

Collier Educator Grant "Stand Up For Justice"

Sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Collier County

Kathrene Pitt

Elementary Teacher – 30 years

Fifth Grade

Sea Gate Elementary

650 Seagate Dr.

Naples, FL 34103

239-377-8355

When the shootings at Columbine happened, I was teaching fifth grade in the wing of our newest high school. Our elementary building was over-whelmed, and the new high school was just across our parking lot. It was an experience full of difficulties as all of us worked to make this unusual situation become a year full of good memories. Columbine was suffering a very different experience, still contributing and solving problems, but navigating their pain both as individuals and as a community. Returning to my fifth grade classroom in a high school that next day seemed especially hard. That year, it was clear to me that while I had grouped children for instruction, Math, Science, Reading, I really hadn't grouped them for the all important task of being a member of their community. I had established the position of the furniture, the course of study, and their place in that. I wanted to know them and to help them develop an awareness of each other, but our learning day was already time deprived.

It's definitely easier to go into new situations or difficult situations with someone else. We learn to trust ourselves and others every time we are faced with making decisions. I needed to see, and I needed them to understand that knowing and depending on each other is valuable. How could I make the connection between them as important a lesson as their connection to the subjects taught or to me? I wanted to be more aware of how they related, and since then, I've wanted them to be more aware of each other. To listen to others, accept that an idea has many dimensions and interpretations, and to build connections that could support the risk of sharing those ideas in a community. That was my goal. I had used note cards to accumulate academic data to build learning groups for subjects. It was just a small step farther to put those cards in their hands. I wanted them to become a part of making the decisions. It was their decisions that could build my awareness.

It started with passing out an index card to each child. I explained that it was time they looked around and thought about each person in the room. It has become a pattern to say, "Who do

you know you want to work with, and who do you want to get to know?" They write their name on one side of the card and the names of their "Team Requests" on the lined side.

I use the cards to create a chart. I look for two-way requests, one way requests, and those who are not requested as well as those who don't make any requests. My goal is to create a team. When they walk in to sit with their team, there must be someone or hopefully more than one, who they know wants them to be there. Their day will not be as bright when there is someone missing. They can talk about their work, make mistakes, think differently, come to an agreement even if it is agreeing to disagree. They can even extend that connection to include others. For every child that comes to school a world of background and differences come with them. Even if you are someone who values quiet and introspection, you need to have those around you miss you when you aren't there.

Each week the first day, the first activity, is that each team determines cooperative roles. Besides the Leader, Getter, Reader, and Writer, each team includes an Encourager. These shared roles emphasize that each person on their team has a responsibility. They can depend on each other as well as experience what it means to have others depend on them.

The second part of the process is to provide "Compliment" cards or special paper. When they see someone that has done something that makes the classroom a better place for them or for all, they write a specific compliment addressed to that person. They put the compliments in a container. One day a week, I select the school Student of the Week from these compliments. The rest are distributed so that they each receive the written compliment. These compliments promote and record their awareness. As each week passes, I take note of who receives compliments and who has given them. Providing learning activities where students work through discussion and cooperation opens up more opportunities to listen to each other, help each other, and develop relationships. I include a shared discussion structure called Support/Challenge. During larger group discussions, students are asked to Support/Challenge answers during Math and Science. This adaptation of Parliamentary Procedure illuminates their part in the discussion, and makes the smaller teams belong to the larger community. These kinds of activities provide the specific opportunities they need to write their compliments.

After working in these smaller teams for an interim period, about four and one-half weeks, we once again distribute the index cards to set up new teams. Reviewing past charts as well as the Team Request cards, I set up new teams, often with specific goals in mind. I have been observing relationships now for several weeks. I've asked questions and sometimes have had a conference with parents and the student. I see what is, and look for what can be. I consider that and even the placement of the team in the classroom. The new teams are charted on a Team Sign. When the students walk in, they search the Team Signs for their new position. They will find that they have at least one of their requests and know that others they are with requested them. I want that to be a great first moment.

When they build their Team Request card or write a compliment, they are more aware of each other. I gain some awareness of how their relationships are remaining the same or changing. I know that my awareness and theirs makes listening to others, learning together, and connecting personal. There have been times when the very nature of someone's uniqueness meant constant problem-solving. Learning to work together can be amazingly complicated, but where would we be without exceptional people? How can we know what they bring to our world? We must be aware of more than their differences, and that means listening and connecting whenever we can. Nelson Mandela said, "If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner." As a teacher, I think of the enemy as ignorance. When we don't know enough, we make such poor decisions. The more we know, the better prepared we are for making good decisions.

When Mrs. Melton's blog went viral, and my classroom experienced filming by the "Today Show", we were all asked questions that provoked discussion. I was asked if I thought the students know what this is all about. During filming, Abby showed just how much she did understand. "I was new this year. I didn't really know Ronasia. We didn't get on the same team until just now. Now I know her, and I think of her as a friend." When the news kept referring to Columbine, Tyler, asked me what Columbine was. I tried to explain in the simplest way that Columbine was a high school shooting that was a huge shock to our country. I explained that it was that shooting that made me realize that we all had to work on being more aware of each other, and that was when I decided the best people to help would be the people like them, the people in charge of the future. In the interview he restated the lesson in his own words, "She said the people who were shooting at Columbine were from the school, and they were people who felt left out. We do these math competitions with our groups where we'll be high-fiving each other. So I think the idea is, why would you shoot someone that you high-fived and had fun with?" Chase Melton said it beautifully, "It's basically like no one deserves to be left out and no one should be excluded from socializing or feeling important. And you always have someone to go to when you're sad, and I really appreciate that."

Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons or activities.

I suppose that I was aware, as much as any citizen of this country somewhat on top of news, that bullying was becoming a national epidemic. However, I think I couldn't fathom that it had crept into our Pine Ridge Middle School halls here in sweet, little, refined Naples. Big cities, maybe, but Naples??? These children had everything going for them, too much to offer the world, and lots of family support and guidance. I had come over from the big city where bullying was rampant, but not here...

As a Technology elective teacher here for the third year now, each year I touch on various topics for Internet research and a substantial amount of writing using *MS Word*. Last year (2011-2012) sometime during the first few weeks, one of our class activities was a short quasi-Socratic seminar on the topic of bullying. Thoughts on the topic were mostly general, until the students readily admitted to me, that bullying WAS a real problem within our walls here at school. I followed up with a few correlating activities, but had so much other curriculum planned, that in essence, I was left at year end feeling like I had dropped the ball on the bullying problem. Teachers never talked about it, the students never mentioned it again, and life went on.

To understand my technology classes (6 periods of them), I must explain that I teach to the whole child: computer literacy, writing, note-taking skills, spelling, math, workplace readiness skills, team-building, decision-making skills and respect, not necessarily in that order, but all of them all year long. I use *MS Word*, *Excel*, *Publisher*, *Access* and *Adobe Photoshop* and *Dreamweaver* as the types of software that help me make my teaching relevant and useful to these children. So this year I decided to do things differently. I started the year with an anti-bullying campaign.

Describe the lesson(s) or activity(s), and, if adapted from another source, please reference.

One of the first projects the students create each year is a table in *MS Word*. It usually has involved a comparison/contrast theme with a basic two-column design, but this past September, I did things differently. I decided first that my students had to educate themselves on the bullying problem itself, accept that it really is a problem in society, before they could buy into an *anti-bullying* campaign.

So I started with 5 days of *Internet* research and note-taking on the topic of *bullying*. They were partnered up randomly. I offered them no specific websites, but instead sent them looking at whatever sites they found that interested them. I had not taught the first lesson on search techniques, but rather felt that they would enjoy the creative license to find what they could find and read what they wanted to read. The topic was RELEVANT and I knew of great interest to them at middle school level...peer pressure and all.

They then were asked to design and create a table of information, based on their notes and research. The next activity was for each partnership to present their digital table to the class, using the AV projector, while opening themselves up for questions and discussion. So as to accommodate other curriculum using *MS Word*, and at the same time continue to generate daily involvement and interest in our *anti-bullying* theme, only one table was presented daily by its creators. The presentation of these tables took several weeks. That turned out to be beneficial because I saw our anti-bullying campaign growing day by day. Basic questions and discussions evolved into debates on "Who is a bully?" "Why do people bully?" "How can you tell if a kid is being bullied?" "Cyber bullying – is it worse than face-to-face bullying?" Awareness was rising and along with it came ownership of the problem and a desire to do something about it.

I usually jump into *MS Publisher* at that point of the school year with the goal of students learning how to create a brochure. They create a 21-day state tour of their liking including any places

they would want to visit within that state, but also requiring a national or state park, an historical site, a museum, to be included. I believe that offering students choices is an important part of teaching and learning today. So it was at this point that I went out on a limb, held my breath and asked ALL of my classes whether they would like to make their first brochure about *anti-bullying*, and delve into the state brochure after that. 3 classes said YES! 3 classes said no. I saw fear register in some of them and knew the bullies had won already.

Without the personal buy-in of those three classes that accepted my challenge, things would not be where they are today. They completed the brochures and finally caught up to other classes with the state brochure, but juggling different topics and different criteria proved to be more time-consuming than I had expected. The brochures turned out great by December but getting there was much more work and many more class periods than I ever expected. One reason why: the brochures had to be perfectly edited if they were to go “public”. In my normal assignments, writing is secondary to computer literacy and errors are marked but rarely edited by the student, due to time constraints. Even though I constantly address grammatical errors and writing and spelling skills, producing an effective well written brochure took four levels of editing time: first, me personally, delineating their errors, second, creators’ corrections, thirdly, peer correction, and lastly, me again.

Printing multiple color copies, folding them into 3-fold brochures and then collating them into a “variety pack” (i.e. one of each) was and still is a costly and timely effort. Many students are very willing to take on that effort. Exhausting the color toners, new ones (4 at a time) have already been purchased using my department funds allocated to me by both the district and our generous PTO.

January, 2013: we are ready to go public with our *anti-bullying* campaign. I informed the entire PRMS staff by email that my students are to initiate discussion with their other teachers, will be marketing “variety packs” for use in their classes, and also offering a 15-minute presentation to any

teachers and classes interested. To keep our idea alive, I offer ALL six of my classes Extra Credit grades for three things so far: class presentations (worth 2-A's), marketing a "variety pack"(worth 1-A) and/or Pass-it-on (worth 1-A), that is, hand out 5 *anti-bullying* brochure to 5 students and ask them to read it and pass it on.

By the end of January, we had 8 class presentations and variety packs sitting in 12 teachers' classrooms, on the main office counter, on each counselor's desk, in the school library and in the school bookstore (hand out with purchase). They are also using them digitally as background as we await the morning news show. One student took a pack to his Mom who teaches at an elementary and he is awaiting news whether he can "present" to her 2nd grade class. We are rolling! We will continue with more presentations and our next step will be bookmarks created in *Publisher* as soon as we finish our current project now in Semester 2. Simultaneously we are working on the translation of some of the brochures into Spanish. Some of the PRMS Spanish Class students have graciously offered and have begun the task!

Explain how the lesson(s) or activity(s) teach students the importance of respecting others no matter what religious, racial, cultural, or other differences exist.

As they presented their table of information to us with their partner, each student was first expected to tell us the one thing that they had learned that really surprised them. These students had seriously been shocked as 90% of them shared: they had NO idea that bullying was such a serious problem nationwide. They shared their empathy for those bullied, their thoughtful discussion on why people bully, and their personal concern for what they could do to stop the epidemic. In talking about why people bully, we talked about differences. In talking about who gets bullied, we talked about

differences. In talking about how people bully, we talked about differences. They all had different ways of solving the problem. This project brought differences to the forefront. When they created their brochure, I gave no parameters. They all came out differently, a product of differences.

Explain how it helped them counter bigotry and bullying and prepare them to stand up for justice?

I feel certain the sharing we did each day for weeks with the presentations helped the students become more introspective about their own behavior and much more willing to be accountable for it. I also believe that bringing hard clear research statistics brought authenticity to the problem and placed it much closer to home for them. Many began to see that what they had formerly considered attention getting antics by themselves or some of their peers now appeared clearly to be forms of bullying. Raising their level of personal awareness of the bullying problem at a local level within the comfort zones of a classroom setting has already made many students much more conscious of standing up for justice. I feel confident that education is the key to opening people's minds. The students' enthusiasm to educate their peers is snowballing. Making students mindful of the seriousness of bullying is the start to a proactive stance against all injustice and bigotry.

Collier Educator Grant “Stand up for Justice”

Jana Csenger

March 8, 2013

I am a School Psychologist in Collier County Public Schools. This year my assignment includes Tommie Barfield Elementary, Alternative Schools and Golden Gate High School. My assignment includes children that range from the infants in the teen parenting program to the young adults up to age 22 in the modified curriculum classrooms. My students come from public housing in Immokalee to mansions on Marco Island. I love working with this variety of students as it requires me to keep my knowledge base broad and my skills up to date.

As a first year psychologist in Illinois in 1995 I was assigned to a large middle school. One of the first students I worked with as a counseling case was an 8th grade girl. She was struggling with relationship problems with a friend and she came to see me weekly. At the time I hypothesized that she had a crush on the friend and that was at the root of the problem but she had not “come out” to me so I never brought it up. Several years later, when she was in high school, she returned to the middle school for a visit and shared with me that she was gay. She thanked me for my support and encouragement and let me know how much it had meant to her during that time. Years later that same student contacted online and told me that she believed my support had saved her life. On more than one occasion she had thought back on our sessions and the support that she felt and those feelings gave her the strength to continue on and know that it would be better someday.

Three years ago I was assigned to my first high school in Collier County. I had previously worked in elementary, middle and alternative schools but 2010-11 was my first high school. In October of 2011 I attended a professional development workshop titled: Meeting the needs of some or all? Expanding professional competence to address the needs of LGBTQ youth in schools. I learned about what schools are doing to promote tolerance of LGBTQ kids and decided I wanted to bring a Gay Straight Alliance to my school. My assignment was changed in the 11-12 school year and I had already received referrals for students who were struggling with issues related to their sexuality and/or gender identity. I approached my building administration from the perspective that this type of club would tie into anti-bullying efforts throughout the county. With the support of administration I brought up the idea to my students. While they were excited about the idea, none of them were ready to take on a leadership role yet to get the club started. Instead we started learning more about what other GSAs in Collier County were doing and tried to support them. In May of 2012 I helped to chaperone the Equality Prom that was held at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Naples. Several of my students attended along with students from around the county.

Addressing the formation of a GSA from an anti-bullying perspective fits in with other actions I was taking around the district. In 2010-2011 I participated in the development and presentation of an anti-bullying program throughout Collier County. Together with a district Behavior Specialist and the then Coordinator of Safe and Drug Free Schools we developed a powerpoint about the district’s efforts to address bullying, the impact of bullying and warning signs. We created our presentation for parents and then traveled around the district speaking at schools in

the evenings. Since then I have further adapted that presentation and made solo presentations at school counselor inservice meetings, additional PTO meetings and most recently at a meeting of the area Pediatricians at NCH.

Back at Golden Gate High School, this year several student leaders stepped up who were motivated to begin a GSA on our campus. We had our first meeting on December 7, 2012. We currently have 12-15 regular participants who bring their lunch to a weekly meeting on Fridays to discuss ways to make our campus safe for all students. We participated in National No Name Calling Week and are currently preparing for the National Day of Silence on April 19. I am very proud of the group of students at GGHS and their bravery at belonging to a club that sometimes makes them vulnerable to prejudice on and off campus. There are more than 12 teachers on campus who have requested Safe Space stickers and posters to hang in their rooms to signify that they are supportive of all students and will make their classrooms safe from bullying and harassment. Our kids are currently trying to raise money to help contribute to the organization of this year's Equality Prom and also to donate to causes that agree with our mission to make the world a safer place for LGBTQ youth.

In the future we would like to produce some of our own Public Service Announcements (PSA) to show on our internal televised announcements to encourage students to accept each other regardless of differences. We would also like to continue building relationships with the other GSAs in Collier County so that we might coordinate some larger district-wide efforts like movie or speaker series. I am proud of what I have accomplished and what the students at GGHS are working to accomplish to make our school safe.

Nominees: Jonah Nicosia & Jennifer Correa

Manatee Middle School's guidance counselors, Jonah Nicosia & Jennifer Correa continued the Anti-Bullying campaign that began last year, but enhanced it to involve more student participation and include a guidance lesson in all classrooms.

This year an announcement was made for all students interested in participating in an anti-bullying committee to sign up. A total of twenty-one seventh and eighth grade students committed to the cause. During the first meeting the committee came up with various ideas to do throughout the year and signed up for smaller subcommittees: events, artwork, and presentations. They then met during lunches to plan out the first events and write scripts for classroom presentations.

Kicking off the campaign was Reflection Monday on October 10th, 2011. The morning announcements included a quote about tolerance that students were asked to reflect on in their first period classes and bookmarks from PACER Center were distributed to every student. Orange & Black Bully Free bracelet sales began as well in order to promote Unity Day on October 12, 2011. Students paid \$1 for the bracelet and were allowed to wear Orange shirts that day instead of their normal white polo uniform shirt in order to pull together as a school to promote tolerance and stand up against bullying.

The theme continued on October 31, 2011; Random Act of Kindness Day. The day began with students viewing the Liberty Mutual commercial promoting passing on kindness during their first period. Smarties with a random act of kindness written on it as well as colorful Pass It On cards were distributed after the clip. The students were asked to complete the act of kindness on their candy and those randomly chosen students that received the card were asked to do something nice for someone. Once they did that they were to give them the card so they can "Pass It On" to someone else. The goal was to have the card passed on at least three times during the day. This day was a huge success with staff and students alike fully engaged in the activities.

As for the student presenters, they worked closely with the guidance counselors to prepare skits that showed bullying in action and the different players in a bullying situation. All the classrooms were visited with the skits being the opening act of the presentation with discussion following. The counselors then shared a power point that the students took notes on and concluded with a powerful video on bullying that prompted more classroom discussion. Students and staff were provided with a Guide to Bullying Prevention with resources and information broken down into easy categories.

Collaboration with the community is also imperative to promote tolerance and diversity. Jonah and Jennifer have been successful in reaching out and working with a variety of agencies to support our school. One such example that is appropriate for this award is the partnership with the Shelter for Abused Women and Children. Jennifer worked closely with them to have the RAISING GENTLE'MEN program introduced to selected 8th grade boys. These boys met once a week for one hour during lunch for eight weeks exploring how to be a true gentleman. Discussions focused on stereotypes, societal expectations, female stereotypes, and the power of language and how it can degrade or uplift people. Midway through selected girls were asked to join the group so they could benefit from this group that promotes gender equality and works to end violence in our society.

Jonah & Jennifer are still not done. There will still be meetings with the committee to plan more events, an art contest promoting tolerance with the winning design will be painted in the courtyard by students on the committee and the winning artist is planned and the Holocaust Box Car and an 8th grade student created museum will be on display during the week of May 4-11, 2012 where a community educational event will be held.

Jonah & Jennifer have been working tirelessly this year to bring to fruition an enhanced school wide effort to promote kindness, tolerance, fairness and a sense of pride in all the students. The student committee is a group of committed seventh and eighth graders who are becoming leaders in the school due to the confidence instilled in them by these counselors. Manatee Middle School is honored and proud to have two wonderful, caring, hardworking counselors advocating on the behalf of all students and staff.

Nominee: Lisa Garby Manatee Middle School

During a persuasive essay writing lesson "Are Bullies Criminals" from Jr. Scholastic magazine the class discussion turned from the article and video clips we watched to the specific bullying happening on school grounds. Students were very engaged, open and honest about what they felt were some of the biggest issues on campus. Instead of continuing with the writing for this particular class we began a list of issues and possible solutions. The next day the students in all of my classes took part in an anonymous survey regarding bullying and then chose 200 random students in the school to survey as well. The one class then tabulated the results of these surveys and formally came up with a list of possible solutions to address the main issues on campus. From here, administration was invited to a round table discussion where the students addressed the concerns and proposed their ideas. Administration was very open to their ideas and asked for five students to meet with the guidance counselor and myself to discuss options further.

From the meeting with Mr. Alamo, the guidance counselor, another staff member, Mr. Webb, five students and I, the "We Respect Differences Week" was proposed for Nov. 15th-19th, 2010. The title for the week came from an idea on educatioworld.com where a teacher had students create a "We Respect Differences" collage. We coincided this week to run at the same time that the UK holds their National Anti-Bullying week because the US had already celebrated the week prior to our meeting. This week consisted of a contest where students could write a rap, poem or create a poem for the theme "We All Matter". First, second & third place prizes were awarded in each category. I was able to get Carabba's to donate 3-\$20 gift certificates; Sonic to donate 3 - \$10 gift cards and McDonald's to donate 3 - coupons for free extra value meals and smoothies. The submissions were displayed in the cafeteria and students cast their ballots for the winners. Winners were announced and rewarded on the school's morning TV show and their submissions are included in the school literary magazine.

The week also included other activities. During HR on Tuesday students were provided an opportunity to sign a pledge not to bully. This pledge was modified from one that the committee located on bullying.org. The teachers read the pledge and let the students have a discussion on the importance of respect and tolerance and what and what not to do in a bullying situation. The pledges were then displayed in the cafeteria so all students could see them. Bracelets were slated to be sold that were pre-ordered in school colors that say "Bully Free" on them but they did not arrive for this week. Wednesday was "Mix it up at Lunch" day was adapted from tolerance.org where students were asked to sit with someone they did not know. The students were provided with a questionnaire to help start a conversation with the new person. After lunch teachers were asked to have a brief discussion about what they learned. Thursday was "Tolerance Thursday" and the bullying committee of five students chose 10 different random acts of kindness to type up and tape to a Smartie. During HR that day the students received their Smartie and discussed with each other the importance of it and suggestions of how to complete the acts. Finally on Friday students were able to "Black Out Bullying". For \$1 they were able to wear a black shirt and blue jeans. The proceeds from this activity went to "Books of Hope". My current classes are writing textbooks to send to an orphanage in Uganda and there is a \$200 fee.

The bracelets finally arrived the last week in December. They are now being sold during the week of Jan. 24th-28th in celebration of "National No-Name Calling Week". The bracelets will be sold during lunches and each morning on the TV show there will be advice on the importance of respect. On Friday students will wear their bracelets and jeans in honor of the week.

This week long school-wide activity gave the students a chance to learn the importance of diversity in our school and the world. It provided them a chance to meet new people they might not have met, learn about each other, reflect on how to be kind and respectful and it taught them tolerance. Through the homeroom discussions and pledges students were able to learn about the proper steps to take when being bullied or witnessing bullying, created poems, posters and raps that were shared with the entire

school, and showed kindness. The lessons were further enhanced with my 70 students not only learning about Africa, its culture, government, people and habitat, but are learning about altruism through writing textbooks for an orphanage in Uganda. Ignorance breeds fear; fear breeds hatred. Here at Manatee these lessons and our expectations of students to be Respectful, Organized, Accomplished and Responsible breeds understanding, tolerance, kindness and a sense of family.

M. Allison Ferraro

In the beginning of this school year, nationally there were several teen suicides that were explained as results of bullying. With the support of the Administration at East Naples Middle School, I was afforded the opportunity to "spearhead" our schools anti-bullying efforts.

Early in September I presented a school wide anti-bullying lesson via closed circuit television to all sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. I had created a Power Point lesson that explained the bullying triad and the roles of persons involved, I also provided information about ways bullying may occur. After the presentation, teachers guided student discussions, and a survey was provided to all seventh and eight graders. The survey was entitled, "Bullying in Our School Community". It gave the students an opportunity to share the perceptions of bullying and to have a voice as to the things that were going on in school. An online survey was also provided to faculty and staff.

Nearly 800 student surveys were turned in, results were tabulated and data collected. I incorporated this data into another Power Point that I entitled "School Violence: When does it become personal?" This information was shared with staff during a teacher inservice in December, 2010. I further adapted the information received and put it into a more student-friendly format and began teaching classes at all grade levels. At this point, approximately 1,000 students (the entire population of East Naples Middle) have been talked to about the effects of bullying and harassment.

The student lesson begins with a simple question of, "When did it become okay to be mean to one another"? The lesson progresses into ways that hatred has crept into our school and offers ways to stand up to or combat bullying – to choose kindness. Through candid discussions that address acceptance regardless of race, religion or cultural difference and bringing to light the harm that words and actions can cause, each student is asked to do their part in making our school a better place.

I appreciate being considered as an applicant for the "Stand Up for Justice Award". If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at 377-4806 or my administrator, Tammy Caraker at 377-3600. Thank you for doing your part in encouraging our community to be a better place.

Gina M. Rose
North Naples Middle School

2/1/ 2011

Clay Tile Mural Installation

One of my big projects every year is to create a large clay mosaic mural. These murals are based on the Collier County Character traits. Character Education is an integral part of my art program at North Naples Middle School.

Students took on the responsibility of choosing the Character Trait creating the layout and design as well as coming up with an inspirational quote to compliment the entire design of the installation.

I was thrilled when the Social Studies teacher and the Language Arts teacher approached me with this wonderful idea to integrate the holocaust (Social Studies) and The Diary of Anne Frank (Language Arts) into our annual mural project!

The students chose the character trait. They decided that after reading the diary of Anne Frank that **Tolerance** would be an appropriate name for this mural. The inspirational quote came from Anne Frank "*Despite everything, I believe that people are really good at heart.*" The social studies students researched names of the children who have died during the holocaust to incorporate around the border of the mural.

The centerpiece of the mural is of a boxcar that was on display at the entrance of North Naples Middle. I thought it was such a moving event, one that would be on loan to us for such a short period of time, that we could at least have that image as a reminder, permanently placed in our mural. The installation is very symbolic, and very well thought out. The students did not want the piece to be dismal or dark. They wanted it to be an art piece that represents , respect, tolerance, remembrance and change.

The boxcar sits in grass and beautiful clay tile flowers are rising from the grass .There are handmade colorful butterflies representing the children who have passed during the holocaust. The butterflies then change into the clay tile boys and girls on the border of the mural. Each tile on the border has the child's name. All tiles were carved, glazed and fired by art students.

The experience was just as amazing and beautiful as the mural itself.

COLLIER EDUCATION AWARD

“Stand Up for Justice”

Nominee’s Name- Sandra Brock

Nominee’s e-mail- brocks1@collier.k12.fl.us

Number of year’s teaching- 24

Grade or subject taught- 6th and 8th grade Family Consumer Sciences

School- Pine Ridge Middle

School Address- 1515 Pine Ridge Road Naples, FL 34109

Phone (daytime) - (239) 377-5105

Describe the events that motivated you to initiate these lessons or activities?

A- In the spring of 2009, I attended a program at the Holocaust Museum of S.W Florida about the **Holocaust Survivor Cookbook**, presented by Joann Caras. I was convinced of the cookbook’s value as a teaching tool in my classroom. I then contacted Amy Snyder, Education Director for the museum to brainstorm possible programs using the **Holocaust Survivor Cookbook** as the centerpiece. Amy and I partnered, wrote a grant which was generously supported by Sweetbay Supermarkets and additional funding by Publix Supermarkets and **“Cooking Up Hope: How Tradition Builds Community”** was born. The involvement of the supermarkets allowed me to buy a class set of cookbooks for each Social Studies grade level at my school and purchase food for my students to prepare in the classroom.

Describe the lesson or activity and how it teaches students the importance of respecting others.

A- This cross-curricular project, that includes Social Studies, Language Arts, Chorus and Family Consumer Sciences, was designed to give students an historical perspective of the Holocaust, while promoting the ideas of family and community , using the stories and recipes from the cookbook, students learn about different survivors and explain different virtues that the survivor exemplified. Students prepare recipes from the cookbook by demonstrating the cooking in the classroom; this promotes and encourages cooperation and teamwork while teaching virtues such as respect, compassion and perseverance. Students also gain a better appreciation for food and how it connects traditions and cultures to families. This lesson was incorporated into my curriculum for four weeks. The time-line of activities is as follows:

- Introduce the history of the Holocaust by bringing the traveling Holocaust Museum to my school.
- Invite local Holocaust survivors to my classroom for students to hear their personal story.
- Invite the chorus students to perform songs from the Holocaust period and share the history of the music.
- Invite survivors, who enjoy cooking, to demonstrate a food representative of their family and share the significance of that food.
- Students use the cookbook to choose a survivor and write the survivor story including three virtues they feel represent this person's life. Students also choose a recipe that they will prepare for their classmates.
- As a culminating activity, my students hosted an "Open House" and invited school administrators, superintendents, parents and civic leaders to come to our classroom. The "Open House" gave my students the opportunity to share what they had learned from this project with others along with sharing samples of food prepared by students from the cookbook.