Service-Learning Fellow's Project

Diakonia Personal Needs Drive
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Primary Subject: Social Studies (Government)　　　　**Grade Level:** 9-12

Additional Subject Area Connections:

- Health/Family Life
- Science

Unit Title: Personal Needs Drive

Type(s) of Service:　Indirect

Unit Description: Students work as a team to collect personal needs items for a local homeless shelter, Diakonia.

Potential Service-Learning Action Experiences:

- Collection of personal needs items
- Assembly of toiletry kits
- Delivery and distribution of kits to homeless shelter

Maryland Curriculum Standards Met

Government Core Learning Goals:

1.1.3: The student will evaluate roles and policies the government has assumed regarding public issues.

1.1.4: The student will explain roles and analyze strategies individuals or groups may use to initiate change in governmental policy and institutions.

3.1.1: The student will evaluate demographic factors related to political participation, public policy, and government policies.

Alignment with Maryland's
Best Practices of Service-Learning:
Personal Needs Drive

1. **Meet a recognized community need**
   Diakonia, Inc. is a non-profit organization that serves homeless men, women, and families in Ocean City, Maryland and surrounding areas. As a non-profit organization, Diakonia relies on funding from a variety of sources, including private donations, government grants, and public support. In addition, Diakonia relies on community donations of food, clothing, and volunteer hours to maintain their services.

2. **Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning**
   By participating in this service-learning project, students are able to see firsthand the ways in which the government operates to benefit its citizens. For example, under the Government Core Learning Goals, students will "evaluate roles and policies the government has assumed regarding public issues" (1.1.3). By working with Diakonia, students will learn about the role of local government in providing for citizens who are in need.

3. **Reflect throughout the service-learning experience**
   Participating in this service project enables students to reflect on their own lives and compare that to the experiences of the people Diakonia serves. In most instances, students come away with an appreciation for the comforts they enjoy.

4. **Develop student responsibility (Students have opportunities to make decisions about the service-learning project.)**
   Throughout this project, students are expected to take on leadership roles and responsibilities. For example, they must make contact with the director of Diakonia and determine what their particular needs are. They must work together to advertise the personal needs drive, and determine how the items will be collected. They must take on the responsibility of collecting, sorting, and delivering the items to the shelter.

5. **Establish community partnerships**
   As a non-profit organization, Diakonia is reliant on the community for support, whether monetary or through material donations. Holding the personal needs drive establishes the local school system as a community partner willing to provide both material items and volunteer hours.

6. **Plan ahead for service-learning**

This project requires extensive planning on the part of the students participating. For example, they must first determine the needs of the shelters, establish a plan for the items they wish to collect, and decide when and how those items will be collected. It is also important for the students to determine the goals of the project during their planning stages.

7. **Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service**

Students must have an understanding as to the purpose of their service. Therefore, it is important for students to research the issue of homelessness and poverty in their area. In addition, it is also important for students to understand how Diakonia serves those in need, and how they are able to achieve this. Finally, students will need to have an understanding of the sensitive nature of Diakonia's services and the importance of confidentiality of the residents and their situations.

Procedures with Resources:
Personal Needs Drive

These procedures represent an example of a service-learning lesson on this specific topic, but can be changed to meet individual classroom interests or varying community needs. You are encouraged to adapt this unit to fit your unique classroom and community and to solicit student input in planning and decision making.

1. Contact local homeless shelter to determine their needs. This could be done through a meeting with personnel or visit to the shelter itself.

2. Once needs have been recognized, determine a plan of action as to how items will be collected (items needed, timeframe, sources of donations, incentives, etc).

3. Create fliers, posters, and other means of advertising the collection drive.

4. Hold collection drive for the allotted timeframe (for example, one week).

5. Sort and deliver items to homeless shelter.

6. Resources:
   - [Worcester County Department of Social Services](http://dhs.maryland.gov/local-offices/worcester-county/) - http://dhs.maryland.gov/local-offices/worcester-county/
   - [Diakonia Website](https://diakoniaoc.org) - https://diakoniaoc.org
   - Info on [Diakonia's needs](https://diakoniaoc.org/donate) - https://diakoniaoc.org/donate

7. Reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of the project by completing the *Rubric for Assessing the Use of the Maryland's Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning* which can be found at www.mdservice-learning.org.

Additional Interdisciplinary Connections

- **Science**

- **Health/Family Life** Issues of those living in poverty, mental health issues, drug/alcohol issues, etc.

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Worcester County

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