



LEARN AND SERVE
COLORADO
@ DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

**SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:**

- **Learn about the Odyssey School and Aurora Public School's Learn & Serve project** pg.3
- **November Calendar listing deadlines and holidays** pg. 4
- **Colorado Youth Development Social Networking Site—become Colorado Learn&Serve Friend!** pg. 4

Learn and Serve Colorado

Vol.1, Is. 1

November, 2009

Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

A growing body of research and practice suggests service-learning is most effective (i.e., has the best impacts on students and those they serve) when the below eight standards are integrated.

1. Link to Curriculum
2. Meaningful Service
3. Youth Voice
4. Reflection
5. Partnerships
6. Diversity
7. Progress Monitoring
8. Duration and Intensity

Service-learning is not an end in itself; it is a strategy/tool/vehicle/method for faculty to more effectively achieve existing goals for students.

Every month, we will be discussing one of these standards for quality practice.

This month we will be looking at **Link to Curriculum**

Link to Curriculum

Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards

1. Service-learning has clearly articulated learning goals.
2. Service-learning is aligned with the academic and/or programmatic curriculum.
3. Service-learning helps participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another.
4. Service-learning that takes place in schools is formally recognized in school

Service-Learning Lesson Plan:

Community Garden, soil preparation¹



Objective

Students will test the quality of the soil in the community garden and make informed decisions about nutrients to be added to the soil in preparation for planting. Students will offer soil testing as a service to the community.

Learning Standards

Science and Technology; Inquiry Mathematics; English/ Language Arts

Procedure

Students will complete a journal prompt: “*What is in the soil that is required for plants to grow?*” The students are encouraged to write from their experience. The results could be shared in a whole class brainstorming session.

Activity—Students will...

- research soil composition and its role in the growth of plants.
- evaluate the quality of the soil, using soil testing kits.
- list the necessary steps to improve the quality of the soil for growing plants, (lime to correct acidity, sulfur to lower pH, manure, the planting of rye grass to replenish the nutrients).
- record data collected on soil testing, quantity of nutrients added, and changes in soil quality.
- create graphs from the data.
- write a piece to put in the common journal in the school library to track data and compare over time.

Assessment

Using the writing process, students will write at least a two-paragraph journal entry in response to the following prompts:

- ♣ “Write a brief review of the process you used during this project. Use specific data collected as you tested the soil and determined what needed to be added and in what proportions.”
- ♣ “Next, please speculate about the impact your choices will have on the garden in the spring?”
- ♣ “What are you hoping will happen as a result of your actions?”
- ♣ “How will your work help our school and community?”
- ♣ “What would you recommend happen next in our garden if we hope to make the garden attractive and productive?”

Service Component

The community garden created by the middle school students addresses a community need that is universal. Through this project students become cognizant of the existence of hunger in their own community. The crops harvested in the school’s community garden are donated to needy families.

Going beyond...The students recognized the community’s needy population was larger than the harvest from their garden could feed. Through additional creative problem solving the students researched the types of crops to plant that would harvest the greatest yield with the greatest nutritional value. In addition, the students began assisting community members in the creation of their own gardens by testing soil samples and providing steps to improve the condition of the soil, if necessary. Finally, the students initiated a can drive in November to supplement the needy families through the winter months.



Service-Learning Coordinator:

Helping Teachers focus on Link to Curriculum

Service-learning programs are harder to organize than traditional lessons, and teachers should not be expected to undertake such projects without additional resources. Service-learning coordinators can play a key role in supporting teachers as they implement effective service-learning.²

*Service-Learning coordinator is an individual trained in service-learning, who assists in identifying community partners; assists in designing and implementing local partnerships' service-learning programs; provides technical assistance and information to facilitate training of teachers who want to use service-learning in their classrooms; assists local partnerships in planning, developing, and executing service-learning projects; and provides other services.*³

Donny Roush, the Development Coordinator at the Odyssey School, one of the Learn & Serve grantees, gives part of his time to being the Service-learning Coordinator for their Learn & Serve grant.

The Odyssey School is an Expeditionary Learning community dedicated to fostering each child's unique potential and spirit of adventure through exemplary standards :

- character
- intellectual achievement
- social responsibility

The Odyssey School is chartered by the Denver Public Schools system. Expeditionary Learning is an educational system that differs from traditional systems in three main ways:

- students learn by conducting "learning expeditions"
- Expeditionary Learning works on developing the character -- as well as the intellect -- of students.
- Expeditionary Learning changes not only how students learn but also a school's culture

The Design Principles focus on:

- The Primacy of Self-Discovery
- The Having of Wonderful Ideas
- The Responsibility for Learning
- Empathy & Caring
- Success & Failure
- Collaboration & Competition
- Diversity & Inclusion
- The Natural World
- Solitude & Reflection
- Service & Compassion

Donny Roush has a background in environmental education and nonprofit management. The skills he has learned in his past experiences transfer well to his role at The Odyssey School and to the role of a service-learning coordinator.

With a background in environmental education, Donny is able to help develop a meaningful service-learning opportunity along with their partnership with **Aurora Public Schools** (Fletcher Intermediate Science and Technology School, Aurora Academy) around the Westerly Creek Connection.

The Westerly Creek is a creek connecting Denver and

Aurora. The Watershed Project (the Learn & Serve grantee's name for their project) will be looking at environmental justice in



the ongoing development happening around the Westerly Creek. (Learn more about WCC:<http://www.denvergov.org/>, search Westerly Creek)

Donny's background in nonprofit management has given him the skills of project coordination, developing community partnerships, and working across multiple systems. These skills allow him to take much of the reporting and coordination responsibilities off of the teachers and other administrators so they can focus on the curriculum development.

Effective service-learning can drive and result in student acquisition of concepts, learning objectives, content, and skills in academic disciplines. Projects are intentionally designed to have students practice—through service— the knowledge, skills, and behaviors they need to learn. Service strengthens academic content, and vice-versa.

Well-designed service learning projects are tied to specific courses and student's grades.

Learn & Serve on Colorado Youth Development Network

The Colorado Youth Development Team is a private-public partnership of youth, parents and youth-serving professionals (at the state and community levels) who have come together to help infuse positive youth development strategies throughout Colorado.

Recently the Colorado Youth Development Team (CYDT) created a social networking site called the **Colorado Youth Development Network**.

This Network creates a space for youth service providers, supporters, teachers, funders and advocates to connect and work together towards creating, building and strengthening services for Colorado's children and youth!

Learn and Serve Colorado is a member of this network and invites you to be a member to. Our member page will be a way for us to communicate on a regular basis—through the use of the blog—and a way to disseminate important information.

Please join this network, it is **FREE**, and will be a great resource for you!



www.coloradoyouthdevelopment.ning.com

Nov.

Learn and Serve Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat/Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
National Association for the Education of Homeless Youth Conference Denver, CO November 14-17			18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
			CDE Holiday *office closed*	Thanksgiving CDE Holiday *office closed*	CDE Furlough Day *office closed*	
29	30					

2009

¹ The lesson plan was found on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at <http://www.servicelearning.org/slice>

² Definition from the Corporation for National and Community Service

³ Definition from Policy Pathways recommended by *Engaged For Success: Service-Learning for High School Dropout Prevention* Service-Learning Coordinators in Every School. (Bridgeland, Dilulio Jr. and Wulsin 2008)