

BEC NEWS

April, 2002

The Newsletter for the Building
Ethical Communities Through
Service-Learning Program

Team Updates:

Would you like to write us? Tell us about your project, your planning, how you reflect, or anything you think is important. We will publish your writing in the next BEC News or on our website for the whole world to see!

Growing Great Projects

Each year the BEC program gets at least one garden project. This year our master gardeners come from St. Gabriel Elementary School in Milford. This class of 4th graders have been working hard all year on this project, but have really begun to see the “fruits” of their labor. The past months have focused on planning, planning, planning. The gardeners spent the winter months trying to figure out where to put their garden and what to grow in their garden. This was a tough decision for them. One of the big obstacles to their idea was the history of vandalism on their school grounds. Although this was a fear, the students planned around it – certain to not let it get the best of them. They picked a spot that was visible from the school and made a promise to make sure the community knew all about the garden to help protect it.

Then they waited, and waited. Now that Spring is just around the corner, they can start getting dirty. The students and their supportive and energetic teacher, Ms. Collins invited parents to listen to a

presentation on the project. After listening, the parents fully agreed that this was a worthy idea. One parent summed it up by saying, “how can we not help, look how excited they are.” The presentation was a success and the students got support from about 90% of the parents and promises to help dig, plant, and weed the garden.

Groundbreaking will happen soon and the students already have many of the plants growing inside. In a log book, the students reflect and plan. The team hopes to have the garden in by the end of the school year. The garden will benefit the school and the wider community. The students originally had plans to sell the plants and vegetables and give the proceeds to their area soup kitchen.

Way to go St. Gabriel 4th graders!

Remember BEC Strategies:

Shared Values
The Golden Rule
Wise Decision-Making
Wide-Angle, Mirror, and
Microscope
Team Roles
Fist-To-Five



Need to talk to us?

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Service, Service, Everywhere Service...

Imagine a class where everything is based around service. Hard? Not for Mr. Williard and his first period construction class at Bristol Eastern High. Recently, they sent us a letter describing all their accomplishments this year. Mr. Williard says proudly that everything they do is service. They have done a fantastic job building...

- Outdoor workout stations for the athletic department
- Shelving units for the athletic department
- Santa's mailbox for the Salvation Army
- Display case for the school hallway to display student work
- Writing tables for people in therapy
- A toolshed for the Institute for the Blind

As you can see, this class has found needs and created solutions. What an amazing year they have had and what a huge benefit this class is to their community.

Quilting: Not Just for the Bees

Mystic Connecticut. Just thinking about the town brings to mind visions of fishing boats, pizza, aquariums, and quilts. Quilts? That's what I said. Ms. Denard's and Ms. Derry's class of 7th and 8th graders are in stitches over their great project. With the help of their teachers and a local quilting club, the students are working in groups to design and make quilts to give to newborn babies in need.

There are rules to this quilt-making though. Each quilt needs to depict something about the United States in the 1800's. One quilt has the design of a covered wagon on it, another a candle, and yet a third has a picture of a table where a family would gather to eat.

Using team roles and reflecting on the character traits that are important for teamwork, the quilting groups have done an amazing job. As of last week, one quilt was completed and several more will be done any day now. Want to see the quilts? The quilters will present their project at the conference on May 2. Come and see!

Ethical Dilemma of the Month

You are talking to your friend one day and your friend tells you that a member of your class is living in a homeless shelter. Your friend makes you promise that you won't tell anyone and you agree. The next day, your service club suggests their upcoming project should be to volunteer at the shelter. Should you do something?

- 1. Is there a dilemma?**
- 2. What character traits do you want to display?**
- 3. Does the Golden Rule apply?**
- 4. What would you do?**

Remember: Connecticut's Asset-Based Character Education Conference is on May 2. There will be a full-day service-learning component. Make a poster and we will pick it up and show it off.