

Community Outreach Project

Food Pantry & Team Building

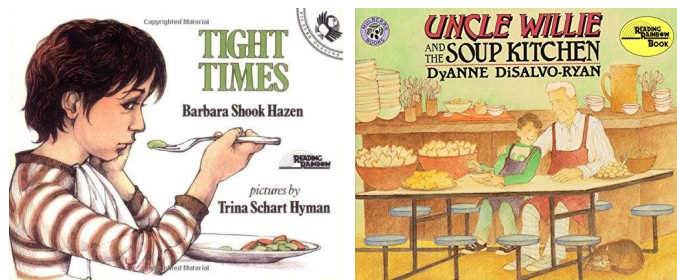
Introduction

I usually use this as the "kick-off" Community Outreach Project to show my students the importance of serving others. This is a natural segue into my year-long message in promoting citizenship in our school and community. *"As citizens in our school and our community, it is imperative that we work to better the lives of our constituents."* I believe internal motivation is cultivated when student ownership is encouraged in and outside of their learning environment. We tend to take care of the things we own.

Serving the needs of others is perhaps the greatest responsibility that we each bear in any circumstance.

Pre-Trip

Along with the [anchor video](#), I use "Tight Times" by Barbara Shook Hazen and "Uncle Willie And The Soup Kitchen" by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan to teach inferencing while providing an insight on the population of community members we are going to serve.



[Click here for lesson materials](#)

During Trip (Service & Team Building)

I recommend splitting your class into two groups: One group taking a tour of the food pantry and serving for 45-60 minutes, while the other group is in a reserved area to participate in the team-building activity. Switch after so both groups get both experiences.

The reserved area can be outside (weather permitting), or a building nearby. I have reserved gym space at a Boy's & Girls Club before, and I have also reserved an open retail space to use for a day as well. Always have a back-up plan if you're planning to be outside. *Multiple teachers/supervisors (that have strong relationships with the class) are needed if you have 2 or more groups.*

Helpful Tip: Always check to see if the pantry you are collaborating with has specific donation needs. The Hunger Task Force always had a need for egg cartons, so we made sure to collect as many as we could as a class prior to visiting.

Materials & Resources (Teambuilding)

** Read this story first to set the tone of the shoulder tapping activity. Talk about the potential effect that we have on each other, as well as the likelihood that we will never know the full impact of even the smallest acts of kindness.**

Kyle's Story

One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class was walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, "Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd." I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friend tomorrow afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on.

As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, and I saw a tear in his eye. As I handed him his glasses, I said, "Those guys are jerks. They really should get lives." He looked at me and said, "Hey thanks!" There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude.

I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now. I would have never hung out with a private school kid before.

We talked all the way home, and I carried his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid. I asked him if he wanted to play football on Saturday with me and my friends. He said yes. We hung all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him. And my friends thought the same of him.

Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, "Damn boy, you are gonna really build some serious muscles with this pile of books everyday!" He just laughed and handed me half the books. Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the smiles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor, and I was going for business on a football scholarship. Kyle was valedictorian of our class.

I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak. Graduation day, I saw Kyle.

Materials & Resources (Teambuilding)

He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than me and all the girls loved him! Boy, sometimes I was jealous.

Today was one of those days. I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, “Hey, big guy, you’ll be great!” He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. “Thanks,” he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began. “Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach ... but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story.”

I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn’t have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. “Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable.” I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment.

I saw his Mom and dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth. Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person’s life. For better or for worse.

Materials & Resources (Teambuilding)

Shoulder Tapping

Instructions: The facilitator will instruct each of the participants to sit in a large circle facing away from each other. Once everyone is seated and comfortable, have each student close their eyes. Encourage the importance of not peeking throughout each round. Once everyone understands the directions, the facilitator will tap 3-7 individuals to open their eyes and stand up and quietly stand in the middle of the circle. Once they are all in the middle, they will be instructed to tap (on the shoulder, arm, or back) the individual that someone else most pertains to.

Once the facilitator has read through several statements the tapped individuals will resume their positions lying on the floor with eyes closed and the next group will be tapped. This will continue until all members of the group have had the opportunity to reach out and touch someone.

(** Closely monitor the activity between statements. There are times that students may not get tapped. If you notice that someone isn't being tapped at all, quietly walk over and tap the shoulder of someone with a statement that you feel is accurate. **)

Emphasize the importance again to keep eyes closed and talking should be discouraged. Once you feel comfortable and everyone is set, you can begin with the prompts.

Tap someone who...

Makes you laugh	You have learned something from	You can trust	You can count on	Is artistic	You appreciate	Is a good athlete
Is intelligent	You couldn't live without	You want to know more about	Is strong	Is a good person	Makes you feel important	Is nice
Gives full effort	Is a true leader	Is reliable	You can tell anything	Challenges you	Has great ideas	Brightens your day
Makes you feel comfortable	Knows a lot about you	Shares an interest or hobby with you	You wished you knew better	Is a leader	Has taught you something important	Is a friend
You trust	You respect	Is a good listener	Has helped you when you needed it the most	Has made you try harder	Has inspired you	Fun to be with
You feel supported by	Has given you good advice	Does a good job	Has recently done something nice for you	Has a good sense of humor	Is patient	Is forgiving
Optional: _____	Optional: _____	Optional: _____	Optional: _____	Optional: _____	Optional: _____	Optional: _____

Materials & Resources (Teambuilding)

Field Trip Reflection

Use the eleven sentence paragraph framework to complete your field trip reflection.

Title of Field Trip

Date of trip

Lead:

Topic Sentence (1 sentence)

Include:

- Who went on the trip?
- Where did we go?
- When did we go?
- What did we do?
- Why did we go on the field trip?

Fact/Concrete Detail: (What is one thing you learned? (1 sentence)

Support/Information Sentence: (1 sentence)

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Concluding Sentence:

Restate the field trip and justify your rating of the field trip on a 5 point scale.

(5 being the best) (1 sentence)

Materials & Resources (Teambuilding)

Shoulder Tapping Reflection:

Processing prompts:

How did it make you feel when you were touched on the shoulder?

Why do you think we don't tell each other these things more regularly?

Challenge: *Carry this forward. Find someone in your life (outside of school), and explain why you appreciate them.*