

Session A: How can we provoke leadership in today's youth?

Session Titles:

Participants:

Beth – Works at Art Institute involved in leadership;

Jill Beers - Art Teacher pre-k to 8 at Nash Elementary,

Conal Cranin - MGR foundation

Betsy Schmidt - The Umbrella Project (paint umbrellas for peace) volunteer with a youth leadership camp (high school leaders come together to facilitate leadership)

Pam Ave Maria - Evanston Skokie School District 65

Officer Amy Modelberg (CPD)

Adjoura Stevens – Teacher/performing arts

Temporarily Joined by Indira Johnson

Session Notes:

Participants in this open space were looking for ways to invoke leadership amongst youth, discussion began on what individuals were looking for in regards to leadership amongst today's youth.

Jill Beers was looking for ways to encourage students to not just be a leader at an older age, but to be a leader at a young age. She felt that often times self esteem can be tied with leadership, and that this serves as a challenge for her. We need to let students know that they can do it. Maybe how can you create a safe environment to be successful.

Within her CPS experience, especially within the art classroom, Jill stated that, "A classroom almost never feels like a safe environment, when we can gain that feeling of safety in our classrooms our students are going to be ready to be a leader."

Pam's experiences show that group oriented activities have been able to help build safety within in the classroom.

What participants are looking to gain from this breakout session:

Individuals are at this session to help discover leadership programs or opportunities that are positive, and will result in affective leaders. Building confidence within themselves to help develop leadership.

Also the idea of youth dynamics, to find a way to bring individuals together in an unstructured situation, to help them find comfort with each other outside of the school. Program ideas are coming from outside Chicago, from New York, Pittsburgh, etc.

Successes:

Adjoura shared a success story of bringing students together within Goldblatt (CPS school). Goldblatt, is with the classical cluster within CPS, what has worked well for this program is developing a project that worked and focused on health. Each school came up with a project that came to the rest of the schools. A performance was given, students were nervous, it was successful, students were able to come together and be a part of greater community. When kids have a structured project, students may naturally come together around sports, or something casual.

Pam brought up the fact that sometimes there is a certain amount of friction. Individuals are looking for more of a personal connection, to foster students walking in other peoples shoes. Ideas of after school were presented, the after school programs are very academic. The individuals within the arts are losing students because the students are involved in an enrichment programs, due to being so behind in school standards. Also for safety purposes, schools have started to push to have the students outside of the school after school time to not have any problems.

Amy introduced the importance of having kids recognize what a leader is, "Kids need to identify what a leader is. When they think of a leader they think of the president, teacher, principal, etc. First have the students identify the leadership abilities within themselves. Then how their choices will affect themselves and other people. Example: There is a pizza shop across the street, we hang out with our gang over here, and the other gang is by the pizza shop, you can't go over to the pizza shop because that other

gang is there, how is that benefiting you. Community service is an excellent way to bring them together. OR a Basketball or sports tournament. Giving the students a sense of responsibility, they feel like it is something that older people do. Giving someone the idea that if they are not doing something, they may be letting someone down. **Responsibility will lead to leadership."**

Betsy stated, that currently it feels like leadership within schools is how disrespectful can you be. How do you deal with that? Home situations are so challenging for the different students. If more adults hold students accountable for their actions will it help develop positive leadership within schools?

A challenge that all group members felt they experienced was consistency: "Is keeping consistency within the classroom setting and at home something that can be fixed, if so, how do we do it?"

Question posed: How do we use the arts, to lure parents into the process of raising children. If you are building leadership you need to have a model for the children.

From experience, Adjoura has found that students who are bullies, or destructive already have strong leadership qualities but has had a difficult time finding how she can challenge their leadership qualities from negative actions to positive. As a group a consensus was come upon that you need to give the bullies responsibility, a purpose, something that will help hold them accountable. Beth mentioned a quote "What's the lowest kind of human being? A man without a purpose." She followed by saying that by giving bullies a purpose we can help provoke leadership within them.

Amy shared her experience as a cop and the importance of giving respect to receive it, "Working in the streets on a bad block with all drug dealers, respect is given and in return respect is received. It's also a matter of respecting each other, even if they aren't giving you respect, eventually they are going to learn to give it." This as Amy mentioned was something that

worked for with adults but is also something that will work with students within a school or after school session.

Along with respect between teachers and students, the respect between parents and teacher is very important. There are feelings that the neighborhood will never change, it's a cycle.

Jill shared her insight as a teacher and how fellow teachers are not respecting their students, "It is similar to a vicious cycle, teachers aren't giving students respect, so how can they expect that students will display respect."

Group members all felt very empowered by Lily Yeh, that the neighborhood was laughing at them and she was laughing. They felt that they can find their inner voice and have found their inner passion and are going to make their difference.

Jill presented a question on how she might be able to engage parents; Adjoura presented a method that worked at her school. "To gain more parental involvement, we thought about forming a parents club. Started it at the open house. Notified parents that the school might need parents assistance, to engage parents as a community to in the end help the students."

Jill mentioned that at her school parents have asked to have art taught to them? She also asked if one can get funding for after school resources for parent programs? Resources are not present, how do the students who live in impoverished communities function?

Conal mentioned that a good way to develop programs is to use the community schools initiative as a reference as a place to gain funds. After school programs involving alumni, parents, youth, etc. Developing a school as a community building not just an educational resource.

By providing art for kids, we can really help facilitate respect. It can be a great outlet for anxious, emotional students.

"If you really knew you'd know me..." And although lives are so difficult, using mentors are really useful.

Programs like After School Matters, is a very affective program, and are very willing to work with people. Teens within teen program were outside

Empowering students to take responsibility for their community as well. Being a leader to your own body, and how you can better yourself through your diet.

Fostering change within where you live. People came together to celebrate themselves and their communities that were positive. Kids are always hearing things that are negative and that takes away from encouragement. To focus on the positive is a better way to affect change.

Exposure to other cultures is very important, it brings individuals together as one race, the human race. Bringing cultural awareness to students can be processed through photographs, to see what happens in other communities. The idea of taking away race and color allows us to remove cultural differences that can really take away from leadership. The lack of cultural knowledge takes away from life experiences. Negative images that they take in on a daily basis result in Children defining their culture as negative.

Kids are not able to step out and see what they are doing. Kids do think about what they want to be. It varies from wanting to be a sports player. It's a very limited spoke, because what's modeled as what's available to them.

Possible ways of bringing youth together in a positive manner were presented. Possibly taking the youth outside of their everyday environment. Doing a project at another site might help bring the students together.

Students will initially come together in a neutral site, and then hold events there.

Betsy from the Umbrella project provided an example of an Umbrella made by umbrella participants to the table participants, the umbrella is not about the individual it is a group effort!

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