



Lincoln Public Schools Lincoln, Massachusetts

To: School Committee
From: Randy Davis, Sharon Hobbs, Janice Fairchild, Erich Ledebuhr, Steve McKenna, Mary Sterling
Re: Report on Community Service Learning
Date: April 6, 2011

In the past few years, through the goal-setting process and the development of Lincoln Learning Expectations, the district has made a commitment to civic engagement through community service learning in every student's education. The real action has occurred at the school level where principals, teacher leaders, and teachers have made this commitment come alive in the work they have done with students of all grades. Engagement in community service learning has now become a part of every child's experience as a student in the Lincoln Public Schools.

This report describes the range of community service learning projects in our schools. Each project is an opportunity for students to make "civic engagement" a reality by taking leadership and being engaged as citizens in school, local, national, and international communities. In the verbal presentations, principals will describe what students are learning through these projects and middle school students from both campuses will offer detail and reflection on their experiences.

The Lincoln School – Steve McKenna, Gr. K-4; Sharon Hobbs Gr. 5-8

Themes of working hard, playing fair and respecting one another are a common thread throughout the Lincoln School. These values form the basis of our civic engagement and community service learning where we identify the classroom environment as a daily example of a working community. Staff training has focused on the Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design approaches to teaching and learning, which provide opportunities for students to feel safe, connected, responsible, and engaged in learning. These trainings have been transformational for our staff and have enhanced the learning experiences of our students. The K-4 All School Meeting and the Grade 5-8 Come Together experiences reinforce the notion of smaller school communities within the larger school community. These monthly gatherings provide a respectful avenue for the celebration and sharing of learning with a community beyond the individual classroom.

As goal 4 in our Lincoln School Improvement Plan states, we have invested our efforts in engaging students in community service learning opportunities that support the Lincoln community and beyond. Some of those experiences are referenced below.

Kindergarten (a small video, presented on April 14, 2011, will focus on student learning)

Food Project Kindergarten has integrated civic engagement and service learning opportunities into their program through a relationship with The Food Project. In the fall The Food Project visited each classroom allowing students to learn about food projects, soup kitchens, and community farming. Children assisted in taking kernels off ears of popcorn, which is popped for a holiday party for homeless children. In the spring they will take a field trip to The Food Project and learn about many aspects of the Lincoln site farm.

Grade 1

Council on the Aging First graders wrote and designed cards to bring cheer to people and families through the Lincoln Council on the Aging. Students learned first-hand that writing is a vehicle for communication and the experience provided a real purpose for their writing. More learning took place when the students received notes in return indicating how much their cards were appreciated. The students were able to better understand the power of their words and actions.

Grade 2

Japan Relief aligned with the Red Cross Grade two teachers collaborating with Art specialist, Colleen Pearce, to provide some support to the people of Japan. The specifics of this effort are still being developed and may include the participation of other grade level teams. The work on this project will connect to the grade two social studies study of continents and countries in the world.

Grade 3

Toys for Tots Foundation Third grade classes and one first grade class opted to forego the customary holiday class gifts in order to support Toys for Tots. The teachers held a discussion with students and offered them the choice of receiving a gift for the classroom or giving toys to children in need. The decision was unanimous and students spent \$10 or less to contribute toys to the drive. The results of this effort were not only a contribution to the Toys for Tots Foundation but also, students embraced the spirit of giving and learned that there are individuals who are less fortunate than they are.



Grade 4

Weekly Recycling Grade four students have taken on the weekly responsibility of collecting the recycled paper from each classroom and office in the K-4 end of the building. Throughout the year -- including the cold and snowy winter days -- they cheerfully transported the paper to the collection bin in the Smith parking lot. Student reflections include: "It is bad for the Earth to put trees in landfills." "Sooner or later we will run out of trees and paper!" "It makes pollution worse." "Trees give us oxygen, if we keep cutting them down for paper we could run out of oxygen." "I don't mind giving up recess. Recess is not more important than the environment."

Grade 5

Clothing Drive, Troop Support, and Assisted Living Connection The fifth grade completed a successful clothing drive in November. Fifth grade students along with adult helpers Sarah Liepert, Pat Winston and Jennifer Glass, sorted, sized, and bagged more than three hundred items. The clothing was delivered to Open Table in Concord. In addition, each fifth grade student wrote a letter to someone serving in the military. These letters were placed in gift packages and sent to troops serving our country. Students also made a valentine to be delivered to an assisted living facility.

Grade 6

Donations to Orphanage in Siberia The sixth grade students collected hats, mittens, socks, new underwear, and Barbie clothes to mail to an orphanage called Dom Desky #5 in Siberia. This effort connected to the students' study of the five themes of geography related to Russia. As part of the assignment, the students made cards to send with the clothing. One sixth grade student, who is fluent in Russian, translated a letter written by the class to send to the children of the orphanage.

Grade 7

Sudanese Educational Fund Seventh grade students had a Guitar hero competition to support the Sudanese Educational Fund. Many students competed and raised approximately \$500 dollars for the fund. In addition, three students have taken on responsibility for tutoring Sudanese children in Arlington. One multi-week session is complete and at least two of the students have signed up to continue to work with their students. Our students were appreciative that "the children remember you from one time to the next. I'm going to do it again."

Grade 8

Lincoln Town Agencies and Food Pantry The eighth grade has become the grade to whom requests from town agencies are frequently made. Students participated in the Codman Fair in the fall, as well as the Lincoln Youth Soccer day. Students have participated in serving meals at Cor Unum, a food pantry in Lawrence, once a month. Several students have become regular participants. One student, who has been three times, said "It's really fun. You get to help people." Another student was there on the busiest night Cor Unum had ever had and said, "We worked really hard and helped a lot of people to eat."

Community Service Learning Projects led by the Student Council

Members of the Student Council have facilitated several different opportunities for students to get involved either at the school or for larger causes.

UNICEF In October, all middle school students were encouraged to collect donations if they went out trick-or-treating on Halloween night. The donations supported UNICEF's mission to help children around the world gain access to food, clean water, health care and education. This was Student Council's third year organizing this fundraiser for UNICEF. Students showed a video that explained the living conditions of many children in the world to raise awareness of why it was important to Trick or Treat for UNICEF. The result was an \$800 donation to UNICEF.

Food Drive for Open Table In November, Student Council collected canned foods for their annual holiday food drive. This year, they made their donation to Open Table in Concord. Open Table had reported to Student Council that they were serving many more families this year compared to years past and were in need of donations. Thanks to the generosity of many families, the result was over 2,000 canned items collected and delivered to the Lowell Food Pantry and Open Table in Concord.

It's All About Kids Foundation, Lowell In February, the student council sponsored Boston Sports Spirit Day! Students donated \$2.00 to wear clothing from their favorite Boston teams. The result was a \$175 donation to the It's All About Kids Foundation in Lowell.

MSPCA March was MSPCA month. The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention to Cruelty to Animals takes in up to 1,000 abused, neglected, abandoned and sick animals each month. Student Council decided that they wanted to help animals in need and support the efforts of the MSPCA. Their fundraising events included spirit days, and a "cutest pet" contest. The result was heightened awareness of the MSPCA and a \$1000 donation.

Support for Japan Relief In April the students will be conducting a raffle in order to make a donation to Save the Children Foundation's efforts in Japan. They solicited donations of an ipod, Red Sox tickets, gift cards, and a lunch made by Ms. Nathanson.

In addition to efforts to support organizations through donations, Student Council members also supported the math night effort in the lower grades by being present and facilitating students in the playing of games. They were also a presence at the PTA Family Dance night where they joined in the dancing and got smaller children to do the same. Finally, the Student Council worked with former students Henry Frost and Eric Steinbrook to recruit teams of three players to play in a one-day tournament to support their efforts to provide funding for organizations in the United States.

The Hanscom Schools

Hanscom Primary School Grades K-3 – Randy Davis

At Hanscom Primary School, we lay the foundation of our work with civic engagement by creating caring classroom communities. With our second cohort of teachers trained in Responsive Classroom this past summer, we now have all classrooms participating in morning meetings and the Responsive Classroom approach. Class meetings, monthly school wide Community Meetings and our school citizenship agreement work together to build a strong sense of our school community and the necessity to be safe, to be kind and to be hard working. Our young students work together to learn to engage, to try out ways to help themselves, their classmates and their school.

As a primary school we often impart important messages to students through children's literature, and in particular through picture books. The spirit of community service and civic engagement is best summed up in the Barbara Cooney's children's classic *Miss Rumphius*:

Alice learns from her grandfather and lets him know... "I too will go to faraway places, and when I grow old, I too will live beside the sea.".... "but there is a third thing you must do. You must do something to make the world more beautiful," said her grandfather. "All right," said Alice. But she did not know what that could be. (Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney)

As we work to create a school community that embraces the spirit of civic contribution, we also find ways to give our students a more global perspective, moving from classroom to school to base to local, national and international communities. To this end, our students have participated in a variety of activities to offer their service to others.

Food pantry at the "Grow Clinic"

The Grow Clinic for Children is a unique and successful program for the treatment of Failure To Thrive (FTT) in young children. Involvement with this clinic is a long-term service project at Hanscom Primary. Our students participate in this project by collecting food to assist children with "Failure To Thrive" and they begin to see ways that young children can help other children.

Actions and Results:

- Grade level teams signed up by month to do a collection for the Grow Clinic.
- Grade level teachers sent notice of collections – aligned with concerts and grade level events – home to families.
- Students, families and staff donated food, formula, etc.
- Pupil Services Coordinator Karen Kanter, assisted by Team Leaders, coordinated school wide efforts, grade level sign ups and made deliveries.
- At least six times a year, a “Buick Trunk full” of contributions are delivered to the Grow Clinic.

Support for Deployed Men and Women

Our goal in this project is to engage students in brightening the lives of deployed soldiers. Also, we emphasize the importance of acknowledging the service of men and women in uniform.

Actions and Results:

- 100% of students in HPS classrooms wrote letters to deployed soldiers (Veteran’s Day, Valentine’s Day Cards).
- Letters were delivered on base and were included in gift boxes sent out through the Company Grade Officer’s Council on Hanscom Air Force Base.

Holiday Season Collection for Veterans

This annual project at Hanscom Primary help students understand who Veterans are and why we celebrate a holiday in their honor. The students’ efforts help them experience the importance of giving as they brighten the holidays for Veterans.

Actions and Results:

- Notes were sent home to request donations for Veterans at the VA hospital in Bedford.
- Students attended November Community Meeting to discuss and understand the meaning of *Veterans*. The Air Force Band did a concert of patriotic music to celebrate the holiday.
- Students, parents, and staff brought in donations such as socks, sweatshirts, deodorant, etc.
- First grade teacher Mary-Ann Sullivan coordinated the project and delivered a van full of donations to the VA hospital.

Martin Luther King Jr. Recognition

Primary students learn about civic engagement through the model of the life and words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Students study Dr. King’s words and actions and come to understand why a holiday is celebrated in his honor. This project helps students begin to see how people can make a difference and creates opportunities for them to reflect on ways that they, too, can be involved.

Actions and Results:

- Students read and discussed the book “Martin’s Big Words” by Doreen Rappaport
- Students worked with Art specialist Donna Lubin to create two decorative banners that were displayed at the Hanscom Air Force Base Martin Luther King Day breakfast.
- Students attended a January Community Meeting to watch Rob Surette perform his hero art painting and hear his message.

Heifer Project - being planned for May 2011

Our school wide goal with this project is to help students to see how their contributions can make a difference for children and their families around the world. We will teach our young students to distinguish between wants and needs as they learn about the situations of other families.

Actions:

- At Community Meeting all classes will watch the story of Beatrice’s Goat and see how a goat can change the life of a family in need.
- Classes will read the picture book Beatrice’s Goat in classrooms.
- Letters will be sent to families to explain the project.
- Collection will be started in front lobby.
- Donation will be made on behalf of HPS community.

In addition to all these school projects, there are many smaller acts of service learning and kindness that are no less important in building a caring learning community. These include individual students who assist with recycling, do classroom jobs or who act as buddies for new students. It also includes whole classes, or grade levels that organize outdoor clean up, work as partners on projects with Hanscom Middle School students, or organize activities to include students with differing abilities.

We find that our students, and staff, are proud of their efforts to assist others. Through these efforts we find ways to incorporate community service into our students' learning. We assist our students to extend these experiences into their lives and to find their own ways to make the world more beautiful.

Hanscom Middle School Grades 4-8 – Erich Ledebuhr

This year, Hanscom Middle School has sponsored school-wide and multi-grade Community service learning projects. Our Student Council Leadership provided leadership for the majority of our Community service learning projects; other projects were connected to the curriculum at different grade levels. A high level of participation in each project at every grade contributed to the success of the projects and the sense of community activism in the school.

Community service learning projects led by the HMS Student Council

October - Recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

The goal of this project was to educate students and staff about the number of women worldwide who fight breast cancer daily, are survivors, or who have lost their lives to breast cancer. Also, the project helped students understand how corporations, educational institutions, and scientists are working together to find a cure for breast cancer. Students and faculty showed support for those affected by breast cancer in many ways, including participation in a fund drive to raise money to donate to Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation.

Actions and Results:

- The Student Council held a Breast Cancer Awareness Week for grades 4-8.
- Student Council members shared a fact about breast cancer on morning announcements each day of the week.
- All students and staff wore pink one day of the week to show support and held a bake sale to raise money to donate to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation.
- Students and staff were invited to make a donation to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation and students were given a pink ribbon to wear for the week to show they were supporting the race for a cure.
- Student Council members created a "Wall of Heroes" in the main hallway. All students and staff members were invited to write the name of someone they know who fought or is currently fighting breast cancer on a large paper ribbon. In addition, Student Council members made posters with facts about breast cancer to place around the wall of heroes.
- A Student Council member whose mother is a breast cancer survivor spoke to grades 6-8 Student Council about what breast cancer is, what the treatment entails, and how breast cancer changed the relationships in her family.
- An eighth grade student spoke to his science class about the impact of his mother's breast cancer on his family and how his family is continually worried about a reoccurrence. The science teacher then facilitated a class discussion.
- Classroom teachers and Student Council members facilitated discussions about breast cancer in morning meeting for fourth and fifth grade students.
- Cross-country members taped their running sneakers with pink tape for the final meet to show Hanscom's support for breast cancer survivors.
- Students raised \$355 dollars to donate to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation.

November - The Problem of Hunger in the United States

This project's goal was to educate students and staff about the problem of hunger in United States. Students learned how the problem of hunger can afflict anyone at anytime and that how many adults and children in neighboring communities go to bed hungry each evening. Students raised money and collected donations to give to the Merrimack Valley Food Bank.

Actions and Results:

- Students in grades 4-8 dedicated a week to bringing awareness to the problem of hunger in the United States.
- Students researched the problem of hunger in the United States and shared their facts during social studies classes.
- Student Council members shared a fact about hunger in the United States on morning announcements each day of the week. They also read a question about hunger each morning and students answered the questions on a form in homeroom and submitted the form for a raffle. The answer to the question was read the following day on morning announcements.
- All students and staff wore orange (the color of hunger awareness) one day of the awareness week.
- Students wore a t-shirt with a name of a place in the US to show that hunger can affect anyone in anyplace.
- Student Council members created a “fact wall” in a main hallway that contained facts and statistics about hunger in the US.
- The school held a canned goods and non-perishable item drive. Student Council members wrote a letter for students to share with their families explaining the problem of hunger in the US and encouraging families to participate in the food drive.
- \$150 dollars and over 900 pounds of canned goods non-perishable items were donated to the Merrimack Valley Food Drive

December - Toys for Tots Foundation

In response to the robbery of a Toys for Tots storage space in Burlington this December, the Student Council quickly held a Toys for Tots fundraising drive. The goal was to collect toys for children that otherwise may not receive a toy for Christmas. Also, the effort helped educate students that Toys for Tots is an organization started and run by the US Marine Corps and provided a way for students to work with their school community and military community.

Actions and Results:

- Student Council sponsored a two week toy drive.
- Student Council members researched the development and growth of the Marine Corps Toys for Tots Foundation.
- Student Council members wrote a letter to students and staff members inviting them to make a donation. In the letter students explained how and why the Marine Corps created the Toys for Tots Foundation.
- Donations from the school community and from organizations on the base resulted in one and a half carloads of toys contributed to the Toys for Tots Foundation.
- Student Council members created a “thank you” wall to thank donors and wrote thank you notes to individuals and organizations that donated toys.

March - Donations for the Troops

The focus of this community service learning project was to support the troops abroad by sending items and notes of appreciation for the service they provide. The project helped remind students and staff of the conditions that some of our troops are facing so that we live safely and freely.

Actions and Results:

- As part of HMS Olympic Week, homerooms competed against one another to see which homerooms could collect the most items for the troops.
- Students wrote thank you notes and letters to troops.
- 10 boxes of items and 3 large manila envelopes of notes were sent to troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

April - planning is underway for National Autism Month and Environmental Awareness

Community service learning projects with grade-level curriculum connections

In the social studies curriculum at every grade, one of the Key Outcomes in the Lincoln Learning Expectations focuses on the relationship between the environment and people. Students of different ages come to understand how people affect the environment and the environment affects people. Several grade-level community service learning projects make the connection between this key outcome and the outcome of civic involvement.

Fourth graders organized and conducted a cleanup of school grounds in the fall, accompanied by discussions about environmental responsibility. At fifth grade, students are working with the Lincoln conservation committee to understand the problem of invasive plants and to participate in the spring removal of garlic mustard plants. Sixth-graders wrote letters to the editor as part of the unit of study on climate change and its effect on the regions of the Arctic, Antarctic and Oceania. Students in sixth grade also studied facts about freshwater shortage and waterborne diseases. They then made Rehydration Packets which will be sent to Haiti. At the seventh and eighth grade, students are participating in efforts that are base-wide such as helping with the annual Creek Cleanup and planting trees on Arbor Day.

In art classes students undertook a Community service learning projects in response to the recent tragedy in Japan. The tradition in Japan is that 1,000 folded cranes bring hope. All art students have discussed the art of origami and folded origami cranes. When they reached the goal of 1,000 cranes, they will be sent to Japan.

Hanscom Middle School is proud of number and different types of Community service learning projects that we have been involved with throughout the year. We have a dedicated student population and staff committed to doing their part to make the world a better place.