very nutritional! National Popcorn Month would be a great time to have your students make and sell popcorn so that they can raise money for a service-learning project! Visit any of these sites for popcorn facts:

#### **Popcorn.org**

<http://www.popcorn.org/index.cfm>

#### **Popcorn Isn't Just for Movies!**

[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/lesson082.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson082.shtml)

### **Fire Prevention Week is October 7-13**

At the end of the month it will be daylight savings time and all of us will "fall back" an hour. Daylight savings time is traditionally the time we're supposed to check the batteries in our smoke alarms. For some people this task can be difficult, especially if they are in a wheel chair. For others, the cost of new batteries is prohibitive. In honor of Fire Prevention Week, Life Skills students could host a school-wide "Battery Drive" and collect batteries to give to those who cannot afford to replace the batteries in their fire alarms. A partnership with the local fire

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department might also result in the students having some free smoke alarms to give away! For more information on Fire Prevention Week, visit any of these websites:

### **Firehouse.com**

<http://www.firehouse.com>

### **Facts about Smoke Alarms**

<http://www.gov.on.ca/OFM/pubsafet/fasa.htm>

### **United States Fire**

#### **Administration's Kids Page**

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/kids/>

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

October has plenty of opportunities for teachers to attend service-learning workshops with the staff of the PSLA. Check out these events:

### Pittsburgh

A **Special Education and Service-Learning Network meeting** is being held by the PSLA in Pittsburgh. The date is Thursday, October 18 at 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm at the University of Pittsburgh. The meeting is free. Contact Roberta Ryan at 412-648-1481 to register.

**Special Education and Service-Learning Workshops** are also being conducted throughout the month of October. These workshops are open to any teacher, regardless of where you teach. Attend the date that is best for you!

- **Monday October 15** from 11:30 am – 2:30 pm at Riverside High School in Beaver County.
- **Tuesday October 23** from 3 pm – 6 pm at Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit.

- **Wednesday October 31** from 12 pm – 3 pm at Rochester High School in Beaver County.

Contact [Roberta Ryan](#) at 412-648-1481 to register for these free workshops!

### Philadelphia

With support from the Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership, and in conjunction with the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Pennsylvania Service Learning Alliance, PHENND (Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development) will be conducting a 15-hour workshop for K-12 teachers this fall. **This course is designed to be an introduction to Service Learning for art specialists and/or other classroom teachers.** The workshop will count for 15 Act 48 CEUs. The registration fee is \$150.00 and some scholarship money is available. Also, if you are not a K-12 teacher, but would still like to take the course, there is room for some folks to audit but you must seek permission from the instructors. For workshop dates and times, or to register, please contact Hillary Aisenstein: Phone: 215-573-2379  
Email: [hillarya@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:hillarya@pobox.upenn.edu)