

PowerUP Jax Fall 2016 Grant Winner

18. Cheryl Lemine

LaVilla School of the Arts

Subject/Grade: 6th Grade Beginning Creative Writing

Project Title: In Honor of Veterans - A booklet of freelance poetry

Summary of Project:

Summary: 6th grade beginning creative writing students use the power of original freelance poetry they write to focus on veterans and honoring them through its creation. What we do during the project: The multi-step project is the flagship effort of new students to LaVilla.

Step 1 – The Learning Phase: Guest speakers who are veterans come to class to meet students. Students learn about who veterans are, listen to the official theme song of each branch of government and they are encouraged to speak with family members and friends who have a military background.

Step 2 – The Writing Phase: Once students are familiar with the role of veterans, who they are their many sacrifices, students apply their recent knowledge about writing original freelance poetry and they each create such a work. Afterward, the poems are lengthened and strengthened through revision and editing.

Step 4 – The Publication & Distribution Phase: Each poem is then typed in a Word format and printed into a spiral bound booklet with color card stock covers. Afterward, the students host a Reading of Respect at school where veterans, friends and family members are invited. Students verbally present their poetry to the veterans who are also given a personal copy of the booklet to take with them. Why we need PowerUp! We are looking for additional sources to help increase our number of printed booklets from last year (2,000). We hope to do 2,500. This would help toward that cost.

How many students will be directly involved? Explain any further impact on other students, teachers, the school as a whole, and/or the community.

Thirty students are directly involved in the project.

Student impact: For those who are unfamiliar with veterans and who they are, this is their introduction and helps them to start seeing the world as a bigger place. For those who are from military families, it provides an opportunity for them to have purposeful conversations with other members – especially those who served – about their service.

Teacher impact: The Reading of Respect is hosted at the school in the Media Center. One of our assistant principals is a veteran as well as our drama teacher and a regular substitute teacher. A dedication page is contained in the booklet that recognizes veterans both living and not who are related to or friends of school faculty.

The school as a whole: While we have entertained the idea of having an assembly type presentation so more students could be involved, the smaller more intimate nature of meeting in the media center is both more comfortable for our students and those in attendance. We are open to ideas on how to grow the event without losing its personal touch.

The community/state/nation: Our department has worked with the Jacksonville Office of Veterans Affairs, Operation Gratitude, Jacksonville USO and several fire stations (many of whom have veterans on staff) to distribute booklets. Booklets are also available in our school office as well as by contacting me.

How will the project specifically increase student learning? Be sure to explain the project's connections to existing learning standards. Be clear about what new skills, knowledge, and/or dispositions the students will acquire.

Student learning is specifically increased in the following ways:

1. Students will develop knowledge of an accurate and realistic definition of veterans and begin to understand what it means to contribute to society and that for some people that means it becomes their life's work;
2. Students will also acquire knowledge and begin to realize the families also "serve" with their military members with sacrifices they – in turn – make whether it's being separated from one another for a period or time or adjusting to new environments/schools more often than the general public;
3. Students will connect the work to existing 6th grade writing standards such as but not limited to: developing, strengthening writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting or trying a new approach (LAFS.K12.W.2.5); research to build existing knowledge (LAFS.K12.W.3.7); and produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (LAFS.K12.W.2.4 – all listed on www.cpalms.org)
4. Students will acquire new skills such as synthesizing what they learn and boiling it down into a meaningful message with above level and creative vocabulary;

5. Students will not only develop the creative piece of work they are required to read/present it to the group attending the Reading of Respect event, which is held annually near Veterans Day.

What is your plan for evaluating the success of your project? What artifacts (photographs, samples of student work, testimonials, etc...) would you use to demonstrate the effectiveness of the project?

To evaluate the project's success, we will provide photos of the event showing students presenting and then several of veterans speaking with the students. Copies of the booklet will be provided and will include the work of all the students. The booklet may possibly have a letter or two from previous attendees about how the event and poetry affect them. We would also aim for complete booklet distribution locally, nationally and internationally.