

Evaluation

The film, "Affluenza" was not effective for our population. It might be used as a 5 minute intro/set induction.

The project generated tremendous excitement among the librarians, public speaking teachers, and the vast majority of students. The same skills that had been taught in previous years were covered. Students brought more commitment and passion to their speech than when they were speaking about political issues such as pro-choice/abortion, drinking age, etc.

The time in the library was well spent. The work of the librarian in conveying criteria/ things to look for was very helpful. The librarians put up a bulletin board in support of the project, which helped spread the enthusiasm.

The appearance of the donor was a good idea, but we were not sure of its outcome. It may need to take more time for the students to really "get" the idea that someone cared about this education so much, that they donated toward it. We still need to think this through to do it more effectively.

One unexpected outcome was the sense of community, or intimacy that occurred when a student elected to share some personal anecdote or connection to the charity. Students shared information of ultimate significance: explaining their choice of the American Heart Association because all the grandparents had died of heart disease; sharing an anecdote about their autistic cousin to introduce their charity that helps such children.

Another unexpected outcome was the opportunity to acknowledge, and memorialize the recent loss that one student had. His father had died very recently, and the student chose to speak about a connected charity. This brave young man was embraced by his class; and many students donated either to that charity, and/or in memory of the father.

One change we would attempt: to more consistently encourage students to link the donation with honoring someone or memorializing. This is an important aspect of charity, and it is one the children have not yet experienced.

Overall, the unit was much more successful in a wide variety of way than we could have ever expected.