



# PROFILES OF SUCCESS:

*Engaging Young People's Hearts and Minds Through Service-Learning*

*The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service*

April 2000

# The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service

The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service was founded in 1993 to represent the interests of grantmakers nationwide who share a belief in the power of service and volunteerism as powerful community problem-solving strategies. The Grantmaker Forum has over 1300 members, spanning the full spectrum of philanthropy, from corporate foundations to family foundations, from private foundations to community foundations.

The Grantmaker Forum is devoted to building awareness of the value and ethic of service and volunteerism and to maximizing opportunities for all Americans to give of themselves for purposes greater than themselves. We believe that service rewards not only those who receive it, but also those who give it and that the ethic of service is the foundation of civic responsibility and self-reliance. Though focused primarily on the philanthropic sector, the Grantmaker Forum strives to build broad-based, cross-sector support for this work.

For more information about the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service, its publications, upcoming events, and more, visit the GFCNS web site at: <http://www.gfcns.org>. Staffing and support for the Grantmaker Forum is provided by BTW Consultants—*informing change*, a Berkeley, California firm specializing in organizational development, planning, and program evaluation for the philanthropic and non-profit sectors.



This publication was developed by Shelley H. Billig of the RMC Research Corporation, Denver, Colorado, as a part of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's Learning In Deed Initiative. It was printed in cooperation with the Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service.

A full bibliography of all sources cited here is available at: <http://www.LearningInDeed.org>, or call Learning In Deed hotline at (202) 778-1040. To contact Shelley Billig directly, email her at [billig@rmcdenver.com](mailto:billig@rmcdenver.com) or call her at 800-922-3636. Further contact and background information on the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Learning In Deed Initiative is listed at the end of this publication.

For information on service-learning in general, contact the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at 1-(800)-808-SERVE or <http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu>.



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# *The Impact of Service-Learning*

## AN OVERVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH

### *Introduction*

Service-learning is a teaching strategy that links meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based classroom instruction. This publication presents the results of a scan of the recent research on the impact of service-learning on K-12 youth, as well as the impact on public schools and communities. It focuses on school-based K-12 service-learning in general, rather than any one particular initiative.

### *Prevalence of Service-Learning*

According to a 1999 survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, 64% of all public schools and 83% of all public high schools organize some form of community service for their students. Nearly a third of all schools and half of public high schools provide service-learning programs, where the service that is being provided is linked with the school curriculum (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999).

### *Teachers and Service-Learning*

Educators are drawn to service and service-learning because they believe it produces positive educational results for students, schools, and communities. In individual interviews, teachers can clearly articulate their observations of the program's effects. They give examples of students becoming more altruistic and caring, showing more concern about their community and community issues, and learning more in specific content areas, such as social studies or mathematics, or in specific subject matter, such as the environment or the elderly. (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999; Billig and Conrad, 1997; Duckenfield and Swanson, 1992; Eyler and Giles, 1998; Kinsley and McPherson, 1995; and many others)

### *Citizenship and Service-Learning*

Citizen engagement is at the heart of democratic life. For democracy to thrive, its members must take responsibility for building community and solving community problems. Democracy requires a citizenry that is both educated and engaged, a people who learn not only basic skills and content knowledge, but also qualities of civic virtue and community responsibility. In recent years, service-learning has become an important educational tool for engaging youth in their communities and making their involvement a powerful learning experience.

### *Research on Service-Learning*

Although the research in the field has not yet caught up with the certainty and passion that educators feel for service-learning, the research that is available begins to build a case for the impacts that practitioners believe to be true. This summary presents the recent research on school-based K-12 service-learning, from 1991 to 1999, organized by area of potential impact. It does not include all research on the topic, but rather is limited to those publications that have documented their results and have shown a positive impact. It is important to note that at the time of this writing, no research was identified with negative impacts, and only a few studies showed no impact or no sustained impact over time. A full bibliography of all sources cited here is available at: <http://www.LearningInDeed.org>, or call Learning In Deed hotline at (202) 778-1040.



## SPOTLIGHT ON Examples of Service-Learning Programs

### *Britton's Neck High School (Gresham, South Carolina)*

Through a service-learning program at Britton's Neck High School, students had a significant impact on the community by building a badly needed fire station for the area. As a result of the project, the area became better equipped to respond to fires, local insurance rates were reduced, and four students became volunteer fire fighters.

Student learning in this program was both broad and deep, as agriculture students conducted soil analyses, math students determined the amount of building materials needed, science classes researched the impact of the construction on soil erosion, and carpentry students partnered with community construction and masonry workers.

### *Edward Little High School (Auburn, Maine)*

Through a service-learning program at Edward Little High School, students contributed to their community by improving 40 acres of deteriorating school property. To replace the dilapidated property, students designed and created a cross-country running course; an obstacle course; a mountain bike trail; an arboretum; a greenhouse; and an amphitheater.

Students learned math and science through the layout and design of the area; special education classes learned science in creating a flower garden; and English classes learned to apply their knowledge to develop publicity materials for the newly refurbished site.

### *Chico High School (Chico, California)*

Through a service-learning program at Chico High School, high school students in Spanish classes tutored Spanish speaking elementary school students in reading skills. The younger children, in turn, helped the high school students with their Spanish speaking skills. The high school students also developed guides and maps to the murals that decorate the town of Chico for the community to enjoy. The maps and guides were in English and Spanish and were accompanied by information gleaned from interviews with the artists who painted the murals.

During Hurricane Mitch, these same high school students worked with community members to learn how to make tamales. The students sold some of the tamales to raise funds for those affected by the hurricane and gave others to organizations for the homeless. The funds raised were given to CARE which used the money to build two homes.

Younger children learned reading and language arts skills while their tutors learned Spanish. Older students learned mapping skills, interview skills, and writing skills as well as the history of the town's murals. They learned about diverse community experiences through tutoring and developing the mural guides, and learned about civic responsibility through their contributions to those affected by the hurricane.



## SPOTLIGHT ON

# The Impact of Service-Learning on Young People's Personal and Social Development

### **Service-learning has a positive effect on the personal development of public school youth.**

#### *Evidence*

- Middle and high school students who engaged in quality service-learning programs showed an increase in measures of personal and social responsibility, communication, and sense of educational competence (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, and Rovner, 1998).
- Students who engaged in service-learning ranked responsibility higher as a value and reported a higher sense of responsibility to their school than comparison groups (Leming, 1998).
- Students perceived themselves to be more socially competent after engaging in service-learning (Scales and Blyth, 1997; O'Bannon, 1999; Morgan and Streb, 1999).
- Students who engaged in service-learning were more likely to treat each other kindly, help each other, and care about doing their best (Berkas, 1997).
- Students who engaged in service-learning were more likely to increase their sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Shaffer, 1993).
- Middle school male students reported increased

self-esteem and fewer behavioral problems after engaging in service-learning (Switzer, Simmons, Dew, Regalski, and Wang, 1995).

### **Students who participate in service-learning are less likely to engage in "risk" behaviors.**

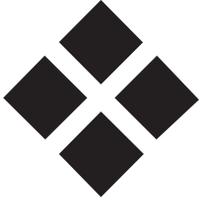
#### *Evidence*

- Students in elementary and middle school service-learning programs showed reduced levels of alienation and behavioral problems (Stephens, 1995; Yates and Youniss, 1996).
- Students who engaged in service-learning were less likely to be referred to the office for disciplinary measures (Follman, 1997; 1998).
- High school and middle school students who were engaged in service-learning were less likely to engage in behaviors that lead to pregnancy or arrest (Melchior, 1999; Allen, Kuperminc, Philliber, and Herre, 1994; Shaffer, 1993).
- Middle school students who engaged in service-learning and experienced a structured health curriculum were less likely to engage in unprotected sexual activity or violent behavior (O'Donnell, Stueve, Doval, Duran, Haber, Atnafou, Johnson, Grant, Murray, Juhn, Tang, and Piessens, 1999).

## **Service-learning has a positive effect on students' interpersonal development and the ability to relate to culturally diverse groups.**

### *Evidence*

- Middle and elementary school students who participated in service-learning were better able to trust and be trusted by others, be reliable, and accept responsibility (Stephens, 1995).
- High school students who participated in high quality service-learning programs were more likely to develop bonds with more adults, agreed that they could learn from and work with the elderly and disabled, and felt that they had trusted others, in addition to parents and teachers, to whom they could turn for help (Morgan and Streb, 1999).
- Students who engaged in service-learning showed greater empathy and cognitive complexity than comparison groups (Courneya, 1994).
- Students who engaged in quality service-learning programs reported greater acceptance of cultural diversity (Melchior, 1999; Berkas, 1997).
- Students who engaged in service-learning showed an increase over time in their awareness of cultural differences and attitudes toward helping others (Shaffer, 1993; Stephens, 1995).
- Students who participated in service-learning enjoyed helping others with projects, became more dependable to others, and felt more comfortable communicating with ethnically diverse groups (Loesch-Griffin, Petrides, and Pratt, 1995).



## SPOTLIGHT ON

# The Impact of Service-Learning on Young People's Academic Learning and Career Aspirations

### Service-learning helps students acquire academic skills and knowledge.

#### *Evidence*

- Students in over half of the high quality service-learning schools studied showed moderate to strong gains on student achievement tests in language arts and/or reading, engagement in school, sense of educational accomplishment, and homework completion (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, and Rovner, 1998).
- Service-learning participation was associated with higher scores on the state test of basic skills (Anderson, Kinsley, Negroni, and Price, 1991) and higher grades (Shumer, 1994; Shaffer, 1993; Dean and Murdock, 1992; O'Bannon, 1999).
- 83% of schools with service-learning programs reported that grade point averages of participating service-learning students improved 76% of the time (Follman, 1999).
- Middle and high school students who participated in service-learning tutoring programs increased their grade point averages and test scores in reading/language arts and math, and were less likely to drop out of school (Supik, 1996; Rolzinski, 1990).
- Students who engaged in service-learning came to class on time more often, completed more classroom tasks, and took the initiative to ask questions more often (Loesch-Griffin, Petrides, and Pratt, 1995),
- Elementary and middle school students who participated in service-learning had improved problem-solving skills and increased interest in academics (Stephens, 1995).

### Students who participate in service-learning are more engaged in their studies and more motivated to learn.

#### *Evidence*

- Students who participated in high quality service-learning programs showed an increase in measures of school engagement and achievement in mathematics as compared with control groups (Melchior, 1999).
- Students at all levels felt that they learned more in service-learning classes than other classes (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, and Rovner, 1998; Berkas, 1997).

## **Service-learning is associated with increased student attendance.**

### *Evidence*

- Schools that sponsor a service-learning program reported that student attendance increased every year over a three year period of time (Follman, 1998; 1999; O'Bannon, 1999).
- Students engaged in service-learning had higher attendance rates than control group peers (Shaffer, 1993, Supik, 1996; Shumer, 1994).

## **Service-learning helps students to become more knowledgeable and realistic about careers.**

### *Evidence*

- Students who participated in service-learning reported gaining career skills, communication skills and an increase in career exploration knowledge (Berkas, 1997; Billig, Jesse, Calvert, and Kleimann, 1999).
- Students who engaged in high quality service-learning programs developed positive work orientation attitudes and skills (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, and Rovner, 1998).
- Teachers believed that participation in service-learning increased career awareness (Melchior, 1999; Billig and Conrad, 1997).



## SPOTLIGHT ON

# The Impact of Service-Learning on Young People's Civic Responsibility

**Service-learning helps to develop students' sense of civic and social responsibility and specific citizenship skills.**

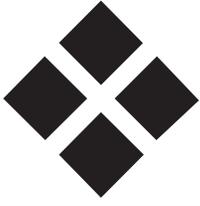
### *Evidence*

- Students who engaged in high quality service-learning programs showed an increase in the degree to which they felt aware of community needs, believed that they could make a difference, and were committed to service both in the present and the future (Melchior, 1999; Berkas, 1997).
- High school students who participated in high quality service-learning programs developed a more sophisticated understanding of socio-historical contexts, were likely to think about politics and morality in society, and were likely to consider how to affect social change (Yates and Youniss, 1996; 1998).
- Elementary and middle schools students who participated in service-learning developed a greater sense of civic responsibility and an ethic of service (Stephens, 1995).
- Students who engaged in service-learning increased their understanding of how government works (Berkas, 1997).

**Service-learning provides an avenue for students to become active, positive contributors to society.**

### *Evidence*

- High school students who participated in service-learning and service were more likely to be engaged in community organizing and to vote 15 years after their participation in the program, compared to those who did not participate (Youniss, McClellan, and Yates, 1997; Yates and Youniss, 1998).
- High school students from five states who participated in high quality service-learning programs increased their political attentiveness, political knowledge, and desire to become more politically active (Morgan and Streb, 1999).
- Students who have engaged in service-learning feel that they can "make a difference" (O'Bannon, 1999; Cairn, 1999).
- Over 80% of participants in high quality service-learning programs felt that they had made a positive contribution to the community (Melchior, 1999; Billig and Conrad, 1997; Scales and Blyth, 1997).



## SPOTLIGHT ON The Impact of Service-Learning on Schools and Communities

### Service-learning results in greater mutual respect between teachers and students.

#### *Evidence*

- Teachers and students in schools with quality service-learning programs reported an increase in mutual respect (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, and Rovner, 1998).
- Service-learning builds cohesiveness in a school, creates positive peer relations among students and among teachers, as well as between students and teachers (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, and Rovner, 1998).

### Service-learning improves the overall school climate.

#### *Evidence*

- Educators and students in schools with a strong service-learning program reported a more positive school climate through a feeling of greater connection to the school (Billig and Conrad, 1997; Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, and Rovner, 1999) and through decreased teacher turnover and increased teacher collegiality (Weiler, et.al., 1999).

### Engaging in service-learning leads to discussions of teaching, learning and the best ways for students to learn.

#### *Evidence*

- In schools that have a critical mass of teachers involved in service-learning (over 20%), there is dialogue among teachers about the best ways for students to learn and the best ways to teach (Billig and Conrad, 1997; Melchior, 1999; Kinsley, 1997).
- Educators involved in service-learning engage in ongoing reflection and analysis to determine how to improve educational services to students (Anderson, Kinsley, Negroni and Price, 1991; Billig and Conrad, 1997).

### Service-learning leads to a more positive perception of schools and youth by community members.

#### *Evidence*

- Community members who participate in service-learning as partners with the school see youth as a valued resource and as positive contributors to the community (Billig and Conrad, 1997; 1999; Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, and Rovner, 1999; Melchior, 1999; Kingland, Richards, and Coleman, 1995; Kinsley, 1997).



## Interested in learning more?

*Here are a few contacts to get you started...*

### **National Service-Learning Clearinghouse**

*A comprehensive information system for service-learning.*

Tel: 1-800-808-SERVE

Email: [serve@tc.umn.edu](mailto:serve@tc.umn.edu)

Web site: <http://umn.edu/~serve/>

### **National Service-Learning Exchange**

*A national peer-based service-learning training and technical assistance network, organized by region.*

Exchange National Center

c/o National Youth Leadership Council

1910 W. County Road B

St. Paul, MN 55113

Tel: 1-877-LSA-EXCH

Email: [lsaexchange@nylc.org](mailto:lsaexchange@nylc.org)

Web site: <http://www.lsaexchange.org>

### **Corporation for National Service—Department of Service-Learning**

*Established in 1993, the Corporation for National Service engages more than a million Americans each year in service to their communities - helping to solve community problems.*

1201 New York Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20525

Tel: 202-606-5000 (Request the Department of Service-Learning.)

Web site: <http://www.cns.gov>

### **Foundation Leadership**

#### **The Surdna Foundation: Effective Citizenry Program**

The Surdna Foundation supports service-learning through its Effective Citizenry program area. The Effective Citizenry program funds efforts designed to promote active democratic participation in local problem solving by both students and non-student residents of communities. The Surdna Foundation is particularly interested in service-learning courses and programs that encourage students to take direct action to resolve pressing community problems. Programs involving whole school districts, or which are co-designed by schools in conjunction with a range of neighborhood partners are preferred.

The Surdna Foundation is also interested in courses and curricula that examine the complexities of social problems, and not simply students' responses to or feelings about service. Surdna generally limits its funding to high school and college/university service-learning programs.

#### **To Contact the Effective Citizenry Program**

Effective Citizenry Program

The Surdna Foundation

330 Madison Avenue – 30th Floor

New York, NY 10017

For more information about the Effective Citizenry program and the Surdna Foundation, visit the foundation's Web site at:

<http://www.surdna.org>

### **About the Surdna Foundation**

The Surdna Foundation is a family foundation established in 1917. The foundation has five program areas, including the Environment; Community Revitalization; Effective Citizenry; Arts; and the Nonprofit Sector.

### **W. K. Kellogg Foundation: *Learning In Deed***

In 1998, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation launched *Learning In Deed: Making a Difference Through Service-Learning*, a \$13 million four-year, national effort to broaden the use of service-learning in school districts across America.

The Kellogg Foundation believes that meaningful service to the community, combined with curriculum-based learning builds stronger academic skills, encourages lifelong civic commitment, and improves workplace and personal development skills among youth. Working with teachers, administrators, community leaders, parents, students, policymakers and national leaders, the Kellogg Foundation aims to make service-learning a common teaching practice across America.

### **To Contact *Learning In Deed***

For more information about Learning In Deed, visit the Web site at

<http://www.LearningInDeed.org> or call the Learning In Deed hotline at 202-778-1040.

***Learning In Deed* is comprised of four components, each of which is administered by an organization selected by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, as follows:**

### ***Policy and Practice Demonstration Projects***

As demonstration sites, California, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon and South Carolina are receiving resources and technical assistance to improve the quality of service-learning policies and practice.

Contact:

### **Education Commission of the States**

Terry Pickeral, Project Director  
The Compact for Learning and  
Citizenship

Education Commission of the States  
707-17th Street, Ste. 2700

Denver, Colorado 80202

Tel: 303-299-3636

Email: [tpickeral@ecs.org](mailto:tpickeral@ecs.org)

### ***National Commission on Service-Learning***

Composed of leaders from the fields of education, government, youth development and community activism, the com-

mission will examine research and best practices, in order to encourage broad support of service-learning.

Contact:

**Education Development Center, Inc.**

Leslie F. Hergert, Senior Project Director  
Education Development Center, Inc.  
55 Chapel Street  
Newton, Massachusetts 02458  
Tel: 617-969-7100  
Email: lhergert@edc.org

***K-12 Service-Learning Leadership Network***

Comprised of key constituencies in the K-12 service-learning community, the Network will promote effective service-learning in American public education.

Contact:

**Academy for Educational Development**

Betsy McGee, Senior Program Officer  
Academy for Educational Development  
100 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10011  
Tel: 212-367-4588  
Email: bmcgee@aed.org

***Learning In Deed Research Network***

Comprised of leaders in research and evaluation, this network is identifying and communicating best practices in order to support high-quality service-

learning.

Contact:

**RMC Research Corporation**

Shelley Billig, Vice President  
RMC Research Corporation  
Writer Square  
1512 Larimer St., Ste 540  
Denver, Colorado  
Tel: 800-922-3636  
Email: billig@rmcdenver.com

In addition, the following two organizations are working with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to support Learning In Deed:

***APCO Associates, Inc.***

APCO oversees the communications and public affairs aspects of the Initiative.

Contact:

Nancy Murphy, Senior Associate  
APCO Associates, Inc  
1615 L Street NW, Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel: 202-778-1000  
Email: nmurphy@apcoassoc.com

***Brandeis University***

The Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University's Heller School is responsible for the evaluation of the Initiative.

Contact:  
Alan Melchior, Deputy Director  
Center for Human Resources  
Brandeis University  
60 Turner Street  
Waltham, Massachusetts 02453  
Tel: 781-736-3775  
Email: melchior@brandeis.edu

munity development programming. Grants are concentrated in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the southern African countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

### **About the W. K. Kellogg Foundation**

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation was established in 1930 "to help people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life and that of future generations."

Its programming activities center around the common vision of a world in which each person has a sense of worth; accepts responsibility for self, family, community, and societal well-being; and has the capacity to be productive, and to help create nurturing families, responsive institutions, and healthy communities.

To achieve the greatest impact, the Foundation targets its grants toward specific areas. These include: health; food systems and rural development; youth and education; and philanthropy and volunteerism. Within these areas, attention is given to the cross-cutting themes of leadership; information systems/technology; capitalizing on diversity; and social and economic com-

# The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service

## Co-Chairs:

Chris Kwak, *W. K. Kellogg Foundation*

Sylvia Robinson, *Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation*

## Task Forces and Work Group:

**Funder Outreach** Lara Iglitzin, Chair  
*Henry M. Jackson Foundation*

**Research** Suzanne G. Aisenberg, Chair  
*Atlantic Philanthropic Service Co., Inc.*

## Communications and Policy Work Group

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**Project Director:** Jill Blair, BTW Consultants

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# *The Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service*

2560 9th Street, Suite 217, Berkeley, California 94710

phone, 510.665.6100; fax, 510.665.6129

email, [GFCNS@informingchange.com](mailto:GFCNS@informingchange.com)

[www.gfcns.org](http://www.gfcns.org)