

***High School in the Community, New Haven: Service-Learning Class***

Two groups of students at High School in the Community (New Haven) are working on projects with the support of their service-learning teacher, Eduardo Roman. One group has initiated an academic mentoring program at a local elementary school. The other group is providing support to a New Haven homeless shelter.



Students from High School in the Community present their projects during Youth: Ethics in Service panel at service-learning conference (5/04)

Both groups would spend one hour for three to four days each week at their respective sites. A fifth day was spent in group reflection about the project and in planning changes in the projects. In addition, the students created a web page linked to their school website with a brief description of the homeless shelter project, a photo gallery and a collection of student reflections. Students set up this web page to pass on lessons and observations for others interested in service-learning. The address for this Web page is [www.homestead.com/hsonline/ServiceLearning.html](http://www.homestead.com/hsonline/ServiceLearning.html).

The service goal for the mentoring project was to help teachers improve the reading levels of primary students that were paired with high school students. Learning goals for the service-learning students included 1) learn strategies to work with younger students from different cultures and 2) gain project implementation skills to plan and complete this project. At the completion of each semester, the high school students recognized the reading improvement levels of their students and provided them with new story books purchased from a project funds.

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The project group that focused their work on a local homeless identified their service goal was to provide labor and organize fund drives for the local shelter. Residents at the shelter were all local homeless families. During visits to the shelter, students interacted with children living at the shelter and read to them, they helped clean open apartments and hallways in the shelter, they stocked canned goods in the pantry, and filed information in the office. The days not spent at the shelter were used to organize fund-raisers to put together care packages that include personal items such as deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Student learning goals for this project included 1) learn about the causes of homelessness, 2) improve personal leadership and organizational skills and 3) develop personal attributes to be successful at work.

One of the student reflections posted on the service-learning web site noted, "...Being there [at the homeless shelter] also makes you grateful for what you have. I like the work we do over there. Reading about how the program works is different from actually seeing all the work that goes into it. In the program one thing I like about it is that you feel like your doing something to make a difference. Another thing I like it the independence. We are given a lot of trust. I feel obligated to do the right thing since there are people who think that since I'm a student I'll need supervision. I think that in this program you need trust to make your group successful.

