

The Service-Learning Chronicle



LEARN AND SERVE COLORADO



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Centaurus High School Unveiling Celebration

Sixty-five students gathered at Centaurus High School in Lafayette to take part in the first ever Public Achievement Unveiling Celebration. Student groups presented the results of six social action projects which developed out of a series of critical dialogues. When the Public Achievement coaches from Naropa University first asked these high school students what they would like to change about their community, most received blank stares. After a few weeks, however, substantial project ideas started to emerge.



Centaurus Students Presenting at the Public Achievement Unveiling.

As a result of weekly meetings between peers and coaches, students designed projects to address the need for youth entertainment and activities after school. Among these were a campaign to raise awareness about skateboarding and hip-hop culture, the need for a youth center, and a desire to change the existing curfew laws in Lafayette. The curfew and youth center groups shared presentations at the unveiling which will soon be given to the City Council. Other projects focus on improving elementary literacy skills, and a public service announcement (PSA) designed to eliminate discrimination and stereotypes within Centaurus.

Students in the skateboarding and hip-hop culture groups also designed and filmed PSAs highlighting the positive aspects of these teen interests. All three PSAs were aired on the community TV station.

The hip-hop students designed a great PSA, but also combined their various talents in break-dancing, graffiti art and rap to give a live dance and rap performance at the end of the unveiling. This was a perfect way for students to celebrate and be recognized for their efforts and talent.

Following the presentations, students received t-shirts sporting the Public Achievement motto, "We are the ones we've been waiting for." After three months of hard work and dedication the students at Centaurus High School have come to embody this statement

by demonstrating their ability to create positive change in the Lafayette community and beyond.

*Article submitted by AmeriCorps*VISTA member Megan Swanson, Naropa University Community Studies Center*

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ◆ February 15, 2007, Raising the Civic Canopy, Denver, CO.
- ◆ February 21-23, 2007, Colorado Conference on Volunteerism and Service-Learning, Colorado Springs, CO.
- ◆ March 28-31, 2007 National Service-Learning Conference, Albuquerque, NM.
- ◆ April 12-13, 2007, Regional Public Achievement Conference, Boulder, CO.
- ◆ April 20-22, 2007, National Youth Service Day/Earth Day.

Reaching Out to the Community and Beyond

The mission of the Senior Seminar program based at Mitchell High School in Colorado Springs and co-taught by John Moore and Lance Jackson is to involve students in experiential education, expose them to different forms of learning, and reward them for their dedication to their education. This program is unique not only in its structure but also in that high school seniors from all District 11 high schools are invited to enroll. Eligible students have to be second semester seniors and needing no more than five credits to graduate. As part of the curriculum, students must complete a service-learning project that includes a minimum commitment of service either at a non-profit agency or on a project of their choice.

As an introduction to the service-learning requirement of the program, during the week of January 16, the group visited several service agencies in Colorado Springs including Silver Key, Colorado College's STAND student group, Urban Peak, Salvation Army, Marian House, and Peter's Bike Clinic. Students will be able to work individually or in groups on their service-learning projects. During this time they will be journaling on their experiences with the organization and at the end of the semester create a presentation to the class.

On top of the service-learning project, these students will be keeping busy with several other projects throughout the semester. Next month they will be collaborating with the Special Olympics every Friday for a program called "Unified Ski Program". Students will pair up with athletes and compete in a ski competition at Copper Mountain. Through this program, this semester will provide several opportunities for students to consider their role in the community as they transition out of high school. These seniors truly have a full and exciting semester planned with many great experiences to finish off their high school careers.

*Article Submitted by AmeriCorps*VISTA member Elly Park, Colorado College Partnership for Civic Engagement*



Mitchell students at Silver Key, an organization that helps the elderly live independently in their own homes. Silver Key assists the elderly with food, yard work, transportation and other resources.



Mitchell students at Colorado College learning about STAND a group focused on eliminating the genocide in Darfur.



Mitchell students at Care and Share Food Bank of Southern Colorado, an organization that provides resources for those in hunger throughout southern Colorado.

Mann Middle School Serves One Nation

With the spirit of the holidays in mind, Mr. Joseph Reed and his seventh-grade choir class had an idea for service-learning. The class was going to sing a song concerning homelessness at an upcoming concert, and decided that this was an excellent opportunity not only to gain a better understanding of homelessness, but also to collect funds and give them to a local organization that serves the homeless. With these service and learning goals established, and the help of *Service-Learning Colorado Springs*, the class got to work!

Students worked in small groups researching different organizations in Colorado Springs that serve the homeless. After making brief presentations on their findings, the students chose to serve One Nation Walking Together, a non-profit agency that collects money, clothing, food, and household items and delivers these donations to Native Americans living in impoverished conditions on reservations in South Dakota.

The students in the class took various roles in helping this project become a success. Two students took the lead in contacting One Nation, requesting that a representative come speak to the class and also inviting that person to the choir concert. Two students prepared introductory remarks explaining the project

and acknowledging Mr. Mike Collins, board chairman of One Nation, who agreed to come speak to the class. Another group worked to create a flyer for the concert brochure explaining One Nation and asking for donations. Additionally, students created a slideshow that was shown as a backdrop during the performance of the song. Meanwhile, other students in the class researched homelessness in Colorado Springs and among Native Americans. The night of the concert, all of the students' work came together wonderfully, and Mr. Collins was extremely appreciative of the name recognition One Nation gained from the service-learning project.

Although ideally high-quality service-learning opportunities encompass an entire semester, this project proves that service-learning can be completed successfully in just one week. As this is the last year *Service-Learning Colorado Springs* will host AmeriCorps*VISTAs to provide assistance to teachers, they strongly encourage District 11 teachers to contact them for any help in planning projects, facilitating reflection, or connecting with nonprofits.

*Article submitted by AmeriCorps*VISTA member Colleen Barnhill, Colorado College Partnership for Civic Engagement*



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Students in the San Luis Valley Live the Dream

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was a "day on, not a day off" for students of St. Peter's Lutheran School in Monte Vista and Ms. Wilson's first grade class at Polston Primary School in Alamosa.

Students took part in a service-learning opportunity focused on Dr. King, what he believed, and how students can apply those lessons. In Dr. King's famous *I Have a Dream* speech he said, "With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day."

"With Dr. King's theme of 'together' in mind, this project encourages students to participate in doing 100 acts of kindness," said AmeriCorps*VISTA Mary Benavidez of Adams State College Community Partnerships. "It supports family and community involvement while uniting the classroom around a common and important goal. Students learn that they can make a difference."



Ms. Wilson's 1st grade class at Polston Primary School

In addition to doing 100 acts of kindness, the students are working with La Puente, an organization that serves homeless in the San Luis Valley. "The best way for young people to learn about Dr. King's legacy is to get involved themselves," said Linda Navo, Teacher and Principal at St. Peter's Lutheran School. "Our students plan to serve lunch at La Puente Home to learn more about the issue of homelessness in our community."

Nancy Molina, Director of the Adams State College Service-Learning Program commented, "Martin Luther King, Jr. said, 'Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.' We honor the life and legacy of Dr. King by doing things that help others and strengthen communities."

*Article submitted by AmeriCorps*VISTA member Mary Benavidez, Adams State College Community Partnerships*