



**2009 Annual Convening  
of Service-Learning Leaders  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Service-Learning Unit  
Disability Awareness &  
Inclusion Play Day**

**Primary Subject:** Health

**Grade Levels:** 6-8

**Additional Subject Area Connections:**

Physical Education, Reading, Writing, Math, Technology, and Visual Arts.

**Unit Title:** Disability Awareness Activities & Inclusion Play Day

**Type(s) of Service:** Direct

**Unit Description:** As part of the Grade 6 Health curriculum, students participate in Disability Awareness Activities to learn about various disabilities and how they affect the body. Students then use their knowledge to design and implement adapted physical activities for students with disabilities and act as peer buddies as students participate in an inclusion play day.

**Potential Service-Learning Action Experiences:**

- Assisting students with disabilities
- Teaching healthy lifestyle activities

**Local School System: Baltimore County  
LSS Coordinator: Sean Patterson  
LSS Contact Information: 410-887-4329**

**VSC Indicators Met**

**Reading**

2A1. Apply and refine comprehension skills by selecting, reading, and analyzing a variety of print and non-print informational texts, including electronic media.

2A2 Analyze text features to facilitate and extend understanding of informational texts.

2A4 Analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

**Writing**

4A2. Compose oral, written and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

4A3. Compose texts using the revising and editing strategies of effective writers and speakers

**Math**

4A1. Organize and display data.

6C1. Analyze number relations and compute.

**Health**

A4a. Investigate the benefits of physical activity.

A2a. Work effectively with others in a variety of physical settings.

A3a. Employ strategies to resolve conflict and make healthy decisions that promote a sense of community and respect for others.

Visual Arts

32a. Communicate ideas and concepts by manipulating elements of art and principals of design to achieve specific visual effects.

**Technology**

Utilizing technology (PowerPoint Presentations)

# Alignment with Maryland's Best Practices of Service-Learning: Disability Awareness Day/Inclusion Play Day

## 1. Meet a recognized community need

This project began 12 years ago at Pine Grove Middle School, a cluster school for students in the Functional Academic Learning Support Class and the Communication and Learning Support Classes. These classes contain students that have severe/profound disabilities and will earn a certificate of attendance. Over the years, other middle schools in BCPS have participated in this program as it continues to expand throughout the county. The evolution of Inclusion Play Days has increased disability awareness within our schools and the communities as our special education population has continued to grow annually.

## 2. Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning

Students that participate in all aspects of this project meet curricular objectives in Health, Reading, Writing, Math, Technology, and Visual Arts.

## 3. Reflect throughout the service-learning experience

Students meet with the advisor during the planning process, as well as after the event. During the meetings, student document ideas and anecdotal notes regarding planning the event. After the event, students meet with the advisor to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of Inclusion Play Day. Collected information is used in planning the event for the following school year.



## 4. Develop student responsibility (Students have opportunities to make decisions about the service-learning project.)

Students are responsible for all aspects of Inclusion Play Day by planning the entire day. Students plan adapted physical recreation activities for students with physical and cognitive disabilities. Each group of students functions as the station leaders for the various activities. The station leaders give the participants clear directions and are responsible for locating the necessary

equipment, setting up the activity, and ensuring that it runs smoothly. Finally, the students must also breakdown the activity area once the event is complete.

**5. Establish community partnerships**

Students make connections with other middle school students in Baltimore County enrolled in the FALS (Functional Academic Learning Support) and CALS (Communication and Learning Support) programs. Schools that have participated include Cockeysville Middle, Perry Hall Middle, White Oak School, Ridge Ruxton School, and Oakleigh Elementary.

**6. Plan ahead for service-learning**

Students plan this project in conjunction with their classroom teachers, administrators, and in some cases, with advisors of the National Junior Honor Society. This project takes an extended period of time to plan and monthly meetings are scheduled in order to discuss progress and plan the event.

**7. Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service**

Students prepare for this service-learning experience by organizing disability awareness training. Students research a disability and create an activity for students to “experience” the impact of the disability. Sixth grade students in Health classes are able attend the training being offered by the eighth grade students. The sixth grade students then function as peer buddies for students with severe cognitive disabilities during Inclusion Play Day. Students learn the various aspects of planning a large event. In linking with the safe schools and character development initiatives in BCPS, students learn to be respectful of other people, especially students with severe disabilities and have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of these principles.