

Project 'Viking Giving Tree'



Head, Heart, and Hands of Viking Giving Trees was a collaborative project in Georgia's Lowndes County Schools (Viking) that involved State Representative Mrs. Amy Carter's Teaching As A Profession (TAAP) students (Lowndes High School) as well as Mrs. Joy Cowart's (Hahira Middle School and Lowndes High School) and Mrs. Kay Retterbushes' (Westside Elementary School) English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. This project was funded thanks to a *GreenWorks!* Grant through Project Learning Tree (PLT).



This project was full of PLT activities which were delivered to high school and middle school ESOL students and to high school level TAAP Students. PLT activities included the following: Water Wonders, Every Tree For Itself, To Be A Tree, Tree Factory, Making Paper, and Trees For Many Reasons. Children's books such as *The Tree Farmer* and *The Giving Tree* were incorporated into the lessons.

A school beautification project was incorporated into a community service component for this project. ESOL students at Hahira Middle School and Lowndes High School worked to improve flower beds at each school. Cleaning out the weeds and digging up all the unwanted plant material in both sites was rather challenging. However, the finished products have improved both areas significantly.

Another component of this project involved a day of fun at Westside Elementary School. High school students were able to impact younger children at our Project Viking Giving Tree Reading Celebration. Every student had a buddy. High school students in the TAAP class led the elementary children in participation of the following PLT activities: Making Paper, Tree Factory and Every Tree for Itself. High school students in both Mrs. Cowart's and Mrs. Carter's classes also wrote a special book for each elementary child, and they read to the younger children at this event. Each elementary child received a special book written just for them. The reading celebration concluded with a special reading of *The Giving Tree*.

Following the reading celebration, the high school students went to Home Depot. They participated in a tour and a scavenger hunt and learned about different types of soil, grass seeds, and potted plants. Then they each planted their own flowers in terracotta pots. Mrs. Kris Cantrell, the Dept. Head for Home Depot's Nursery and Mrs. Pam McGinnis, local representative for Scotts Soils, provided the students with an outdoor learning experience.

Several community partners were involved in this project. Mrs. Barbara Boler from Langdale Woodlands assisted with lessons.

Mr. Jamie Pitts from Packing Corporation of America assisted with lessons. Partial donations of flowers and straw were made by B & B Plants and another local family. Mr. James Watson from Printing and Graphics at Lowndes High School gave us his time to assist with printing some of the students' products. Helen Lee, horticulture student from Wiregrass College and retired Lowndes County School teacher, gave us ideas for what



to plant in the areas. The Lowndes High School TAAP gave of their time to assist with writing projects and the celebration. Last but not least, the Hahira Public Librarian, Mrs. Janet Register, was very generous with book loans and searches throughout the state to find the books we requested.

TAAP Students said:

-This was a great learning experience because I learned a lot of different activities that I could do with my kids in a class. I feel I impacted the elementary students by helping them with these activities and by becoming their friend. (Miranda)

-It was awesome. I would love to use some of these activities in my classroom. They really make it fun...I love Mrs. Cowart and her ESOL students. (Meaghan)

-I impacted others by helping them learn about trees and what they need to grow. I tried to make it as fun as possible. (Roxie)

ESOL Students said:

-It was very helpful in my reading, speaking, and writing. I wrote a story for a child who was an ESOL student as well. I read my story to her. I had to speak with her in English. It was fabulous. My little girl and I had a great time together. (Moxa)

-I think my writing skills got better because we wrote a lot of paragraphs about trees. (Sun)

-I was impacted because I had to speak more English. (Pierre)

Others said:

-It was a great day. The activities were well organized. (Barbara)

-I would love for this collaboration between schools to continue. The high school students were so involved with their buddies. It was a great day for learning and building relationships. (Mrs. Retterbush)

GreenWorks! Is a program of Project Learning Tree www.plt.org. For more information about Georgia Project Learning Tree go to www.GeorgiaPLT.org