

# Read-a-Thon for Johns Hopkins Pediatric Unit

By Janet Hines

**Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project (e.g. health, education, environmental or public safety need)?** Johns Hopkins Pediatric Center serves many seriously ill children. After reading Dr. Ben Carson's book, the students in my classes had a strong desire to help the hospital where he worked. Children conducted a read-a-thon to collect funds for purchasing finger paints, coloring books, pencils, crayons, and puzzles. The students also wrote stories about themselves with illustrations to present to patients. They drew pictures to create coloring books and invented board games for the children. Receiving blankets were crocheted for the infants, along with mittens, hats, and footies.

**Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to school curriculum (e.g. what course outcomes were met and/or how did the project reinforce or enhance student academic learning)?** We were able to incorporate the Language Arts Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) through the read-a-thon, reflection piece, and the written stories. The math VSC's were met when we counted and collected the money and then graphed the amounts of money collected by each professional learning team.

**Best Practice 3: How did you reflect on your experience throughout the project?** Students completed reflection questions in their reading journals. A few reflection questions were: "How do you feel when you have done something for someone else?" - "List items children in a hospital for an extended amount of time might enjoy." - "What can I do to teach or help another child learn?" And "What did you enjoy most about the project?"

**Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project?** Students formed two to three person groups based on jobs needing completion. They typed letters to businesses, brainstormed lists of items/things needed, made phone contacts, created advertisement, and packed computer boxes with completed projects. Through the efforts of my students, 25 boxes of games, puzzles, books, etc. were taken to Johns Hopkins to be distributed to young patients.

**Best Practice 5: What community partners did you work with on this project (e.g. non-profits, civic organizations, business that provided donations, etc.)?** Students wrote letters to local businesses asking for donations or monetary support. They also involved the Student Government Association and Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) of Chesapeake Bay Middle School. Johns Hopkins Hospital was the beneficiary of our project.

**Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project?** The most important part of planning a project is determining how to allow the students to take ownership. After brainstorming possible community needs, the class voted to work with Johns Hopkins Pediatric Center. Students met once a week during after school activity

time to plan and organize materials, write letters to obtain supplies, get community support, and produce quality projects for the hospital.

**Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project?** When the project concluded, students were able to take the items and money to the hospital. They then were able to hear Dr. Ben Carson speak at the Johns Hopkins Auditorium. Dr. Carson gave a very motivational speech encouraging the students to excel at their schoolwork. Many of the male students took the challenge given by Dr. Carson and improved the quality of their work, completed homework assignments regularly, and literally improved their grades across the curriculum.

