

Overstreet Elementary Project Executive Summary

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PROJECT EXECUTIVE ITEM 1: Realized Project Summary and Benefit

Throughout this semester, our Aqua Pod went all in to volunteer at Overstreet Elementary School to help with the students. At the very beginning, it became apparent that everyone on our team had the desire to seek and help the students reach their own goals, and through Day One we were given the opportunity to do just that. We knew that we wanted to inspire the students academically with our project, but soon realized we wanted to go beyond that idea and open them up to a sense of diversity as well as an insight to acceptance. These plans eventually led us to the idea to have an international fair for the students. The goal was to teach the students of Overstreet Elementary School facts about the seven continents of the world and inspire them to accept the differences of others. We began to share this information with the teachers at the school and they were excited about the idea of giving the students a chance to learn information outside of the normal fifth-grade curriculum. Their biggest piece of advice for us was to make sure we understood that, indeed, we will be dealing with fifth graders and listing random facts to them would not keep their attention. We took this piece of advice and ran with it. Our team narrowed down the information we wanted to include to the categories of population, foods, landmarks, traditions, and animals. We figured that out of all the things one could discuss about the seven continents, these categories would be the best attention grabbers and the most interesting to know about for the students.

When the students finally got to experience our project, we could tell that for some of them they were just excited to be involved and share what they knew about the continents with us. For many of the students, we believed that this was the first time they were allowed to boast in their knowledge. We could tell that, even for just a short period of time, they felt accepted and acknowledged. During the entire semester, that was exactly what we wanted to instill in these students as a group. We wanted them to realize it was okay to be different, and that it was okay if they were not understanding things as easily as everyone else because they were not everyone else. They were their own individual self. As a team, we realized from the start that by helping these kids with something as simple as school work, we would be able to help them accept themselves and, in return, it would help them be able to accept others. Our project was the final key to harping on this idea and was proved successful when the kids openly and willingly participated. Throughout the semester, all of us have made an impact on at least one student at Overstreet Elementary School and we are humbled by the fact that we have been given the opportunity to do so. Overall we traveled 357 miles to have our team spread up among the subjects to be able to serve 231 fifth graders to the best of our abilities. We also accumulated 180 community service hours as a group.

PROJECT EXECUTIVE ITEM 2: Leadership Lessons Learned

At the beginning of the semester, we were paired up as one of the largest groups in Day One. Everyone was their own unique individual. This caused us to struggle some because everyone's mindset was not the same as the next person's. We had to adjust our options and work together as a team to figure out the common goal. Fusing our own individual talents together, the goal not only came together but it also worked cohesively. The greatest challenge of

all was working with our Community Partner. It became a complex task to accomplish our goal without interfering with the schedule of the school. We changed our date several times and struggled to figure out a schedule in which each class could come and have enough time to enjoy the fair. Fortunately, for every obstacle that we faced together, we would find an alternative solution to make things happen. We really strived to put forward our best because of how important the international fair was to us. It even came down to us sacrificing our free time to work through our issues, meet with each other outside of class, and carpool trips to get supplies we needed to satisfy our project. We have also sacrificed class time to carry out our project.

The greatest leadership lesson we learned was to speak up and take action when handling our responsibilities in order to accomplish a goal. We all were a bit shy at first when it came to our Community Partner. We then quickly realized that we needed them as much as they needed us. On top of that, there was complication within the group when some members were not on track like the rest of the team. Due to this, the team suffered for a short while; however, we picked the pieces up by addressing the person and group with positivity and encouragement. United and taking action as a team, our group handled our individual responsibilities and the common responsibility of lending a helping hand when it was needed. Another lesson we learned was to be better communicators as a group so there would not be any misunderstandings along with acknowledging the importance of precision and details. This was to insure perfection to a whole picture.