

# Teamwork and Collaboration with Community Partners through Service Learning

Kari Cellini, PhD, MS, MS, RN and Dolores Minchhoff, DNP, CRNP

## Background

- ❑ Teaching community/public health concepts in an undergraduate curriculum is important to prepare nurses to meet the evolving professional expectations of nursing practice.
- ❑ Service learning provides the opportunity for students to meet academic objectives while engaging in service opportunities in the community (Ross, 2012).
- ❑ Service learning is an experiential teaching learning strategy that prepares students for the future as community needs are examined and students' understanding of social determinants of health is developed as they work with community partners.
- ❑ Service learning as a teaching learning strategy encourages **teamwork and collaboration** between student, the educational institution, the community partner, and community members.

## Methods

- ❑ RN to BSN students engage in a service learning project as a graduation requirement.
- ❑ Students are introduced to the project in a one credit Introduction to Capstone course.
- ❑ The required service learning hours are threaded throughout the program and must be completed by the final course, Capstone.
- ❑ Guided by a capstone advisor, students explore possible community partners, choose a community partner, establish objectives with the community partner, and then complete their service with the chosen community partner.
- ❑ Students choose the community partner based on a variety of personal and professional criteria.

## Impact of Teamwork and Collaboration from the Student Perspective

- Understood what a community is.
- Identified vulnerable groups.
- Increased awareness of the needs of differing populations.
- Provided resources in the community increasing quality through partnerships.
- Continued service planned with community partners.

'Touched our community.'

Service Learning is a “teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities” (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2013).

## Impact of Teamwork and Collaboration from the Community Partner Perspective

- Exposed students to unique experiences.
- Broadened students' perspectives.
- Shared ideas between those of different abilities and backgrounds.
- Gained understanding of differing cultures.
- Resulted in community members feeling valued.

'Enlightened each other.'

### References\*

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (2013). What is service learning? Retrieved from <http://www.servicelearning.org/what-is-service-learning>  
Ross, M. (2012). Linking classroom learning to the community through service learning. *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, 29(1), 53-60.  
doi:10.1080/07370016.2012.645746

\*Additional references available on request