

Service-learning in Allegany County Public Schools

WHY SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning is neither an add-on nor a diversion from the curriculum. It is an approach to teaching that provides students with authentic learning experiences in which they learn academic content in a real-life, real-world context. There are many advantages to this approach including:

- The students love doing it. It is engaging, inspiring, and motivates them to learn.
- It develops the students' communication skills by requiring them to read, write, listen, and speak.
- Students learn a range of valuable practical skills including: problem solving, organizing, collaborating, project management, research, and dealing with obstacles and setbacks.
- It develops character virtues and interpersonal habits such as respect, responsibility, empathy, cooperation, citizenship, initiative, and persistence.
- It makes a positive contribution to the community.
- All students can actively participate and make a meaningful contribution regardless of their talents or their challenges.

Statistics on service-learning in Allegany County

Starting in the 6th grade students can start working towards a service-learning elective credit. During the 2008-2009 school year, 66 seniors were awarded the elective credit totaling over 8,712 independent hours beyond the required 75 hours.

Total number of required hours completed by Allegany County students during the 2008-2009 school year.

6th grade- 676 students completed approximately 20,280 service-learning hours.

7th grade- 639 students completed approximately 9,585 service-learning hours.

8th grade- 674 students completed approximately 10,110 service-learning hours.

9th grade- 686 students completed approximately 10,290 service-learning hours.

Totaling 50,265 hours of service for grades 6th-9th

There were over 50 projects completed by Allegany County students during the 2008-2009 school year. Students were involved in numerous projects ranging from food drives to tree planting. Students realized how service-learning links to the everyday studies. For example, English students participated in the Pennies for Piece program that helps to empower communities through education in remote areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan and enabled students to broaden their cultural horizons. In science classes, students collected biodegradable items and donated them to the Family Crisis Resource Center. Students realized how important it is for them to vote and voice their opinion for change in their social studies class. Since bullying is so prevalent in today's world, students initiated and completed Public Service Announcements to help fight against bullying and tolerance in our middle and high schools. Service-learning allows avenues for students to learn and make a difference in their communities at the same time.