

# 2020 Jaffarian Award Application – Batesville (IN) Intermediate 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 2019-2020 school year 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.***

Nearly a year ago, a casual conversation about Batesville Intermediate School pursuing a more global perspective in education led to a lunch meeting with Hillenbrand and our Media Specialist, Mrs. Anne Amrhein. That luncheon led to a planning committee with dynamic brainstorming and big dreams. Mrs. Amrhein and her assistant, Mrs. Angie Moster, eagerly volunteered to lead the initiative. Through that committee and the ingenuity of Mrs. Amrhein and Mrs. Moster, an idea for a student book club which focused on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals became a reality. And, by the end of August, the 24 members of the Junior Ambassadors' charter group met for the very first time: bright-eyed, curious, and unaware of the revolution and ripples they would cause in our school and community.

Batesville is fortunate to have unwavering support from Hillenbrand, a local company with broad ties throughout our country and world. Hillenbrand's team introduced us to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and provided some financial support to our school library for the purchase of recommended books. Each day, the Junior Ambassadors spend 30 minutes in the library participating in discussion and research focused on topics such as No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well Being, Quality Education, and most recently, Gender Equality. While reading a book related to the particular theme, Mrs. Amrhein and Mrs. Moster guide conversations with students about how these issues resonate both locally and globally. And then, true magic happens. The students brainstorm ideas on how they can educate others as well as take part in solutions. Guest speakers are a weekly occurrence, ranging from local food pantry administrators to state hunger activists to global partners working to improve life for people of Kenya and Haiti. During the study of each "SDG," the students work in pairs to create multimedia presentations, posters, and public service announcements. Our Junior Ambassadors then schedule presentations with every classroom in our building to engage and inform all 480 third, fourth and fifth grade students throughout Batesville Intermediate School. In addition, our students have been interviewed on local radio, presented to other Batesville companies, and have been published in our local paper.

**2. Describe the involvement of others in the program. Letters of support 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.**

Although there are only 24 Junior Ambassadors in this program, their message has rippled to every student and staff member in our building. Each and every day, they are problem-solving, building team capacity, researching, developing presentations, contacting community groups, engaging in interviews and sharing their messages. They have infiltrated the town of Batesville with the urgency of some of these very real issues. They were able to launch their mission and introduce their projects through a “press conference” attended by families, Hillenbrand executives, and the local newspaper. They planned, publicized, and executed a school-wide Read-a-thon to raise money for the Grain-of-Rice project, with the funds to be used to build elementary classrooms for needy children in Kenya and Africa. Although part of the funds were donated back to the school as a token of appreciation, the Junior Ambassadors agreed to use those funds to help children in Haiti. (Haiti was the setting of the first book club book *Serafina's Promise* by Ann E. Burg.) 300 40-oz. jars of peanut butter and 546 5.5 oz. tubes of AIM toothpaste were purchased and sent with a local group providing relief in the country. This group has already succeeded in impacting our world. And, during this time of virtual learning, they have continued their mission of educating their peers through virtual presentations.

**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.**

We are fortunate to have the comprehensive resources and blueprints provided by the United Nations to guide us through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Targets, appropriate videos, links, and book titles are suggested for each goal. Through community partnerships and grants, Mrs. Amrhein has secured funds to ensure the books were available for the Junior Ambassadors. During monthly classroom presentations, the student pairs were able to share these pieces of literature with the rest of our school.

This unique and comprehensive program covers nearly ALL of the AASL Standards of thinking, creating, sharing, and growing:

**INQUIRE:** Students are introduced to global concepts through literature and a book club approach to discussion. They are challenged to share and apply the SDG's in a personal way.

**INCLUDE:** The 24 Junior Ambassadors are representative learners, charged with the task of engaging others in their school and community in global issues.

**COLLABORATE:** Pairs and triads of students work together to produce presentations for their peers and community members.

**CURATE:** Students are encouraged to use a variety of resources in their research ranging from websites to interviews to class trips.

**EXPLORE:** Students have become reflective and curious activists. They seek out their own personal ways to continue to learn.

**ENGAGE:** Mrs. Amrhein plays a key role in teaching proper documentation techniques and internet etiquette. Each group takes great pride in their presentation and works to make it appropriate for the students in their particular class, making revisions and adding hands-on activities and discussion points.

In a normal school year, in our normal general education setting, we would never have the ability to introduce these topics to 3rd - 5th grade students. The Junior Ambassadors program has enabled Batesville Intermediate School to start processing some of the small ways they can begin to change the world.

#### **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.***

The Junior Ambassadors program launched as a "pilot", with hopes to become a model for other schools wishing to use the Sustainable Development Goals as a part of the curriculum. Because the United Nations published these resources to use, this program becomes relatively easy to duplicate.

A successful program would include:

- A willing, informed, and creative leader who is able to allow students to follow their heart.
- A "book club" format
- A set time to meet several times each week

- A presentation component
- Expectations to utilize and engage with community partners
- A yearly “capstone” project that encompasses aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Key considerations would include:

- How will we fund the purchases of the recommended books for each SDG?
  - (Possible community partnerships and grants)
- How many SDG’s are reasonable to focus on in one year?
  - (Four goals per year is easily attainable to focus on one each quarter)
- How are students chosen for this program and when does it take place?
  - (We chose students identified High Ability and use the time each day that is allotted for Response to Instruction. ALL students receive some type of focused, individualized instruction during this 30-minute period each day.)
- Where do we look for guest speakers?
  - (Mrs. Amrhein worked with several community agencies and grew a network of contacts very quickly.)

**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?**

Mrs. Amrhein started this program with the hopes to introduce some global perspective in our small town. Very quickly, this grew to something much bigger than that. Our students not only have learned about poverty but have done something about it. BIS students know that life is very different in places like Haiti and Kenya and have done something about it. They have heard stories about Malala and have compared educational experiences. They understand the importance of breathing and social-emotional wellness. This is not because it was a standard introduced in class. This is through countless hours of research, listening to guests who build schools in Kenya, visiting food pantries, creating posters hung throughout our school, developing presentations, writing announcements, interviewing others and being interviewed by the radio, newspaper and podcasts...all by STUDENTS. Mrs. Amrhein allowed these kids to develop a passion that will truly change the course of their lives. I have heard from parents literally brought to tears by the conversations they have had with their children on these tough subjects. Students and families have already contacted the Middle School and High School in hopes that they can continue this journey as they progress through school. Most of the Junior Ambassadors asked for these books for Christmas so they could start their own collections. They have grown far beyond their years.