

Service learning in Lutheran schools

Snapshot! Service learning stories from our schools Cornerstone College Mt Barker SA

Background

Cornerstone College is located at Mount Barker, South Australia. The College has approximately 750 students from year 8-12.

Context

Cornerstone uses the Developmental Assets (Search Institute) in their school. The following is a reflection of how the school views service learning and the thinking that has gone into how they have developed their service learning 'world view'.

Service learning at Cornerstone

It is difficult to get a definition of 'service learning' to which everyone would say 'Amen!' We (Cornerstone) have come to understand it learning about the plight of people in need, serving that need, and then reflecting on the experience and learning about one's self.

Whilst there are numerous positive outcomes from service learning, the more obvious are:

- Providing a sense of purpose and value – as youth contribute to society's genuine needs they see themselves as a valuable resource for their community.
- Building personal relationships between those serving, those being served and the one who leads the service. Whilst the service is important, it is the relationships which are developed that give youth a sense of value and a motivation to stay involved.
- Addictive involvement – research shows that when youth have multiple service learning experiences over time in a variety of contexts, it builds a sense of serving as a norm and they are therefore more likely to continue serving as adults.
- Building relationships with community – as the college sends students out into the community to serve needs, relationships between the college and sectors of the community are bound to positively develop.
- Building multiple assets – whilst service to others is just one of the Forty Developmental Assets, it opens the door to building upon many of the other assets, particularly in the categories of empowerment, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity.