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### Capstone: Process Paper

A Senior Capstone is supposed to represent the entirety of a student's education at SLA in connection with his or her own personal interests. For my capstone I created a service club based inside of SLA called the SLA: Community Involvement Club. The framework of this would include two main parts. The first were two meetings a week, one for each lunch (X and Y), where I would teach leadership skills and discuss issues on the local and global scales. The other part was planning monthly service projects for members and volunteers from across the city to attend. I chose this project because I knew there was a strong community service culture in SLA that only needed organization to grow. Additionally the previous service club had disbanded and there was a hole that I knew I wanted to fill. Volunteer service had a big impact on my time at SLA and I wanted to give others that chance as well.

The core values appeared many times in the process of completing my capstone. Inquiry was essential to the initial planning, asking myself "How do I want this to look?" and "What is our goal?" Planning and considering what I could handle and how could I push myself, while keeping a realistic handle on what I could accomplish continued to change during the course of the year. The next step was research. This came in the form of talking to other service leaders in the Philadelphia area, as well as looking up information to teach in lessons. Many of my sources were organizations that I learned about to teach the members in the club as well as cool activities to do for workshops and fundraisers. The social nature of volunteering and community service makes collaboration essential. I had to work with students in my school in order to make my

project work. Additionally I wanted to extend this to create a bigger impact on Philadelphia. I knew previously that other service clubs in Philadelphia public schools were being closed. In response to that I reached out to students in these schools (J.R. Masterman and Central High) and invited them to the projects I planned. Many portions of my project required weekly planning, with Thursday usually being the day of the meetings. I documented meetings and projects with photos and kept a log of volunteer hours. As an incentive volunteers were told if they completed more than 100 hours they could receive the Presidents Award for Volunteer Service. Finally as part of my reflection I keep a journal that I updated every month.

Steps I took to complete my capstone started with establishing the format. I was part of the previous service club so I followed their style of educational meetings with service projects on the weekend. This required multiple conversations with Ms. Manuel who has acted as voluntary service coordinator in SLA. We'd meet once a month to plan future meetings and plans for the weeks that month. Then each week I would research the topic for that week 's meeting and any future volunteer opportunities. For service projects I would contact a member in that organization and then ask if they were interested in a group of students volunteering. Then I would introduce the project to students in the club and on Facebook. Near the second half of the year I wanted to start teaching leadership, to do this I walked members through this very process where some even made their own service projects. This was to help them take charge and be prepared for next year if they wanted to continue the club.

There were several obstacles that I had to overcome. My biggest hardship was balancing my other homework with my Capstone work. When my workload in other classes demanded more attention from me, my capstone usually got less. This meant that occasionally some

meetings were less interesting and engaging than others. I tried to fix this by relying on student initiative. Essentially this came in the form of asking students to make their own practice meeting, teaching them planning skills, and then presenting when I couldn't. Another problem I had was that of low membership. I faced this by having specific well-publicized events such as Peace Core speakers, which would attract a bigger portion of the student body.

In the end I was very proud of my project. I learned a lot about what it takes to run a service organization and to educate others. I'm a proud volunteer and I find a passion in making an impact in other peoples lives. It was especially rewarding for me to find that the freshmen students involved wanted to continue the club next year. I am also proud that I got to present four Presidential Service Awards to members who all achieved over 100 hours of community service in the course of a year. If I were to do this again I would focus on more outreach to the student body and creating more interactive lessons. My highest hopes are for the students who partook in the Community Involvement Club this year and for the clubs future in SLA.