

Understanding Our Community Ties

Suggested Grade Level: Middle School

Relative Subject(s): Social Studies

OBJECTIVE

To understand and appreciate our link to the community and how our involvement is important in keeping it strong. To realize that we must all work together in the community to care for, and protect both people and animals.

MATERIALS

- Poster Paper
- Markers
- Any materials needed for the community service projects

ACTIVITY

Preliminary Discussion

- What makes up a community?
- Why do we need to work together in our community?
- What organizations in our community help people and animals?
- Discuss non-profit organizations like: Nebraska Humane Society, The Open Door Mission, Nebraska Aids Project, the Red Cross, The Lydia House, etc.
- Why were these organizations started and whom do they benefit?
- Why do people volunteer for these organizations?
- Have you or your family ever volunteered for a community organization? Which one(s)? How did you feel when you helped out?

Procedure

Write these headings on two separate pieces of poster paper: "Who Makes Up Our Community" and "Needs of Our Community." Brainstorm ideas for both. Write a mission statement for your classroom, which encompasses both of these categories and describes how the class feels about their link to the community. This statement should also reflect the class' commitment to helping their community. The class should then begin brainstorming ideas for organizations they would like to help. Choose one animal-related organization and one people-related organization. Write down all of the ideas and then vote on the two organizations the class would like to help. Once the organizations have been chosen, call the volunteer coordinator to discuss possible group projects for your class. It could be either an on-site project, like cleaning up at the facility, or an offsite project, like a food drive. Find out what the organization's greatest needs are, and what the students are most interested in doing. Have the students help organize the projects. Make a big banner for the room, which includes the mission statement, and discuss it often. You can also have t-shirts made with the mission statement on them, to wear while working on the projects.

Post-Discussion

- What did you most enjoy about these community service projects?
- What did you learn about these organizations?
- Why is it important to help animals and people, alike?
- Why is it important to help your community, in general?

Nebraska Humane Society
8929 Fort Street Omaha, NE 68134 402.444.7800 www.nehumanesociety.org

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

If the projects go well, and the class is enthusiastic about volunteering, look at the possibility of having them volunteer with an organization on an on-going basis. It could be a few hours a month, every other month, or whatever works best. This will help bring a sense of unity to the class, as well as give them a strong link to their community.

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