

DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM FOR ENCOURAGING MEANINGFUL  
COMMUNITY SERVICE IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Synthesis Project Presented

by

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MASTER OF ARTS

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Critical and Creative Thinking Program

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## ABSTRACT

### ORIGINAL CURRICULUM FOR ENCOURAGING MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY SERVICE IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

December 2008

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In this paper I have explored the importance of community service experiences and ultimately created a guide for implementing a high quality and meaningful community service program at the high school level. This paper begins with an initial discussion of my personal experiences in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, when I discovered firsthand the importance of personal reflection and sharing. I have defined community as a group of people with common place and common interest. Community service is an action within the community that betters the community in some way. The reader will find examples of communities coming together to make a change and examples of individuals reflecting on personal experiences. These examples highlight the importance of community service and reflection as well as showing the reader how to be involved and how to reflect.

I have written this paper for educational administrators, teachers, and community members to be used as a stepping stone for the creation and implementation of a high school community service program. Typical programs today require a certain number of hours completed by each student before graduation but do not specify the type of community service or

even afford the students the opportunity to present to others what they have done. The program that I have laid out encourages the sharing of experiences as a way to both appreciate the student efforts as well as give each student a chance to inspire others.

Within the body of the paper the reader will find a Teacher Handbook as well as a Student Guidebook. These two books are intended as a guideline for proper implementation of a thoughtful community service program. The Teacher Handbook supplies the reader with tips and instructions for helping students in a yearlong community service program. This handbook includes a schedule of monthly meetings with a basic outline for the implementation of each of the meetings. The Student Handbook is written to enhance the learning of each participating student. The handbook includes phone numbers for local community service organizations as well as space for each student to take notes when connecting with community service opportunities. Each of the books has been written generically for the purpose of this paper but can easily be modified to more closely fit a particular school or community.

Community service is an important part of my life. Each experience introduces me to new people and ideas and each experience has challenged me to do better in my life. In each community service project that I have been a part of I have certainly taken away more than I have given. It is my intent that the paper I have written will encourage and inspire the reader to partake in community service opportunities and to reflect and share about those experiences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ..... 1

1. WHERE AM I COMING FROM? ..... 4

    Hurricane Katrina ..... 4

    Coming Together ..... 4

    Visiting New Orleans..... 5

    Return Home ..... 5

2. WHAT IS COMMUNITY? WHAT IS COMMUNITY SERVICE? ..... 7

    Defining Community ..... 7

    Example – Greensburg, Kansas..... 8

    Community Service is an Action..... 8

    Community Service Benefits..... 8

3. WHAT IS REFLECTION? HOW DO WE REFLECT ON COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCES..... 10

    Defining Reflection..... 10

    Ways to Reflect..... 11

    How to Reflect..... 11

    Sample Reflection from New Orleans ..... 11

4. WHY SHOULD OUR YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE? WHY SHOULD OUR YOUNG PEOPLE REFLECT ON AND SHARE ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCES? ..... 13

    Benefits of Community Service for Students..... 14

5. HOW TO IMPLEMENT A MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL ..... 16

    Community Service Teacher Handbook ..... 17

    Community Service Student Guidebook..... 32

6. MY JOURNEY THROUGH CCT..... 40

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 42

## INTRODUCTION

“Get up and get moving.” “Do something.” “Change the world.” “It is time.” Each spring we hear dozens of sound-bites, such as these, from graduations around the country. Celebrity and non-celebrity speakers alike, challenge graduates to use their education and knowledge to make the world around them a better place. Many graduates will hang up their caps and gowns and do just that. They will travel to faraway places to teach children to read. They will volunteer as mentors to young people in their hometowns. Some will work on political campaigns or find themselves protesting the varying injustices in the world. Many will pursue jobs in the human services fields or find volunteer work to do on the weekends. However, there are still many more graduates who hear the same speeches after receiving the same educations and find themselves very unsure of how to change the world. They don’t know where to begin to “do something”. It is time that we teach our students the skills that changing the world requires. In the many years leading up to high school and college graduations we ought to be preparing our students for community interaction, not just the workforce. It is time that meaningful and productive community service experiences were encouraged, facilitated, and shared. High school students can be asked to do more and as a result they will sit with cap and gown on graduation day and know what it means to “do something”.

Chapter One of this paper will guide the reader through the process that brought me here. It briefly tells the story of a trip to post-Katrina New Orleans and how that experience led me to this synthesis project. This trip taught me a great deal about myself and the return home taught me a great deal about other people. It reminded me that everyone has the ability to make a difference in the world but not everyone understands that ability and how to put it to work.

Chapter Two focuses on defining community and community service. These terms are thrown around often in our society but not always with understanding. Community is the space and common interests shared by a group of people. In order to develop a program to teach high school students to participate in meaningful community service we must understand what “meaningful community service” is and how it fits into the communities in which we live. Meaningful community service includes not only the act of service but also the opportunity to reflect on the experience.

Chapter Three begins by defining reflection as it is meant in this synthesis project and goes on to explore how to reflect in a significant way on community service experiences. Reflection is an important component of meaningful community service experiences. High school students who learn to reflect on their experiences will be more apt to have continued experiences and to inspire others along the way. This chapter is the foundation for teaching students to reflect and then share about their community participation.

Chapter Four explains the importance of encouraging our young people to participate in community service. Multiple studies over the years have shown the great benefits of community service. For instance, young people who participate in community service are far more likely to have continued participation as adults. This chapter also explores why students should reflect and share about their experiences and how this reflection and sharing leads to inspiration.

Chapters One through Four lead us into chapter Five’s discussion of a community service program to be implemented at the high school level. This chapter includes a handbook for teachers to lead small groups of high school seniors on a school year long program of service, reflection, and sharing. There is also a handbook for high school seniors embarking on the program. Each handbook has basic guidelines for the program as well as tips to make the most



of the program.

## CHAPTER 1

### WHERE AM I COMING FROM?

I generally try not to watch too much news on the television. The images that we are bombarded with are a little too graphic and a little too inflammatory. However, I, like many, found myself glued to the television during the pre-storm, storm, and post-storm that was Hurricane Katrina. I was unable to turn off CNN. Images or no images, I felt a need to know what was going on along the gulf coast. My husband and I had visited New Orleans the year before and as music and food lovers had fallen in love with the rich and unique cultural history and atmosphere of the city. As the hours and then days passed after the storm I became more and more angered by the things that I was hearing and seeing. More specifically I couldn't believe that more wasn't being done to help. I vividly recall images of families on rooftops with homemade signs asking for help, pictures of children lost in the shuffle of shelters and rain. How was it possible that no one seemed to be looking out for these people? How was it possible that there were well known and respected people in our country all but blaming the children and the less fortunate for this terrible situation? These were American children and families without food, water, and electricity in a country of great wealth and overabundance. It appeared as though no one was going to help them. All I could think was "I have to do something, I have to change this," but how?

Fast forward six months to the following February, I am part of a church group heading to Louisiana to work with Habitat for Humanity for one week. We have 16 people from 3 different churches; we have lawyers, housewives, photographers, teachers, and a minister, we are husbands and wives, parents and children. We are a multigenerational group with one goal: to

do something to help.

We have landed at the airport and are piling into our three rented minivans in search of lunch. The drive into New Orleans is shocking. The highway offers an aerial view of many homes and neighborhoods. We see the infamous Wal-Mart from the news...the one that was looted during the immediate aftermath of the storm. Now, six months later the building is still boarded up and the parking lot is littered with water damaged cars and tractor trailer trucks. We drive by several parking lots filled to capacity with FEMA trailers that still haven't been distributed. Brand new trailers sit unused while many, many people are still struggling in shelters and falling down homes. And then there are the houses. I had seen them on television but was not prepared for the feeling that settles in your stomach when you realize that you are looking at a roof that someone has had to chop through in order to survive. Rooftops with messages spray painted with pleas for help. It is nothing less than horrifying to think of the children who had to climb through the rafters only to be trapped on the island that is the roof of their home. It is the children that I can't stop thinking about. These children had no say in the upkeep of the levees; they had no say in the evacuation process, and continue to have no voice in the cleanup process. This paper is ultimately about helping young people to have a voice. Through positive community service experiences the young people of our high schools will learn that they have a voice and they will be empowered to use it, even as they become adults. It is time to teach our young people how to really make changes in the world.

Upon returning to Massachusetts, after the week in the gulf coast region, I found myself hearing the same things over and over again: "Wow, you're such a good person!" "How did you ever give up your vacation?" "I wish I could do something like that?" I found myself bothered by the praise and almost wanted to stop telling people where I had been. The desire to raise

awareness about the still deplorable conditions in the Gulf Coast and the need to show others that they could also help was what encouraged me to keep sharing. However, I couldn't understand why so many people seemed shocked by what I had done. Few people believed that they could or would do the same thing. It was disheartening to think of the number of people in my own community who had no idea how to "do something" and as a result assumed that they couldn't or wouldn't be able to "do something". We all have a role in the world and we all need to be active participants. We can all do something. It is my goal for this synthesis project to develop a curriculum that teaches young people, not only to be active in community service projects but also to share and be proud of their involvement.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHAT IS COMMUNITY? WHAT IS COMMUNITY SERVICE?

A community is a group of people connected by space and interests. We belong to many communities, first the community that is our family, next we belong to our neighborhood community, our town or city community, and so on and so forth. Each level of community that we are members of can be large or small and the common interests can be many or few. To be a community requires only common space and common interest.

The members of a given community must rely on one another to maintain certain standards. For example, the people living in a given town or city have common interests in the form of public services, water, electricity, public safety, transportation, schools, jobs, etc. It is unreasonable to expect each individual within a community to deal with all of these interests only for themselves. Instead we must remember that our actions will affect those around us and vice versa. In today's world we often forget that we all have similar needs and we all have a responsibility within our community.

There are many instances of communities that have come together to achieve a common goal. For example, many communities have organized neighborhood watch programs. These volunteer programs help to reduce crime and increase neighbor to neighbor connections within a specific area. Another example of community togetherness can be found in a community garden. Community gardens create open and natural spaces while providing the community with fresh fruits, vegetables, and flowers. These gardens also convey a sense of stewardship to the members, teaching young people about responsibility and community building. A more specific example of community togetherness can be found in the aftermath of the tornado that

struck Greensburg, Kansas in May of 2007. Over 95% the homes and buildings in this town were destroyed by the tornado. It has been one year and the town has vowed to rebuild what they lost and, moreover, they have committed to making Greensburg a “Green City”. This example is extreme but illustrative of the power of community action. The people of Greensburg had a decision to make: stay and rebuild or leave and start over. Leaving seems like the easier choice but the community of Greenburg chose otherwise.

Community service is an action. It is an opportunity. We have previously discussed the definition of community and here it is important to think about the definition of service as well. Service is acting with others’ interests in mind. It can be the writing of a check to clean up a park or the actual garbage pick-up in the park. Community service takes place when an individual or a group of individuals works together to benefit a particular community. They may choose to work within their own neighborhood or the neighborhood of others. They may work daily or once a year. Community service requires a need (by some area of a particular community) and a desire (by an individual or a group) to help in the community. Anyone can participate in community service. Small children can sell lemonade and donate the proceeds to a cause; older students can volunteer as reading buddies with younger students; adults can spend time building houses for low income families. In every community there are countless ways for people to serve. It is only a matter of finding a need and doing what one can to fill that need.

Community service benefits everyone involved. The family eating at a soup kitchen are receiving both the obvious, food, and the not so obvious, a feeling of support. The people who prepare and serve that food are also benefiting. They have the feeling of doing something good for others as well as the opportunity to give back to the community in which they live.

Making a difference in the community does not have to involve a great deal of money or

time. While both money and time can make a difference it is also possible to make a difference with very little of both. For example, my next door neighbor has a 15 year old son who walks an elderly neighbor's dog each afternoon. He does not get paid to do this but does it because he feels it is helpful. Another neighbor knits prayer shawls for individuals who are fighting cancer. Certainly, if she could donate millions of dollars to find a cure for cancer that would make a difference but each shawl that she knits and gives away makes a great deal of difference to the recipient.

I have found that often, people do not participate in community service opportunities because they think that their one or two hours cannot possibly make enough of a difference to be worthwhile. However, if each of us donated one hour of our time we would be surprised at all we could accomplish. During the week that I spent in the gulf coast our small group, with a few additional people, were able to make considerable progress on the building of two brand new homes. Imagine if we had been able to spend two weeks?!

## CHAPTER 3

### WHAT IS REFLECTION? HOW DO WE REFLECT ON COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCES?

For the purpose of this paper reflective practice will be defined as the act of an individual taking the time to think about and process a particular experience. Currently in high schools around the country students are required to participate in community service activities. Students are typically asked to complete a certain number of hours and to document those hours in order to graduate. The documentation of these community service activities is, more often than not, a list of times and dates. For high school students participating in community service, personal reflection is a way to encourage further engagement with the experiences. Reflection is a way to get students to slow down a bit and really begin to think about and understand how their time and efforts make a difference. For the purpose of this paper and curriculum I have chosen to focus on the type of reflection that takes place after the event. There are two main types of reflection that can take place: reflection during action and reflection that occurs after the action (Boud and Knights, 1994). It is, of course, important for volunteering students to be aware of the experience as it is happening but reflection that they are asked to participate in is best focused after the fact. This type of reflection can take many forms, from journal writing to photography, all with learning and understanding as an outcome. Reflection forces us to understand an experience more fully. Done well, reflection is a valuable opportunity to grow and learn from an experience (Brockbank and McGill, 1998)

In the community service program that has been developed in this synthesis project students are asked to participate in twenty-four hours of community service during the senior



year of high school and to actively reflect on those experiences on a weekly basis. It is important to encourage students to be conscious of their reflection time and not to merely go through the motions of reflection. The reflection time is less meaningful if it is not focused and intentional (Boud and Knights, 1994). Reflective practice that is active and intentional will enhance the learning that will take place at each and every community service site.

Reflecting on personal experiences and then sharing those experiences with other people encourages one to feel proud of what they have done and in so doing encourages further action. Sharing about community service experiences can come in many forms. For example, writing and photography are both simple ways to reflect on an experience. A student who loves to paint or a student who regularly writes poetry are both on track to positive reflective experience.

### **How do we reflect on our community service experiences?**

Hatcher and Bringle define reflection “as the intentional consideration of an experience in light of particular learning objectives” (Hatcher and Bringle 1997, 153). The process of reflecting on community service experiences allows us to better understand the experience and the outcomes that we hope to accomplish. There are many examples of ways to reflect on a community service experience. It is important for the students involved to find the way that best suits their situation. For example, after spending a week in the gulf coast building with Habitat for Humanity, I created a slide show of many of my photographs and shared them with friends, family, and coworkers. An additional, example from the same trip, comes from a member of the group that I traveled to New Orleans with.

Touring the area revealed firsthand the true measure of the destructive force that can be unleashed by nature, and so indiscriminately. More vivid and a magnitude more extensive than the images seen on TV, the landscape was a horrifying mixture of twisted debris, denuded buildings and uprooted trees decorated with an

assortment of clothing from far and wide. Crushed cars and large sections of buildings transported from one neighborhood to another, boats washed ashore and onto someone's backyard, all adding to a landscape of utter devastation.

Yet amid the destruction there were encouraging signs of hope, resignation and determination. Old Glory hastily erected in the midst of a leveled house sang out a clear message: "This was once our house; this is still our country." Graffiti scribbled on the walls of abandoned homes assured the passerby: "Thank God we're safe; we will return." The insistence that Mardi Gras celebrations not be curtailed is a testament to the fortitude of a people who refuse to let their misfortune change the course of their lives.

We were gratified to offer a little help together with a host of other volunteers from virtually every state and from as far afield as Canada; some professionals with real skills, others with only a deep sense of compassion and a desire to be there to search for some small way to be of some help.

We are pleased to report that our group played a significant role in the complete framing and siding of two houses in a new 15 house complex, called "Hope Village", - - - a high profile project Habitat for Humanity is undertaking in Covington, Louisiana.

It was cold, sometimes blustery and often muddy, and the fact that we survived a week of sawing, hammering, trimming and straddling rafters, beams and joists and dangling from ladders, all without mishap, is truly a testament to the grace of God. We returned with a few aches, a lot of mud, a good deal of humility and a renewed sense of appreciation for the simple blessings of life and God's bountiful mercies - - - too often taken for granted.

In both of these examples two major things are happening. First, the person participating in community service is taking the time to really think about the experience. In putting together my slideshow I spent a great deal of time looking through all of the pictures and thinking about what had happened over the week. Secondly, the person (or people) on the receiving end of the sharing are being asked to do their own reflection about the experience. It is this second level of reflection that will inspire the reader/listener to perhaps engage in community service activities.

## CHAPTER 4

### WHY SHOULD OUR YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE? WHY SHOULD OUR YOUNG PEOPLE REFLECT ON AND SHARE ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCE?

The high school years are formative years for young people. Encouraging high school students to participate in community service is beneficial to the students as well as the greater community. High school students who have been service oriented as adolescents are more likely to be politically active (to vote) and community oriented as adults (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss & Atkins, 2007). This greater likelihood to vote and be politically minded stems from the raised civic concerns and social awareness that results from being engaged in the wider community. When students engage in community service they find themselves engaged in a cause that they can stand behind and believe in. As a result they are more likely as adults to continue to find and support causes and organizations that they believe in within their communities.

High school students are attempting to find their identity and role in society. It is important for the adults around them to allow them to find themselves within the realm of the high school setting as well as within the adult world. "Insofar as youth seek identities that transcend the present moment, there are obvious advantages to engagement with adult society. Youth learn about society and the various orientations they may take toward it. They may seek to support, reject, or revise the traditions they find. But in order for identity to develop, youth need to have social substance on which to reflect and build" (Youniss, Mclellan, Su, & Yates 1999, 250). When students are afforded the opportunity to engage in adult society through community action and service they learn a great deal about themselves, how they fit in and can change the

world around them, and they make a difference in the community.

Students who participate in community service activities are less likely to engage in negative social behaviors (Youniss, Mclellan, Su, & Yates 1999). Additionally these students often perform better academically and have an increased likelihood of being enrolled as full-time college students by the age of 21 (Eccles & Barber 1999).

There are many different types of community service opportunities that high school students can engage in: anything from building houses to cleaning beaches to tutoring younger children. Different types of community service will undoubtedly impact students in varying ways. For example, students who engage in service that is face to face with people will have different learning opportunities than students who primarily engage in activities that don't have direct personal contact. Each type of service can have powerful impacts on the participating students and either type should be encouraged.

For decades in our country we have attempted to find ways to encourage civic-mindedness in our young people. We have seen many attempts to increase voter registration and turnout at elections. We have also seen the schools try to increase community awareness through classes and activities. An additional push has been in the realm of community service at the high school level. In many school based programs the goal of community service activities has been to develop young people who are active in their communities. However, oftentimes this goal is not being met due to programming that is not well planned nor geared towards that particular outcome. Reindeers and Youniss (2006) indicated that community service participation at the high school level leads to further civic engagement and community involvement. There are many reasons for these findings including the fact that "...service help[s] young people discover aspects of themselves they were not conscious of and stimulate

them to see new relationships between themselves and society” (Reindeers and Youniss 2006, 9). It is this stimulation of relationships that allows teenagers to see how they, as individuals, fit into the community and as a result how they will be active participants in that community.

## CHAPTER 5

### HOW TO IMPLEMENT A MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL.

Throughout this paper we have explored the why's and how's of both community service and reflection. This fifth chapter is made up of two handbook/guidebooks for both teachers and students. The community service program that I envision happening at the high school level utilizes both of these books to encourage positive and meaningful community service opportunities. The first is the Teacher Handbook. This handbook explains the program in detail while providing information for the teacher to better guide and assist the students in the program.

*Community Service Teacher  
Handbook  
Generic High School  
2007-2008*

## *Preface*

*This handbook has been written to assist the teacher in encouraging learning through community service opportunities and reflection. The handbook includes a full set of guidelines for the community service program as well as a schedule of monthly meetings to be held with students. The schedule has an outline for each meeting and instructions/suggestions for working with the students. In short, this handbook is a reference guide. It is to be used as much or as little as the teacher requires.*

*The great aim of education is not  
knowledge but action.*

*~ Herbert Spencer*



*Welcome!*

*You have volunteered to guide a small group of students (approximately 10-12) to positive community service experiences and meaningful reflection. Perhaps this sounds daunting but it will be inspiring!*

*The following is a list of basic guidelines that each student will be following as you all embark on this journey together.*

### *Guidelines:*

*Each student will complete 24 meaningful hours of community service over the course of the school year. Students may choose to complete all 24 hours at one site or to spread the hours over different types of community service experiences.*

*Each student will attend monthly meetings with a small group of seniors and a faculty advisor. These meetings will allow students time to further reflect on their experience while publicly sharing with their peers.*

*Each student will maintain a notebook of reflections on the community service experience. They should be regularly (at least once a week) reflecting on their community service experiences. These reflections may take any form. For example, one student may choose to write, while another chooses to draw, while a third chooses to take photographs. Any type of reflection is acceptable as long as it is meaningful in intent. In addition to the weekly reflections, at each monthly meeting a short reflection activity will be given to the group by the faculty advisor.*

*Meaningful reflection requires time and effort. Although students may choose the method by which they are reflecting it is important that the reflection is more than just a requirement. Students should be prepared to share part or all of their reflections with small groups of their peers. For example, a student may write poetry about his/her community service experience. He/she would then be encouraged to read the poetry aloud at his/her monthly meeting.*

*Each student will give 2 presentations during the year to their small group and other invited guests (e.g. Parents, teachers, community members, etc.). The first presentation will just be with the small group and advisor; the second presentation should include other invited guests. These presentations will be approximately 7-10 minutes each. These presentations should highlight what has gone on in the*

*community service experiences so far. The presentation should be viewed as a positive opportunity to publicly share reflections and inspirations.*

*In addition, each student will give a presentation at the end of the year to peers (including members of the junior class), faculty, and other invited guests. These presentations will be approximately 20 - 30 minutes in length. These presentations should explain what the community service experience was and what it meant to both the presenter and the community. This is a final opportunity to inspire others through public sharing of experience and reflection. (Note: If a student has more than one type of community service experience they may choose one or share about them all).*

*Each student will receive a student guidebook. This guidebook will contain information about local, national, and international community service organizations, contact information, a calendar, and blank pages for reflection.*

## ***Contacts:***

*The following contacts include national, international, and local organizations. Use this list as a starting point and as an ongoing resource. You may also find that there are other organizations that you are interested in working with.*

*American Red Cross*

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

*Boys and Girls Club*

[www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

*Special Olympics*

[www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)

*The Audubon Society*

[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

*The Nature Conservancy*

[www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

*The Salvation Army*

[www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)

*YMCA*

[www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net)

*Volunteer Solutions*

[www.volunteersolutions.org](http://www.volunteersolutions.org)

*Boston Public Library*

[www.bpl.org](http://www.bpl.org)

*Volunteer Boston*

[www.volunteerboston.org](http://www.volunteerboston.org)

*Boston Partners in Education*

[www.bostonpartners.org](http://www.bostonpartners.org)

*Boston Cares*

[www.bostoncares.org](http://www.bostoncares.org)

***Other Organizations:***

## *September*

*1 ½ hours*

*25 minutes: Introductions – Find out what interests each of the students, what they might like to do for their community service*

*25 minutes: Overview of the program – Talk through all of the information in the student guidebook (i.e. Presentations, Contact Information, Personal Reflection Pages). Be sure to answer any questions that the students have.*

*40 minutes: Reflection activity - free writing\* - Be sure to explain the goal of free writing. For this free writing exercise provide the following prompt (many students will find the free writing to be difficult and the prompt will help to ease into free writing. Use the following prompt: "Completing 24 hours of community service sounds like..." The free writing exercise should only take 10 minutes, use the remainder of the time to share with one another about the free writing experience.*

*Student Homework: Spend at least two hours researching community service organizations and opportunities, begin to make calls to set up volunteer times. Weekly reflections (see Guidelines for description).*

*Notes:*

*\*Free Writing:*

*Free Writing is an exercise in writing without editing or second guessing your words. The writer takes 10 minutes and writes continuously without stopping. The key is to never remove your pen or pencil from the paper. Write whatever comes to mind, even if what comes to mind is "I don't know what to write. I don't know what to write. I don't know what to write." The goal of free writing is not to produce the perfect piece, it is to get ideas on paper.*

*"In your natural way of producing words there is a sound, a texture, a rhythm--a voice--which is the main source of power in your writing. I don't know how it works, but this voice is the force that will make a reader listen to you. Maybe you don't like your voice; maybe people have made fun of it. But it's the only voice you've got. It's your only source of power. You better get back into it, no matter what you think of it. If you keep writing in it, it may change into something you like better. But if you abandon it, you'll likely never have a voice and never be heard" (Elbow, 1973).*

## **October**

*1 ½ hours*

*20 minutes: Check-in: Who has made contacts? Who has already done some community service? Who can recommend organizations or contacts? Who needs help finding opportunities? Give each student time to check in with the group.*

*35 minutes: Reflection activity – free writing from the following prompt: “Finding community service opportunities makes me feel...” Spend 10 minutes on the free writing exercise and use the remainder of the time sharing with the group.*

*35 minutes: Allow the students time to research and hopefully talk to organizations that they would like to volunteer with. Remember that some students may be intimidated by the thought of making “cold calls”. If they need, help them to prepare questions prior to making the first phone call.*

*Student Homework: Prepare for the first 10 minute presentation (see student handbook for explanation). Weekly reflections.*

*Notes:*

## ***November***

*1.5 - 2 hours*

*Presentations*

*10 minutes for each of the 10-12 students to present. Although this presentation is fairly informal, have each student take the time to stand in front of the group while they present. The group should be reminded that the next presentation will have more than just the group in attendance and they should use this first presentation time to get comfortable speaking.*

*Student Homework: Weekly reflections.*

*Notes:*

## ***December***

*1 ½ hours*

*25 minutes: Check-in: Were people pleased with the November presentations? How are people feeling about the particular sites they have been working with? Is everyone on track to finish 24 hours before the year is over?*

*40 minutes: Weekly reflection sharing. Each student should share a part of how his/her weekly reflections have been going. They may talk about the reflection process, read a bit, show a drawing, etc. Encourage each student to share even if it feels uncomfortable to them. An important part of this program is learning to share one's reflections and thoughts.*

*25 minutes: Use the final minutes to set up meetings with organizations or confirm volunteer times. Remember to help students who may feel nervous about calling a new organization. This is a learning process and students who finish the program with the ability to make contacts have gained a great deal.*

*Student Homework: Weekly reflections.*

*Notes:*



## *January*

*1 ½ hours*

*25 minutes: Check-in: Have each student share for a minute or two. How do they feel the year is going so far? Does anyone want to try a new volunteer placement? How is the reflection process going?*

*25 minutes: Reflection activity – free writing from the following prompt: “When I think about the second presentation I feel...” Spend 10 minutes on the writing and the final 15 minutes should be spent with a couple of students sharing.*

*40 minutes: Use the final 40 minutes to make calls to volunteer sites and to invite people to the public February presentations.*

*Student Homework: Prepare for the second presentation (see student handbook for explanation). Invite guests. Weekly reflections.*

*Notes:*

## ***February***

*1.5 - 2 hours*

### *Public Presentations*

*10 minutes for each of the 10-12 students to present. Each student should present to the entire group (including all guests) and answer questions at the end of the presentation.*

*Student Homework: Weekly reflections. Think about the following questions and be ready to talk about them at the March meeting: Are there things that you would change about your presentation? What did you like about the other presentations?*

*Notes:*

## **March**

*1 ½ hours*

*20 minutes: Check-in: How many hours do you need to complete? Do you have a plan for completing those hours? Do you need help finding those hours?*

*45 minutes: Spend this time debriefing the February presentations. Remind the group of the homework questions and have each student share a bit. (Are there things that you would change about your presentation? What did you like about the other presentations?)*

*25 minutes: Spend the final 25 minutes talking about the final May presentations. These last public presentations should be the most polished. Each student should be encouraged to utilize multimedia opportunities. Remind the students that these final presentations should really reflect the process that they have gone through over the year.*

*Student Homework: Work on planning the final presentation. Invite guests to final presentation. Weekly reflections.*

*Notes:*

## *April*

*1 ½ hours*

*15 minutes: Check-in: How is the community service going? Have you been working on your final presentation?*

*30 minutes: Weekly reflection sharing. Each student should share a part of how his/her weekly reflections have been going. They may talk about the reflection process, read a bit, show a drawing, etc.*

*45 minutes: Planning time for final presentation.*

*Student Homework: Work on final presentation. Invite guests to final presentation. Weekly reflections.*

*Notes:*

## *May*

*1 hour*

*15 minutes: Check-in: Are you ready to present?*

*30 minutes: Reflection activity – free writing from the following prompt: “This program has taught me...” Spend 10 minutes writing and in the final 20 minutes have a few students share.*

*15 minutes: Final questions and answers about the presentations.*

*May dates TBD for presentations. There should be 2 different dates so that each student has enough time to present.*

*Notes:*

*Community Service Student  
Guidebook  
Generic High School  
2007-2008*

## *Preface*

*This guidebook has been written to enhance the community service opportunities of each student participating in the program. The guidebook includes descriptions of each step in the process, from reflection and sharing to finding phone numbers for volunteer organizations. In short, this guidebook is a reference for the student. It is to be used throughout the year by each student.*

*You cannot do all the good the world  
needs, but the world needs all  
the good you can do.*

*~ Anonymous*

*Welcome!*

*Community Service is a vital component to your high school education. Over the course of this, your senior year, you will be asked to complete 24 hours of community service work, attend monthly small group meetings with your peers and an advisor, regularly reflect on your experiences, and publicly share about your experiences in three presentations. It sounds like a lot as you begin the year but you will find all of the work in this program to be meaningful and enjoyable.*

*The community service work that you do will be of your choosing and design. You will have resources to assist you in finding good community service opportunities, making the right connections, following through on your commitments, and learning to reflect on your various experiences. Be ready...it is time to change the world around you!*



### *Presentations:*

*Over the course of the school year you will be asked to give two short presentations to your small group and other invited guests (parents, teachers, community service contacts, etc.). The first presentation will only be in front of your small group and the second presentation will also have other invited guests in attendance. These presentations will be approximately 7-10 minutes each. They should highlight what your community service experiences have been and what you feel you are learning from them. You may choose to share pieces of your personal reflections or perhaps you will simply want to talk about what you have done. These presentations will be informal in nature so do not worry excessively about them. This should be viewed as a positive opportunity to publicly share what you have done and perhaps inspire your peers and guests to give it a try!*

*At the end of the school year you will each be asked to give a final presentation to your peers (including members of the junior class), faculty, and other invited guests. This presentation will be approximately 20-30 minutes in length. These presentations will be an opportunity for you to explain what community service experiences you participated in and what the experiences meant to both you and the community. This is a formal chance for you to inspire others through public sharing to take a chance and change the world!*

## ***Contacts:***

*The following contacts include national, international, and local organizations. Use this list as a starting point and as an ongoing resource. You may also find that there are other organizations that you are interested in working with.*

*American Red Cross*

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

*Boys and Girls Club*

[www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

*Special Olympics*

[www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)

*The Audubon Society*

[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

*The Nature Conservancy*

[www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

*The Salvation Army*

[www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)

*YMCA*

[www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net)

*Volunteer Solutions*

[www.volunteersolutions.org](http://www.volunteersolutions.org)

*Boston Public Library*

[www.bpl.org](http://www.bpl.org)

*Volunteer Boston*

[www.volunteerboston.org](http://www.volunteerboston.org)

*Boston Partners in Education*

[www.bostonpartners.org](http://www.bostonpartners.org)

*Boston Cares*

[www.bostoncares.org](http://www.bostoncares.org)

***Other Organizations:***

### *Personal Reflection Pages:*

*Over the course of the school year you should be regularly (at least once a week) reflecting on your community service experiences. These reflections may take many forms. For example, you may choose to write while one classmate opts to take pictures while another spends time painting. Any type of reflection is acceptable as long as it is meaningful in intent. It is important to remember that meaningful reflection requires time and effort. You may choose the method by which you are reflecting but please remember to engage in the experience.*

*You should be prepared to share part or all of your reflections in your monthly small group meetings. The public sharing of some of your personal reflections is a part of the learning process and will help you to get the most out of your community service experiences.*

*In addition to your weekly reflection time, you will be asked to do some type of reflection during each of your monthly meetings throughout the school year. This reflection time will often be journaling after your group advisor has given a prompt.*

*The next several pages in this guide have been left blank for you to use in reflection if you choose.*

Each of these handbook/guidebooks has been written to complement a community service program at the high school level. Teachers will be trained in implementing the program in order to better facilitate positive community service experiences for the students.

## CHAPTER 6

### MY JOURNEY THROUGH CCT.

In the summer of 2005 I entered the Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) graduate program CCT class with a touch of anxiety and a great deal of “what exactly am I doing here?” I clearly remember walking the corridors of Wheatley Hall, wondering how I could possibly be in the right building. I passed no one on my way to my first class, not in the parking lot, the elevator, or in any of the other classrooms. I suppose it is very fortunate that there were already students in my particular classroom, otherwise I may have turned around and left, forgoing the CCT experience for a little more summer vacation. My first two classes, Creative Thinking, Collaboration and Organizational Change and Creative Thinking, were my introduction to the CCT program. These two classes were the catalyst I needed to apply for the Masters program and continue my education.

As an undergraduate student I was passionate about my major of Sociology but never really sure how I would use it. After graduation I pursued jobs in education, first at a museum and then in a more traditional classroom. When I began researching graduate education I was disappointed to find few programs that even had classes in the Sociology of Education. I had foolishly assumed that this would be easy to find and the perfect way to combine my interests. It was the first sentence in the CCT program overview that hooked me “The Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) program at the University of Massachusetts Boston provides its students with knowledge, tools, experience, and support so they can become constructive, reflective agents of change in education, work, social movements, science, and creative arts.” There it was, the program seemed to be created just for me.

Now, fast forward 3 years to the present, I have completed my coursework and

somewhere along the way found something that I am passionate about. Through several projects and papers it has become clear to me that community service and action are not only important to me but also the direction that I hope to point my career. It is important that our young people are encouraged and enabled to do community service both locally and globally. I look forward to further developing and implementing this program at the high school level.

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