

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**TO:** WOODSIDE SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**FROM:** STEVE FRANK, MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
SHARON LACROSSE, LIBRARIAN/COMMUNITY SERVICE COORDINATOR

**CC:** BETH POLITO, SUPERINTENDENT  
PAM DUARTE, TK-5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE PRINCIPAL  
KATHERINE PETERSON, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES  
TERESE MCNAMEE, CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICIAL

**RE:** MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY SERVICE UPDATE

---

**OVERVIEW:**

Woodside Middle School embraces service-learning to enrich and deepen students' experiential education. Each 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student should participate in community service each year, and a minimum of 30 hours is highly encouraged by graduation. This community service can be focused on our school and local community, as well as on neighboring communities and beyond.

Students have opportunities to earn hours by serving their own school in the form of teacher aides, recess and lunch peer leaders, assistant coaches for school sports teams, and various other leadership roles. In these capacities, the students will have the opportunity to cooperatively assist teachers, lead younger students, acquire administrative skills, and develop leadership skills, while at the same time learning about what it means to serve others. The goal in providing these opportunities is to help students gain confidence and satisfaction in serving others and to explore their interests and passions in leadership and service beyond Woodside School.

The Woodside Middle School Community Service program organizes projects to support students as they develop interest and awareness beyond the comforts of Woodside School. Students will be introduced to a variety of local organizations and programs that serve specific needs. The goal of the program is for students to engage in active volunteering rather than fundraising, with an emphasis on partnerships with underprivileged neighboring schools and non-profit organizations. Local service projects will be organized on the early release Wednesdays, with several school-sponsored opportunities each trimester.

Outside of the school-sponsored projects, Middle School students are encouraged to develop their own special interests in community service. Students may earn hours by working individually with their families, youth groups, or any other organization that performs community service.

During the 2016-2017 school year, Middle School students have multiple opportunities to earn community service hours. The Peer Leader program consists of roughly 20 Middle School students who spend their lunch recess with primary students. Peer Leaders actively engage with lower grade students during lunch, providing the younger students with support, coaching on the fields, and general assistance to the yard duty staff. This is a great opportunity for the Middle School students

to develop their leadership skills by helping the younger students. Many of the Peer Leaders take part in an elective class that engages the students in how to be leaders with their younger peers.

In addition to the Middle School Peer Leader program, Middle School students participate in the Community Service elective class. Two classes are offered each trimester and by the end of the 2016-2017 school year, nearly 100 Middle School students will have taken the class. These students work with younger students in the primary grade levels and are directed by the classroom teachers.

Students have read aloud to the preschool students throughout the school year. In addition, they have worked very closely with the Kindergarten, playing educational games with the students who wait for the bus. Middle School students also work with the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, reading with them, teaching them how to take Accelerated Reader tests, working with them on the computers (showing the students how to log in, open a word document, write a few sentences, and teaching them how to print a document. They have also led reading circles of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade edition of Jr Great Books, and they have helped the teachers in the classroom organize math games.

Middle School students have also helped 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, working with them 1:1 with anything that they need assistance with. Finally, they have helped 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with assignments, and they have helped in art class, the office with paperwork, and the library with stamping, stickering, and shelving books.

Last spring we piloted a program called Reader Leader in collaboration with the Woodside Town Library. We have added the program to our 2016-2017 school year. Reader Leader is designed to pair up middle school students with primary students who need extra assistance with reading and homework. The middle school “Leaders” act as 1:1 tutors for “Readers” who are students in kindergarten through second grade. Primary grade teachers assist in identifying students who could most benefit from participating in this program. This takes place on early dismissal Wednesdays at the Town Library. The students meet at the school library and walk together to the Town Library for the tutoring session that lasts over an hour. Currently, we have 13 pairs of Reader Leaders.

In collaboration with the Student Council, the Community Service program supports one philanthropy each school year. This year the students voted to support ***Stop Hunger Now***, a nonprofit organization introduced to them by a parent in the community. Their mission reads as follows: *Stop Hunger Now gets food and life-saving aid to the world’s most vulnerable people, and works to end global hunger in our lifetime. Established in 1998, we have provided over 225 million meals in 74 countries.* The headquarters is based in Raleigh, N.C., and operates throughout the U.S. and through affiliates in developing countries.

The students will be actively engaged from start to finish to raise money to support a meal packaging event, and then host the event. At the event middle school students will be involved in unloading the materials, setting up assembly lines, measuring, weighing, sealing, packaging the meals and loading up the truck. Approximately twenty-five middle school students were able to participate in a community run fall packaging event so they are familiar with the program. The student run event will take place in the spring.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Continue to monitor the Community Service program and evaluate the opportunities for Middle School students both inside and outside of Woodside School.