



Miracle Makers:

A Social Justice Learning and Living Community Service Project

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Abstract:

As members of the Social Justice Service Club our mission is to support the Building Communities through Social Justice Learning and Living Cohort (BCSJLLC) in order to advance the mission of literacy throughout the Greater Miami Valley Region. We are also charged with fulfilling a voluntary service learning commitment for our organization. This year we worked with the "Miracle Makers." This is an after-school program at the Ruskin Elementary School, one of the participants in the UD-Community School Partnership Program. Our service consisted of mentoring students, assisting them with their homework, and engaging them in group and one-on-one recreational activities. As a service club, we were able to complete 75 hours of service learning. Our presentation will focus on our service work and how it demonstrates and reinforces our commitment to the Marianist ideals of lead, learn, and serve.

Mission Statement:

We are a living learning community that encouraged intellectual exploration through service. The open communication within the organization allows room for new ideas and negotiation. The arrangement of the organization and LLC combines academic, residential, and co-curricular elements to increase the success of the Social Justice Club. Through this interdisciplinary approach, answers to fundamental human questions are explored with new meaning and importance. Social Justice is focused on issues of literacy, diversity, solidarity, commitment to integrity and equality of all human life and the common good, which is demonstrated in the community living of the LLC which is committed to assuring that the members fully experience college life while being socially aware adults.

Outcomes:

- Increased acceptance of help from students
- Developed friendships with members of the Ruskin Elementary student body
- Learned about the difference in education across the United States
- Contributed our knowledge and skills
- Helped teachers manage students in their after-school program (Miracle Makers)



Reflection:

Through our work at Ruskin Elementary School, we were able to reach a better understanding of the gap in education that exists in the United States. We found that even though the students at Ruskin and we were both educated in the United States, there are huge differences in the outcomes of our education. This inspired us to continue our work at Ruskin. During our weekly visits we participated in multiple activities with the students. With the younger students we facilitated gym class and recess, helped with arts and crafts, and participated in story time. For older students we helped with homework- particularly mathematics. At our first visits, some students were wary and shy, but as our visits increased they gradually became more comfortable and open to accepting our help. Volunteering at Ruskin Elementary School was a rewarding experience because it showed us how different members in different socioeconomic groups live and learn. We were able to share our experiences with them, and they also had some valuable lessons to teach us.