



# Summer Challenge

A Service Learning Project for Summer School

By Linda Edwards

## *Project Description*

A student-centered Service-Learning fundraising project provides the motivation for academic achievement during a three week summer school for children in grades 3-5.



## *Overview of Activities*

- Choose activities which will provide both academic review and challenge for a summer school program.
- Provide students and parents with a list of achievements and/or behaviors that will earn Edwards “dollars.”
- Choose a charity to support. Visit the facility with students and learn about its mission.
- Choose a fundraising activity each week and guide students as they implement.
- Guide students as they reflect upon academic accomplishments and empowerment to engender change in the community.

### Reading

Students each chose an independent reading book from the classroom library. Time was set aside each day for reading, which was supported by conferences with the teacher to monitor fluency, Accelerated Reader quizzes to monitor comprehension, book club each Friday to share passion and progress, and motivation to read at home each evening.

### Math

Activities designed to produce basic fact mastery and motivation to practice and improve. Daily trivia problems for challenge and a variety of math games for practice and fun including Zip Around, Bingo, Dominoes, Pentominoes, Tangrams and Blackjack!

### Science Labs

Weekly science themes were oceans, life science and earth science. Projects included making volcanoes, vocabulary skits, dissecting seeds and flowers, and investigations into ocean animals and habitats. Students kept journals that included challenge questions, predictions and observations.

### Computers

Computers were used to support all activities. Programs used included: Freerice.com to expand vocabulary skills, Traveler's IQ Challenge to broaden geographical competency, and Math Magician for math skill practice. They were also used to create fundraising flyers.

### Fundraising

Students chose Transition House as our fundraising focus. They visited and learned of a need for furnishings for a new sick room for children. Then they developed and implemented fundraising projects for each of the three weeks: Weeks one and two they organized bake sales, and week three, an ocean celebration with entertainment and refreshments. They kept track of fundraising progress with two posters that showed the furnishings which had been purchased and highlighted progress. These were prominently displayed at the front of our school where parents dropped off students each morning.



### Organizational Details

Each student had a wallet, and kept track of dollars earned for a variety of activities, all designed to promote academic achievement, community involvement and teamwork.

Parents were apprised of the project at the beginning of each week and encouraged to participate and support our efforts. At the end of each week, parents had the opportunity to match the “dollars” earned by their child with a donation to Transition House. They also baked, came to the bake sales and ocean celebration, and helped with driving.



### *Student Impact*

Students learned that they can make a difference in their community and their world. They learned that by working hard, both individually and collaboratively, they can realize a successful outcome and initiate positive change. In my experience, probably the most beneficial aspect of this project was the connection that students were able to make between classroom learning, which is often necessarily rigorous and grueling, and success in the real world. The project was a culmination of three weeks of hard work and learning, which translated successfully into exciting products. The students could see with their own eyes that their efforts had been worth the trouble. They basked in the realization that came from knowing they’d done a great job and the praise they most certainly deserved. In short, they were empowered. They had lived the saying, “Knowledge is power!”