

Curriculum Connections

Learning Together: Grade 12s Mentor Primary Students ...

About the program ...

Students in Holy Trinity Catholic High School's Grade 12 Religion class put their social justice commitments into practice by developing a mentorship program for students experiencing social difficulties at a neighbouring elementary school. The senior students organized individual tasks for each elementary student depending on their challenges and needs and kept journals of their mentorship work. The class also ran year-long projects to raise awareness for several causes in their school and community.

A Mentor's Comments ...

"He had trouble spelling the word *awesome*, but he never said, 'I can't do it.' He just said, 'Well, I'm not really sure how to spell it...I'm going to need some help.' I thought that was good. I was very surprised by how interested he seemed. I never got the vibe that he was bored or anything, although he did get distracted by other children around him, but who doesn't, right? Next week I want to continue to work on his spelling a little bit more, then we'll work on writing, then reading."

A Mentor's Story ...

"In the past month or so I've had trouble figuring out things to do with him. It's his [oral] communication skills that need attention – he's good at math, reading, writing and even spelling. Lucky for me I have a cousin in the same grade as him and at his house I saw something that was perfect. Lucky for me again, my grandma got it for him at her store. It was a box of science equipment (just plastic, no glass) and a book full of science experiments and tricks that kids can do. I choose a couple to do this week and the first one was to do with magnets and it worked out perfectly. He knew about atoms and mass and explained it to me perfectly, showing he understands science and likes it too. My plan is to have him learn the tricks and show them to some other students so that he can work on his communications skills a little more."

Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- The elementary students benefited from the cooperative, hands-on approach to learning designed by their mentors and improved their reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- The senior students practised their Catholic faith and educated their own school community and the neighbouring elementary school community about several important social justice issues.

"Today when I got him from his class yet again he had a huge and amazing smile on his face! I gave him so much encouragement he was starting to write more often...I believe he feels more comfortable doing it together – every time I would write a letter he would do the same thing."

– Mentor journal excerpt

To find out more, contact ...

Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board
Holy Trinity Catholic High School
Box 550 128 Evergreen Hill Rd
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4N5

Contact: Kathleen Evans (Principal)
Cristina Hutchison (Teacher)
Phone: (519) 429-3600
Email: chutchison@bhncdsb.ca

School website: <http://www.trinitycatholic.ca/>