



Caring for Animals Kindergarten Service Learning Project

**Oneonta City Schools
with participation from local veterinarians and the SPCA
2006 – 2007 School Year**

Project Goals

- Provide a leadership role in the community for kindergarteners
- Collect needed items for local animal shelters throughout the school year
- Create an ongoing developmental dialogue with local shelters to assess needs
- Create cross-curricular units based on the service learning project
- Stimulate community involvement
 - Inform the school community and the larger community of the project needs and how they can help
 - Make the community aware of the students' project so community members bring donations to the students throughout the year
 - Work with other students and teachers in the district.
- Create a service learning leadership experience as a foundation for service learning leadership projects in future grades.

Animals

Kindergarten teachers identified animals as a wonderful point of departure for a service learning project for kindergarteners.

Leadership and Service

Leadership and service learning is strengthened by collecting items all year long. The goal, as with all service learning projects, is to develop a long term relationship with community based organizations. Students and community members come to know over time that kindergarteners are managing donations. The inclusion of our youth strengthens our communities on a comprehensive level.

Project Description

Kindergarteners:

- Learn how animals are cared for from local veterinarians and SPCA staff and what is needed to continue to care for animals in our community
- Mount a school and community wide collection of supplies identified by local organizations managing the needs of animals without current homes. The project continues throughout the school year, culminating in a school wide assembly to honor the work of the kindergarteners. From year to year, kindergarten teachers work together with local organizations, developing a dialogue to create a dependable flow of needed supplies while providing a well developed leadership experience for the kindergarteners.
- Engage in cross-curricular units, reading about animals, making dog biscuits, cat nip toys, creating diagrams and tracking donations.

Project Components

- Visit with local animal welfare organization (SPCA was our local organization)
- Visit with local veterinarian
- Ingredients and supplies to make dog biscuits and catnip toys

SPCA Perspective: “terrific project”

- In 2003, SPCA representatives came to Greater Plains to visit with kindergarteners in the classroom





Volunteers from the local SPCA talked with students about pet adoption and their organization's needs.

Students were given the opportunity to interact with pets who are in need of good homes in the community.



After a district wide group presentation, the SPCA suggested:

- The children should come to the SPCA. We can handle a maximum of 20 with an adult for each 5 children.
- They would be broken into two groups to hear about different aspects of our operation.
- An hour is about the maximum for kindergartners' attention span.
- An hour would be good - 1/2 hour for each group and then they would switch.

Visiting the Veterinary Clinic





Interacting with animals at the veterinary clinic





X-rays come to life on the screen giving students a new view of the pets they love at home.

Having clean teeth is important for our pets, too!



New York state police officer brings
police dog "Pit" for a visit.
There are 75 police dogs in New York state.



All police dogs are named after policemen.
Pit has been with me for 5 years and
she practices her training routines everyday.
She lives with me and goes everywhere I go,
even out to dinner!

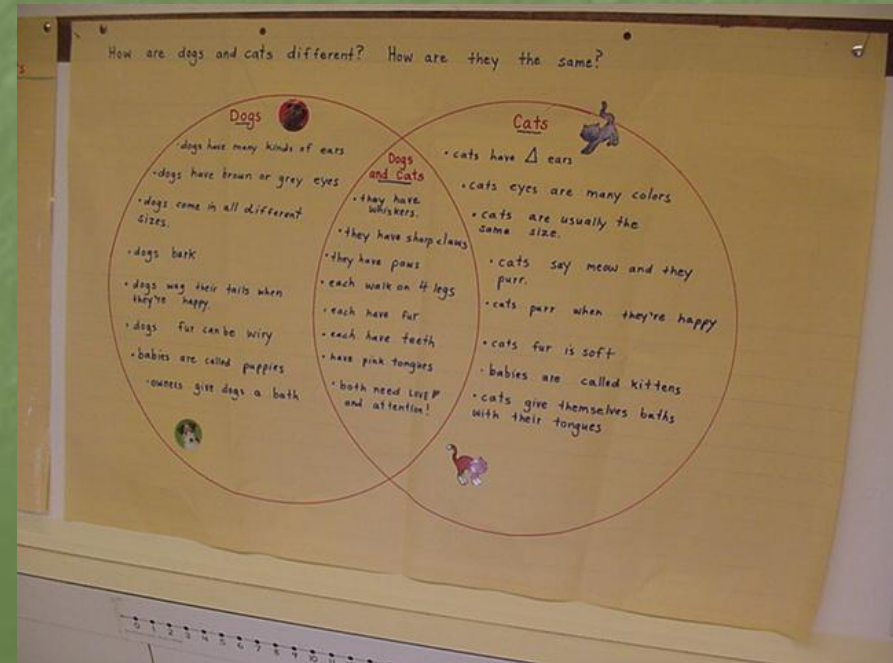
Pit has a
badge
and a bullet
proof vest.





Students express what they've learned about dogs through art.

Students are able to compare and contrast what they learned about cats and dogs.

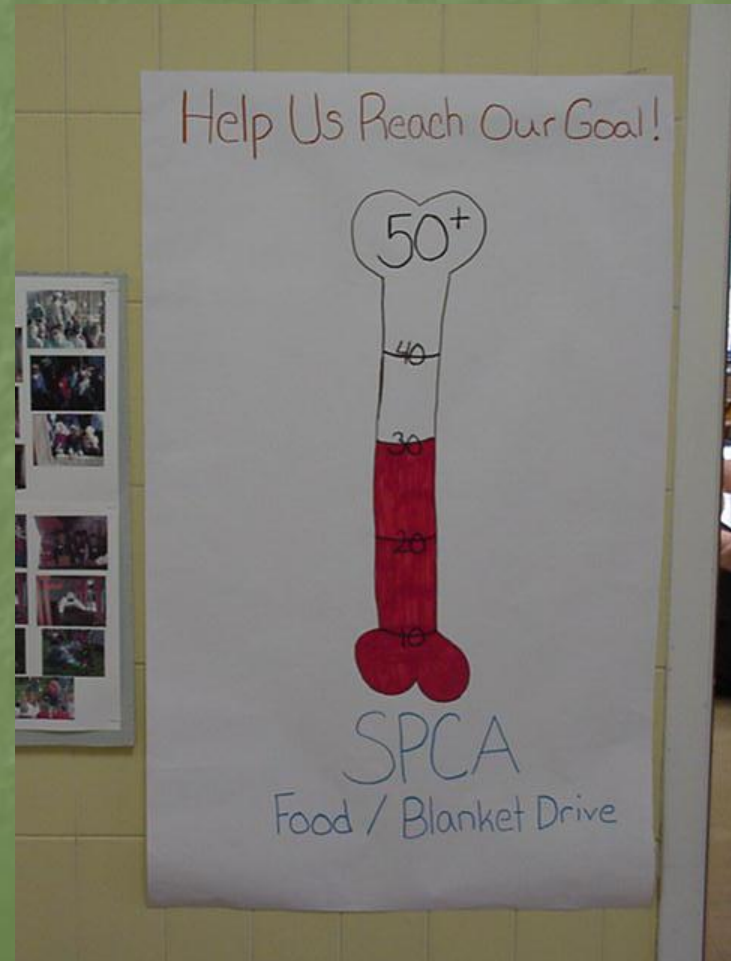


Animals at Home



Items for Donation

- Blankets
- Food
- Leashes
- Collars
- Clorox

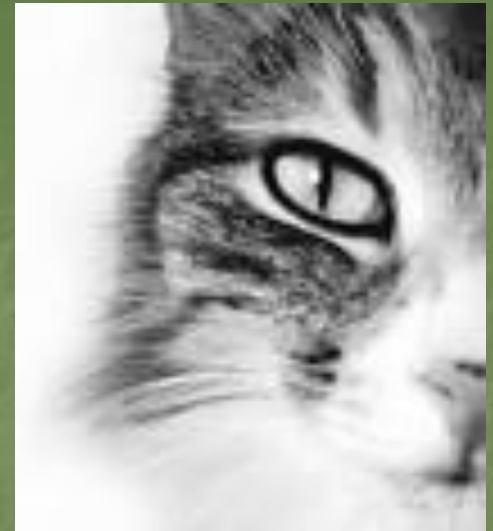




Students take action setting goals with a donation box in the school to help collect supplies for the local SPCA.



Preparation



- SPCA representatives speak to the class about dog safety, how to greet a dog, kindness to animals, and the role of the SPCA in our community.
- A visit to the local veterinarian's includes observing an animal health examination, viewing x-rays and information about the work that veterinarians do in our community for farm animals and pets.
- Other locally available presentations are scheduled as well.
- Fiction and non-fiction books are used to research dogs and cats, followed with the creation of a fact bulletin board.

Action



- The Kindergarten classes collect blankets and towels for the animal shelter.
- Dog biscuits and catnip bags are made as gifts for animals in the shelter.
- Kindergarteners partner with second grade students, writing letters asking local hotels for worn out blankets and towels.
- Students continue to partner in creating posters and writing letters to parents requesting blankets and towels, and cat and dog food, creating a school wide blanket/food drive for cats and dogs.

Reflection



- Group discussion takes place throughout that focuses on the outcomes of the giving the students are doing and the help they are bringing to their community by supporting animals waiting for a new home.
- Students write stories and draw pictures about animals and how to care for them. Students write about how they feel giving the blankets and food and how the animals might feel when they receive the donations.
- Graphing helps to strengthen awareness of these outcomes. Graphing activities include picture graphs of pets students have at home, a graph to track the amount of food collected and a Venn diagram to compare and contrast differences and similarities between cats and dogs.

Celebration



- The local newspapers are informed of this project to further celebrate the work accomplished by the students.
- A flyer is created for parents to learn about the outcomes of the project and how they can continue to support the local SPCA.
- At a school wide assembly students:
 - Describe the project
 - Share reflection excerpts
 - Give the donations to a representative from the SPCA.
 - Students help carry items to the car for the staff from the SPCA

Disciplines Incorporated

- English/Language
- Arts
- Math
- Health/Safety



Time Line

- Trolley and OPT bus rides to see the community
- Send letter home to the parents informing them about our project and requesting video/photography permission.
- Visit SPCA. The role of the SPCA is discussed, animal responsibility and what the children can do to help them.
- Non-fiction and fiction books are used for researching cats and dogs. Fact bulletin board created.



- Visit to a local veterinary clinic
- Graphing activities
 - Picture graph about what pets the children have at home
 - Venn Diagram
- Kindergarten students paired up with a 2nd grade buddy to:
 - Make posters and write letters to the parents asking for cat/dog food and blankets/towels.
 - Write letters to area hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts establishments asking for gently use towels and blankets for the shelter.
 - Write stories about animals and how to care for them
 - Make collection boxes and put out for food/towel drive
 - Graph the food donations collected



- Make dog biscuits
- Sew catnip bags
- Reflection with 2nd grade buddies about:
 - How they felt about giving the animals food
 - How the animals might feel when they receive the food/towel donations
 - What they think about the project
- Flyer to parents to share the outcome of the project and how families can continue to help the SPCA
- Celebration
 - Share at school wide assembly and inform local newspaper of the event
 - SPCA representative comes to receive the food/blankets/towels
 - Children help to carry the collected donations to the car for the SPCA representative



Teacher Perspective

- Every year it gets easier and we expand to include more things. Now we are focusing on why animals are important. We're creating journals for the students to draw and write.
- Some of the children asked their friends to bring donations for the animals to their birthday parties as gifts.





Description Letter to Parents

Dear families,

The Kindergarten and 2nd grade classrooms are working together on a service learning project in conjunction with the SPCA and in association with the Oneonta Service Learning Project.

We will be collecting the following items for the Otsego County SPCA:

- Canned cat/dog food
- Bags of dry cat/dog food
- Gently used towels and blankets

Place your donation in the collection box located in your child's classroom anytime between November 10th and November 21st. Thank you for participating in this valuable learning experience!

Sincerely,





Photo Release Form

October 20, 2006

Dear Families:

The Kindergarten and Second grade classrooms will be working together on a service-learning project in conjunction with the SPCA, and in association with the Oneonta Service Learning Project. Our classes will be gathering items to donate to the animals staying in the SPCA shelter. We will have a representative from the SPCA come and talk to us on _____. The main focus will be animal responsibility, kindness to animals and the role of animal shelters in our community.

While participating in this activity, my child _____
may have his/her picture taken for the purposes of documenting,
publicizing and celebrating this service-learning activity.

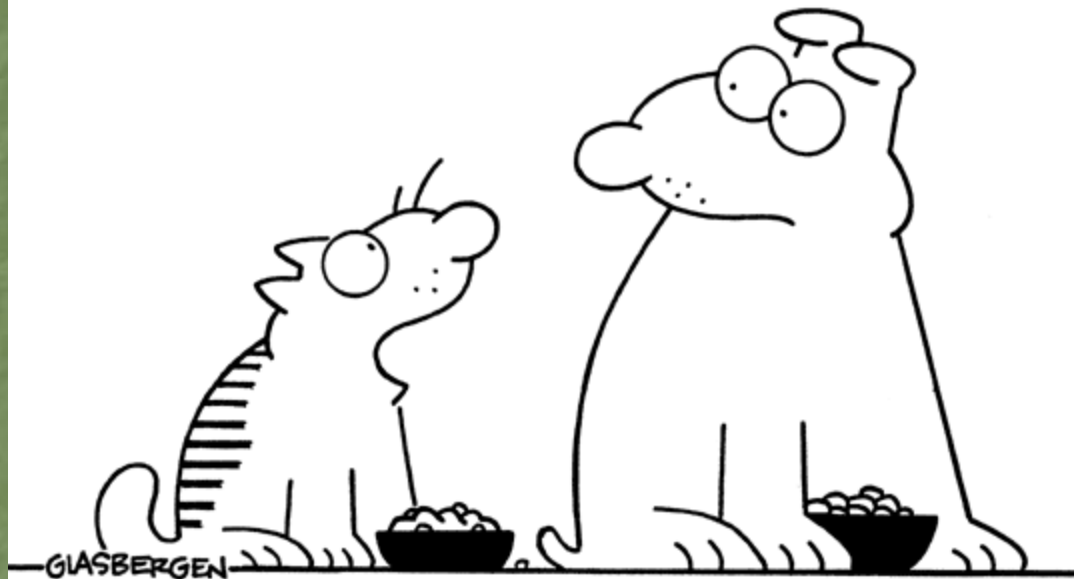
Signature of parent or guardian: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form signed to your child's classroom teacher.
Thank you!



Copyright 2003 by Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com



“The vet says i need a hobby. I thought eating and sleeping were my hobbies!”