



Teddy Bear Drive for Dove Center

By Rhonda Tasker

It was Christmastime and I was surrounded by a group of 10th and 11th grade students in my social studies class. We began discussing the needs in our community with regards to domestic violence and the impact it had on children. We decided to do a teddy bear drive to aid young children living in the Dove Center, a domestic abuse shelter. We also knew that the children are sometimes taken to the Garrett County Memorial Hospital for emergency room treatment. These children would benefit a great deal from the love of a teddy bear.

Best practices:

- There is a real need in our community to help abused children. We have a domestic violence center that accommodates parents and children who are victims of violence. A growing number of children seek a safe haven in a hurry, unable to gather a favorite toy from home. Being away from one parent and living in a strange environment or taken to the emergency room can cause children to be lonely, scared, and sad.
- There are several curricular objectives met through this project, including social skills development, cooperative learning, enhancement of communication, time management, decision-making, and mathematical skills.
- Students reflected on the activities by discussing the visits and deciding what made each visit special. They also reviewed what they could improve so they could better utilize their time with the children and make the project a high quality service-learning project.
- Students were responsible for collecting the donations used to purchase the teddy bears. They selected the bears that they thought were most appropriate and then bought the bears. Students had to develop a schedule of events to follow regarding shopping for and delivering teddy bears. They also had to obtain permission to travel to the Dove Center and Garrett County Memorial Hospital from both their parents and the facilities.
- We worked with the Dove Center, Garrett County Memorial Hospital, and WalMart.
- Students had to select collection sites for donations of both money and teddy bears. They kept accurate records of all the donations received and deposited the donations into the school account. Later, they requested a check written from this account, so they could purchase the bears. They had to make a schedule of events to meet at Wal-Mart to purchase teddy bears and deliver them to Dove Center and the hospital. Students had to coordinate the schedule with contacts at the Dove Center and the hospital. They also arranged for opportunities to learn more about both facilities and the people they serve.
- As noted above, students had to learn about the issue of domestic violence, as well as how to work as a team to plan and implement a large-scale fundraising event.