

Random Acts of Kindness has brought more meaning into my life, and I am committed to help spread the word.

— Carol, State Parent Facilitator, HI

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These Lesson Plans are a culmination of school-wide activities and classroom activities, ranging from grades K-12.

Lesson Plan

Correctional Facility Reading

Submitted by David; Fort Wayne, IN

Background:

This is a reading program that was created for the students/juveniles at a local Youth Center. The Youth Center is a fully secured detention center. Many of our students spend between 30-90 days at the center before returning home or are referred to alternative placement facilities. When I first arrived at The Youth Center, I was amazed at the poor reading level of many students. Using the Gilmore Oral Reading Test and a modified vocabulary assessment, I estimated that nearly 75% of students in the center read below a 3rd grade level. Most of these juveniles have been in the juvenile justice system for a great part of their young lives. These students have not received the educational supported need to succeed. I felt that motivating these students to learn would be my number one priority. That is how the "Reading for Giving Program" was created.

After consulting the local school's Strategic Plan for academic guidance, I then began contacting local businesses looking for community support for the program. Several local businesses agreed to provide program awards, and a pizza company donated 100 personal pan pizza coupons to get the program started. I then created a diverse reading list for students. I included modified texts for students that read at lower levels but still wished to participate in the program.

I then approached the students at the School about participating in the program. I explained that they must complete a novel from the reading list, write a response to the Program Product Guide, and write a formal letter that will accompany the gift. Many of our students are eager to give and want to be praised for their accomplishments. These juveniles are eager to do something positive and this reading program allows them to be caring and giving citizens. I have had an overwhelmingly positive response to the program. We have been so successful that we have extended the school day by 30 minutes to provide students with extra time to read. I feel that finding the proper motivation technique is the key to the entire success of the program, and some great pieces of literature help. Any teacher can inspire students if they can identify the proper motivation and the proper time to implement their plan.

Youth Center Reading for Giving Program

Goals and Objectives:

The "Reading for Giving Program" is a voluntary reading unit for students at the Youth Center. This program allows students to enjoy reading, while promoting literacy and the essential gift of giving. Students will be required to reach 3 benchmarks to become eligible for the "Giving Program." Students who reach their specific benchmarks will be provided the opportunity to provide their fellow man/woman with a special gift. A formal letter recognizing the individual for their community service or positive impact on the student and community will accompany the gift. This program was created to meeting the following goals as outlined in the Local Schools Strategic Plan:

Strategy X:

Plan A: To coordinate linkages with schools and potential community partners

Plan B: To expand community awareness of the correctional facility and community linkages.

Plan C: To formulate school-based implementation plans to establish community linkages.

The Reading Program will be guided by the following objectives and goals:

1. This program will foster the principles of literacy for students at the Youth Center.
2. Students will be motivated to read for their personal benefit and enjoyment.
3. Students will display critical writing skills in a functional aspect.
4. Students will commit acts of random kindness for their fellow citizen.
5. Students will perform critical thinking processes in formal and informal writing.
6. Students will recognize outstanding/positive community involvement by fellow citizens.

Program Requirements and Benchmarks:

1. Students will choose a novel from the suggested reading list.
2. Students will complete a reading level appropriate novel.
3. Students will complete a reading Program Product Guide.
4. Program Product Guide will be reviewed with suggestions or needed corrections recommended by WYC Academic Staff. Proficiency in grammar and conceptual understanding will be required.

5. Students will inform staff of citizen and that citizen's positive impact on the community to be awarded the appropriate gift.
6. Students will create a formal letter to a citizen detailing their appreciation for the citizen's community contributions, personal thanks, and personal influence on the student.

Support for the program by Staff:

As a staff at the Youth Center, we understand that the students who have been placed in our facility are in need of special care and opportunities. Many of the students in our facility are capable of becoming productive citizens. We feel that this program provides the students an opportunity to learn the art of reading and to make them more aware of their part in the community. As educators we must find ways to motivate our students, no matter what they have done in the past, to learn and have a positive impact on their community. By accepting the requirements of this program, students have made a personal commitment to better themselves and take a step in becoming productive adults. As a staff we will ensure the integrity of the program, provide our students with the proper resources, and provide aid to students to complete the program.

This product guide will be completed after the reading of the novel...

Youth Center Reading Program

Book Review Product Guide

Directions: After completing the required readings, students should answer the following questions in regards to the novel. This review should be written or typed. These questions should be completed in paragraph form and may include several paragraphs. Each question must be answered to complete the review process.

1. Create a new title for the novel. Explain how this new title is appropriate or how it is an improvement over the original title. Use textual support to describe the improvement of the title.

2. Describe 3 scenes from the text that would be good life-lessons for a child?

3. Why would you suggest this novel or book to a friend or colleague? What social, inter-personal, or intra-personal life-lessons are dealt with in the novel?

Sample letter written to local pizza company...

Dear Mr(s). _____,

The academic staff at the Youth Center has designed a voluntary youth reading and random acts of kindness program. The goal of this program is two-fold. First, we hope to promote the reading skills of the students in the program. We hope to expose them to different types of classical and contemporary literature. Secondly, the program has a goal of promoting community awareness and a sense of social belonging. We would like our students to understand and accept their place in society, while promoting charitable contributions to the community. How can you help?

Many of our students at the detention facility lack motivation and have never taken academics seriously. This is a major reason why they are in this facility. We hope to motivate them by providing the opportunity to earn rewards for completing the reading of novels. Most of these students have very poor reading skills, and the completion of a novel in this program could very possibly be the first novel they have read to completion. We would like to provide them with some motivation to complete their first novel. The students at Youth Center would not directly receive the reward, but they would have the opportunity to present the reward to someone in the community. We hope that students present the reward to someone in the community that has provided a great service or changed the students' life in a positive way. We hope to promote the students sense of giving by using this as an example of random kindness.

We currently have over 150 students enrolled in our education program. I feel we could possible have over 50 students involved in this program. I would really appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss this program. Your company has always supported projects that have the community's interest at hand, and I personally believe this program will help build community involvement at the most needed level. I can be reached at the Youth Center. We expect to begin the program within the next couple of weeks.

Sincerely,

Name

Youth Center Reading for Giving Program

Reading List

Moby Dick - Herman Melville
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn - Mark Twain
A Tale of Two Cities - Charles Dickens
Slaughter House-Five - Kurt Vonnegut
Because of Winn-Dixie - Kate DiCamillo
Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer - Mark Twain
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea - Jules Verne
Dead South - Robert Coram
Frankenstein - Mary Shelley
Smugglers' Island - Avi
The Sea Wolf - Jack London
Island of the Blue Dolphins - Scott O'Dell
Redwall - Brian Jaques
Air Raid-Pearl Harbor - Theodore Taylor
The Canterbury Tales - Geoffrey Chaucer
Where the Red Fern Grows - Wilson Rawls
The Call of the Wild - Jack London
Shoeless Joe - W.P. Kinsella
Johnny Tremain - Esther Forbes
Endurance Shackleton's Incredible Journey - Alfred Lansing
The Inimitable Jeeves - P. G. Wodehouse
The Martian Chronicles - Ray Bradbury
Robinson Crusoe - Daniel Defoe
The Story of Baseball - Lawrence S. Ritter
Anne of Green Gables - Lucy Maud Montgomery
Hearts in Atlantis - Stephen King
The Firm - John Grisham
The Scarlet Letter - Nathaniel Hawthorne
Around the World in Eighty Days - Jules Verne
A Child Called "It" - Dave Pelzer
Help Yourself - Dave Pelzer
A man Named Dave - Dave Pelzer
The Lost Boy' - Dave Pelzer