



SOLID FOUNDATION®

Building Student Success within a Strong School Community®

Connection

Community Building Ideas

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Common Experience

A common experience is an educational experience related to one or more school community goals that all students share. This does not necessarily mean that all students share in the experience at the same time.

A common experience is a program, curricular component, event, activity, or policy that includes or applies to all students in a school and is related to one or more school community goals.

Goal: Studying

Assignment Notebooks

- ✧ Contributing Schools: Northwest Elementary School, LaSalle, IL;
Davis Elementary School, Chicago, IL

This common experience reinforces the goal of studying, while helping students meet school community responsibilities. All students receive a special assignment notebook in which to record their daily assignments. Parents and teachers are responsible for checking the notebook to ensure that students are keeping up with their homework. Assignment notebooks train parents, teachers, and students to pay attention to the goal of studying, enabling everyone to meet school community responsibilities.

Study Worm

- ✧ Contributing School: Martinsburg Elementary School, Martinsburg, PA

This construction paper hallway masterpiece is representative of all the homework completed at MES in a three-week period. As students turned in completed homework, they were given “worm segments” to add to Study Worm. Parents can then search for their child’s name on a segment(s) when they come for parent-teacher conferences. More than 3,000 worm segments are testimony to the amount of homework completed by MES students.

Home Bags

- ✧ Contributing School: Cheesbro Elementary, DeKalb, IL

On Friday, students are given a bag to take home for the weekend. It contains fun and educational activities to do at home with parents and siblings, such as books, flash cards, and games.

Academic Olympiad

- ✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Students answer questions correctly before running through a maze of events.

Home Practice Boxes

- ✧ Contributing School: Steffee Intermediate Center, Seneca, PA

Large plastic boxes filled with all the possible materials a student could need to complete their homework is sent home with each student’s parent. Boxes include: a hardback dictionary/thesaurus/atlas/grammar guide, spelling flipbook, math survival guide, list of educational websites, list of ideas for home practice, customary and metric rulers, pens, pencils, highlighters, colored markers, colored pencils, stapler and staples, sticky notes, glue, erasers, and paper.

A new Home Practice Policy is also included. Parents now receive a note after a student misses three assignments. The next missed assignment triggers a mandatory parent/teacher conference. If a parent cannot or will not come to the school, the teacher goes to visit the parent in the home.

The estimated cost of the home practice box is \$75, although many items in these boxes were donated or purchased at a generous discount.

Homework Club

✧ Contributing School: Northwest School, Lincoln, IL

One day per week, the library is kept open for an hour after school for students to do their homework. At least one teacher needs to be present to supervise and to answer any questions the students might have about their work. Parents can also volunteer to help. After the students are settled and working, a small snack is provided for them (often parent helpers will volunteer to provide the snack). The children are strongly encouraged by their teachers to be a part of Homework Club, but attendance is optional. This program allows the students to spend quality time in a distraction-free environment to work on homework assignments, at the same time giving the students access to the school library, the computers, internet, etc., with supervision by a teacher and other volunteer help. Depending on the amount of interest and available manpower, the Homework Club could meet more than once a week.

Homework Bulletin Board

✧ Contributing School: Washington-Monroe Elementary, Lincoln, IL

This is a simple school-wide project that highlights the goal of studying. A centrally located bulletin board is used to feature the achievements of each class in completing homework assignments. Each class has a bar graph on display, and each time a student turns in a homework assignment, he or she places an apple on the graph. A fun and competitive dimension may be added by awarding prizes to the class that completes its graph first.

Project Learning Tree

✧ Contributing School: Prairie View Elementary, Sandwich, IL

The Learning Tree focused on the goal of studying over a nine-week period. Each student spends at least 10 minutes per grade per day studying at home. Parents record the time in a Learning Log. Logs are turned in weekly and checked by the School Community Council. Each child who studies for five nights receives a leaf with his or her name on it. The leaves are added to a large tree on the wall of the library, cafeteria, or a major hallway. At the end of the nine weeks, a celebration is held for the students and their families, with individual and class awards given out.

Another S.E.A. Adventure

✧ Contributing School: Bedford Elementary, Bedford, PA

Parents and students are invited to an evening open house prior to the end of school. Twelve stations featuring different Summer Enrichment Activities are set up around the room. Each Summer Enrichment Activity is accompanied by a packet that includes all the needed materials and directions. Examples include building a bug house, or a wooden strategy game using marbles. Little notebooks are included so that students can keep a journal about the activity. Families may take only 2 different packets per student. Extra packets are placed in classrooms for future use.

Goal: Reading

Shared Reading Program

✧ Contributing Schools: Corkery Elementary School, Chicago, IL;
Northwest Elementary School, LaSalle, IL

This form of common experience unites students around reading and shared literature. Different books are assigned to each grade level, and all students in that grade level are responsible for reading the assigned book. Once they are finished, students use the books as a basis of discussion and study in every class. They may complete arts and crafts projects related to the books, for example. Parents may be included in the projects. In a variation of this program, the school may purchase the books for students, who begin to build their own libraries on a core of common books.

Student Announcements

- ✧ Contributing School: Central Elementary School, Lincoln, IL

Students each take a turn reading the morning announcements over the sound system. Included in each day's announcements is a study tip for the student to read to his or her schoolmates.

Guest Reader Days

- ✧ Contributing Schools: Darwin Elementary School, Chicago, IL;
Riverton Middle School, Riverton, IL

Adults from outside the school are invited to spend 20 to 25 minutes reading aloud to students, which reinforces the importance of this skill for all members of the school community. Older students can also serve as reading role models for younger students. Guest readers are rewarded for their efforts during a ceremony following the reading session. Guest reader days are also a form of inter- and intragenerational association: school community members personally interact with one another while promoting a school community goal.

Touchdown to Reading

- ✧ Contributing School: Wyland Elementary School, Gibsonia, PA

In Wyland Elementary's Touchdown to Reading program, Pittsburgh Steelers Jerome Bettis and Chad Scott encouraged kids to read books, study, and set goals. As a result of the program, more than 2,800 books were read by Wyland Elementary students. A school-wide assembly attended by Chad Scott was held at the conclusion of the program. Scott awarded each participating student with an autographed certificate stating "Keep on Reading." A drawing for a Jerome Bettis autographed football and jersey was also a part of the assembly.

Around Southeast in 80 Days

- ✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

For 80 days, students receive a paper hot air balloon to post in the school corridor to mark each book they read. The goal is to begin and end the balloons at the library door, completely encircling the school. Each balloon lists the child's name, the title of the book, and is signed by a parent or teacher. When the goal is reached, a real hot air balloon visits the school.

I Caught You Reading

- ✧ Contributing School: Saltsburg Elementary School, Saltsburg, PA

Teachers take pictures of students who are caught in the act of reading. Parents are also encouraged to bring in photos of family members "caught" reading. A collage of these photos is placed on a large bulletin board.

A Reading Mystery Night

- ✧ Contributing School: Bedford Elementary School, Bedford, PA

Reading Mystery Night is a Friday evening event for students and an accompanying adult family member. The well-publicized event encourages families to come to the school between the hours of 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. After registration, students are split into groups of 10 by reading level. They are escorted by a parent volunteer to a classroom where a teacher would lead the group through a book with clues to the mystery. Parents follow along with their children. As soon as the group figures out the who, what, where, why, and how of the mystery, the teacher leads the group to the cafeteria where everyone enjoys the mystery's solution - a piece of beloved chocolate peanut butter cake. This is a great "group think" exercise that also allows parents to become more familiar with their child's school.

I Scream for Reading

- ✧ Contributing School: Somonauk Elementary, Somonauk, IL

Ice cream sundaes, complete with whipped cream, cherries, and sprinkles, are the students' rewards for completing goals in a reading program. Top readers in each grade receive an additional certificate for a sundae at a local restaurant. The top reader overall receives a watch for finding time to read.

Birthday Books

- ✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

Rather than sending a sugary treat to school for a child's birthday, the birthday child can bring a book to share with the class and have it placed permanently in the school library. A bookplate in the book identifies the donor and a gold star on the spine denotes it as a birthday book. A list of suggested titles for parents to choose from can accompany the note home explaining this optional program.

Teacher Exchange Day

- ✧ Contributing School: North Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Teachers exchange rooms and read books to other classes.

Traveling Book Bags

- ✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

Book Bags are prepared which have the words "Read to Someone Every Day" on the side and contain several books on a particular topic, such as dinosaurs, fairy tales, Dr. Seuss, or Curious George. Parents can check out a bag to read with their child at home.

Peirce Bucks

- ✧ Contributing School: Peirce Elementary, Chicago, IL

These pretend dollars are awarded to students for reading, studying, completing homework, and other goal-related achievements. The students receive bank books to keep track of their "deposits." Bucks are exchanged for merchandise.

Family Reading Night / Pull the Plug Night Bucks

- ✧ Contributing Schools: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL; North Elementary, Sycamore, IL; Prairie View Elementary, Sandwich, IL

Parents are asked to turn off the television for one night and read with their children. The school sends home a list of reading activities for the family to consider. Families are asked to sign pledge cards, agreeing to turn off the television for one day. The pledge cards are then entered into a raffle, with books given as prizes. At Prairie View Elementary, this event coincided with the declaration of Family Reading Night by Illinois Secretary of State George Ryan. Families and teachers gathered at the school that evening. A Family Favorite Book Display was shown and a storyteller provided entertainment. The Learning Center had a new book display, and parents could sign up for a paperback book exchange. The School Community Council had a booth to distribute tips for encouraging children to read. More than 65% of the school community participated.

World Book Program

- ✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Each child reads seven books in seven weeks. They each recruit seven sponsors who pledge \$.50 per book read. Children reach reading goals, and with the money raised, teachers can get new books.

Book Fairs

- ✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

Book Fairs offer quality paperbacks at reasonable prices for families. Books can be purchased during the day, but combining the fair with another evening activity such as “Meet Your Teacher Night” brings in parents.

Summer Reading Program

- ✧ Contributing School: Bell Elementary, Chicago, IL

The program is kicked off by a librarian from the local public library, who talks to parents and students about services and programs the library offers. Parents are given suggestions on how to make their home a “Reading Home.” Children keep track of books read over the summer to meet goals. Prizes of books are awarded, and a “make your own sundae” party is thrown for all participants.

Maxi the Bookworm

- ✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL;
North Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Each time a child reads a book at home, he or she fills out a simple book Compact, shaped like a segment of a worm. It is then added to Maxi the Bookworm (on the wall in the library or in the hall), who grows longer with each contribution.

Sweetheart Breakfast

- ✧ Contributing School: Malta Grade School, Malta, IL

Students are asked to invite a “sweetheart” (a parent or grandparent) to breakfast and to hear about reading. This breakfast takes place just before or on Valentines Day.

Love A Book

- ✧ Contributing School: North Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Each class chooses a favorite class book. The title of the book, written on a heart, is placed in a display case in the hallway for Valentines Day.

Read to Succeed

- ✧ Contributing School: Raster Elementary, Chicago, IL

Each student is encouraged to read for 600 minutes during a month. The program is kicked off by a school-wide pep rally, complete with cheerleaders. At Raster Elementary, Pearle Vision and Six Flags America sponsored the program.

Reading Month

- ✧ Contributing School: North Elementary, Sycamore, IL

One month is used to focus intently on the goal of reading. At North Elementary, a variety of activities during November motivated the children to read. The Bookworm project (above) began, as well as the Favorite Book Project. For this the students worked at home with their parents on book projects, which were then displayed at school. Parents led Book Talks on Monday and Friday for one week. They focused on Caldecott and Newberry Award-winning books. The next week readers came in from the community. They were former North students. The final week teachers exchanged classrooms to read to other students. The whole school participated in Drop It and Read, devoting ten minutes daily to personal reading. Pull the Plug Night occurred during the month. Parents received a form to fill out about how they spent the evening. The newsletter included suggestions for reading activities for that evening. Word Day had students wearing clothing with words on them. The class with the most words

received a prize. A Book Parade featured students illustrating their favorite book with a sandwich board, poster, or hat. The entire school read toward a goal of 4,000 books. When the goal was exceeded, the principal spent an entire recess on the roof dressed as Mrs. Santa Claus.

Towers of Titles

- ✧ Contributing School: Wyland Elementary School, Gibsonia, PA

Teachers decorate the school halls with “towers” that include each student’s name and the titles of the books that each student reads during a certain period of time.

Reading is a Treat

- ✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Rather than emphasizing Halloween during October, all school activities reflect the goal of reading. Near Halloween, the school holds a parade. Students may dress in costumes as an author or the character of a favorite book, or they may carry a sign or banner about their book. A party or educational celebration follows the parade. Avoiding the negative connotations of Halloween allows students of various religious backgrounds to participate.

Library Donations

- ✧ Contributing School: Riverton Middle School, Riverton, IL

Before the holidays, students bring in new or good condition books to the library and exchange them for candy canes off a tree. At Riverton Middle School, this program provided new books for the library, which could not purchase any because of budget cuts. The school newsletter thanked families for purchasing books and subscriptions to magazines, and a local pharmacy donated money to allow the library to connect to ILLINET ONLINE, connecting the library to over 800 other libraries in Illinois via the internet.

Pumpkin Patch

- ✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Students bring home orange pumpkin-shaped sheets, each with four 15 minute blocks of reading time. When a student has completed one hour of reading, the pumpkin is returned with a parent’s signature and hung in the classroom. When the entire class completes 24 hours of reading time, a class pumpkin is hung in the hallway Pumpkin Patch. All reading must be done outside of the classroom to qualify.

I Scream for Reading Ice Cream Social

- ✧ Contributing School: Saltsburg Elementary School, Saltsburg, PA

Parents and students come to the school where they listen to local celebrities read favorite children’s books. Following the reading sessions, everyone meets for an Ice Cream Social. Students and parents may bring a “gently used book” to the book exchange. In addition, formally dressed student wait-staff take orders for and deliver the ice cream to the guests, emphasizing the goal of respect.

Getting in the M-o-o-o-d to Read

- ✧ Contributing School: Peirce Elementary, Chicago, IL

This program gives each class a poster with a black and white cow on it to record its progress toward classroom goals. Different numbers of pages are required for the different grade levels. Cows are posted on a hallway bulletin board. Every classroom reaching its goal is a winner.

Winter Reading Festival

- ✧ Contributing School: Alcott Elementary, Chicago, IL

This two-month reading emphasis includes parent education on reading at home, trips to libraries,

SQUIRT (Sustained Quiet Independent Reading Time), and Family Reading Night. The principal promises to become the Fiddler on the Roof and play a violin from the school roof if and when the students meet their reading goal.

Summer Reading Record

✧ Contributing School: Saltsburg Elementary School, Saltsburg, PA

Students are challenged to read over the summer. Upon returning to school, they turn in cut-outs of 45-speed records to document what they have read, and earn a “paycheck” type of envelope with gift certificates from various local businesses. Students are additionally honored with a fun outdoor lunch, with oldie tunes played to keep with the theme of Summer Reading Record.

Reading Santa Claus

✧ Contributing School: Prairie View Elementary, Sandwich, IL

A Santa comes to the school to read to students. Each child brings a gift-wrapped book for a gift exchange.

Family Reading & Arts Festival

✧ Contributing School: Riverton Middle School, Riverton, IL

The Reading and Arts Festival involves students, families, and teachers. Displays and demonstrations throughout the school highlight the efforts of literary groups and reading, art, and music students.

Bookbag

✧ Contributing School: Shenandoah Elementary School, Verona, PA

A bookbag is prepared for each class. Included in the bookbag is a book, a snack, and a small stuffed animal. Students may take the bookbag home over the weekend, keep the contents, and prepare a book report for Monday. The accumulated reports are hung on the wall and they form a “Bookworm.” Local businesses will often be willing to contribute the books, snacks, and stuffed animals.

Poetry Break

✧ Contributing School: Shenandoah Elementary School, Verona, PA

Routinely, unexpected volunteers enter classrooms with small props, announcing a “poetry break!” They read a poem out loud to the children, distribute a small treat, and leave.

Literature Garden

✧ Contributing School: Washington-Monroe Elementary, Lincoln, IL

A garden is prepared outside of the school building, with a plot reserved for each classroom. The students and teachers in each class decide on a book to read. Once they have read and discussed it, they come up with a way to represent that book in their garden plot. The students themselves design the plots, plant them, and tend them throughout the school year. As well as providing an excellent hands-on learning experience, this project will expand the curriculum to outdoor education with an emphasis on reading and responsibility. The “Literature Garden” will provide a unique setting for children of all ages to work together...a place “Where Minds Grow Strong!”

Goal: Respect for Self and Others

Display Photos of Children on Office Bulletin Board

✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

Bulletin boards with positive messages such as “Some Bunny Loves You” display bunnies and students’ pictures. This helps increase the pride of students. At Lawn Manor, another bulletin board

idea—displaying photos of the children and their families—was attempted but was not as successful because many families did not have family photographs. The School Community Council discussed the possibility of arranging for a photographer to take the family photos.

Family Respect Night

✧ Contributing School: Martinsburg Elementary School, Martinsburg, PA

Prior to the event, parents are asked to share a story or example of how their children have demonstrated respect for others. These examples are then shared at a Family Respect Night for parents and students. Local church groups present puppet shows and other activities to show parents how respect can be taught in the home. Finally, each family makes a craft item for residents in a local nursing home.

Common Motto

✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

A motto is adopted that reinforces the goal of respect. Used by all staff to support a list of rules, the motto is communicated through a letter to parents, who are requested to use it to give a clear and consistent message from home as well. At Lawn Manor, the motto “We Do Not Hurt Anyone on the Inside or Outside” is understood, even by very young students.

Special Education Awareness Puppet Show

✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL;
Bell Elementary, Chicago, IL

Puppets are used to get across a message of understanding differences in others and respecting them. The children respond to the puppets very well.

Rainbow of Respect

✧ Contributing School: Saltsburg Elementary School, Saltsburg, PA

The entire school focuses on the goal of respect. School personnel try to demonstrate the philosophy “respect breeds respect.” Rainbow-colored posters reminding the students of this are placed throughout the school. Students earn stickers when they show respect to others—in the cafeteria, in the halls, or whenever a teacher feels a student is worthy. The stickers are accumulated on special rainbow posters in the students’ homerooms, eventually spelling out the word “RESPECT.” As each room completes this goal, it earns a rainbow of balloons for its door and a pizza party.

Multi-Cultural Awareness

✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

Each month a culture or ethnic group is emphasized. Individual classrooms as well as school-wide activities highlight the literature, music, games, food, geography, and language of the culture. At Lawn Manor, the focus was on Native Americans during the Thanksgiving season and a German Christmas was celebrated in December.

Special Needs Program

✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Based on the Easter Seals “Disability Awareness Program,” this program’s topics include an introduction to special needs, vision, hearing, developmental delays, and cultural differences.

Random Acts of Kindness

✧ Contributing School: Shenandoah Elementary School, Verona, PA

Anyone in the school may nominate any student that is being kind to someone else. On the nominating slip is written the name of the nominee, the one who made the nomination, and a description of the

kind act. Bi-monthly, five slips are drawn from a collection box and those students are invited to bring a guest to school and have a special lunch with the principal. The students receive a special button, a certificate, and a treat as recognition of their act of kindness.

"I Love You" Letters

✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Every child in the school receives a letter from his or her parents stating why the child is so special to the parents. The School Community Council works hard to make sure no child is left out. The letters are passed out in stockings the day before Christmas vacation, and teachers give students a few minutes to read them.

Proud to be an American Day

✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

A short assembly is held for the entire school. Students wear red, white, and blue. Boy Scouts, if available, present the flag, and the students say the Pledge, sing the National Anthem, and read the Preamble to the Constitution.

Be Good Jar

✧ Contributing School: Northwest Elementary, Lincoln, IL

Students at Northwest Elementary are encouraged to stand out in the crowd and "be good." When teachers or staff members notice students who show respect by opening a door or saying "please" and "thank you", they place the student's name in the "Be Good" jar that remains in the principal's office. Each Friday, five names are drawn out of the jar. Those students' names are read over the school intercom and they each receive a bag of candy. Students quickly learn that the more they are caught "being good," the better chances they will have of their name being pulled out of the jar.

International Pride Festival

✧ Contributing School: Peirce Elementary, Chicago, IL

This celebration acknowledges the many different cultures represented in a diverse school. Each class participates by presenting various cultures in dance and song. The program opens with a color guard and the National Anthem. Food representing various parts of the world can be sold, making the event a fund-raiser as well.

International Days

✧ Contributing School: Wyland Elementary School, Gibsonia, PA

Each grade researches and learns about the people and cultures from five continents of the world. They then share what they learn with other students and parents.

El Cinco de Mayo Festival

✧ Contributing School: Pershing Elementary, Rawlins, WY

For this party, students decorate the halls, families bring finger foods, and tacos and drinks are provided. Music is Mexican and slides of Mexico are shown. Children present dances and numerous pinatas are hung. The Student Council (if available) runs a carnival. Additionally, the School Community Council can use this festival celebration as an opportunity to introduce the community to the goals for the school.

“I Am Capable and Lovable Day”

✧ Contributing School: Darwin Elementary, Chicago, IL

An all-school assembly is part of a month-long emphasis given to the goal of respect for self and others. Posters about respect created for a poster contest decorated the school. Students wear IACL signs, reminding each other that they deserve respect and are capable of showing respect. Teachers who see children behaving respectfully toward a classmate receive a ticket. Students who earn three or more tickets receive a prize. Students make a videotape of interviews with students, teachers, and staff on the meaning of respect.

Movie Night and Cookout

✧ Contributing School: Bedford Elementary School, Bedford, PA

An end-of-year cookout for students and their parents-family adult is held at the school. Following the meal, a high-quality kids’ movie rented from the Penn State library is projected onto an outside wall of the school building. During intermission and at the conclusion of the film, teachers, parents, and students discuss how the characters in the film dealt with respect and responsibility situations and how students can relate that to their own lives.

My Family and How We Are Special

✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

A month is chosen to be cultural awareness month. Families receive a decorated leaf, which they fill out and return, to be hung on the school’s Family Tree.

Friendship Christmas Tree

✧ Contributing School: Hiawatha Elementary, Kirkland, IL

Each student is assigned another student and writes a positive note on a cut-out of his or her handprint. A picture of the child is also placed on the handprint. They are then arranged in the shape of a Christmas tree in each classroom. Positive statements about the teacher and principal are included. Parents view the trees at the school’s Christmas gathering and receive handouts with suggestions for family activities which promote respect.

Respect Month

✧ Contributing School: Darwin Elementary, Chicago, IL

During a chosen month, the school’s bulletin boards promote respect. Each classroom publishes a “respectable behavior report,” in which students are cited for demonstrating respectable behavior consistent with the school’s responsibilities. Readings related to respect are sent home for families to discuss together.

Rainbow Child

✧ Contributing Schools: Washington-Monroe Elementary, Lincoln, IL;
Bell Elementary School, Chicago, IL

This project is arranged on a class-by-class basis, and takes place over the course of one to two months. Each day one student from the classroom is chosen to be the Rainbow Child for that day. His or her picture is posted on a centrally-located Rainbow bulletin board which is decorated with a rainbow and a pot of gold. During the day the classmates of each Rainbow Child write positive statements about him or her on slips of paper. This component of the program can be administered by teachers as a writing assignment, with the teachers checking each assignment for style and content. At the end of the day these slips are placed in a sealed paper bag – the student’s “pot of gold” – for each child to take home and share with his or her parents. Over the course of the project, every child has his or her Rainbow Day.

Sign Language Instruction

✧ Contributing School: Bell Elementary, Chicago, IL

All mainstream students receive basic instruction in sign language, in order to communicate at a rudimentary level with hearing-impaired people, and especially hearing-impaired students. Hearing-impaired students (if available) assist in the instruction, which could add an intragenerational dynamic to the program. This instruction would result in increased understanding between students with hearing impairments and those without, ultimately enhancing the educational experiences of the entire school community.

“We Care About Each Other” Week

✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

During a selected week, the values of being sensitive to others, not hurting people physically or emotionally, and skills in conflict resolution are stressed. During the week each child has a “Secret Buddy” to whom he has to be especially kind. School bus conduct is also emphasized. The week culminates with a Dress Up Day and the entire school has a “Manners Tea” to practice their very best manners. A compliment box allows children to write something nice about their teachers or each other. The notes are read at the tea.

Manners Potluck Dinner

✧ Contributing School: Kingston Intermediate School, Kingston, IL

The dinner is a school-wide event, advertised by the students to their families using happy grams. Each family brings a meal (dessert or main dish according to the first letter of the family’s last name). Proper table manners and introductions are the themes of the evening, taught and reinforced by older members of the school community to the students.

Courtesy Month

✧ Contributing School: North Elementary, Sycamore, IL

The teachers write each student in their classrooms a note, call them on the phone, or schedule a conference with them. The staff writes Good Citizen Awards for students showing good citizenship. The awards are displayed in the hallways and announced over the intercom.

Courtesy Week

✧ Contributing Schools: Riverton Middle School, Riverton, IL;
St. Pius V Elementary School, Chicago, IL

Each day of the week a different form of decent, courteous behavior is highlighted. Some examples include: 1) Good Deed Day: school community members are encouraged to go out of their way to do good deeds; 2) Compliment Day: school community members give each other comments of praise and admiration; 3) Good Manners Day: teachers focus on proper table and telephone manners; 4) Friendly Day: school community members make a point to be friendly to one another during the day by practicing warm introductions and congenial behavior. The final day of the week is a combination of all four previous days. An award is given to those students who have demonstrated the most consistently courteous behavior.

Campaign for Courtesy

✧ Contributing School: St. Pius V, Chicago, IL

This week-long event has a different emphasis each day. Good Manners Day, Good Deed Day, Compliment Day, Friendly Day and Class/Teacher Choice Day are held, including signs and symbols to remind students. Theses are hung in doorways and courtyards. The students are asked to help create a symbol and/or slogan to describe the week’s focus. Follow-up occurs in the following months with

Outstanding Student Awards given monthly. The focus for selection is courtesy. Certificates and pictures of the awarded student are displayed. Another follow-up to this event is “Every Week is Courtesy Week.” The daily themes already established are continued and reminders remain posted throughout the school.

Cafeteria Program

- ✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Students receive a sticker for displaying good manners at meals. They go to the office and place the sticker on a chart. When one row is filled, the student receives a small treat.

“Have a Heart. Give a Compliment.”

- ✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Each classroom makes a banner with a saying relating to the goal of respect. The banners are rotated from classroom to classroom.

Harvest Luncheon

- ✧ Contributing School: Hughes Elementary, Chicago, IL

Students invite members of the community to a parent and faculty appreciation luncheon before Thanksgiving. During the weeks leading up to the event, students work on manners, how to plan a meal and stay within a budget, and how to write an invitation. They make the decorations and host the meal.

Morning Announcements

- ✧ Contributing School: Big Rock Elementary, Big Rock IL; Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Each day the morning announcements offer suggestions for courteous behavior, and special compliments are shared by students.

Super Citizen

- ✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Teachers, students, and parents can submit the names of students displaying courteous or caring behavior. The names are read over the intercom and a Super Citizen certificate is posted.

Year-long Citizenship and Courtesy Program

- ✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

On Monday of each week the topic of the week is announced on the intercom, such as saying “Please” and “Thank you,” greeting others in a friendly manner, and courteous behavior on the bus. Throughout the week the skill is reinforced. At the end of each month, each class picks a student from his or her room who has been the most courteous. The winners are announced to the school and they receive certificates.

Goal: Healthy Mind and Body

CPR Classes

- ✧ Contributing School: Northwest, LaSalle, IL

All classes receive basic instruction in CPR technique and first aid to help choking victims.

Safety and Health Programs

✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

A full program of personal safety, physical health, and emotional well-being is implemented. Much of it is organized by the P.E. and Health teacher. At Lawn Manor, the program consisted of the following:

- ◆ ACES: All Children Exercising Simultaneously
- ◆ Officer Friendly: Local police department
- ◆ Fire Prevention Programs: Local fire departments
- ◆ Fingerprint Identification Program: The local police department offered fingerprinting for children whose parents bring them in to the school. Parents took the fingerprint cards home with them.
- ◆ Field Trips: Robert Crown Center for Health Education in Hinsdale, IL offered programs on Smart Kids/Safe Kids, body functions, and nutrition.
- ◆ Safety Programs: Children were taught how to be safe in school, on the bus, on bikes, near the water, and at railroad tracks. Written information for parents supplemented the instruction the children received. The children practiced making emergency calls on a real phone and learned how important it is to know their address and phone number.
- ◆ Hygiene: Bathing, washing hair, and dental care were taught. Handouts were given to parents to facilitate discussion at home on these topics. AIDS education began with teaching proper care of body wastes. Basic knowledge of germs, immunizations, and proper hand washing was taught. This was all accompanied by notes to parents telling them what their children were being taught.
- ◆ Nutrition: Junk Food Busters introduced healthy eating habits and was tied to a collection of Halloween candy for the community food program. Parents were asked to send healthier lunches for children and to encourage them to drink milk.

ACES - All Children Exercising Simultaneously

✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

Parents participate with staff and students for ACES (All Children Exercising Simultaneously) Program.

Red Ribbon Week

✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Red Ribbon Week represents a commitment to a drug free, healthy life style. On Red Day, all students and teachers are asked to wear red to symbolize their support of a drug-free environment.

Self-Care Education

✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

The school invites children to participate in a special group meeting for six weeks on the problems children may encounter in self-care.

Goal: Responsibility

Responsibility Month

✧ Contributing School: Darwin Elementary, Chicago, IL

Choose a month in which to highlight the goal of responsibility. At Darwin Elementary, responsibility month included posting the school's mission statement in the hall. Next to the principal's office was

a sign that said: “Family-School-Community Partnership: We Value Responsibility.” Above a large mirror in the hallway were the words: “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the most responsible of all?” As the children passed down the hallway, they saw their images in the mirror. Each classroom had an oversized t-shirt that said, “I Am A Responsible Person.” Each child got a turn wearing the t-shirt and, of course, exhibiting responsible behavior.

Wee Deliver Post Office

✧ Contributing School: Martinsburg Elementary School, Martinsburg, PA

The MES Wee Deliver Post Office is a continuous project at Martinsburg Elementary School that thrusts students into the responsibility of running a school-wide post office. Parents, students, teachers, and staff members are encouraged to write and send letters to others within the school building. Letters are dropped into a mailbox outside of a classroom designated as “116 Postal Place.” Classrooms and student council members take turns serving as postal workers who sort and deliver the mail. Each classroom has its own address (e.g., 218 Deitzel Drive for Mrs. Deitzel’s Class) to simulate real postal addresses. A mail carrier from the Martinsburg US Postal Service even visited with the MES Wee Deliver Post Office to share some of the many unique aspects of his job with student postal workers.

Collect Items for Disaster Victims

✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Students help provide relief for disaster victims. At Kingston, the students were asked to bring in items to help hurricane victims. The goal was to circle the gym once with the donations. Over 1000 items circled the gym twice when the collection was completed.

Red Cross Friendship Boxes

✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

Students fill small boxes with health, recreational, and educational items. The boxes are given to the Red Cross to be sent to children affected by natural disasters in this country and abroad.

Clean Up Day

✧ Contributing School: Riverton Middle School, Riverton, IL

Implicit in this common experience is the responsibility of school community members to care for their environment. During one day of the school week, parents, students, and teachers join together to clean up different areas of the community. Each grade is assigned to a different area of town. This common experience results in positive collective action for the benefit of all school community members.

Summer Cleanup

✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Parents and children clean up the school yard at the end of July, picking up litter, trimming and mulching shrubs, weeding, maintaining the ball diamond, and painting the flagpole. They are thanked by name in the school newsletter.

Community Service

✧ Contributing School: Bethune Elementary, Chicago, IL

Upper grade children are required to donate a set number of hours of community service to remind them to help others. Such activities as tutoring or helping senior citizens could be counted to meet the requirements.

Food Collections

- ✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL
(A number of other schools also noted Thanksgiving food drives.)

Halloween candy is collected from the children. Each child is asked to contribute 10 pieces from his or her trick-or-treat bags. For Thanksgiving, canned items are gathered in a collection center in the hallway proclaiming “Sharing is Caring.” All items are donated to a local township assistance program. An added benefit is focusing on the difference between foods with good nutritional value and “junk” food.

Valentine “Vet” Program

- ✧ Contributing School: Lawn Manor Primary Center, Oak Lawn, IL

Valentines made by the children are sent to a VA hospital.

Giving Tree

- ✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Students each bring an item of canned food to place under the Christmas tree. In lieu of a gift exchange, each child donates a dollar to help a needy family. Some students are selected to help shop for items the family needs, such as toys or clothes.

Goal: Communication

All-School Debate

- ✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Teachers teach debating skills to all students. The top fourth and fifth grade debaters are selected to debate parents on topics such as bedtime rules, household chores and family responsibilities. Families are invited to the debate. At Kingston, members of the Northern Illinois University debate team gave a presentation of their debating skills (an example of intergenerational association).

Snowmen

- ✧ Contributing School: Steffee Intermediate Center, Oil City, Pennsylvania

Art, writing, and digital communications are used in combination for a 2-month school-wide project. First, students make “snow people” using tube socks filled with kitty litter and dipped in a hardening solution. Then, the “snow people” are brought to life using buttons, fabric remnants, markers, and other art supplies. Using the creative writing process, students write a story to accompany their “snow person.” Then, students snap digital pictures of their “snow person” and incorporate the picture and story into a book that showcases their project. A small group of students also document all the action of this multi-phase project by putting together a video. The snow people, books, and video are then shared with parents at a school-wide family event.

Writer’s Corner

- ✧ Contributing School: Southeast Elementary, Sycamore, IL

Students’ work from class is posted monthly on a main bulletin board. One or two articles, poems, or stories are selected for monthly publication in the school newsletter.

Esperanto

- ✧ Contributing School: Alcott Elementary, Chicago, IL

Esperanto, the universal language, is taught to a diverse student body.

Summer Writing Program

- ✧ Contributing School: Prairie View, Sandwich, IL

With the help of volunteer parents, each student self-addresses three post cards and places them in a box. Each student then selects three other post cards from the box to write and mail to other students during the summer – one in June, one in July, and one in August. In the fall, the postcards will join the student's new journal.

Other Ideas

Classroom Quotes

- ✧ Contributing School: Darwin Elementary, Chicago, IL

Each class is given one quote and students write essays about that quote, explaining its relationship to a school goal.

Sowing Seeds

- ◆ Goals: Studying, Reading, Responsibility, Mutual Respect, Healthy Mind and Body
- ✧ Contributor: Dr. Sam Redding

Children are grouped and given potting beds and vegetable seeds. Each group determines its own method for growing its plants. It monitors the plants' process, records data, and cares for the plants. The produce is judged and parents are invited to see the results. The library assembles special books on gardening. Children could enter vegetables grown at home by their family in a separate category, perhaps with the help of senior citizens. Older children could mix with younger children in groups. Prizes could be given for drawings of plants, stories, and poems about gardens. Written records for the garden could be submitted. Science classes could do lessons on plant genetics, math classes on measurements and charts. Social studies could research the origination and history of vegetables grown in various cultures. Health classes could deal with nutrition. In the end, everyone eats their vegetables, using good table manners, of course. Perhaps students could help prepare the food, or the food could be prepared differently to represent different cultures. Families could be invited. Inner-city schools could use the idea as well as rural areas.

Association

By definition, an **association** must include face-to-face interaction of school community members for purposes related to one or more school community goals. The three categories of association are:

Intragenerational Association: Association of students who are typically separated in school; for example, eighth graders and third graders or special education students and regular program students. Intragenerational association may also include peer tutoring programs.

Family-School Association: Association of members of students' families with each other and/or with school personnel for purposes related to a school community goal.

Intergenerational Association: Association of students with adults other than their teachers. Typically, these "surrogate parents and teachers" include senior citizens, community volunteers, or high school or college students. The purpose of the association must be related to one or more school community goals.

Intragenerational Association (among students)

Study Buddies

- ◆ Goal: Studying

Intragenerational **associations** between upper level and younger students are arranged around the **goal** of studying by using upperclassmen as tutors. Upperclassmen are paired with underclassmen on a one-

to-one basis for a specified period of time each week, helping the younger students develop good study habits. Or, students can be paired together as “Study Buddies.” Each day “Study Buddies” touch base with one another to make sure the other has completed his or her assignment notebook.

Computer Class Creates Books

- ◆ Goal: Reading
- ✧ Contributing School: Riverton Middle School, Riverton, IL

Sixth grade classes create and print books on computers. They then read them to the first grade classes.

Homework Club

- ◆ Goal: Studying
- ✧ Contributing School: Northwest School, Lincoln, IL

One day per week, the library is kept open for an hour after school for students to do their homework. At least one teacher needs to be present to supervise and to answer any questions the students might have about their work. Parents can also volunteer to help. After the students are settled and working, a small snack is provided for them (often parent helpers will volunteer to provide the snack). The children are strongly encouraged by their teachers to be a part of Homework Club, but attendance is optional. This program allows the students to spend quality time in a distraction-free environment to work on homework assignments, at the same time giving the students access to the school library, the computers, internet, etc. with supervision by a teacher and other volunteer help. Depending on the amount of interest and available manpower, the Homework Club could meet more than once a week.

Student Biographies

- ◆ Goal: Respect for Self and Others / Communication
- ✧ Contributing School: Riverton Middle School, Riverton, IL

Older students interview younger students and write short biographies of them that focus on their academic experiences and the virtues of respecting oneself and others. These essays can be given as writing assignments, with teachers checking the style and content of each essay. When finished writing, the older students read their essays to younger students.

Student Mentoring Program

- ◆ Goal: Studying
- ✧ Contributing School: Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Fourth and fifth grade students teach second and third grade students in the area of scientific literacy. This is done after school with teacher supervision.

Reading Buddies

- ◆ Goal: Reading
- ✧ Contributing School: Bell Elementary, Chicago, IL

Students from upper grades read to younger students. They select a buddy and exchange notes, pictures, and small presents. This creates relationships among students who normally do not associate with one another.

Pen Pals / Visitation

- ✧ Contributing Schools: Bethune Elementary, Chicago, IL; Kingston School, Kingston, IL

Fifth graders from two schools correspond throughout the year, then meet each other face-to-face. The class from Bethune visited rural Kingston, where the mayor greeted them, they visited a farm, and

enjoyed a pot luck supper with Kingston families. The next month the Kingston students visited their friends in Chicago. They visited the Sears Tower and other special sites in the city, and were warmly welcomed at Bethune School.

Family-School Association

A family-school association does not necessarily include all families in the school, but many of them do. When all students are included, these family-school associations are also common experiences. For some examples of family-school associations, see the following entries in this section.

Project Learning Tree

Family Reading Night / Pull the Plug Night

Sweetheart Breakfast

Summer Reading Program

Family Reading & Arts Festival

International Pride Festival

Manners Potluck Dinner

Harvest Luncheon

ACES

Summer Cleanup

Project Learning Tree

All-School Debate

Sowing Seeds

If family-school **associations** are educational in nature, they may be listed under "Education" in the Resource Manual. Some family-school associations (Open Houses, for example) are also included under "Communication."

Breakfast with Dad/Breakfast with Mom

◆ Goal: Respect for Self and Others

✧ Contributing School: Martinsburg Elementary School, Martinsburg, Pennsylvania

Two mornings are set aside in the school year for students to bring their father or other male family figure to breakfast at school. The same activity is also available for mothers to join their children for a school breakfast.

Intergenerational Association (students with adults)

Role Models

◆ Goal: Studying

College students are recruited as tutors for elementary school students as one form of intergenerational association related to the goal of studying. The tutors can work with students on developing good study habits during after-school study sessions, or they can come for short presentations to classes, providing good role models for younger students while giving them tried-and-true study tips.



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