



# UnityWorks K-12 School Programs and Activities\*

UnityWorks empowers the site team at each school to design and implement its own blueprint for change. Teams have planned a wide variety of multicultural activities and programs including:

## Awareness and Training

1. Held an open forum to begin the conversation on diversity and acceptance.
2. Conducted a school climate survey involving staff, students and parents.
3. Organized school-wide professional development based on UnityWorks training activities.
4. Trained teachers on how to work more effectively with English Language Learners.
5. Trained student leaders in peer mediation and conflict-resolution techniques.
6. Purchased multicultural books and videos for the school resource library.
7. Established the “UnityWorks Minute” where at each staff meeting, one teacher is asked to share an activity s/he has done with their students to promote unity.

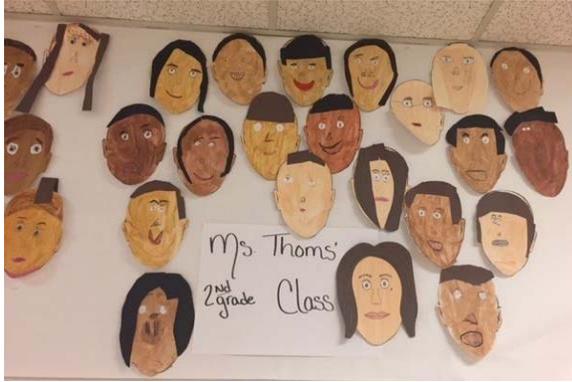
## Classroom Activities

1. Led classroom discussions on stereotyping and prejudice.
2. Revised lesson plans to include authentic voices and multiple perspectives.
3. Developed monthly half-hour lessons on diversity for the entire student body.
4. Beginning with the UnityWorks team, 700 students and their teachers created beautiful self-portraits (see next page), mixing paint to accurately match their own skin colors. The portraits were then displayed throughout the school as part of a larger lesson on diversity and acceptance. As a result, racial name-calling, which had been increasing in recent months, has all but disappeared. There was also a significant drop in discipline issues and suspensions—attributed in large part to the UnityWorks program—which is a strong complement to other programs adopted by the school. (The skin-color activity is described in our Teaching Unity book.)

## Extra-Curricular and Other School Activities

1. Established a student multicultural club that has studied different cultures, learned about Islam at the local mosque, visited homeless children, and organized a winter clothing drive.
2. Posted photos of students with a world map showing their countries of origin.
3. Organized an exhibit on African-American history for the entire school.
4. Displayed artwork in the hallways from different regions of the world.
5. Hosted an essay competition and a poetry slam on the theme of unity in diversity.
6. Scheduled school assemblies with speakers on a variety of multicultural topics.
7. Brought in a play on the Japanese internment to share the story of one American family’s experience during World War II. After the show, the actors engendered a lively discussion by asking the audience: Why were people forcibly removed from their homes and imprisoned? Do you think this could happen today? What can we do to help prevent it?
8. Organized a series of traditional activities (native drumming and dancing, basketry, root digging, storytelling and moccasin making) based on the understanding that people can learn to respect other cultures when they first respect their own.

\* For more detailed descriptions, visit our website and click on Programs > Overview > Sample School Activities. Some activities were organized through the EMPIRE Program, which was the precursor for UnityWorks.



### Community Outreach

1. Put the school reader board in English and Spanish to increase parent engagement.
2. Sponsored community service projects designed by students and community members.
3. Participated in the national Stand Against Racism campaign organized by the YWCA.
4. Encouraged parent involvement through family nights and cultural activities.

### Partnerships and Collaborative Projects

1. Five high schools collaborated to produce student-written plays on prejudice, stereotyping and gangs, and performed them for large audiences of parents and community members.
2. Established the InterValley Ambassadors student exchange program to increase understanding and acceptance of youth from different ethnic neighborhoods.
3. High school students developed and taught lessons to elementary students about bullying.
4. One middle school partnered with a high school on an arts program, including a youth orchestra and an Art Board Project highlighting authors and artists from around the world, with biographies written in English and Spanish to support students' bilingual skills.
5. A high school partnered with an elementary school—with older students helping younger ones to learn about our human family by researching and presenting information on various countries. Topics included history, geography, climate, religion, music, dance, art, architecture, culture, language, customs, food, sports, traditional clothing and more.

### Cultural Performances and Celebrations

1. Arranged for performers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, for example, a Lakota hoop dancer whose presentation was designed to convey the concept of unity in diversity.
2. Organized a multicultural festival on the theme of “Celebrating Our Differences,” after months of planning involving the entire school. Teams of teachers, students, staff and parents researched the diverse cultures in the local community, and each developed a presentation that included traditional dances, food, music, crafts and other elements of their culture. The goal was to increase parent involvement, which went from only five people at the start of the project, to over 450 at the culminating event. The teams are now creating a multicultural recipe book, with each recipe accompanied by an explanation of the significance of the food to that culture.
3. Hosted a “World Cultural Night” with displays designed to showcase the home countries of the international exchange students. Community members enjoyed speaking with the students, and received stickers in their “passports” for each “country” visited.

