

Community Outreach Project

Pediatric Oncology

Introduction

This field trip took more planning and prepping than any other outreach project in my seven years in a classroom. I'll elaborate more on this at the end.

“What can we do, and how can we respond to people who are in crisis?”

“How can we respond when faced with significant adversity?”

“How can we continue to stay resilient while also bettering the lives of others, no matter the circumstances that we are facing?”

I highlight these questions prior to explaining/showing this project, as it is important for students to draw on their experiences to evaluate how they have responded to adversity.

Pre-Trip

The anchor story that I use is [Zach Sobiech's “My Last Days”](#) episode on SoulPancake. This sets the tone for what the class will be studying prior to visiting the Pediatric Oncology floor at the hospital. I explain to the class that we are going to be studying the topic of children who are fighting cancer. We will be reaching out to community members who are facing similar challenges that Zach did, and it is our job to continue to instill hope for the kids and families that we contact.

After watching the “My Last Days” video, I have the class brainstorm questions that they would like to ask the doctors/nurses on our visit. *(There are accommodations to this activity if a visit is not feasible)*

Watching Zach's video is sure to elicit an emotional response from students. I make sure to have our counselors aware of my project ahead of time if there are students who need additional assistance to process the emotions that may arise with Zach's story.

The *why* behind this project is to show *how important it is to make sure we are impacting each other positively. There really is no place for gossip, bullying, or any other type of negative energy with the intention of harming others.* The unfortunate truth is that all of us will be impacted by significant adversity in one form or another. It's important to study and evaluate *how* we can respond to others in a time of crisis.

Materials & Resources

During Trip (Tour Pediatric Oncology)

* I'm not entirely sure how possible this field trip will be now and in the near future with COVID-19 being an extreme risk to those who are immunocompromised. I'm in contact with our pediatric unit to see if there is a way that we can do a "virtual visit" where doctors/nurses can take us through the floor, but I also have video resources available if a virtual visit is not possible.

Even without a pandemic, the risk of contamination and giving a patient a viral infection increases when 60+ people tour the oncology unit. We had to find a time when no patients were present, while also not touching anything. Any student who exhibited any cold-like symptoms were not allowed to come. With the (very necessary) precautionary requirements that needed to be met, we had to move a lot of moving different classes around to ensure that we were available during the time that the oncology floor was available.

We also spoke to a nurse, and a pediatric oncologist about their daily efforts to help each child they are in a position to serve.

Video resources are below:

[Treatment Video](#)

[Superman Sam](#)

Moral of the story? **No matter the circumstance, serving the needs of others is *the* way to remain resilient in any circumstance.** I then show Zach's [annual "Clouds" concert](#) that takes place in the Mall of America each December to raise funds towards Zach's Osteosarcoma Fund.

Kindness and serving the needs is contagious. *People naturally draw near to movements that are dedicated to help others.* Zach lived his life to ensure those around him were better each and every day.

Post- Trip (Outreach)

I would then end the "virtual learning trip" with Zach's "[My Last Days: One Year Later](#)" video. Through this video, I have students begin to identify gifts and letters of encouragement to the list of patients that are currently undergoing treatment at the pediatric oncology unit.

One year we ended up FaceTiming a family a number of times throughout the school year as the patient that responded to our letters was a 2 year old girl who had been getting cancer treatment for the past year. We were able to send her letters and drawings, while also asking her parents how they were doing through the process as well.

This outreach project offers an opportunity for students to directly interact with a population of community members who are facing challenges, while also enhancing their toolset and knowledge on how to respond to others who may be facing significant adversity.

Materials & Resources

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)

Support/Information Sentence: (1 sentence)

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

Support/Information Sentence: (1 sentence)

Support/Information Sentence: (1 sentence)

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

Support/Information Sentence: (1 sentence)

Support/Information Sentence: (1 sentence)

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)