

LANGUAGE ARTS, CIVICS, CONSUMER SCIENCE, CAREER EXPLORATION

Exploring Poverty through *Mango Street*

By: Ann Turalски

Teaching Team: Ann Turalски

School: Abraham Clark High School, Roselle, NJ

Grade Levels: 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th

Academic Focus/

Core Curriculum Standards:

The Arts(Visual and Performing)/1.2

Comprehensive Health and Physical Education/2.1

Language Arts Literacy/3.1,3.2,3.3,3.4,3.5

Mathematics/4.1,4.5

Social Studies/6.1,6.2,6.6

World Languages7.1,7.2

Consumer, Family & Life Skills 9.1B,9.2A,9.2B,9.2C,9.2D

Core Ethical Values:

Civic Responsibility, Empathy, Caring, Mutual Respect

Project Description:

ESL Students, after reading Sandra Cisneros' *The House On Mango Street* participate in separating, categorizing and packing donated goods at the Community Food Bank in Hillside, NJ. A short film at the Food Bank reinforces what they have been discussing in class and serves as an effective vehicle for developing empathy and promoting civic responsibility.

Target Audience:

Volunteer network of the Community Food Bank, Hillside, NJ

Timeline: Three weeks

Project Scheduling:

The students are scheduled to work at the Community Food Bank at the beginning of the *Mango Street* Unit which takes about three weeks to complete.

Equipment Needed:

Copies of *The House On Mango Street*, *Novel Units' Teacher Guide*, Preliminary and Post Survey Questions, NJ Writing Rubric

Academic Focus:

The Arts(Visual and Performing):

Students are asked to visualize and sketch descriptions and metaphors contained in the novel.

Language Arts Literacy:

Cisneros' *The House On Mango Street* enables ESL students to delve into a well-known American novel, exploring many universal themes that reveal the immigrant experience. Journal writing, vocabulary, graphic organizers and rubrics are integrated into daily lesson plans. A final persuasive essay is required.

Comprehensive Health and Physical Education:

Students become aware of the effect of poverty on individual health and well being.

Mathematics:

Students become aware of the scale and the amount of food that is donated and distributed to people in need in the Northern NJ area.

Social Studies:

Students become aware of issues facing immigrants and examine cultural identity questions. Traditional gender roles and responsibilities are explored. Students develop social skills while

organizing and working in a cooperative group at the food bank. Civic responsibility is fostered by working at a charitable institution.

World Language:

The immigrant culture of Mexican-Americans in Chicago is examined. Language and identity are discussed.

Consumer Family, & Life Skills:

Students are asked to observe the different positions necessary to run an organization such as the Food Bank and the skills required to be employed. Ethical questions are part of discussions concerning decisions made by characters in the novel.

Educational Strategies:

Performance-based Education:

Graphic organizers, journals, discussions, essays and rubrics were used to facilitate student understanding and connection to the themes explored in the unit. Students engaged in a real-life experience with specific goals.

Cooperative Learning:

Students brainstormed, critiqued each other, and worked together through the activities during the unit.

Interdisciplinary Approach:

Art, Language Arts, Civics, Language, Culture, Life Skills

Personal Growth Outcomes: Civic responsibility, empathy, caring, and mutual respect are encouraged by the exploration of the universal themes in *The House On Mango Street* culminating in a experiential hands-on experience at the Community Food Bank. The students experience the satisfaction and delight of knowing that they have made a positive difference in their community.

Community Involvement:

The Community Food Bank in Hillside, NJ.

Parents and Volunteer Involvement: Parents are welcome.

About forty students visit and work at the food bank after seeing a film about the organization and the people it helps.

Reflection Activities:

Media coverage. Students are asked to complete a pre and post service survey designed to help them think about the impact their service has made on them and the impact their service has made on others. Students write to the Food Bank about their changed perceptions.

Means of Assessment:

Teacher observations, pre and post survey, essays, rubrics.

Hurdles Encountered:

Hurdles: Scheduling the students at the Food Bank

Solution: A mutually agreeable date was booked

Celebration: Lunch at the Community Food Bank

Recognition: Certificates and Grades

Key Findings: ESL students will become more enthusiastic, engaged and motivated when service is a part of the curriculum.

