

"B" level paper

## **Ballard Community center**

### **Final Service-Learning reflection**

**May 11, 2005**

The Ballard Community Center is a non-profit organization that focuses on providing a high quality, affordable early education program and essential basic life assistance for families and individuals in need. The philosophy of the Ballard community centers early education program is to provide a quality developmental and age appropriate learning environment for children ages one to five. The Ballard center operates under a daily schedule that provides for fine and gross motor activities, developmentally appropriate skills learning, and incidental learning through play. The Ballard center believes that in order for a child to succeed they must have an environment where they are treated with dignity and respect and have the opportunity to grow and learn at their own speed.

The Ballard community center is good at recognizing and helping the oppressed people in our community. They constantly are trying to work to better the family's situation and the education their child receives. The Ballard center is aware that exposing children to a positive way of life through positive examples can only better their chances of being well rounded, positive, and social people.

The Ballard center offers to the community many ways in which they can help improve the family's life's at home as well. Ballard has support called Heat on, which

helps families when it is cold outside and they are unable to pay for heat in their house. Heat on is an annual service that the plumbers and pipe fitters union provides to the community. The union member provides their time one weekend in October to inspect the furnaces of elderly and disabled homeowners who cannot afford to pay someone else to do this work. ✓

Another wonderful way that Ballard helps families in the community is through Holiday Bureau. Holiday bureau allows individuals and groups to adopt families that cannot afford to buy gifts during the holiday season. Adopters provide things such as gifts, food and clothing for the families. A wonderful statistic I'd like to share is that over 160 families were adopted last year. Another special way Ballard help out families is through a very much needed and appreciated act; a food pantry. The Ballard community food pantry allows low income families and individuals to receive emergency food assistance. Food is provided on a walk in basis for Douglas county residents. And each household is limited to one visit every three months.

Many organizations through out the country strive to grow with and cater to the community. Communities have grown with society in the ways of seeing equality in the world and others, and not discriminating along racial and gender lines. The Ballard community was a wonderful place to observe racial and gender issues because you could learn from the children as well as their parents. My agency acknowledges the intersection of race, gender, and class through many different avenues.

When addressing the issue of race, the Ballard center makes efforts to build leadership and unified voices among minorities for social and economic equality through

what and how they teach the children and the rules and regulations they enforce. They build awareness that minorities are important in creating social changes in the community and the nation through their involvement in community building. Ways in which Ballard addresses the issue of class is that they provide essential, basic life assistance to families and individuals in need. Like I mentioned earlier Ballard does this through the food drive, the food pantry, heat on and the holiday bureau. Ballard helps low-income families and people to build powerful, effective organizations through which they can change their communities and effect public policies for the better.

How would you describe the class structure of the circuits at Ballard? What about the staff

How Ballard currently addresses the issue of gender is through advocating for a "living wage" no matter the sex of an employee. Ballard provides ways for women to find services like parenting classes and support groups for working mothers that are single. Ballard also is good at making an effort to increase access to family planning and reproductive health information and services.

✓ good

← You could discuss the wage gap here.

There are a few ways in which I noticed a connection between my services and course readings. The first is in connection with the production of Ballard as a center and volunteering and seeing what kinds of families go here it is apparent to me now that "double day" still exists. Many times mothers come and pick their children up still with their working cloths on, or even their name tag. This proves that women still go from a long day at work to another job at home with taking care of the family.

✓

Another connection I made was with groups like the Combahee River collective, which also fight for gender uplift. Minority women in the U.S. have had to fight to find their place in the "dominant" culture in addition to working toward gender uplift. This is

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why clubs like these are very important. Hull house could also be compared to Ballard in the fact that they do offer education to any child no matter what their race. The hull house opened in 1889 to educate and improve the lot of newly arrived European immigrants. So there is a connection between the development of the hull house and the goals of the Ballard center.

Yes, and discuss more here

Another issue that is apparent in my service and a major theme in the class is the subject of gender. Despite numerous gender uplift movements undertaken by women in the U.S., inequalities still exist. Women similar to the two women that began Ballard had a purpose of uniting people especially women through a group like supportive setting. Women like Ella Baker, Margaret Sanger, Mary McLeod Bethune and Mother Jones have worked so hard for what rights we have. There are still more that needs to be done and problems in organizing and advocacy, but these groups and motivated people help us as a whole become much closer to equality among gender, classes and races.

Right, + what specifically would you argue about to make such changes

The Ballard community center was a wonderful experience, and I will take all I have learned and use it in my everyday life and especially when raising my children in the future. My favorite part was actually developing a relationship/friendship with all the children; and really seeing ways in which I have influenced them through my actions.

Going to volunteer was a great opportunity for me to get out of my privileged world and really sit back and love how far and how many privileges women have come to have. I am excited to become involved within my community no matter where I move in the future. I know there are women and families that always need and appreciate all the extra help they can get. It was wonderful experience learning in your class through hands



on activities like service learning. I really appreciate the opportunity to experiment with volunteering, and I will now always want to and seek out places where my help/ services would be needed and appreciated.

WORDS: 1,168