

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TO: WOODSIDE SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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

CC: BETH POLITO, SUPERINTENDENT
LAUREN PETREA, TK-5TH GRADE PRINCIPAL
MARTA BATLLE, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES
MONIQUE HUNT, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SERVICES

RE: MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY SERVICE UPDATE

OVERVIEW:

Woodside Middle School embraces service-learning to enrich and deepen students' experiential education. Each 6th, 7th, and 8th 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.

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 2018-2019 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.

This year in the elective classes we are excited for our new knitting project. Our Knitter in Residence, Brian Myrtetus, will be leading us as much as he is available! We will be knitting a program through the National World War II Museum called: Knit Your Bit! *Since its launch in 2006, Knit Your Bit has reached more than 10,000 knitters and crocheters in all 50 states. Through their efforts, the Museum has distributed more than 50,000 scarves to veterans' centers, hospitals,*

and service organizations across the country. We are going to be knitting scarves for veterans and attaching personal notes to them. We will ship those scarves to the museum in New Orleans, LA. We will also communicate with local Veteran organizations to see if we can possibly knit for local veterans, as well. We will be teaching the students a new technique called finger knitting. The students will be using this technique to make blankets for the elderly in nearby homes. We plan to deliver the blankets so the students can see the project all the way from through. We are looking into a PTA grant for funding the yarn.

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 CS elective 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. This was a big success last year and we are set to host this event again on March 13, 2019.

We will offer our Reader Leader program in January 2019 for the duration of the 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. On average we have six pairs of Reader Leaders.

NEXT STEPS:

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