

Making the Connection: Intergenerational Service-Learning

**National Conference on
Volunteering and Service
Atlanta, Georgia
June 1, 2008 ■ 2:00-3:30**

Session Outcomes:

Participants will leave this session with:

- Definition of service-learning and elements of quality service-learning
- Understanding of the SaYES Initiative
- Materials and information to help launch a SaYES partnership
- A beginning action plan

What is SaYES

- A joint initiative of Learn and Serve America and Senior Corps
- Goal: Build local capacity of RSVP projects and schools to engage in effective partnerships to support service-learning

SaYES Products and Resources

- Accessed via the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
- Three online training modules or downloadable PDF version (in your packets)
- Appendix of adaptable forms and templates

Adaptable Template Appendix

- Position descriptions
- Service assignments
- Outreach materials
- Memoranda of understanding
- Policies and procedures
- Worksheets

What is Service-Learning?

- A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with academic study
- Combines service objectives with learning objectives
- Is structured; reflection time enriches and informs the service-learning experience

What is Service-Learning?

- Youth and community stakeholders have a voice in and impact on the process
- Participants acquire new skills and knowledge, and have the opportunity to strengthen communities and to explore values
- Results are shared and work well done is celebrated to motivate participants to continued learning and community involvement

Service-learning is not...

- Stand-alone volunteer activity
- An add-on to existing curriculum
- Minimum service hours to graduate
- Service assigned as punishment
- Only for students
- Only for older students
- One-sided (students and communities give *and* receive)
- Community service without the learning component

Stories From the Field

Prime Time Volunteers
Sheila Bohr
Waterloo, IA

RSVP and the Waterloo Community Schools District = Prime Time!

In 1991/1992, the Waterloo School District and RSVP partnered together to develop an organized volunteer group, consisting of individuals 55 and older, to assist in providing educational experiences in a diverse cultural setting where in all students are expected to learn. This group was originally called the *Golden Apple Club*.

RSVP and the Waterloo Community School District = Prime Time!

The impetus for this initiative was children come to school affected by:

- The rapid change in structure of the American family, traditional institutions and gender roles.
- Worsening social conditions such as greater availability of drugs, increased violence and teenage pregnancies.

RSVP and the Waterloo Community School District = Prime Time!

Through experience adults know that there is a difference between “adult time” and “child time”— that a year between five and six for a child is much different than any one year of an adult. We could not then and still can not talk about children as “the future” which somehow implies that the needs are in the future.

RSVP and the Waterloo Community School District = Prime Time!

Volunteers (55+) were (and continue to be) recruited and over the years have helped with various subjects such as reading, math, art, crafts, woodworking, served on committees, helped with field trips, mentor, pen pal, etc.

RSVP and the Waterloo Community School District = Prime Time!

- Fast forward to 2006 – anticipation of the “boomers” retiring.
- The Golden Apple Club was still in place and active.
- However, the “anticipation of” and “hopes for” this “new” generation of retirees and their (anticipated) desire to help address community needs, was the next impetus – this time in “change” within the program - in hopes of attracting this new generation of retirees and tapping into their experience, knowledge and passion to help others/make a difference.

RSVP and the Waterloo Community School District = Prime Time!

Due to the need to continually recruit volunteers for the Waterloo Schools; the desire to include this “generation of boomers” into that recruitment; as well as the need for RSVP to have a better hands on with the volunteers and their service activity for data collection purposes, it was agreed upon by RSVP and the Waterloo Community Schools to have an RSVP Outreach Coordinator housed in the Waterloo Schools.

RSVP and the Waterloo Community School District = Prime Time!

Results?

- We are better able to capture the impact of the volunteers who are in reading, math and mentoring activities.
- We have increased our recruitment of volunteers in the 55-65 range. In 2005, we had 4 Primetime volunteers in this age range. Today we have 46!!!

RSVP and the Waterloo Community School District = Prime Time!

Drawbacks? Problems? Concerns?

Yes, there have been all of the above at one time or another. But pluses far outweigh the minuses. This 2005 extension of the partnership that started in 1991 with the Waterloo Community Schools District has provided the results we had focused on – 1) increased volunteer recruitment-including boomers and 2) a more accurate accounting of the impact of RSVP volunteers in the school.

Which leads me into our SaYes activity....

This activity was an extension for 14 RSVP school-based mentors and their mentees. These volunteers and students who are matched as Mentors and Mentees spent the better share of a morning together in volunteer service to others.

Primetime SaYes Project – Waterloo, Iowa

**School based Mentors and Mentees engaged
in one of two intergenerational activities:**

NE Iowa Food Bank – Putting together family food bags that were to be dispersed for the weekend.

Cedar Valley Arboretum & Botanical Gardens– Cleaning up of grounds by weeding, raking, etc. in preparation of the planting/growing season.

Problems? Hindsight?

- Had to follow-up on the permission slips – getting them signed and returned.
- Picking the students up. They were “scattered” around the city and it took 2 large vans to transport to and from.



Now for a few snapshots of the day's activities....

Food Bank

The Mentors & Mentees learn about the Food Bank and the important role it has in our communities.



Food Bank

It was a team effort!



Food Bank

55 schools in a 10 county area will receive these food packs through operation Family Pack.



Food Bank

Everyone took their job seriously.



Food Bank

Mentor Sherry and Mentee Shannon enjoyed the opportunity to work together to help others.



Food Bank

Helping others put smiles on everyone!



Arboretum

Mentor Tim & Mentee Damonte going over the day's "game plan".



Arboretum

Mentor Carol and Mentee Brienna checking their lists!



Arboretum

Mentor Stan and Mentee Keilan putting their plan together!



Arboretum

Mentor Lance and Mentee Letrell are partners as they work together in their clean-up efforts.



Arboretum

Mentee Matthew & Mentor Steve trim back old plants in one of the garden beds.



Arboretum – Mentor Ken with Mentee Mekhi

“We all need someone to look up to and someone who looks up to us.”



Stories From the Field

RSVP of Jefferson County
Nancy Grim
Steubenville, OH

Partnerships begin at the beginning...

- How do others perceive you?
 - Worker?
 - Speedy?
 - Finisher?
 - Appreciative?
 - Empowering? (not seeking total control)
- Verbal and Nonverbal Communication?
- Reputation for other projects?

Differing Communities:

Factors & Influences- community history, demographic, prejudices, politics, economical or social changes, attitudes toward issues ect...

- Needs Assessment (use many modes)
 - Phone survey
 - Carpe Diem (Seize the Day and the Opportunity)
 - Listen and attend Local Meetings
 - Town Hall Meetings
 - Churches
 - Advisory Councils
 - Program Surveys
 - What would you like to see improved on in your community?
 - Is there a need in your community right now?
- Long-term vs. Short-term Needs
- Brainstorm Solutions
- Be flexible, teachable and versatile
- Seek problem and solution before funding

Participation Motive & Resources Inventory

- Who has the financial resources?
- Who has the know-how?
- Who has the human resources?
- Who has the political pull?
- Who has the greatest potential for sustainability?
- Who is a worker bee interested in really making a difference in this area?
- Who is interested in gaining personal or agency credit?
- Who knows everyone?
- Who has inkind & supplies?

Stories From the Field

RSVP of Summit County
Inese Alvarez
Akron, OH

Giving Thought to Green- Akron OH

- Service-learning project based on model from *The Project on Civic Reflection*
- www.civicreflection.org
- **Civic reflection** is the practice of reading and discussing short pieces of literature as a means of reflecting on the central questions of civic life, i.e., giving, serving, leading & associating

Giving Thought to Green- Akron OH

- Chose a private Catholic school – Our Lady of the Elms High School
- Social Action Club- Afterschool program for students interested in community issues and good candidates for discussions about civic engagement

Reading & Reflecting with RSVP

- Literary Readings were chosen from “*The Civically Engaged Reader*”

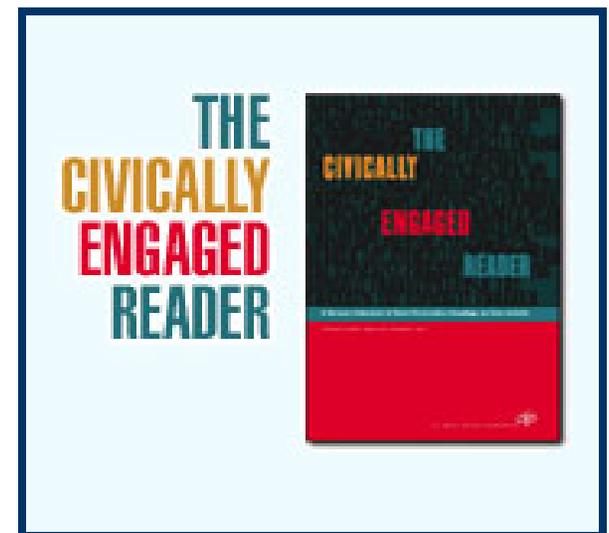
“*Fellowship*”- Franz Kafka

“*Mending Wall*” – Robert Frost

“*Where Were We*” – Dave Eggers

“*The Lovers of the Poor*”- Gwendolyn Brooks

“*The Use of Force*”-Wm. Carlos Williams



Reading & Reflecting with RSVP

- Series of 4 meetings involving 8 high school students from Our Lady of the Elms High School and 10 RSVP volunteers
- Evaluations showed an interest in continuing the activity



SaYES Grant

- Opportunity allowed RSVP to expand the civic reflection program to include the service-learning component
- Focused the activity on Earth Day
- Proposal of project submitted to the teacher in charge of the school's Social Action Club

Program Goals

1. To further intergenerational understanding
2. To engage older adults to mentor youth on importance of civic engagement
3. To bring about more consciousness about the environment in the community

Program Development

- 6 meetings - 2 hours each
- Meeting 1: Reading of poem
- Meeting 2: Information about Climate Change
- Meeting 3: Information about low-income housing; discussion on fund-raising; how to design presentation to residents of low-income housing

Program Development

- Meeting 4: Finalize the presentation/Rehearse
- Meeting 5: Implement Presentation
- Meeting 6: Follow-up with reading of the poem to tie in the activities with the poem; evaluation of program

Program Participants

- Ten RSVP volunteers (semi-diverse group)
 - One volunteer facilitated series
 - Retired science and math professor at a local university presented Climate Change information
 - One RSVP Advisory Council member
- Sixteen students & One teacher
 - 9th grade: 1
 - 10th grade: 3
 - 11th grade: 6
 - 12th grade: 6

First Meeting

Reading and discussion of “*God’s Grandeur*” by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844)



Second Meeting

Information about climate change
presented by RSVP volunteer



Third and Fourth Meetings

- Talk given by Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority Service Coordinator (also RSVP Advisory Council member)
- Students and RSVP volunteers discussed how they were going to take the information and present it to lower income residents of AMHA
- Decided to present to 2 buildings

Third and Fourth Meetings

- Discussion about ways to seek donations for energy efficient light bulbs and reusable shopping bags. (Writing request letters, fundraisers)
- Students and RSVP volunteers worked on Go Green Skit to present the information and “Fact or Fiction” game show format to test the audience’s knowledge about what they learned

“Go Green” Skit



Conversation between Grandparent & Grandchild about CFL's, bottled water & plastic bags.



Game Show: Fact or Fiction



Testing the audience about what they just heard with “Fact or Fiction”

Final Meeting

- Reading of poem/Reflection

Was there a relationship between the poem and the service-learning activity?

- Recognition given to all participants
 - Certificates, pins, “Thanks-a-lot” Girl Scout cookies, Mark Lynas's book, *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet* presented to the president of the Social Action Club, Pizza & Cake!

EVALUATION - Questions

- 14 items on evaluation (13 received)
 1. Why did you decide to participate?
 2. Did the project meet your expectations
 3. Was the poem meaningful to you?
 4. Was the information given by presenters on climate change and Akron Metropolitan Housing clear, interesting, nothing new, enough or too much.

EVALUATION - Questions

5. Was the presentation design experience a new learning experience/fun; how easy or difficult was it for you.
6. Do you feel the implementation of the presentation at the AMHA buildings was valuable and meaningful and was it well received?
7. Did you see the connection between the reading of the poem and the service activity

EVALUATION - Comments

- Comments made by RSVP volunteers:
 - “I really didn’t know what to expect”
 - “New skills learned includes communicating with young people about the environment”
 - “The girls went beyond what I thought they would”
 - “Girls did a great job”

EVALUATION - Comments

- Comments made by students:
 - “I learned how to help the environment and work with people I don’t know”
 - “I thought this program was just about service but I found that it rather raised awareness and I learned”
 - “New skills learned include ways to slow climate change”

EVALUATION – Comments

- Comments made by students:
 - “I thought the facilitation of the series was well planned, well thought out, and well received”
 - “I have a greater respect for the environment (I understand this isn’t a skill, but I definitely took respect with us as a result of these meetings)
 - “I learned a lot and it was fun”

Stories From the Field

RSVP Volunteer Center
Sharon Bladen
Hamilton, MT

Keeping Email Simple & Safe

A Joint Project of Hamilton Middle School and W. MT RSVP



Using your hotmail account

- **Using your hotmail account**
- Getting to Hotmail
- Type www.hotmail.com into the URL once connected to the internet
- Logging In to your account
- Once you are at hotmail, type in your username and password
- Click on sign in
- Checking you Inbox (messages sent to you)
- On the right hand side of the page you will see INBOX click on it to open messages sent to you.
- Deleting messages
- Each message you receive has a small box to the right of the message. If you click on the box a check mark will appear.
- Mark all unwanted email you wish to delete.
- Click on the word Delete with the red X next to it
- Those emails are now in your trash or deleted.
- Sending Messages
- To send a message you must first click on NEW to get a new blank message box to appear.
- Type in the email address you wish to send the message to right in the box that says TO: _____
- You can add a subject so the person receiving the message knows what the message pertains to.
- Click on the large empty white section to start typing in your message.
- When you are ready to send click send and your message will be sent immediately.



Email Safety Tips

- Keep your email address as secret as possible
- Ignore all unsolicited emails - DELETE them!
- Delete emails from people you don't know
- Don't open attachments unless it is run through an anti-virus program
- Don't reply to spam or offensive emails
- Don't forward chain letters
- Change your password every 2 months or so
- Don't choose an easy password that others can figure out
- Don't share your password with anyone
- Log Off when ever you are done!
- Keep all personal information to yourself
- Try not to give your email to companies unless you are required to.
- Don't ever click "Remember Me" on your email program while on a public computer
- Keep virus protection up to date



- **Hoaxes:** An email or pop-up that Tricks someone into believing or accepting something as true that's really false. When something seems too good to be true, it isn't true!
- **What to do:** Ignore all pop-ups; Do not open emails that look too good to be true
- **Chain letters:** Emails that are sent to many strangers or unknown email addresses.
- **What to do:** If you open a chain letter do not open any attachments that come with the email.
- **Spam:** A disruptive commercial message posted on a network or sent to an email that can cause a virus.
- **What to do:** If you get spam email that you think is deceptive forward it to spam@uce.gov . Be creative when making up your email address.
- **Viruses:** Viruses can enter your computer when you open unknown attachments or attachments with unfamiliar file extensions. For example .png
- **What to do:** Don't open any unfamiliar attachments!
- **Scams:** An attempt to criminally and fraudulently acquire sensitive information to commit identity theft.
- **What to do:** Never give personal information to anyone through an email including phone # credit card numbers, social security numbers.

Feedback

- Seniors
- Students
- Community



The Action Plan

- Steps I will take to find/reach out to prospective partners
- Implications for my volunteer recruitment plan
- Considerations related to ongoing volunteer retention and support

Additional Tools and Resources

- **National Service-Learning Clearinghouse**
<http://www.servicelearning.org/resources/sayes/index.php>
- **Corporation for National and Community Service**
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/>
- **Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory**
<http://www.nwrel.org/index.php>
- **SEANet**
<http://www.seanetonline.org/sayes.html>

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