



Wisconsin | Campus Compact



## **Best Practices in UWEX Service-Learning**

### **Saratoga Community After School Program Celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**Community Development programs, UW-Extension Waukesha County**

The Saratoga Community After School Program provides academic support, enrichment activities and recreation for K-6 students of Saratoga Elementary in Waukesha. The Waukesha County Extension Community Educator team works with the school and other local partners to recruit volunteers and raise funds to support the program.

In celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, third-sixth graders were split into groups and given the task of working together to create a “Dream Island” that honored the messages of Dr. King. Teachers and volunteers prepared the kids by talking briefly about Dr. King’s messages of love, friendship, unity, and freedom. They discussed with the kids that thinking about the future and about the way the world *might* be is a way of serving others, by becoming more aware of their own power to affect the world.

The following day facilitators held a reflection time during which the groups shared their drawings and answered questions about their islands. One of the questions asked the kids was who rules on their island, and one of the groups responded, “The ruler is the nicest person there.” On most of the Dream Islands, anyone who did not follow the ideals of equality, friendship, peace, and freedom would be forced to leave the island—or, as on King’s Island, be forced to swim to a raft of exile and spend one night there.

Overall, the islands revealed in the children an abundance of hope and high expectations for society. And the children’s insight prompted the volunteers and teachers to wonder: At what age do we learn to settle?

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