THE EDUCATION FUND

FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Ideas with
IMPACT

UNLEASH YOUR INNER SUPERHERO AND SAVE THE DAY FOR OUR FURRY FRIENDS AT THE ANIMAL SHELTER!

SUPER HERO

CRAFTING FOR HOPE! A RESILIENCY PROJECT

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Table of Contents

Goals and Objectives

A Little Background information

In 2020, when much of the world shut down in response to Covid-19, a few positive things also happened. According to research, like the article published by World Economic Forum in January of 2021 titled **Lockdown led to positive change for some people. Here's Why**:

> "More than half the people we surveyed reported these changes for the better: being more appreciative of things usually taken for granted (reported by 83% of participants), having more time to do enjoyable things (by 67%), spending more time in nature or outdoors (by 65%), paying more attention to personal health (by 62%), doing more physical activity (by 54%) and spending more time with a partner or spouse (by 53%)."

Once people were required to stay home, a few fads began to emerge. Per People magazine, there was an increase in baking bread, using zoom, and fostering pets. In fact, 23 million U.S. households adopted a pet during the pandemic! However, once the lockdown restrictions were lifted, and people had to return to work away from home, many of those pets were returned to a shelter. In 2021, for the first time in five years, the number of dogs and cats euthanized in the U.S. actually increased. And that trend continued for 2022.

Miami Herald recently reported on how pet adoptions were popular at the start of the pandemic in 2020 - leading to record low number of pets in shelters. However, now in 2023, Miami-Dade's animal shelters are crowded again due to less adoptions and more animal surrenders. Many shelters are ill equipped and in need of volunteers and donations to be able to take care of the number of animals they now have.

Animal Shelters

The first animal shelter in the U.S. was established near Philadelphia by Caroline Earle White and a group of women activists in 1869. Since then, nearly every city in the U.S has at least one animal shelter. Animal shelters play a vital role in our community. Here is a list of some of the responsibilities overseen by animal shelters, as compiled by Richellusa.com:

Lost Connections Reestablished – Thousands of lost and injured pets are reunited with their owners through animal shelters each month. Pets often get loose and run away. Or they may become frightened and escape their confines and get taken in by city animal control agencies or turned in by citizens that see a loose animal. Animal shelters play a vital role in reestablishing these family connections and ease a lot of potential suffering by families.

Providing Opportunities for Best Friends – Many human-animal love connections have been developed thanks to animal shelters and rescue groups. Lifelong best friends have been established through the low-cost adoption of animals just waiting for a loving family to adopt them.

Stemming The Tide of Unwanted Animals – With their aggressive spay and neuter campaigns, outreach programs, in-house workshops, partnerships with local veterinarians, and low-cost voucher initiatives, animal shelters are leading communities in efforts to stem the tide of unwanted dogs and cats through being proactive instead of reactive.

Helping others to Learn and Grow – A wealth of knowledge and information awaits any visit to an animal shelter. With educational programs for kids and adults, hands-on opportunities to volunteer in the shelter, and opportunities to assist with marketing, social media or spreading information via word of mouth, there are many ways to learn and grow by visiting animal shelters.

Improving Pet Health - By providing excellent veterinary care for sheltered animals and referring pet parents to veterinarian clinics once they have adopted, animal shelters continue leading the way in improving pet health in communities.

Preventing Danger – Not all canines and felines are cut out to be "man's best friend". While most are great companions, some just aren't. They may have been abused, neglected or have been bred improperly. Or they may just have a disposition disorder. Therefore, some of these animals aren't fit to be in our communities and as such, pose a risk to the population. Animal control officers are tasked with the important job of removing these animals from the streets and transferring them to animal shelters so they don't pose a danger to society.

Assisting in a Disaster – When natural disasters hit, pet populations are affected too. There are many pets that get displaced during a tornado, hurricane, flood, earthquake or another natural disaster. Often the local animal shelter and rescue groups get inundated with animals looking for food and shelter. They are on the front line of rescue efforts to save pets and eventually reunite them again with their owners.

How Can Kids Help?

Just because children are young, does not mean they are incapable of helping out! By increasing understanding of the issues many animals and animal shelters are facing, students are increasingly inspired to do their part in raising money, raising awareness, and volunteering their time to this worthy cause.

Animal shelters play a vital role in keeping our pets and cities safe, educating the public and providing much needed resources for cities dealing with pet over populations. If it were a perfect world there wouldn't be a need for animal shelters, but until that time, the more support we can ALL give toward their efforts to save, shelter, reunite, adopt, improve animal health and educate the public, the easier it will be for animal shelters to realize their mission and help all animals.

Our Main Objective:

The final goal is to find a way to help our community by assisting dog shelters in raising money, raising awareness, and increasing volunteer numbers. By combining Financial Literacy skills, Resiliency education, and the visual arts, students will be able to create a non-profit business plan focused on selling their handmade crafts in an effort to reach a self-imposed monetary goal that will be donated to the local Humane Society.

Florida Standards

Social Studies Standards

SS.3.CG.2.1: Describe how citizens demonstrate civility, cooperation, volunteerism and other civic virtues. *Students will identify examples including, but not limited to, food drives, book drives, community clean-ups, voting, blood donation drives, volunteer fire departments and neighborhood watch programs.

SS.3.E.1.3: Recognize that buyers and sellers interact to exchange goods and services through the use of trade or money.

Resiliency Education Standards

MENTORSHIP & CITIZENSHIP: HE.3.R.3.2: Identify opportunities to volunteer or serve others in the school or community.

CHARACTER: HE.3.R.1.1: Identify skills needed when working with others. *Clarification: Listening, cooperating, taking turns, compromise.*

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: HR.3.R.2.4: Discuss how skills can be improved through hard work and perseverance.

Visual Art Standards

VA.3.F.3.1: Create artwork that communicates an awareness of events within the community.

VA.4.F.3.1: Create art to promote awareness of school and/or community concerns.

Overview of Project

Introduction: An Idea Sparks!

In 2022, I read an article in the Miami Herald that discussed how pet adoptions were popular at the start of the pandemic in 2020 - leading to record low number of pets in shelters. However, now in 2022/2023, Miami-Dade's animal shelters are crowded again due to less adoptions and more animal surrenders. Many shelters are ill equipped and in need of volunteers and donations to be able to take care of the number of animals they now have. This left me wanting to help find a solution that could involve my students - but how? I brought the problem up during a Social Studies discussion on civic involvement and students were quick to respond, "we can donate money"! Now the important question was, where do we get this money from? Once again, the students themselves were ready with solutions... most yelled out, "We can ask our parents to give"! "We can make things to sell!" shouted another one of my eager students. And thus, the idea evolved into a way to merge an interest in arts & crafts with citizenship & volunteerism. But to make it truly successful, we also had to include some financial literacy to help the students understand the basics of running a business.

Selecting a Cause

From the very beginning, my students wanted to support the dogs and cats of our community. Some students mentioned having adopted a pet from a local animal shelter called the **Humane Society of Greater Miami**. It was easy to find information online for the Humane Society of Greater Miami. They had a facebook page and a website (https://www.humanesocietymiami.org) that allowed for easy access to reach a contact for the organization. The website also provided

links and suggestions on ways to help their cause. While my students are still too young to be able to physically volunteer at the shelter, they were particularly excited about the "wish lists" linked to the website. Students could see individual items that the shelter needs and the current price via amazon.com, chewy.com, and cuddly.com to fulfill these items. Once contacted, the Humane Society offered to have a humane education speaker visit our school to share lessons about kindness to animals, empathy, responsible pet care, and the causes and results of pet overpopulation. Talk about a great way to get students interested!

Financial Literacy

Once students make an inventory of the items they want to be able to purchase from the "wish list", they have to calculate the total amount of money that will need to be collected. This would be the "Goal" and students would be responsible for keeping track of where we are on the path to reaching that goal. Students are given lessons on the importance of understanding the market – we must create items that people want, as well as the importance of price points and quality versus quantity. The students work on budgeting and understanding that any money spent on materials must be taken from money earned – which makes reaching a goal that much harder to do. The money first used for crafts can be collected as a fee of $10 for each student participating and/or by asking for the PTSA to purchase the materials needed for the beginning crafts – students would be given a budget and would need to select materials that will help them to create a profit that can go towards the final goal.

Resilience Education

Throughout the process, students will be supported by teachers and parent volunteers to help keep them focused and motivated. Resilience education will be included at the beginning of each meeting to impart the value of resiliency skills such as volunteerism, responsibility, and goal

setting. Resilience education will help students understand the value of these ideas, as they actively engage in activities and exercises that will prepare them to be upstanding, responsible citizens. Similar Growth Mindset concepts will be embedded in the meetings as well.

Crafts

Students will work together to decide on best crafts for the purpose of selling and making money at school. Ideas such as stickers, bracelets, charms, earrings, keychains, and shirts are popular amongst students and faculty. The materials needed to make items such as those listed can be fairly cheap, and the construction does not require mastery of skills or years of experience. Many students have already done crafts like those listed and may be able to lead in demonstrating and teaching others to do it. Some students can also watch free online tutorials to learn. Students also needed to work on advertising by making posters and flyers for the craft sale. Posters may also be created to raise awareness of the animal shelter's needs for supplies, volunteers, and to increase pet adoptions.

What Students Gain By Giving

Throughout this project, students gain a wonderful understanding of the importance of civic responsibility and empathy for others. They show leadership as they bring ideas and teach each other the skills they have learned through their own individual experiences. They practice using problem solving and critical thinking skills when faced with adversity or set backs. The students learn life-long skills of working together for a main cause and the value that their hard work can bring to their community. They will find in themselves a sense of pride in their ability to contribute, and the understanding that they are part of a greater community (not alone). Each student is important and together there is so much they can accomplish! But that's not all...

An article published in 2014 in the International Journal of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education found Quantitative analyses that revealed statistically significant gains in literacy skills, and consistently observed high levels of student engagement when art was involved in the lesson. More recent studies continue to further prove these findings across curriculums. By providing students an opportunity to create and use their imagination, aligned with a mission/goal to help their community - I expect this project to increase student engagement and motivation in school, which leads to increased test scores in reading and math.

Profitable Craft Ideas for Students

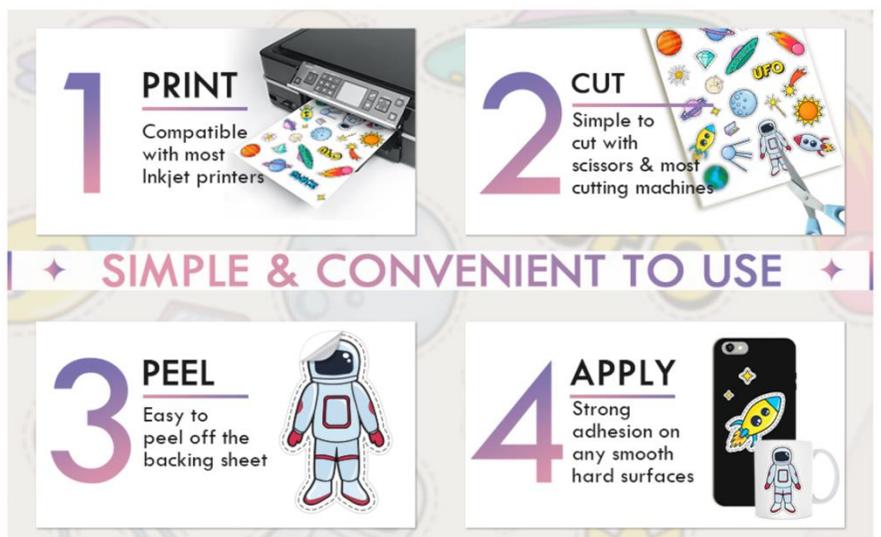Attached are ideas for crafts that fit the following criteria:

- Materials required are few and/or inexpensive.

- Materials are easy to use and manipulate by students.

- Craft does not require much time to complete.

- Tutorials can be found easily online.

- Can be sold for much more than the worth of the materials.

Personalized Stickers:

All that is needed is special sticker paper, access to a computer, and a printer.

Students can use online art programs to design their own stickers, print, cut, and sell.

I recommend: Koala Printable Vinyl Sticker Paper for Inkjet Printers – 20 Sheets Glossy White Waterproof Adhesive Label Paper – 8.5x11 inch, tear-resistant, removable – Only 9.99 on Amazon.com.

Hand-made Charms, Stud Earrings, & Lanyard Beads:

All that is needed is polymer clay and a few tools, access to a small toaster oven.

Students can sculpt, cut out shapes, or mix colors together to create small charms that can be used as charms, beads, or earrings.

I recommend: Sculpey Souffle Polymer Oven-Bake Clay, 12 color set, Non Toxic, 10.8 oz. – only $14.99 on Amazon.com.

Bo...

All that is needed is special Shrinky-Dink paper, access to a sm...

Students can draw and color in their own designs, bake it, and cut it out to place on a keychain or as hanging earrings.

I recommend: 213 Pieces Shrink Plastic Sheets Keychain Kit, Includes 20 Shrinky Art Paper Film Sheets, Colorful Markers, Key Chains Accessories, Ear Hooks, Tassels only $18.98 on Amazon.com.

Custom Shirts & Tote Bags:

VERSION 1: Iron on design for individual shirts

All that is needed is special iron on paper, access to printer, assistance with iron, shirts.

Students can draw and color or print out their own design on the special iron-on paper, cut it out, and then have it ironed onto a shirt.

I recommend: PPD Inkjet PREMIUM Iron-On Dark T-Shirt Transfers Paper LTR 8.5x11" pack of 10 sheets only $10.99 on Amazon.com.

VERSION 2: Screen printing to make multiple shirts

All that is needed is a Screen-printing kit, shirts. The kit is expensive but can be used a lot.

Students can draw a design on the screen using drawing fluid and blocker, utilize different colors with squeegee to print the picture through the screen, allow shirt to dry and then have it ironed to bake design in permanently.

I recommend: Speedball Intermediate Kit for Screen Printing, Include Screen, Squeegee, Ink, etc only $54.99 on Amazon.com.

Adaptability

- Components of this project can be modified to be used as part of a class project across multiple grade levels – from elementary to high school!

- Students can choose from so many worthy causes to raise money for. For example: Toy drives, food drives, to collect or purchase items for local shelters or to fund special activities for younger children, elder adults, or students with disabilities.

- This can also be a way for After school clubs to fundraise for specialized equipment or other club or school needs.

- Crafts that were shared were mostly focused on our project to help our local animal shelter. However, crafts can also be themed to encapsulate school spirit with school colors or the school mascot as the main subject.

- Crafts can also be modified to coincide with special holidays or events. For example: Christmas/Hannukah themes, Mother's Day, or Valentine's Day!

- Older students may be able to use technology to increase their sales by utilizing sites like etsy and tiktok or Instagram to advertise their crafts and bring increased awareness to their cause.

Resources

<u>Youtube:</u>

Links to tutorial videos for the different craft ideas

How I Make Stickers Using Procreate & Cricut to Make Stickers Tutorial:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agmXAbmcoSE

Puppy earrings / stud earrings / polymer clay tutorial / earrings:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cACKI_ZGz7o

DIY How to Make Your Own Earring / Shrinky Dink Tutorial:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tnBUgV4xYs

(How To Use) Iron-on Heat Transfer Paper

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1z_lzjlU8k

How to Use Speedball Screen Print Materials

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lE9loi8E8fY

<u>Instagram:</u>

Great influencers to follow for crafting ideas:

@marshmallow.avenue

@sprinkleofclay_

@whattacharmer

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