

Community Partnerships

The Refuge: A Lesson in Teen Homelessness ...

About the program ...

Students visited The Refuge, a centre for homeless teens, to participate in a tour of areas frequented by homeless teens and to listen to a multimedia presentation about their region's homelessness issues. Students wrote about the impact of the trip in their journals and related classroom issues to what they learned at The Refuge. The visit inspired the students to run a winter coat and food drive to support the centre. They applied for and were awarded funds to make their charitable efforts for The Refuge a permanent endeavour within both the school and the community.



Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- Staff connected the project to the curriculum by studying books on teen homelessness in English class. Many students shared their experiences of their visit to The Refuge and applied their first-hand knowledge to relate to the experiences of the fictional characters they were studying.
- Students realized how fortunate they were and that homelessness is a real issue for teens in their region. They demonstrated their commitment by continuing with the project the next year. Many also began volunteering on their own time.
- Students realized that the needs of homeless youth do not revolve around holidays and neither should their giving. They were humbled by the difference their involvement in the community had made and now organize drives throughout the year, instead of just each winter.
- Students also encouraged the community to become involved. Some students went door-to-door looking for coats while others announced the coat drive in their churches. This raised awareness of teen homelessness throughout the community and benefited The Refuge.
- Parents talked about the impact the visit had on their children. Many joined staff in the coat and food drive donations and delivery.

Comments from students ...

“[The visit] made me realize how lucky I am, and I am not far from being one of those kids and they aren't far from being me.”

“I found it interesting that they don't use paper plates to feed the homeless to show that they care. I never thought of the respect that regular glass plates have.”

To find out more, contact ...

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