

# LEARNING AND SERVING IN PENNSYLVANIA

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA SERVICE-LEARNING ALLIANCE

## IF I COULD CHANGE ONE THING IN THE WORLD

-MARY KWARTNIK, ANNA LANE-LINGELBACH SCHOOL

SUMMER 2000

At the Lingelbach School, our approach to service-learning has been shaped by our community partner, Need in Deed. Need in Deed is a service-learning organization that helps students (and their teachers) develop project ideas generated from students' concern about the world around them.

In partnership with Need in Deed, the 3rd and 4th grades in our Small Learning Community have spent time exploring their gifts and talents and identifying problems in the world they want to address. The acronym of SMILE outlines the process we are using:

- S—start by believing in yourself
- M—make up your mind to succeed
- I—identify the problem or concern
- L—learn more about it
- E—express what you have learned

Our third graders are concerned about child abuse, homelessness, drug abuse and crime. Their essential question is "How do grown-up problems affect children?" The Need in Deed approach introduces the students to a variety of neighborhood social service agencies who work deals with these issues, either directly or indirectly. In March we took a field trip to Inn Dwelling, the outreach arm of a local church. Students visited the center's food cupboard, health clinic, thrift shop and dining room. They learned from Father Greg how programs to combat drug abuse, unemployment, housing and hunger often have a positive effect on children, as well. Students later visited two other area shelters: Wintershelter and People's Emergency Center, to compare how different organizations address this problem.

For their culminating project, the third graders will create "Call for

Help" refrigerator magnets, listing the names and phone numbers of community agencies and hotlines, for distribution to all the students in the school.

Fourth graders chose a dual focus for their service-learning project: health and homelessness.

Several health care experts (two nurses from a visiting nurse association and a registered nurse from a local hospital) came to the class, answered questions and described how proper hand washing can help prevent the spread of germs. In conversations with a local shelter, students discovered that families who are temporarily living there have no first aid supplies—even basic anti-bacterial ointment or Band-Aids. The students wrote to local pharmacies and super markets requesting donations of first aid supplies. We recently got a positive response from the American Red Cross of Southeastern PA, which is donating first aid supplies for our project. The students will decorate cardboard boxes, transforming them into "First Aid/Healthy" boxes, for distribution to families in the shelter. Each box will contain a message, with supplies and simple tips they've gleaned from their interviews with healthcare experts.

The fourth graders' culminating event will be a visit to the shelter, where they will meet with shelter residents and distribute their hand-decorated kits.

We are using portfolios to collect journal reflections, photographs from field trips, relevant newspaper clipping, surveys and other lessons across the curriculum that relate to our projects.

-For more information on the Need in Deed program, call them at (215) 242-NEED

### Journal Reflections from Third Graders involved with this Need in Deed project:

"In Need in Deed we learned about things we feel sad about and things we feel happy about. We did a work sheet that said if I could change one thing in the world it would be, I would change the people that are poor and give them a wonderful and happy life."

-Jacquelynn Denise Dickens

"We did a paper. It had questions on what we were concerned about. I was concerned because I wouldn't want to be without a home or food. The other things I am concerned about are drugs. I don't like drugs because they are bad. They can mess up your whole life."

-Zakia Haughten

"When we got to the People's Emergency Center we learned that women live there. We talked about homeless people and how St. Vincent's helps people, too. When we went to the Wintershelter we learned that men live there. We put a card on each bed. We found the beds were underground. At the People's Emergency Shelter we found out that women and their babies live there and the mothers go to school to learn how to be good mothers. We did not know that the kids go to a public school. We went on the trip because we were learning about homeless people. Mr. Dick was happy we brought cocoa."

-Gregory Darby

"When we went to the People's Emergency Center I had a lot of fun. We went to a classroom to talk about homeless things. Then we went to a place where men sleep at night. We met a man named Mr. Dick. We gave him food for the men."

-Latesha Harper-Wimes

