

Honoring Our Veterans

Throughout the school year 2000-2001 approximately ninety 8th grade students attending Magnolia Middle School participated in a project to honor veterans. Students planned and implemented a variety of activities to achieve their goals. Among the activities completed were: a field trip to Washington D.C. to place wreaths at Vietnam and Korean Memorials; creating cards which were mailed to more than 300 veterans thanking them for their service; sending flowers to the community V.F.W., the American Legion, Perry Point Hospital, and Veterans Homeless Shelter for Memorial Day; placing posters in local business to recognize veterans; and other school activities which were designed to honor veterans.

Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project? Magnolia Middle School is located in a community that includes military families associated with Edgewood Arsenal and Aberdeen Proving Ground. The students agreed that veterans and active military personnel deserved recognition for their sacrifices and service to our country.

Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to the school curriculum and curricular objectives? The social studies curriculum includes the student of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War, and the Civil War. Students came to realize soldiers of all wars sacrificed, as do their families, when they are called to serve their country. Students were able to recognize that soldiers had commonalties regardless of the time they served.

Best Practice 3: How did participants reflect on their experiences throughout the project? Students reflected throughout the project through class discussions, writing letters to their teachers expressing their thoughts, and developing written reflections in response to specific questions about visiting the Korean and Vietnam Memorials.

Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project? Students planned and implemented wreath dedication ceremonies that took place in Washington, D.C. and their community to honor veterans. They also created original designs and poetry to include on the cards mailed to veterans to commemorate Memorial Day.

Best Practice 5: What community partners were worked with on this project? Goldie's Florist was a tremendous asset to us because in addition to discounting the flowers were ordered, they also delivered cards and posters to various veterans groups when they delivered flowers. The PTO of Magnolia Middle School also donated funds for our project.

Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project? Early in the social studies curriculum we discussed the Revolutionary War and the sacrifices of the men and women fighting for independence. In November we commemorated Veterans Day by studying the history of the date (W.W.I) as we continued with our studies of the history of our country, it became apparent how much veterans of all ages had sacrificed for our country.

Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project? Many students gained experience in public speaking as they participated in ceremonies in Washington, D.C., spoke over the P.A. system, and visited classes to explain our project. Other students wrote original poetry and created artistic designs for Memorial Day cards. All students gained an appreciation of the life of a soldier, not only the sacrifices they make, but the problems faced by families left behind. Students were very touched by cards and letters veterans sent back to them after receiving the students' cards.

To learn more about the project contact Pauline Frantz, Magnolia Middle School, Harford County, 410-612-1525