

# 2019 Jaffarian Award application – Wyoming Middle School

## Narrative

- 1. Describe the program or program series, and how the school library and librarian were involved. If the program is ongoing, use the information on programming and activities from the previous school year (2018-2019) only.**
  - **Include the title of the program or program series.**
  - **Explain the humanities theme or topic emphasized in the program.**
  - **Explain why you chose this program.**
  - **Describe in detail the program or program series.**
  - **Describe the planning process and collaborative relationships involved.**

### Poverty and Philanthropy Class

A couple of years ago we started a Poverty Class during our enrichment period (Cowboy Bell). I worked with our social studies teacher to develop the curriculum for this class. We based it on Hunger 101 from the Atlanta Community Food Bank, we added a class book, The Paper Things, a realistic fiction novel about homelessness and researched other curricula. We chose poverty because at that time Cincinnati ranked second in the United States in childhood poverty. This was a startling statistic based on the economic boom that has been happening in Cincinnati over the past decade. We wanted to raise student awareness about this social issue that negatively impacts our Cincinnati neighbors. The class was off to a great start, but we were lacking some engagement, empathy and action goals.

Fall of this school year we teamed up with Magnified Giving. Their focus is to start a new generation of philanthropists. I initiated contact with this organization and the Childhood Poverty Collaborative, the non-profit focused on ending childhood poverty.

Since our theme was childhood poverty we decided to build philanthropy, awareness and service into our existing enrichment class. We doubled the length of the current class to incorporate these new elements. As we planned the class we added a second teacher, who also teaches 6th grade social studies. We collaborated to kick off philanthropy by having the students look up famous philanthropists. They looked up how much money they give away, what non-profits they give it to and most importantly why they choose to give money to these organizations.

Next, I looked for members from our own community that were philanthropists to speak to our students. This helped students understand the impact that ordinary citizens have in our community. I asked our school foundation to come and talk about what is a foundation and how they decided how to use their money, as this is the role that our students would be taking. I applied to Magnified Giving and our students were awarded \$1000.00 to give to an organization/s that they researched and deemed worthy of their donation. This included finding

out the mission of the organization, the public ratings (using Charity Navigator), how many people they serve and the impact the organization was making in our community. We developed a graphic organizer to help students with their research. We needed to make sure all students had similar information because they would be voting on which charity would get the money.

Magnified Giving encourages philanthropy to be student driven. Our students picked a non-profit that interested them around our theme Poverty. Once students completed research they contacted their agency by email/phone to ask a member to come out to our school to speak. The focus was on what would this organization do with the money if it was awarded to them. This was a powerful question for our kids to ask. All four enrichment classes got to hear the speakers.

Students decided to hold a fundraiser to involve the entire school. They held a PJ Day. To wear pajamas for the day they had to pay \$1.00. They raised over \$800.00. Next, students created a Public Service Announcement with assistance from me and a film expert in the area. Students watched the PSA's and voted on the agencies to award their money to.

This class ended with a day of service at the Freestore Foodbank and an amazing awards program where the students reflected on the process and told their audience why they choose their agency and awarded the check to the organization.

**2. Describe the involvement of others in the program. Letters of support (to be uploaded below) should emphasize the humanities program and the impact the program had on students and the school community, not the library program or the librarian.**

- **Identify the number of student participants.**
- **Describe how the program features higher-order thinking skills through student involvement.**
- **Describe the benefits that ensued, including how you measured success.**
- **Describe the involvement and awareness of parents, administrators and community leaders.**
- **Explain why you feel the program is exemplary or goes beyond normal school library media programming activities.**

Wyoming Middle School has around 660 students. The four enrichment classes have 75-80 students. These classes are based in social studies/social issues. There are 165 students in the 6th grade. Our students did a fundraiser that involved the entire student and faculty body.

The philanthropy addition to our poverty class fostered many opportunities for higher thinking. Since we wanted this to be student driven there were many opportunities for inquiry. They asked questions during research, speaker presentations and at our day of service.

Students used graphic organizers to collect information—this was an authentic way to evaluate information collected. Students evaluated their agency based on agency information such as, responsible use of funds and how much money goes right to client services. They took all this

information and had to decide what would make the biggest impact in a public service announcement for their organization. These PSA's were amazing! The PSA's demonstrated success in the form of empathy, connection and a call to action.

The most important higher-level thinking skills and measure of success were that of connection and reflection. When it came time for the award ceremony students were asked to reflect on the process and share why they choose the agency that they did. Our students connected to our neighbors in need. To the hungry, homeless and those with mental illness.

The authenticity of the philanthropy class, having the ability to actually become philanthropists will not soon be forgotten by these students. Our enrichment classes are pass/fail which allows our teachers and students the ability to be creative and authentic. We measured success by engagement. Our students were engaged in every aspect of this—each student could use their diverse strengths to impact the outcomes of this project. Some students were good researchers, others took to filming or creating power points and some students took over the role of emcee at the awards ceremony. Students did a great job collaborating with each other and with me and their teachers. Our students spoke confidently and passionately at the awards ceremony moving some in attendance to tears.

At the awards ceremony students stated that they were “forever changed” by this class and they wanted to continue to be a philanthropist. The most important benefit is the connection our student made to our community and that being a philanthropist is not all about sharing your treasure but also your time and talents.

Teachers kept the parents update on the class project and parents came and supported our students at the award ceremony. Our superintendent, Dr. Susan Lang had the opportunity to address our students, parents and the non-profits at the award ceremony. Please find a letter of support attached. This project was all about community—our local Wyoming community and our greater Cincinnati community. Speakers were pillars of our community and CEO's of companies. Our students were empowered by these community leaders.

This class was exemplary because it was authentic, creative, created empathy, connected students to our community and used future ready skills that we work on each and everyday from our library. Library skills don't just happen in the library and this project proved just that!

### **3. Provide evidence of a curriculum component.**

- ***Describe the relationship of the program or program series to the school's curricular goals and to the state's learning standards.***
- ***State how the American Association of School Librarians Standards for the 21st Century Learner were incorporated into the program.***
- ***Provide evidence of a curriculum component for classroom treatment of the humanities theme or topic emphasized in the program.***
- ***Explain how the program goes beyond the school's standard curriculum requirements and programs.***

This project is reflective of Wyoming City Schools District’s mission statement which states that our students are developing future ready habits and are learning authentically through inquiry-based experiences. That is exactly what our students got through this enrichment class. Authenticity of actually becoming a philanthropist –following your interest or passion, researching non-profits, evaluating all the data and awarding money to a deserving agency. Our mission statement further states that these learning experiences will help them to reach their full potential, to be responsible global citizens and to become life-long learners. This was a great class to connect students to our greater community and shows them that we need to become committed to helping those in need.

One advantage to the enrichment classes are that teachers do not need to tie this class to specific Common Core Standards. This allows them to make the project about inquiry, empathy, critical thinking skills, problem solving, creativity, collaboration, communication and leadership, all valuable future ready skills. We are currently looking at adding “service” into our mission statement for all students. Our students had the opportunity to lead the entire student body in fundraising, communicate clearly and succinctly in their public service announcements and collaborate with their group in the hopes that their agency would be selected for monetary award.

Not only is this class rich in future ready skills but also in AASL Standards. The philanthropy part of this class was to be student driven and based in research which focuses on the shared foundations of Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore and Engage.

While collaborating and planning our Philanthropy class we made sure to build upon the Inquire Foundation by building in the opportunities for critical thinking (creating questions for speakers, evaluating data before creating a PSA) by providing authentic experiences and access to technology for online resources. Include Foundation was evident through developing respect for diversity and those who are different from ourselves to growing empathy within our community. Collaborate Foundation was demonstrated through group collaboration, the use of communication tools and sincere interest in problem solving possible solutions for to solve their social issue. I provided ideas for tools—PowerPoint, Video, a framework for creating PSA’s. Curating was accomplished after students completed their research, organized it and sharing the resource used. We built in reflection time before awards ceremony so that group members could meet and reflect on the experience which met Explore Foundation. When necessary students credited their sources both in research and in their PSA.

What was great about this class was clearly the opportunity for students to take responsibility for their own learning, asking for guidance as needed from me or the classroom teacher, connecting to our Cincinnati community, becoming empathetic and passionate for a cause and watching the pride in our students as they presented a check to their non-profit organization.

**4. Describe how this program might be replicated.**

- ***Provide examples of how this program or program series might serve as a model or springboard for humanities programming in other schools.***

- **Identify key components of the program that were essential to the program's success.**
- **Identify any key components that might need to be modified for use in other settings.**

We would like to replicate this class every year in 6th grade. We have done the poverty piece of this class for the last 3 years but students really enjoyed the philanthropy part that we added in this year.

It would be really great to be able to take the curriculum that we have developed for this class and allow others to use it. Magnified Giving continues to reach out and to include more schools in this philanthropy endeavor.

This class can be replicated through the use of Poverty Curriculum, the guidelines from Magnified Giving. Librarians would just need to build community partners so that you can bring in speakers as appropriate.

Key Components essential for success:

- Establishing the need --by studying poverty, homelessness and hunger
- Make sure students are using credible and reliable sources
- Forming partnerships within the community
- Empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning.

**5. Describe the expectations and outcomes of this program**

- **What would you change about the program?**
- **What were some unexpected benefits or reactions to the program?**
- **How did this program take the library to the next level in terms of school and community collaboration, programming and student impact?**

Not much I would change--other than having a time

line for this class--so we do not short change any group as we approached the conclusion of the class. A lot of prep time the first time you run the class and then it is just polishing from then on.

Benefits: Students were highly engaged in this activity and really made some great connections to our community. Some students asked questions on what courses they needed to take if they wanted to pursue a career in non-profits. Might want to talk more about career paths that deal with social issues in the upcoming years.

This class and my involvement with students and staff is what I live for. The authenticity of this project made it meaningful to our students and reflects well on my Learning Commons and in the coordination of this project. I have a lot more partnerships that I can build on not only for Philanthropy but for resources in other classes as well. The most remarkable part of this project was that these students are only 6th graders!!!!