

Talbot County Humane Society Fundraiser

By Kathleen Manley (Floyd)

After teaching a service-learning unit to my sixth grade students, we discussed how they could serve their local community. Several of my students wanted to work with the local humane society. A few days after having this discussion I learned of a severe case of animal cruelty in a neighboring county. As a result seventy-five of my students agreed to develop a project that would help to supply support to two local Humane Societies. Our project included a penny drive and a pet supply drive.

Meet a recognized community need: In the spring of 2003, there was a severe case of animal cruelty in a neighboring county. As a result the Caroline County Humane Society had to seize over one hundred cats and several dogs. Due to the large number of animals seized, their facility became over crowd and they were unable to care for all of the animals. The Talbot County Humane Society offered to help by housing several of the animals and accepting donations for the care of those left at the Caroline County Humane Society. My students decided that this would be a good opportunity for them to support a local organization. Students organized a pet supply drive in addition to a penny fundraiser. As a result of our project both Humane Societies were able to support those animals still housed in their facilities.

Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning: Through our project, students were able to learn about the needs of a local Humane Society. The project connected to several curricular objectives including math, language arts, and social studies. Students used their knowledge of sorting, graphing, writing, and citizenship to complete this project.

Engage students in reflection throughout the experience: Throughout the experience students were asked to reflect by keeping a journal describing their thoughts and feelings about this project. Many students felt as though this was a community need that they had not previously known about but were willing to continue working to address. We took pictures of our project and submitted an article to the local newspaper.

Develop student responsibility: Students had suggested doing a project for the Humane Society during a brainstorming session and ultimately picked this project. Students developed responsibility for this project by creating posters and advertisements that could be displayed both inside of our school and in the local community. Students collected pet supplies and money to support this project. At the end of the project students were responsible for counting the money and sorting and organizing the pet food and supplies.

Establish community partnerships: This activity was completed with the help of several community partnerships. The Talbot County Humane Society provided literature on how to care for and treat animals. The local Character Counts director helped in organizing donation sites and spoke to students about the need for community service and Character Counts. In addition, several local businesses allowed students to place posters or donation boxes in their facilities.

Plan ahead for service-learning: As a class we planned ahead for this service-learning project by discussing several ways in which we could help the Humane Society. All students were encouraged to make suggestions. We discussed the needs of the Humane Society and how we felt that we could best meet these needs.

Equip students with the knowledge and skills needed for service: As a class we read several newspaper articles about the needs of the two Humane Societies. We developed a plan of action that would benefit the animals. Students learned how to work with local organizations and businesses to achieve their goals.