Intergenerational Bonding

By:
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Teaching Team:
Elementary and Middle School Teachers

School:
PleasanTech Academy Charter School, Pleasantville

Grade Levels:
2nd – 4th grades

Academic Focus/
Core Curriculum Standards:
Language Arts 3.2.A.1, 3.2.A.3, 3.2.C, 3.2.D
Social Studies 6.1.A, 6.4.A
Health 2.2.D
Math 4.1.A, 4.4.A

Core Ethical Values:
Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Citizenship, Caring

Project Description:
Elementary students meet and work with senior citizens from The CARING Place in a structured six-week project that fosters intergenerational bonding and empathy. Meetings will take place at the senior facility and at PleasanTech Academy. The students interview the senior citizens, work with them on activities and chronicle their responses in reflective journals. A projected highlight is the teaching of formal etiquette by the senior citizens.

Target Audience: Senior Citizens in the Caring Place

Timeline: The project will take approximately 6 weeks to complete. (October 31st to December 20, 2007)

Project Scheduling:
Students will visit for 2 hours, five times, during the regular school day.

Equipment Needed:
Buses from The CARING Place, reflection papers, refreshments for final celebration.

Academic Focus

Language Arts: The project encompasses many facets of the language arts. Students improve their communication skills as they visit and interview the senior citizens. They learn to express their own ideas as well as listen to the ideas of others. Students also learn to reflect on the experience and then express their feelings in writing.

Career Education and Life Skills: The 6 Pillars of Character are a central focus of this project. Students learn good citizenship, caring (empathy), respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, and fairness.

Social Studies: Students will learn about life long ago and how things have changed for the current generation.

Mathematics: Using real life data and information.
**Hurdles Encountered:**

**Hurdles**
Enlisting the participation of classroom teachers.

**Solution**
Present the Service Learning concept to the staff at a faculty meeting and ask for volunteers.

**Educational Strategies:**

**Performance-based Education:** Students will make a presentation to the senior citizens, illustrating traits of good character.

**Cooperative Learning:** Students will work together as a group to decide what to share with the senior citizens and reflecting on what they learned from them.

**Interdisciplinary Approach:** This project crosses the lines of curriculum by including language arts, social studies, and life skills.

**Personal Growth Outcomes:**
Students learn to respect each other and the senior citizens as they work together. Students will learn the importance of empathy for others. Students take responsibility for their own actions during the visits and also for their writing at the end of the project. Trustworthiness will be demonstrated as they leave the school grounds and interact with Caring Place's senior citizens. Citizenship is a new concept for young children, but they will see that they not only are members of their own family and school, but also of a greater community.

**Community Involvement:**
The CARING Place is an adult daycare facility in Pleasantville, NJ. The children of PleasanTech Academy will visit at the facility as well as host activities at the school for the seniors.

**Parents and Volunteer Involvement:**
Parents are made aware of this involvement and must grant permission for their children to participate. They can also be invited to participate.

**Reflection Activities:** (Link with core ethical values)
At the end of each visit the students meet together to discuss the activities and what they have learned. After group reflection each student will complete a individual journal-type reflections.

**Means of Assessment:**
A survey will be created to evaluate the success of the program for the students as well as the senior citizens. The results will be graphed.

**Celebration:** Final gathering with refreshments in which students and senior citizens pay tribute to their work together.

**Recognition:** Media coverage of the final gathering.

**Key Findings:** It is hoped that when the project is finished, both seniors and students will experience a high degree of success and satisfaction. (See Means of Assessment).