

2008-09 EL Civics Making a Difference in the Community Awards

A key focus of the California English Literacy and Civics Education (EL Civics) program is for adult students to acquire the language and literacy skills to become citizens, exercise the rights and duties of citizenship, and enrich the communities in which they live. This award recognizes EL Civics programs that teach skills required for citizenship and empower students to make a difference in the community. CASAS, in conjunction with the California Department of Education, identifies programs that make a difference in the community through EL Civics lessons and activities. To be recognized as a Making a Difference Award recipient, agencies must meet specific data collection criteria, document the effectiveness of their project, and show that the project goes beyond the classroom to affect the community in a positive manner. The following agencies have been selected as the 2008-09 EL Civics Making a Difference in the Community Award recipients:



EL Civics students and staff from North Orange County CCD gather for a group picture and proudly display their employment soft skills website. This website contains information gathered by students, and outlines valuable skills necessary for workplace success..

Corona-Norco Adult School- Corona Community Free Health Screening Camp: The Corona Community Free Health Screening Camp provides free medical information and screening tests to uninsured or underinsured people in the community. Since the Health Camp's inception in 2003, approximately 4,700 adults, teens, parents and children have received medical screenings (vision, hearing, prostate, cholesterol, diabetes, mammograms, blood pressure, children's immunizations, etc.) that they would not have received without this event. This health screening camp gives adult learners the opportunity to participate in a community event and learn more about the health care system. Students organize event logistics, recruit volunteers, contact health care professionals, advertise the event in the community, and participate in a follow-up survey. This health screening camp not only helps Corona-Norco's ESL students to learn more about the health care system, but also provides a very valuable service to the entire community. The success of this program can be measured by student feedback and performance data. During the 2009 Health Screening Camp, 81% of the follow-up survey respondents received all necessary medical care, 86% of respondents reported that their children received all necessary medical care, 98% of respondents stated that they were treated professionally and with respect, and 86% stated that they would definitely attend another Health Camp. In addition, there was a 97% Additional Assessment pass rate among the 700 students in EL Civics classes in 2007-08. The health screening camp provides necessary services to those in the Corona community, and the strong collaborations between the Adult School and other community organizations help to make the event a success.

North Orange Community College District- Knowledge in Action: US Workplace Expectations and Soft Skills: North Orange County CCD has implemented a program to address the importance of workplace "soft skills". These are practical skills needed for on-the-job success, such as arriving to work on time, following directions, managing time efficiently, and being a fast learner. North Orange County CCD's "Knowledge in Action" program is made up of two parts- sharing knowledge about soft skills and applying that knowledge in the workplace. For the first part of the program (sharing knowledge about soft skills), ESL students researched workplace soft skills and created presentations. They shared their presentations with fellow students and made fliers listing important workplace soft skills to share with the community.

A soft skills website was created for students to post their research (www.softskills.wikispaces.com). For the second part of this project (applying the knowledge about soft skills at work), students came up with plans to improve their on-the-job performance, and practiced soft skills at their workplaces. This program has given students valuable skills to help them succeed at their current job or to obtain a better job. North Orange County CCD has seen increased persistence between 2006-07 (56%) and 2007-08 (58%), and 100% of the students passed the EL Civics Additional Assessment related to this project. In addition, 98% of the students polled after participating in this program said that they learned how to be a better employee and that they will use their new skills in the workplace. North Orange County CCD's "Knowledge in Action" project taught adult learners about valuable on-the-job skills, and because the students shared their knowledge with others, the benefits of this project have extended outside of the classroom and into the community.

Old Marshall Adult School (Sacramento City Unified School District) - Multi-Cultural Health Fair:

Old Marshall Adult School's Multi-Cultural Health Fair, which started in 2005, is an event planned and executed by the school's staff and students. This project teaches students, their families, and the community about important health-related topics. At the event, community members and organizations host workshops related to healthy lifestyles. These workshops are provided in a variety of languages (Spanish, Hmong, Vietnamese, etc.) and cover topics such as childhood obesity, asthma, health insurance access, and lead poisoning prevention. To plan the event, EL Civics students survey their peers for workshop ideas and ask community agencies and individuals for their participation. Students set up classrooms for the workshops, organize the workshop schedule, and usher presenters during the event. This event relies heavily upon collaboration with community members, who volunteer their time and resources. The multi-cultural health fair has produced valuable results and has improved the lives of Old Marshall students and the surrounding community. In 2007-08, Old Marshall Adult School exceeded California state performance averages in 5 out of 6 ESL instructional levels, and 90 of the EL Civics students that participated in the health fair passed an Additional Assessment. Aside from high student performance, the health fair was able to provide basic health care services to those in attendance. Students from the Charles A. Jones' Skills Center provided free blood glucose testing and blood pressure screening, and those with abnormal results were given the resources to follow-up with a physician. Because the workshops were administered in a variety of languages, attendees with little to no English skills were still able to participate and learn. This project has gone beyond the classroom to help those in the community, and has led to valuable partnerships with community organizations.



Above: At Old Marshall Adult School's Multi-Cultural Health Fair, participants received valuable blood pressure screening tests. At the Health Fair, participants were also able to attend workshops presented by community members on a variety of health-related topics.