Joining Together for Malaria Awareness Month

By: Chelsea Craigie

Teaching Team: Jamie Witsen, Jon Carver

School: Montgomery UMS, Skillman
Alexander Hamilton Academy and John F. Kennedy HS in Paterson will also participate in the project.

Grade Levels: 7th Grade social studies and science

Project Description:
The current malaria epidemic in Africa serves as the focus of this interdisciplinary project. Students during their social studies class that studies African civilizations will learn about the current malaria epidemic, and in their science classes they will learn about the disease itself and the way in which it is spread. The action plan involves the students using their knowledge to inform the public so they can raise money to purchase mosquito nets to help stop the spread of malaria. They will also work together with Alexander Hamilton and JFK in Paterson to make this a communal effort to make a difference.

Target Audience: The African communities that are vulnerable to the malaria epidemic.

Timeline:
One month.

Project Scheduling:
The project will take place in social studies and science classes periodically throughout the month, and in extra-curricular spaces.

Equipment Needed:
The teaching material on malaria.

Academic Focus:

Comprehensive Health and Physical Education (2.1): Students will learn the gravity and physical repercussions of Malaria and the kinds of health issues it causes.

Science (5.1, 5.5, 5.8, 5.10): Students will learn the science behind malaria, from the climate that the mosquitoes live in to the bugs themselves.

Social Studies (6.1-6.3): The students are grounding their lessons about malaria in the history and culture of Africa, where the disease is most dangerously spreading. They will be learning about the people that are being affected at the same time that they learn about the disease itself.
Hurdles Encountered:
Hurdles: The logistics of correlating the work of both classes, contacting the sources for malaria nets, and organizing the fund drive in a timely manner. Including the Paterson teams also will have to be worked out.

Solution: Teachers worked together, and students in teams handled various aspects of the project.

Educational Strategies:
Cooperative Learning: The students will have to work together to raise money for the nets and create a coherent and well thought out educational and awareness campaign.

Interdisciplinary Approach: The students will have to mix their social studies understanding of the history and culture of Africa with their knowledge about the science of the disease itself.

Personal Growth Outcomes:
The students will gain a better understanding about the real lives of a part of their world. Malaria is spreading and affecting millions of people every day, but doesn't pose a threat in the U.S. The students will grapple with what it means to live in America and gain a new respect for other cultures they may previously have known nothing about. They also will learn the value of cooperation and teamwork in executing a plan to help others.

The students will also have the opportunity to share what they learn with Alexander Hamilton Academy and JFK High School in Paterson, NJ, who will be working with Montgomery UMS to both learn about malaria and advocate for a solution.

Celebration: The students will get the opportunity to celebrate their fundraising and their new knowledge before sending the nets to Africa and realize how many people they have helped.

Recognition: The local newspaper will cover the story.

Key Findings: Schools from very different areas can come together to raise awareness and money with the common goal of helping people around the world.

Community Involvement:
The students will involve the community in two ways. First, the students at Montgomery will be responsible for creating a campaign that both raises awareness and money for mosquito nets to send to Africa to help curtail the spread of Malaria. In addition, the students will be united with the two schools in Paterson in a joint effort to make a difference.

Reflection Activities: The project has not been completed. However, a projected reflection is a televised meeting of the three schools called “Uniting the Heart, the Head and the Hand” in which students from all three schools share what they have learned from this project.

Means of Assessment:
A rubric evaluating all aspects of the project. A reflective essay.