

# Newsletter Title

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## What Makes a True Service-Learning Experience?

Many educators use the terms *community service* and *service learning* interchangeably. That's a mistake. They are two very different activities. Throw the idea of *volunteerism* into the mix and you have three very different things, says Laurel Singleton, editor of *Service Learning in the Middle School Curriculum: A Resource Book*, published by the Social Science Education Consortium (SSEC).

"We define community service as volunteering in the community for some form of extrinsic reward, such as fulfilling a graduation requirement or obtaining class credit," Singleton told Education World. "Service learning, in contrast, is a teaching method that combines academic content with direct service experiences in which students provide genuine service to their school or community while extending or deepening their understanding of curricular content."

Arden Moon, a professor of education at Michigan State University, has written extensively about service learning. "Service learning is learning experientially through structured

integration of service and subject matter that is part of a planned curriculum," Moon told Education World.

"If service learning is structured correctly, it is academically demanding and provides opportunities to learn about social development and citizenship," Moon wrote in a recent issue of *Schools in the Middle*. "It also prepares students for the work world by teaching them teamwork, problem solving, about diversity, and interpersonal skills. The service-learning experience becomes a source of knowledge."

Assessment is an important element of service learning, Moon told Education World. "The teacher should provide assessment of students' service-learning activities to validate the level of academic achievement. If service learning is part of the curriculum, then the assessment of service learning is not separated from assessment of the subject content for the class. If assessment is done correctly, the criticism that service learning is servitude or fluff in the school curriculum becomes

defused."

"My strong stand about service learning being academically sound does not mean there isn't a place for community service," Moon said. "Applying our knowledge to issues in the community and helping meet community needs are all important, but they shouldn't be seen as the sum total of service or as a pedagogy."

Service learning can strengthen students' ties to and understanding of their community, according to Moon. "Some of the understandings, values, and commitments we espouse for our students remain rhetoric if students have few opportunities to live those beliefs," he said.

Service learning can benefit schools in other ways too. According to a recent study by Florida Learn and Serve, students who were actively involved in service-learning projects showed improved attendance, fewer referrals for discipline problems, and improved grades.

Article by Gary Hopkins  
Education World® Editor-in-Chief

# Thought of the Month

“ The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at the moment of challenge and controversy.”

~Martin Luther King Jr.



## Learning and Leadership Grant

These grants support public school teachers, public education support professionals, and/or faculty and staff in public institutions of higher education for one of the following two purposes: 1) Grants to individuals fund participation in high-quality professional development experiences, such as summer institutes or action research. 2) Grants to groups fund collegial study, including study groups, action research, lesson study, or mentoring experiences for faculty or staff new to an

assignment. Applicants must be practicing U.S. public school teachers in grades K–12, public school education support professionals, or faculty and staff at public higher education institutions. Preference will be given to members of the National Education Association. The NEA Foundation encourages grant applications from teachers with less than seven years of experience in the profession, and education support professionals. Applicants: Mail the original and five (5) copies

of your application to the address listed below. Please do not staple or bind your application. Applications that do not comply with the guidelines or that include materials not specifically requested by The NEA Foundation will not be reviewed.

**Deadline:** 10/15/2009

**Website:** [http://www.neafoundation.org/programs/Learning&Leadership\\_Guidelines.htm](http://www.neafoundation.org/programs/Learning&Leadership_Guidelines.htm)



## Going Green

The Ionia County ISD is trying to become more eco-friendly and that means that the service learning newsletter is going to start being posted online at [www.ioniaisd.org](http://www.ioniaisd.org).

We will continue to print the service-learning news-

letter, but we will also be posting the newsletter online. We encourage you to start reading the newsletter online, so we can be paper free by the end of the year! . Thank you for your support with our goal of becoming paper free!

Remember to check us out at [www.ioniaisd.org](http://www.ioniaisd.org) under service-learning.

# Habitat for Humanity Teacher Fellows

As part of the 2009-2010 State Farm sponsorship of Habitat for Humanity Youth Programs, a new program has been created that encourages teachers to collaborate with Habitat on service-learning projects. The new program, called the Habitat for Humanity's Teacher Fellows program, educates teachers about Habitat for Humanity and the volunteer opportunities available to engage their students in Habitat's mission.

During a weeklong summer build, up to 13 teachers will build with Habitat and learn about the local community and educational resources Habitat provides. Participants will then lead a new Habitat project with the students they work with in the year following the trip and share their knowledge and resources with colleagues. The 2010 Habitat for Humanity

Teacher Fellows build will be in Tacoma, Washington, July 18-24. Participants must be full-time teachers in grades K-12 at an accredited school (public, private or parochial) within the United States. We are looking for teachers who have some previous involvement with Habitat but are ready to do more.

Habitat for Humanity has the application for teachers up on their website and in their Youth Programs newsletter. All costs for this building and education experience are paid for by State Farm as part of our sponsorship of Habitat Youth Programs. This includes:

- \* Air fare (up to \$600)
- \* Affiliate donation
- \* Program fees

- \* Ground transportation in Tacoma
- \* Lodging
- \* Meals during trip
- \* Educational materials

Participants will only be responsible for: transportation to and from home airport; the cost of food during travel days; and any additional personal snacks, souvenirs or other purchases they make during the trip.



# Service-Learning Mini-Grants for Ionia & Montcalm

The service-learning mini-grants will be available on the Ionia & Montcalm Intermediate School Districts' website beginning October 5<sup>th</sup>. Teachers in Ionia County will be able to apply for a

State Farm service-learning grant. Teachers in Montcalm County will be able to apply for the Learn & Serve mini-grant. Please read applications for specific directions on applying.



Register Today!  
[www.ioniaisd.org](http://www.ioniaisd.org)

# Strategies for Success with Literacy

**An innovative curriculum  
designed to engage students for  
academic excellence.**

This program combines researchbased strategies from the fields of literacy, service-learning, civic development/citizenship, and social/emotional learning. The acclaimed approach helps students become academically and civically engaged and increases their literacy skills. New components have added leadership and career exploration plus higher order skills that improve research and writing.

For more information contact  
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December 1 & 2, 2009  
8:30– 4:30

Ionia County ISD  
2192 Harwood Road  
Ionia, MI 48846

**Cost: \$200**

Registration includes a “Strategies for Success” Teacher Tote Bag with \$350 worth of resources including a Teacher Guide with articulated lesson, Student Guide, and ten books used to integrate skill development and literacy, and more! **Register today!**

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