

Raising a Barn

- A Service Learning Project -

A Presentation by:

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Introductions

- Jeffrey Kerswill
 - Residence Life Coordinator at the University of Calgary
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 - Volunteer Coordinator for McMan Youth, Family and Community Services)

What We Will Cover

- Introduction of Community Impact
- Steps to building a community service program
- Working with a community partner
- Questions and Answers
- Group Brainstorming and Sharing of information

Goals of this Session

- Present a working model of a Service Learning Program
- Discussion around what you may be doing on your campus...
- Providing the perspective of a Community Partner

Community Impact

- Basis of Group
 - A group primarily comprised of Community Advisors (RAs)
 - A small number of residence students at large
 - Ever changing population of McMan clients
- The McMan / U of C Partnership
 - We are in our first year of our partnership

Community Impact

- Why Build a Service Learning Program?
 - - "a chance to help out and give back to different groups of people who are less fortunate than ourselves"
 - - "I felt that I wanted to contribute, even if it was in a small way"
 - - "I wanted to step out of my comfort zone, my own sheltered life, and see what the world really is- the reality"

McMan Youth, Family & Community Services

- *Last summer, we identified McMan Youth, Family & Community Services as a community partner that would provide our students with many different opportunities.*
- *Some background information on McMan*
- *“To support and encourage individuals and families to achieve their full potential as contributing members of their community.”*
- *Provincial wide organization with head office in Edmonton*

McMan - continued

- *Provincial Not for profit organization established 30 years ago*
- *Calgary branch has been established for 25 years*
- *Calgary branch has over 70 full time employees providing services to 3000 youth and their families through 14 different programs.*
- *Third largest youth serving organization in Calgary*
- *No geographic boundaries for the City of Calgary – youth and families may access services while residing in Airdrie, Cochrane, Okotoks, and Strathmore.*

Community Impact

- **A list of opportunities:**
 - Homeless Awareness Week – volunteers chaired roundtable discussion
 - Protection of Children involved in Prostitution (PCHiP)
 - Winter Gear Up Event
 - Collected Jackets to be donated for youth experiencing homelessness
 - Client Holiday Party
 - Community Kitchen outings
 - Positive communications
 - Parent Child Assistance Program

Raising the Barn – building a service learning project with a community partner

- **Four main components:**
 - Foundation (your student population)
 - Structural Support (programming models)
 - Walls (inclusion of Community Partner)
 - Roof (overall conclusion)

Foundation

- Student populations
- What issues are prominent to your students
- Are there exciting programs that could include community partners
- Paraprofessional Staff

Challenges of Engaging Students/Student Leaders

Brainstorming!!!

In groups take a few minutes to discuss what challenges you foresee in engaging the many different student populations in Service Learning Opportunities

Structural Support

- Programming models/requirements
- Increasing awareness about issues facing today's youth and their communities
- Paraprofessionals

Lets talk about your institutions

- In your group discuss your own institution:
 - Service learning project or programs
 - What has worked or not worked
 - Student populations
 - What do you see as key issues for your students

This is a chance to share your ideas with your peers on Service Learning!!!

Installation of the Walls

- The inclusion of the walls:
 - - *Introduction of Community Partner(s)*
 - - *Development of Relationships*

Advantages of Working with a Community Partner

- *Volunteers are able to gain skills and knowledge*
- *Flexibility of program – willingness to try new activities and offer resources*
- *Creativity of program – willing to bend to the needs of Community Impact Program*
- *Community Services Learning is friendly – willing to offer ongoing opportunities for the volunteers to continue volunteering if they are interested*
- *Resource rich – grassroots organization*
- *Volunteer recruiting/commencement – needed to be altered to allow a group*
- *The skills gained from their service learning*
- *experiences are transferable in developing programs for their fellow students*

Advantages continued

- *Developing student advocates for issues they are passionate about*
- *McMan did not need to change to accommodate needs of Community Impact Program*
- *McMan was more than willing to develop a relationship and offer support to further opportunities.*
- *Created an opportunity of education and awareness of issues pertaining to Calgary and youth*
- *experiencing issues in Calgary*
- *Created a future list of volunteers and/or donors*
- *Created an opportunity for further community development*

Some struggles of working with a Community Partner

- *Working continuously with a flexible schedule - Events can change or be cancelled on late notice*
- *Limited financial support*
- *The need for Police checks limited the amount of activities group could be involved with and when opportunities could occur*
- *Limited space for volunteers dependent on the opportunity*
- *Balancing working with an off-campus services*

Choosing your Community Partner

- *In looking to choose your community partner(s), here is a list of possible constraints that should be considered:*
- *flexibility, commitment to student development, a willingness to work within the constraints of risk management, will your students and their clients both gain from their experiences, communication with a point person, are there constraints attached to the organization (sex specific, religious ideals, language barriers, etc...), commitment beyond 8 month period, able to provide students a variety of different experiences, etc...*

Installing the Roof

- *Providing students with a self guided service learning with Community Partner(s)*
- *Developed sense of community beyond ones campus*
- *Helping students and the community gain from their experiences in hopes of developing a stronger sense of citizenship*

This presentation as a whole reflects :

- *a growing opportunity for Residence Professionals in developing our students/paraprofessionals with a programming model that allows open interactions and self guidance. In looking at what students are seeking in residence programs, opportunities such as Community Impact allows students an opportunity to be apart of a something that focuses on service learning and beyond in allowing students the ability to formulate what it is that they are interested in becoming involved in both on campus and off campus.*