

Social Studies Service-Learning Projects



Elementary

- Students at one school teamed up with immigrant and refugee students from another school to welcome them into the community. They learned about diverse cultures by adopting an immigrant family and who shared their knowledge. In the process, students also were able to explain American culture and government to others.
- Toward the end of the year, students developed a handbook for incoming 1st graders to ease the transition to a full day of school. Given to kindergartners on Step Up Day, the book included classroom and school schedules, rules, a map of the school and a listing of important people and services.
- Students worked with a community garden association to raise seedlings and grow for food for the hungry. Students started by identifying that food is unequally distributed throughout the world and their own city.
- While studying local history, students identified a need to highlight the attractions in their otherwise undervalued community. They worked with the local historical society to identify and learn about historical, natural and cultural points of interest. They created a brochure, map and walking tour guide to promote their neighborhoods.
- Students worked with the local bicentennial committee to make town celebration “kid friendly”. They developed a walking history trail with 10 podiums describing the history of their town over the last 200 years. Students gave tours to the community during the Town’s Bicentennial events.

Middle School

- Op Sail 2000 inspired a group of students to study navigation and the impact of schooners on their state’s history. Students worked with the local Historical Society to produce and share a collection of historically accurate stories about shipwrecks, culminating in an exhibition at the Historical Society and the Portland Harbor Museum.
- After they learned about immigration, citizenship and cultures, students planned and hosted a naturalization ceremony. They partnered with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services to understand the significance of this event and the rules and regulations that govern it.

- When students studied colonial life, they realized that only some of their classmates had been able to go to Norlands as 4th graders. So, they decided to create a simulated, colonial schoolhouse experience that would be available to their whole K-8 school. They partnered with the local historical society to ensure an authentic experience.
- Students researched the ethnic history and culture of their city's residents by hosting a cultural café. During café hours they interviewed family members, local immigrants and refugees. They used their new knowledge to create a book of oral histories telling individual and diverse stories. Completion of the book was celebrated at a community book reading and by the distribution of multiple copies.

High School

- History students partnered with local archeologists and the historical society to map, excavate, date, document and analyze findings at the site of an historical home. The site was first discovered as students were clearing the trails behind the school after an electrical storm. This is an ongoing project and each year students decide how they will share their findings with the community.
- Civics students studied reactions to the Vietnam War in this country and in Vietnam. They felt that since many kids were interested in this subject because of relatives' stories, music, and movies they would develop a presentation for middle school students. They created a mock trial and presented evidence to middle schoolers who acted as jurors.
- Students studying public policy examined the statewide school funding formula, meeting with the governor and other experts as part of their research. They realized that their parents and neighbors did not understand this complex policy so they created an informational brochure to share what they learned about school funding with their community.
- In a history class, students in a small seaside town learned about civic participation and due process by studying the local marina. After years of informal observation, students realized that the docks usually were destroyed each winter. They studied the options and presented their findings to local selectmen. They also created a video to lobby state and federal agencies and legislators to increase funding to change the location of the docks.