A poster about the Western Michigan University Everyone Counts Learning Community. The poster is authored by Mary Z. Anderson and Tiffant B. White, and it can be found at https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/diversity-posters/11. The poster is part of the Higher Education Commons. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.
Western Michigan University Everyone Counts Learning and Understanding Partners with organizations within the community to build awareness and understanding.

Schoolcraft Community Schools

Schoolcraft Middle School Mission Statement according to the Student Handbook, "Schoolcraft Middle School will prepare productive, respectful, problem-solvers for their next educational endeavor. We will accomplish this by delivering a challenging, integrated curriculum in a positive environment by a skilled staff." (p.1).

Schoolcraft Community Schools

To assist in the education of 111 participants (including 91 students, 5 teachers, and 15 chaperones from Schoolcraft Middle School), Tiffany White used her Everyone Counts Learning Community as a resource to build a furthered awareness and understanding to the community. The partnership included WMU, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Schoolcraft Community Schools, Voices United and community chaperones.

Kalamazoo Community Foundation provided a $1,000 Good Neighbor Grant to Schoolcraft Community Schools for buses and drivers, pre and post-lesson facilitators, a Voices United facilitated conversation, and copies of teacher resources (Educator's Guide) for future student lessons.

Zainali El-Amin Nawen from WMU’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion provided exhibit brochures and posters. One brochure was sent home with each sixth grade student. Posters were hung in the halls of the middle school.

An information sheet was sent home with the Schoolcraft sixth-grade students to assure parents and guardians had an opportunity to discuss the topic of Race before the students participated in the pre-lesson. The students wrote a pre-writing to learn if perceptions were affected by attending the exhibit and learning from facilitated conversations. The pre-lesson was facilitated by two WMU students trained by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion for this purpose.

The students, teachers and chaperones split into two groups at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum. One group attended the Race exhibit on the second floor where the other group attended the photo exhibit on the first floor. The students in the Race exhibit were provided with a sheet of questions that directed them in specific exhibits that would be of particular interest to their age group. The sheet of questions was developed by Kathy Taylor, fifth-grade math teacher. The group that attended the photo exhibit were allowed time to view and consider each photo. Once each student had an opportunity to view the photos, they were asked to stand in front of their favorite photo. Teachers and chaperones circulated throughout the exhibit to ask the students questions about why they chose the photo exhibit as a favorite. After one hour, the groups switched locations.

The students brought their lunches and ate them at the museum. After lunch, the students were provided a post-lesson. It consisted of a facilitated conversation by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion for this purpose.

The following week, Demarra Gardner, a Voices United facilitator, came to Schoolcraft Middle School and met with the sixth-grade students to provide a facilitated conversation. The purpose of waiting a week was so that the students had time to process what they had seen at the exhibit. The students were also asked to write a post-writing assignment. The purpose of the pre-lesson was to have the students read and think about the exhibits. The purpose of the post-lesson was to have the students reflect on and share their thoughts about the exhibits. The purpose of the assignment was to have the students share their thoughts about the exhibits.

Lessons learned via community collaboration

Having fifteen parent/guardians who took the time to chaperone the visit to Kalamazoo Valley Museum’s Race Exhibit was an invaluable part of the project. Not only did the adults gain knowledge along with the students as they guided the children through the exhibits, but it also showed the students that this topic is important enough for adults to take time to invest in the students in this regard.

The Schoolcraft Middle School newsletter that is sent home to all parents/guardians noted that this event would not have been possible without the parental/guardian support and the community support. There were five teachers who assisted in the project by collaborating in team meetings. These teachers learned that grant writing and project funding is attainable for them to enhance learning within their district. They had never written a grant proposal, and Good Neighbor Grant being a grass-roots effort made the experience simple for them, encouraging future endeavors. There were three teacher/guardians who were heavily involved. There were 15 chaperones that saw what a community exhibit can do and go together, a common goal. Four people who are affiliated with WMU realize what their efforts within their communities can do to reach others, creating a ripple effect in the community.

During the pre-lesson, the students were very open about themselves and their parents. They were given ways to respectfully address biases presented by their parents.

Mary Andenberg had also an opportunity to support a group of youth visiting the Race exhibit during her participation in the Everyone Counts Learning Community. Mary is a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church where she often helps out with youth activities. When she learned the Youth Group leaders were considering taking the middle school and high school youth to see the Race exhibit, she volunteered to assist in coordinating this important learning experience.

Fifteen middle school and high school youth were accompanied to the Exhibit by 5 adult adults. Although some of the youth had also visited the exhibit with school, they were interested and engaged in learning. After visiting the exhibit, the youth and their leaders met with Demarra Gardner and 5 youth facilitators from Voices United. Ms. Gardner and the youth facilitators helped the Westminster Youth and their leaders talk about their experiences at the exhibit and think more about experiences of race and racism in their own lives.

The powerful impact of this experience can be seen in some of the reflections shared by Westminster Youth and their leaders two months after they visited the exhibit.

“Before the race exhibit, I knew that racism was wrong, but I didn’t realize the ultimate foil of anti-discrimination efforts... After the Race exhibit, I shared what I learned about the RACE exhibit with all 3 of my friends. Before the race exhibit, I didn’t realize how many disparities there were (and still are) because of race. I now realize what Race is really about. I give thanks for coming to Kalamazoo RACE exhibit.”

The purpose of the post-lesson was to have the students reflect on and share their thoughts about the exhibits. The purpose of the assignment was to have the students share their thoughts about the exhibits.

Lessons learned via community collaboration

Having fifteen parent/guardians who took the time to chaperone the visit to Kalamazoo Valley Museum’s Race Exhibit was an invaluable part of the project. Not only did the adults gain knowledge along with the students as they guided the children through the exhibits, but it also showed the students that this topic is important enough for adults to take time to invest in the students in this regard.

The Schoolcraft Middle School newsletter that is sent home to all parents/guardians noted that this event would not have been possible without the parental/guardian support and the community support. There were five teachers who assisted in the project by collaborating in team meetings. These teachers learned that grant writing and project funding is attainable for them to enhance learning within their district. They had never written a grant proposal, and Good Neighbor Grant being a grass-roots effort made the experience simple for them, encouraging future endeavors. There were three teacher/guardians who were heavily involved. There were 15 chaperones that saw what a community exhibit can do and go together, a common goal. Four people who are affiliated with WMU realize what their efforts within their communities can do to reach others, creating a ripple effect in the community.

During the pre-lesson, the students were very open about themselves and their parents. They were given ways to respectfully address biases presented by their parents.

Mary Andenberg had also an opportunity to support a group of youth visiting the Race exhibit during her participation in the Everyone Counts Learning Community. Mary is a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church where she often helps out with youth activities. When she learned the Youth Group leaders were considering taking the middle school and high school youth to see the Race exhibit, she volunteered to assist in coordinating this important learning experience.

Fifteen middle school and high school youth were accompanied to the Exhibit by 5 adult adults. Although some of the youth had also visited the exhibit with school, they were interested and engaged in learning. After visiting the exhibit, the youth and their leaders met with Demarra Gardner and 5 youth facilitators from Voices United. Ms. Gardner and the youth facilitators helped the Westminster Youth and their leaders talk about their experiences at the exhibit and think more about experiences of race and racism in their own lives.

The powerful impact of this experience can be seen in some of the reflections shared by Westminster Youth and their leaders two months after they visited the exhibit.

“Before the race exhibit, I knew that racism was wrong, but I didn’t realize the ultimate foil of anti-discrimination efforts... After the Race exhibit, I shared what I learned about the RACE exhibit with all 3 of my friends. Before the race exhibit, I didn’t realize how many disparities there were (and still are) because of race. I now realize what Race is really about. I give thanks for coming to Kalamazoo RACE exhibit.”

The purpose of the post-lesson was to have the students reflect on and share their thoughts about the exhibits. The purpose of the assignment was to have the students share their thoughts about the exhibits.

Lessons learned via community collaboration

Having fifteen parent/guardians who took the time to chaperone the visit to Kalamazoo Valley Museum’s Race Exhibit was an invaluable part of the project. Not only did the adults gain knowledge along with the students as they guided the children through the exhibits, but it also showed the students that this topic is important enough for adults to take time to invest in the students in this regard.

The Schoolcraft Middle School newsletter that is sent home to all parents/guardians noted that this event would not have been possible without the parental/guardian support and the community support. There were five teachers who assisted in the project by collaborating in team meetings. These teachers learned that grant writing and project funding is attainable for them to enhance learning within their district. They had never written a grant proposal, and Good Neighbor Grant being a grass-roots effort made the experience simple for them, encouraging future endeavors. There were three teacher/guardians who were heavily involved. There were 15 chaperones that saw what a community exhibit can do and go together, a common goal. Four people who are affiliated with WMU realize what their efforts within their communities can do to reach others, creating a ripple effect in the community.

During the pre-lesson, the students were very open about themselves and their parents. They were given ways to respectfully address biases presented by their parents.

Mary Andenberg had also an opportunity to support a group of youth visiting the Race exhibit during her participation in the Everyone Counts Learning Community. Mary is a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church where she often helps out with youth activities. When she learned the Youth Group leaders were considering taking the middle school and high school youth to see the Race exhibit, she volunteered to assist in coordinating this important learning experience.

Fifteen middle school and high school youth were accompanied to the Exhibit by 5 adult adults. Although some of the youth had also visited the exhibit with school, they were interested and engaged in learning. After visiting the exhibit, the youth and their leaders met with Demarra Gardner and 5 youth facilitators from Voices United. Ms. Gardner and the youth facilitators helped the Westminster Youth and their leaders talk about their experiences at the exhibit and think more about experiences of race and racism in their own lives.

The powerful impact of this experience can be seen in some of the reflections shared by Westminster Youth and their leaders two months after they visited the exhibit.