

“...my experience with the *Memory Project*...has changed my life...I've been inspired to pursue Art Education and eventually Art Therapy so that I could use art to heal children who have been through traumatic experiences.”

Samantha Roppelt
Former Bel Air High School student

Service-Learning Projects

- Students across the state have participated in the *Kids Helping Hopkins* program by organizing activities at school, such as creating coloring books, to benefit young patients at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center.
- Eighth grade students at North Dorchester Middle School participated in *Voting Counts* to help increase voter awareness and turnout in Dorchester County. Students were able to pass on their knowledge about the importance of voting to others while helping increase the number of voters participating in an election.
- Harford County students painted portraits of children in an African orphanage as part of the worldwide *Memory Project*. The students sent their portraits, along with art supplies they collected, to the children who would now have a precious and positive memory of their childhood.
- Students from several Calvert County schools assisted scientists in creating an oyster habitat and releasing healthy oyster larvae on to designated oyster bars in the Patuxent River. Participating students learned about the ecology and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay's oyster reefs. In addition, the aquatic environment of the Bay was directly improved through the students' oyster restoration actions.

These are just a few examples of service-learning projects happening across the State. For more information and project ideas, visit www.mdservice-learning.org.



Division of Student, Family, and School Support
Youth Development Branch

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr.
President, Maryland State Board of Education

Martin O'Malley
Governor



For more information contact:
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2592
410-767-0358

www.mdservice-learning.org
www.marylandpublicschools.org

October 2009

Maryland Service-Learning:

Improving Achievement,
Academic Engagement,
and Civic Literacy



What is Service-Learning?



Service-learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning. Each of Maryland's 24 local school systems have designed a service-

learning program which includes projects that best fit local needs and connects to the curriculum by course and grade level.

All service-learning projects in Maryland public schools must meet the Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning:

- Meet a recognized need in the community.
- Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning.
- Reflect throughout the service-learning experience.
- Develop student responsibility.
- Establish community partnerships.
- Plan ahead for service-learning.
- Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service.

“Earning these hours has given me the chance to learn more about myself and those around me,”

*Dara Ahrens, Grade 12,
Kent County High School, Kent County*

Maryland was the first state, and is currently the only state, to have a service-learning requirement. However, Maryland is not alone in recognizing the benefits of service-learning on students' civic knowledge and engagement, academic success, character, and social development. Many private schools and public school districts across the nation have service or service-learning requirements, and other states have added or are in the process of adding service-learning to their state education plans.

“Helping is the best thing you can do in life, I really like helping people. I want to be somebody who changes someone else’s life.”

*Samantha Sink, Grade 8,
Sudlersville Middle School, Queen Anne’s County*

Why is Service-Learning required in Maryland schools?

Service-learning promotes both academic engagement and achievement while teaching students about civic responsibility. Students improve their academic skills by applying what they learn in school to the real world; they then reflect on their experience to reinforce the link between their service and their learning. Students also are able to explore a variety of career options. By engaging in these experiences, students meet existing core curricular goals using a “hands-on” approach to apply what they are learning in the classroom to real community problems.

Who is involved?

Every Maryland public school student must complete 75 hours of service-learning in order to graduate from high school.

Each local school system has a Service-Learning Coordinator who ensures that Maryland students engage in high quality service-learning experiences. There are also teachers who serve as Service-Learning Fellows. Fellows create exemplary service-learning experiences for students and share their expertise and enthusiasm with their peers.

When do students complete Service-Learning projects?

Service-learning can take place across all subjects and in all grades from kindergarten through Grade 12. Schools, classrooms, and even individual students help identify the community needs and develop projects to address those needs. A single student, a group of students, an entire classroom, an entire school, or the whole school system can work on a project.

How does Service-Learning benefit Maryland and the greater community?

Each year, approximately 59,000 students graduate from Maryland public schools, and each graduating class represents approximately four million hours of service.

Community projects have addressed such needs as hunger, homelessness, illness, pollution, and discrimination; and have taken place at afterschool programs, Head Start centers, recreation departments, local libraries, nursing homes, hospitals, homeless shelters, museums, rivers/waterways, ecological reserves, and many more locations.



Twynette Binns “has made a commitment to service-learning to ensure that the students at Pocomoke Middle School will be engaged in projects that will benefit the public and encourage student to continue to give back to their community.”

*Social Studies Teacher,
Pocomoke Middle School, Worcester County*
