

"Stars and Stripes" Senior-Senior Prom

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In the spring of 2002, SLAB hosted the second annual Senior-Senior Prom at Daybreak Adult Daycare Center. "Stars and Stripes" Senior-Senior Prom is a dance for senior citizens and high school students. There is dancing, refreshments, and socializing. The Prom was a lot of fun for both generations that participated.

Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project? In our community, like most communities, there is a great need of senior citizens for stimulating activities, connections to other people, and some care provisions. And often many seniors need daily care and are sent to daycare centers, like Daybreak. At these centers, seniors need entertainment and activities in which to engage. The Prom involved both generations, and therefore helped to break down barriers between the two populations. I think that the Prom helped to teach the younger generations to respect their elders and vice versa. This need for this project was determined because of previous experience with Daybreak Adult Daycare Center. I used to volunteer there for 3 hours a week and learned a lot about my elders. Primarily, that they enjoy a good time as much as my generation. Both the women and men at Daybreak Adult Daycare Center were helped by our project. SLAB members and the Daybreak staff had a nice time as well.

Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to the school curriculum and curricular objectives? This project reinforced the Character Counts Pillars: responsibility, citizenship, respect, and trustworthiness. Leadership qualities were also emphasized in the planning and execution of the Prom. Participants of this project also learned to respect others for their differences. We also worked with the Horticulture classes of a local high school to create corsages for the participants.

Best Practice 3: How did participants reflect on their experiences throughout the project? Reflections were done throughout the planning and upon completion of the Prom. Like all of SLAB's projects, there was a large group reflection for all the members who attended the Prom. We also reflected with the Daybreak residents and students at the end of the dance. A discussion took place about the day's strengths, weaknesses, and the feelings evoked by the event. The various reflections help SLAB plan for a more successful Senior-Senior Prom for the future.

Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project? Because SLAB is a student-run and student-led board, students planned the entire project. Planning and executing an event like the Senior-Senior Prom requires students to take both leadership roles and have responsibility. A committee was formed to plan the event and then met to discuss the details. Students were in charge of getting flowers donated, preparing the refreshments, making corsages and decorations, getting other SLAB members to attend, and meeting with the staff of Daybreak to finalize the event.

Best Practice 5: What community partners were worked with on this project? The major community partner that we worked with was Daybreak Adult Daycare Center, where the Prom was held. We also formed partnerships with the flower shops that donated centerpieces and carnations to make corsages. Because the Horticulture classes helped make the corsages, we had a partnership with them as well. The Optimist Club and

Lutheran Brotherhood were also partners for this project because they provide financial support for SLAB's projects.

Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project? We plan ahead for the project at the previous month's meeting by having members sign up to attend the event and form a committee to plan it. The committee meets several times prior to the event to plan it. Soliciting donations of flowers, preparing the decorations and corsages, and getting the refreshments are all part of the planning process.

Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project? Members learned the benefits of forming relationships with the elderly, leadership skills, and socialization skills. SLAB also hopes that the Senior-Senior Prom helped to break down the barriers between generations.