

Service Learning Project

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My Project

I did a clean-up in Newport News Park



I asked where was there a need

There was a great need to clean the areas around two boat docks



I spent time looking for and picking up trash

Most of what I found were cigarettes, gloves, & fishing lines



I properly disposed of the bags of trash

I filled one 55-gallon trash bag per dock (both were very heavy)

Personal Growth

Initiative and civic responsibility

Throughout this service learning project I found myself gaining more confidence to be more initiative in my community and this also lead me to have more civic responsibility for how to better my local green space since I live in a city





Biases and Stereotypes

A stereotype that is often heard is that cities normally do not have parks, especially big parks, but in reality Newport News Park is one of the largest municipal parks this side of the Mississippi with over 7700 acres [1]

Leading Skills



Leading skills I learned through this project are creativity (figuring out how to get trash that were in tricky places), problem-solving (I found a homeless man sleeping in the park and was able to give him information on resources that the city provides that could help him), and proactivity (saw that there was a need and followed through to better it)

Relational Skills

Service learning has changed my ability to relate to people in many ways

- **Adaptability**

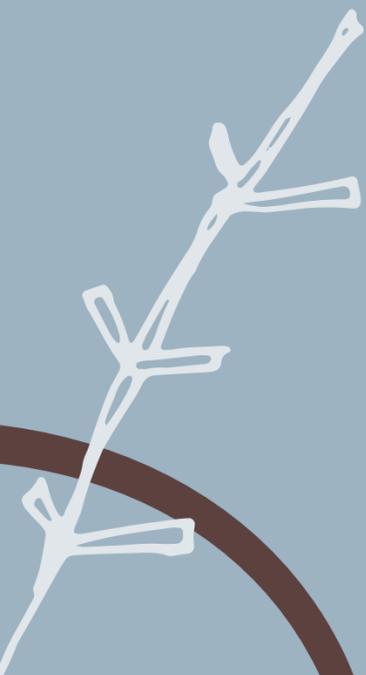
I suggested that there may be a need to do a cleanup around the park and my supervisor agreed and we discovered where the greatest need was

- **Empathy**

I took the time to talk with the homeless man and listen to his story of how he got to Newport News and imagined myself in his position when figuring out which services would best serve him

- **Communication**

After speaking with the homeless man, I let the park rangers know the situation so they could keep an eye on him if he needed further assistance



I gained many insights out in the community that I may not necessarily have gained in the classroom

- **Cleanups need more effort**

It took me a few hours to get through 2 boat docks, and the park is almost 8000 acres big so there is a lot of land to cover

- **Communication is key**

Understanding where the need is and knowing how to interact with any potential situation you may run into

- **Interpersonal skills**

Even if you are doing a cleanup by yourself, knowing that there are other people that are there to help you when needed

Knowledge Gained

Benefits from service learning is the ability to apply classroom concepts in a real world setting



Effectiveness of Learning Service



- **Learning outcomes**

Using service learning projects in public health programs helps students better understand many of the factors that contribute to health [2]

- **My reflection**

This project deepened my understanding on how the environment and economic status can affect one's health and has made me have a bigger appreciation for having the opportunity to work in a park.

Reflection is an important part of service learning because it allows you to step back and see what is working and what could be improved

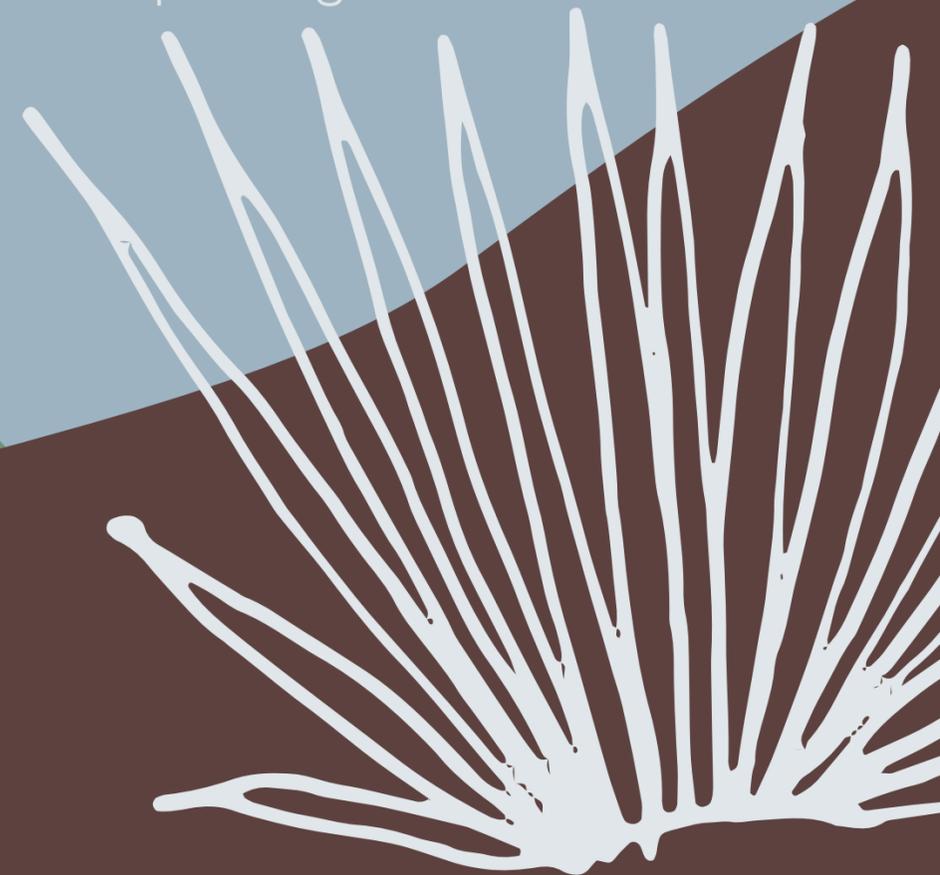
Improvements to community engagement

The CDC says community engagement is important to improve areas such as agenda, design, change, ethics, and many more. Ways that it can be increased include outreaching, consulting, involving, collaborating, and sharing leadership [3].

Community-based project

I can develop my service learning initiative into a community-based research project by reaching out to other like-minded individual in my community and working together with park staff to improving our local green space for the enjoyment of everyone

How to Improve Community Systems



Service Learning & Global Health

Service learning and community-based research are important to Global Health because they can lead to new programs and improvements to existing programs [4]. My experience could provide information to those in the public health and global health fields by opening and broadening the conversation of the importance of nature for human health.





References:

1. Newport News Park. Newport News, VA. (n.d.). Retrieved November 24, 2022, from <https://www.nnva.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/Newport-News-Park-27>
 2. Mason, M. R., & Dunens, E. (2019). Service-Learning as a Practical Introduction to Undergraduate Public Health: Benefits for Student Outcomes and Accreditation. *Frontiers in public health*, 7, 63. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2019.000633>.
 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, June 25). Chapter 1: What is community engagement? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved November 24, 2022, from https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/pce_what.html
 4. Pechak, C. M., & Thompson, M. (2009). A conceptual model of Optimal International Service-Learning and its application to Global Health Initiatives in rehabilitation. *Physical Therapy*, 89(11), 1192–1204. <https://doi.org/10.2522/ptj.20080378>
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