



## Service Learning Initiative Wins National Demonstration Grant

The Service Learning Initiative of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) received a huge boost in its effort to strengthen Service Learning by winning one of only five national demonstration grants through the federal Department of Health and Human Services. The grant, worth \$100,000 annually for the next two academic years, enables Chicago public high school students the opportunity to earn Service Learning credit by working with developmentally disabled students in inclusive environments through the **Service Partners Project**. Chicago Public Schools is partnering with United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago to train students and teachers, as well as support the development of authentic Service Learning activities in schools.

Service Learning represents a very promising educational practice that enhances educational collaboration between general education and special needs' students. The Service Partners Project offers a great opportunity for students with or without disabilities to develop classroom-based and after school Service Learning opportunities. Through team building activities and classroom instruction, students will prepare, develop and implement projects that provide an important service to the community, while enhancing academic learning. An added feature of the Service Partners Project is that students will have the opportunity to explore careers and professions that promote and advocate for developmentally disabled individuals. Currently, special education teachers are in great demand around the country, but many other career opportunities exist in the field.

Seven high schools are participating in the Service Partners Project including Hyde Park, Benito Jaurez, Prosser, Northside College Prep, Northside Learning Center, Vaughn, and Kennedy. Each school will develop a Service Learning project that brings both disabled and non-disabled students together for action in their schools and communities. As projects unfold, both students and teachers will have opportunities for networking and training. Students will use hands-on learning experiences to explore career opportunities, while they complete their projects. Hyde Park students will document the project through their TV/Video class.

Through the support provided by the Health and Human Services Grant, the opportunity to increase student awareness about disabilities through hands-on Service Learning experiences will be greatly enhanced. Receiving one of only five national demonstration grants is a remarkable achievement for Chicago Public Schools and its Service Learning Initiative. It is a testimony to the fine work currently being done in the fields of special education and Service Learning.

### What is Service Learning?

Service Learning is a teaching and learning methodology that connects classroom curriculum with identified community issues and needs. Service Learning engages students in projects that serve the community and build their social and academic capacities.

### Why use Service Learning in the Classroom?

Educators around the country agree that institutions of learning must provide students with foundational skills and knowledge as well as technical skills that can be used in potential careers. What more and more educators are finding is that without an important third component—skills and attitudes in social responsibility—education is not complete.

We need only to look to recent examples of gross corporate malfeasance at Enron, Arthur Andersen, and Tyco to know that even with a good set of foundational and technical skills, we are not preparing our students for well-rounded participation in society. We also need to imbue students with a strong sense of social responsibility. Among many other positive outcomes, Service Learning is an effective tool to provide the third leg of an effective education.

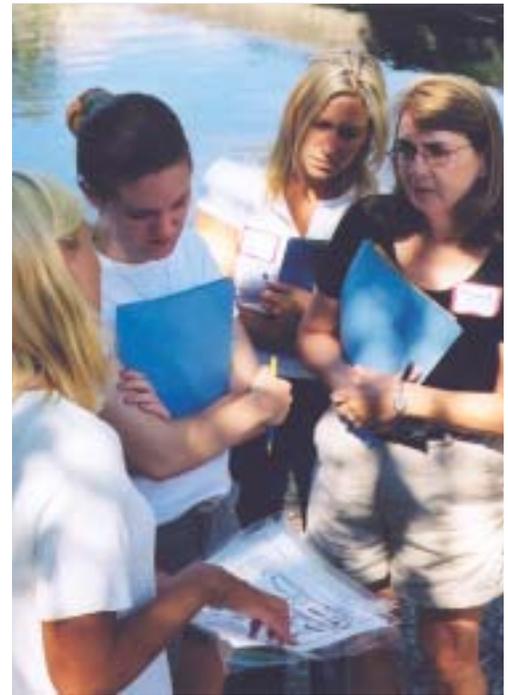
# Pilot Project Lifts Off

“We have forty teachers who want to do a Service Learning project in their classroom!” A CPS Service Learning Coach participating in the new Service Learning Pilot Project Initiative called to complain that so many teachers were expressing interest in integrating service projects with classroom curriculum. Well, perhaps *complain* is slightly over-stated. An abundance of willing teachers is a good problem to have. It is an exciting development for Service Learning at CPS. The challenge for the Service Learning Coach is to support the enthusiasm and energy of those teachers as they provide hands-on learning experiences for their students that will build effective citizenship skills through active engagement in their communities.

Through the new Pilot Project, the role of the Service Learning Coach is being re-defined. During the first four years of the CPS Service Learning requirement, the Coach was largely responsible for shepherding each student through a service experience. With the advent of revised guidelines and the Pilot Project, Coaches now share responsibility for the requirement with fellow faculty members. The goal of the Pilot Project is to encourage and support teachers to plan and implement service projects that are directly tied to classroom curriculum. Sixteen CPS high schools are currently participating in the Service Learning Pilot Project Initiative.

The Pilot Project kicked off on August 5, 2002, when 25 teachers from among pilot schools gathered at the University of Illinois/Chicago for a four-day Service Learning Institute. Based on evaluations, teachers returned to their schools motivated to begin using Service Learning as a practical, innovative classroom teaching strategy.

The Pilot Project is providing professional development, teacher support, curricular resources, networking opportunities, additional financial support, and connection to community organizations to enable teachers to use Service Learning effectively. By the end of the year, we hope to have a strong cadre of trained teachers who use Service Learning in the classroom as a high quality teaching tool. During the year, participating schools will develop long-term strategies for implementing Service Learning across the school and across curriculum.



*Teachers receive instructions for a service project at the Peggy Notebart Museum*

## Pilot Project Schools

Best Practice  
BEST Academy  
Bogan  
Clemente  
Curie  
Gage Park  
Juarez  
Harper  
Hyde Park Academy  
Kennedy  
Prosser  
Walter Payton College Prep  
Northside College Prep  
Orr  
Senn  
Washington

# Pilot Project Schools Receive Training in Service Learning Pedagogy

*“Bravo, I was inspired!”*

*“I learned a lot from my colleagues. I’m excited about trying a Service Learning project with my classes.”*

*“The Institute was extremely helpful. I feel more prepared and excited about the upcoming school year.”*

*“Great job! More teachers should be involved in the Service Learning Initiative.”*

*“I am very excited to participate in this pilot program, and my students will be eager to participate!”*

*“Excellent explanation of how it’s supposed to work – Service Learning with curricular tie-ins.”*

*“Service Learning rocks!”*

These were just a few of the positive comments from teachers after two recent professional development opportunities sponsored by the Service Learning Initiative. Teachers received a better understanding of the pedagogy and practice of Service Learning.

From August 5 – 8, 2002, twenty-five teachers from CPS Pilot Project schools participated in an intensive Service Learning simulation experience. Hosted by the University of Illinois/Chicago Great Cities Institute, teachers experienced the three primary components of Service Learning: Preparation, Service, Reflection through discussion, guest speakers, and hands-on activities. At the culmination of training, teachers developed Service Learning projects for use in their classrooms during the current academic year. A highlight of the Institute was a day of service during which teachers

went out in teams of five to a community organization in the city. Each team returned with exciting stories about their experiences in the field.

A second professional development opportunity for teachers was hosted by the Chicago Historical Society (CHS). The CHS hosted the Service Learning Symposium on Friday, October 4, 2002, for 90 Pilot Project teachers. Again, in an abbreviated format, teachers examined the three components of Service Learning. Rob Donahue of Northwestern University’s Civic Education Project discussed the pedagogy of Service Learning followed by a team analysis of sample Service Learning projects. Teachers measured case studies against performance rubrics.

Chicago Public Schools’ CEO, Mr. Arne Duncan, addressed the teachers, highlighting the power of Service Learning to engage students in learning while developing real leadership skills. Participating teachers also had the opportunity to have lunch with one of 12 community organizations in attendance. The community organizations are able to develop classroom-based Service Learning projects with teachers.

An important component of the Service Learning Pilot Project is professional development of teachers. These training opportunities prime the pump for Service Learning. Throughout the school year, teachers will have opportunities to come together to share their experiences and practices in order to sharpen their own tools for Service Learning.



*Teachers brainstorm Service Learning projects at Summer Institute.*

## PROSSER CAREER ACADEMY SPONSORS SERVICE LEARNING FAIR

More than 60 students braved a cold autumnal Saturday morning on November 2, 2002, in order to attend the first Service Learning Resource Fair at Prosser Vocational High School. Mr. Jeffrey Bates, Prosser's Service Learning Coach, invited local and city-wide service organizations to present service opportunities for students. Students spoke with organizations representing environmental, health, educational, and hunger concerns. A Service Learning Fair is a great opportunity to introduce community resources to both teachers and students at your school. Schools may also wish to team up and host a fair together.

One of the participating community organizations, the Northwest Neighborhood Federation, has worked with Prosser to develop a student leadership organization that addresses issues of concern in the community surrounding Prosser. These students have worked actively for improvements in their local park over the past year. They won a major victory when funds were finally released for a needed renovation of the park.

If you would like assistance in hosting a Service Learning fair at your school, contact Jon Schmidt at 3-3425.

## NEW SERVICE LEARNING RESOURCES NOW AVAILABLE

New Service Learning Teacher's Guides are available from the Service Learning Initiative. The guides feature an overview of the CPS Service Learning Initiative, useful teaching tools, curricular resources, and other teaching resources. Please contact the Service Learning Initiative at 3-3425 to order your Teacher's Guide.

An important part of the Teacher's Guide is a new set of curricular resources developed by CPS teachers and community organizations in collaboration with the Service Learning Initiative. Many students earn service hours by working at homeless shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens, or senior centers.

Curriculum guides in these areas – Hunger and Poverty, Housing and Homelessness, and Aging – have been developed to strengthen the learning



*Students explore service opportunities with a community organization.*

experience of students as they participate in service projects. School faculty are encouraged to use the curricular resources to enhance the preparation component of a Service Learning project. The guides are based on an inquiry approach to learning. Students are asked to seek out information in these three areas of inquiry and report their findings back to the class prior to moving to the action component of a Service Learning project.

We believe that students will have a richer service experience if they are adequately prepared for service project. These curricular resources can now be downloaded from the Service Learning website at [www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us](http://www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us)

## CPS STUDENTS SERVE AS MID-TERM ELECTION JUDGES

The Mikva Foundation has expanded a successful Service Learning project this year for CPS' high school students. Students were able to serve as election judges during the recently-completed mid-term election. Mikva Foundation provided the training for the students. Mike Altman, a social studies teacher at Steinmetz High School helped get his students involved in the project this fall. Below are some of his reflections.

*I wanted to show my interest and support for my students so, after school, I stopped at three different polling places where some of my students were election judges. They were doing fine. The adult election judges at each location were extremely complimentary of the students' knowledge of what to do and their willingness to help. Especially praiseworthy at each location was the precinct captain, who seemed to be around all day to make sure things ran smoothly. From the few minutes I spoke with each student, I could tell they had learned a lot through this experience.*

*Tomorrow, I will have them share their experiences with each of my classes. Today, I took my classes through [Mikva's resources],*

*the campaign experiences of the students, our mock election here last week, the Springfield trip, a class video on the candidates, and today's experiences as election judges. I feel great professionally, especially about the Government class. This has truly been experiential learning at its best! My students have gained so much insight and interest in the political process.*

Mike Altman teamed up with Mikva Foundation to offer a terrific Service Learning experience for his students that included the key components of preparation, service, and reflection. If any teachers are interested in recommending students to serve as election judges during the spring election season, contact Brian Brady at Mikva Foundation, 312-332-5810.



## ISBE and Illinois Resource Center Train CPS Teachers in Service Learning

Gary Greene, coordinator for Service Learning at the Illinois State Board of Education, and Jim Zabel, Director of the Illinois Resource Center, provided professional development workshops in Service Learning for CPS teachers on Monday, October 7, 2002, and Monday, October 28, 2002, at Medill Professional Development Center and Kennedy High School, respectively. At the workshops, participants discussed the definition of Service Learning and its application in the classroom, heard from local practitioners, and explored resources available to schools and teachers. By the end of the three-hour workshops, teachers were brainstorming exciting possibilities for classroom-based service projects.

The workshops featured "voices from the field", presentations by two high schools in the Chicago area that have integrated Service Learning across the curriculum. Maria High School and the Academy for Learning in Blue Island presented strategies and practices for using Service Learning

as an effective teaching strategy. In a recent article in Momentum magazine, Maria High School, a national Service Learning Leader School award winner, was described as a school committed to the principles of Service Learning. "This is learning at its best," wrote Kathleen King. "It is relevant, it is experiential, and it has a direct positive impact on the community....Students discover that curriculum extends beyond their walls and that knowledge must be combined with moral responsibility to positively impact others."

The ISBE-sponsored workshops are part of the CPS effort to strengthen Service Learning by providing teachers with the tools and support necessary to integrate service with classroom curriculum. If your school is interested in participating in professional development workshops for teachers, contact Jon Schmidt, the Service Learning Manager at CPS, at 3-3425.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## The Service Partners Project



*SPP students prepare for a day of team building*

(SPP) is a new, federally-funded initiative of Chicago Public Schools designed to bring disabled and non-disabled students together for service projects (*see page one*). Service Partners Project hopes to create less

restrictive learning environments for students, explore important social issues, and develop opportunities for students to serve in their communities. Students from Vaughn Occupational High School and Northside College Prep kicked off the Service Partners Project through a new curriculum-based project of Vaughn's Culinary Arts Program.



As part of their preparation for their service project, students from Vaughn and Northside College Prep gather every Wednesday to learn about and research topics related to homelessness and HIV. As part of their study and preparation, students examine the importance of nutrition, particularly for homeless people. Students each week look at different types of foods that are offered at shelters and provided to the homeless. One component of their project will be to bake meals and snacks for individuals who are homeless.

On Wednesday, October 25, 2002, students had the opportunity to hear from Open Hands Chicago, a Chicago non-profit organization that works with individuals who are homeless and HIV+. Students had the chance to voice their opinions and concerns about these important social problems. Students debated and questioned the effects of homelessness and HIV on their communities.

A student from Vaughn High School described the experience as "life-changing". He described his student Service Learning partners as "very smart" and "excited" about the opportunity to learn about each other while learning about issues, stereotypes and possible solutions to the problems of homelessness and HIV.

Through the project, students are learning and acquiring leadership skills and knowledge that they will use as they work with Access Living, The Night Ministry and the Chicago Food Depository. Recognizing the opportunity to get engaged in their own education, students are excited about becoming proactive in the fight to solve the problems of homelessness and HIV.

## Service Learning Calendar

Chicago Cares celebrates the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday with a day of service on Saturday, January 18, 2003. Students can sign up to serve by contacting their Service Learning Coach by December 13, 2002.

Sign up now to attend the 14th Annual National Service Learning Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota from April 23-26, 2003.

This premier national conference brings together thousands of students, teachers, community leaders and prominent



speakers to explore various aspects of Service Learning. For information, contact [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org).

## The Service Learning Initiative

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## A BLAST FROM THE PAST

*“I felt happy when I first walked in and saw old friends and new ones.”*

*“I was really excited when we won first prize on the first project.”*

Attitude, style character? That’s right, everyone has or has had each of these. Indeed, today’s generation views self-expression and culture as keys to popularity, but we forget about our elders whom we might characterize as “grumpy” or “old”. They were, however, once young, hip, and cool. Over time, these once rebellious youngsters have become our elders and may not have lost that flair!

A partnership among Young Citizens, Seniors and Youth Neighborhood Connections (SYNC) 2003, a project of the Chicago Department on Aging, and Chicago Public Schools is enabling students to work together with senior citizens to break down the isolation and alienation that can exist between young people and senior citizens. SYNC 2003 is an exciting Service Learning opportunity for young people and senior citizens to develop a new vision and spirit about each other.

Day Star School is one of seven Chicago area schools participating in Service Learning projects that partner young people with senior citizens. One of the many goals of the project is to eliminate stereotypes that hinder communication between young people and senior citizens through SYNC 2003, while providing each group the opportunity to witness and celebrate the strengths that each generation brings to society.

Larry Wallingford, Chicago Department on Aging SYNC Coordinator, views the integration between students and senior citizens as an important aspect of the Service Learning experience. The interaction enables students to develop good relationships while learning about and helping society.

Students from Day Star had the opportunity to make a field trip to the Institute for Cultural Affairs. The students met with senior citizens to share their unique ideas about culture. Through stimulating conversation, games, readings and puzzles, students work together to develop a Service Learning project. Students realize their potential as leaders, communicators and citizens. Through service, students are able to educate senior citizens about how enthusiastic, smart and well mannered they are as young adults.

Teenagers are “loud, rude, and stupid!” Seniors citizens are “grumpy and authoritative!” These *were* the biased opinions shared by many students and elders. Upon reflecting about their time together, Virginia, a senior citizen, described the session and students as “delightful,” and Bethany, a Day Star student, described the evening and senior citizens as “refreshing.” Hancock, Senn and the School for Entrepreneurship at South Shore Academy are also participating in SYNC 2003 this year.

### Service Learning on the Web!



The Service Learning Initiative has re-vamped and renewed its website. Go to the website at [www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us](http://www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us) and click on Service Learning. You can discover a world of resources that will be enhanced and upgraded throughout the year, so check in often with us. You will find the new Service Learning calendar that features service opportunities for students and training/networking opportunities for teachers throughout the year. You will find a database of 200+ community organizations where students can earn service hours. You will also find and be able to download all the forms that you need for effective Service Learning projects. Join us in cyberspace for a world of resources.

## Learning While Doing Builds Life-Long Skills and Attitudes!

In the following paragraphs, a Prosser Career Academy High School student offers his perspective on the value of Service Learning and the importance of teaching:

*When I first entered Prosser, I heard that every student had to do 40 Service Learning hours. When I heard that, I thought that it would be boring doing these hours, but I was wrong. At Lloyd, I had a lot of fun doing my 40 Service Learning hours. When I was doing my hours at Lloyd, I learned many things I did not know about before.*

*For example, I learned that teaching young kids can be very pleasant or can also be very difficult. Luckily, the students I tutored were very nice and were willing to try their very best in order to learn. I helped the kids to read, spell, and also solve math problems. Teaching the kids how to read and spell can be very difficult, but eventually the kids that I taught learned, and that was very satisfying.*

*I found that teaching young kids how to solve math problems is very easy, especially teaching addition and subtraction. The only thing that the students need to do in order to learn and make what they learned stay in their head is to practice how to read, spell and solve problems in their houses and to practice every single day, especially in school. If the students do this, then they will be smarter and they will have greater opportunities throughout their lives.*

*Doing my 40 Service Learning hours, the most important thing that I learned is that teaching is the most important job in America. Without teachers every little boy and every little girl would not have the education that is needed to succeed in*

*in his or her life. Over the last few days, I have developed more respect for my teachers, because now I know that teachers push students so that we benefit from it in the future because all their work is for our own personal benefit.*

*I also know that doing Service Learning hours was not a bad thing because I enjoyed doing these hours, and it was a good thing. I enjoyed helping kids gain knowledge. I first thought that doing this project did not make any sense, but I think I know what the purpose for assigning this project was. In my opinion the purpose for this project was to give students an understanding and knowledge of life in the real world. This project was very beneficial to me and I hope that other students learn what I learned. If they learn at least a little bit of what I have learned they will also appreciate people and our community more.*

*—Leonardo Equihaus*

### Students Can Win Service Learn Grants

The YMCA Alliance has created the Youth Grantmaking Board (YGB) composed of a diverse group of students from Chicago high schools. The YGB has announced a new funding opportunity for groups of students who attend a Chicago high school, work with an adult advisor, and are sponsored by a Chicago high school which is represented in the YMCA Youth and Government program. Student groups can apply for grants of up to \$2,500 for programs or projects that are developed, led, and directed by youth. To receive an application, contact your school's Service Learning coach, or call 312/440-6971. Applications are due by January 14, 2003.

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