

Marco Rangel

Power Culture Equity & Service

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Midterm

My community service learning takes place in Martin Luther King elementary, located in Seaside, the program that is involved in the school is “Community Partnership for Youth (CPY) which is a prevention program providing positive alternatives to gangs, drugs and violence while reinforcing individual strengths. Our vision is to provide our youth with a safe, structured environment that encourage healthy boundaries, positive self-esteem and the ability to make good choices for a full successful life”. C.P.Y is structured from several principles such as; integrity because it exemplifies truthfulness, modesty, and trustworthiness; respect, because it exemplifies courtesy, honor, and reverence. All children and staff must memorize and model each of the standards.

Standard #1. In CPY, we greet each other every day with a smile and a handshake to strengthen the relationship between us.

Standard #2. In CPY, we honor and respect each other so we address one another with the proper language and speech.

Standard #3. In CPY, we value the space of ourselves and others and are careful not to intrude or injure each other.

Standard #4. In CPY, we are mindful of what is true and strive to be honest in word and deed.

Standard #5. In CPY, we treasure our rich heritage and hold the cultures of all people in high regard.

Standard #6. In CPY, we strive to reflect our beauty both inwardly in our understanding and outwardly in our appearance.

History of C.P.Y

Community Partnership for Youth was founded 1991 during spring as a grassroots community response after a tragedy. Ramon Avila a promising Seaside High student-athlete was shot and killed during alleged drug deal. As a result local community leaders' goals were to find a solution to prevent crime in the neighborhood and its effects on their most vulnerable youth and children.

Citizens from the community got together to find ways in order to protect children from crime, drugs and violence in the community. Their discovery was, prevention started since a very young age. CPY's founding committee discovered that students with a most at-risk were all too often left unsupervised, and without guidance in early childhood; they discovered that prevention

began in elementary school level. They also learned that the hours between 2pm and 6pm are the prime time for violent juvenile crime; which is time when children are most likely to be victims of violent crime.

These and many ideas help create Community Partnership for Youth (CPY). CPY is a prevention program which provides alternatives to avoid gangs, drugs, and violence. “The program consists of an After School Mentor/Tutor program, an 5 week all-day Summer Program, a Middle School Leadership Program, a High School Life Skills, Leadership & Job Preparation Program, a seven week Strengthening Families Program (SFP), and a Visual and Performing Arts Academy.”

Quality Measures

Positive human relationships: consistent and caring relationships between young people and adults and between young people and their peers.

Perhaps one of the strongest parts of the program in CPY which is promoting a positive human relationship among the students and staff, their goal is also to take the experience outside the classroom and practice it in the community. Mrs. Baker a woman of older age who is in charge of running CPY in King elementary does a stupendous job. Before students enter the cafeteria; where the program takes place, one of the staff members waits next to the door and welcomes all the students that attend the program and takes attendance. Most of these staff members have been working in CPY for several years and know most of the students who have been attending King elementary. The relationship between staff and students is very strong and positive. After attending several times to my service site I was able to see each staff personality.

In my site there are six CPY workers including Mrs. Baker. The program has a large number of students, the ratio being approximately twelve to one.

One of the many reasons why I really enjoy volunteering is having the privilege to work with Mrs. Baker. Mrs. Baker is the heart of CPY and promotes positive relationships among students. Her personality is something I really admire; she is a humble person that takes her job really serious. If students are not getting along she will make them sit together and talk the problem out. She looks at these kids more than students; she sees them as her family. What I like the most about her personality is that she knows when to be nice and when to call the kids attention even if she has raise her voice.

An experience I encountered upon related to making positive relationships was with CPY worker named Mr. Robert. Mr. Robert is another of the pillars of the program. He is in charge of circle time, which is when all the kids say their standards. All the kids get in a circle and have to sit down in with their legs crisscross during circle time. The problem started with two students that had a small conflict throughout the day. The issue was that one kid told the other that he was not good at drawing, even though it seems like a small problem the goal is to make the kids get along and help them resolve problems. Mr. Robert heard both kids arguing and called one at a time to try and hear both parts of the stories. After talking to both kids he made both of them talk to each and try and solve the problem. Not only did he help both kids, but as well he help me learn a new way of how to deal with problems like this and help out other kids, also by creating a stronger relationship between students and staff.

Effective programming: constructive and well-planned schedules and activities that are tailored to the needs and interests of youth, parents, and all other stakeholders.

Entering the cafeteria students know what to do. First thing they do is line up outside the cafeteria to check in. After doing such they place their school stuff on the ground next to the benches. Once done, Mrs. Bakers assigns tables to students based on their grade level. To avoid older kids from bullying younger ones and try and make the kids in the same grade level get along. CPY schedule starts with students doing their homework for an hour. Once done with their homework students are expected to read for twenty minutes. After reading and finishing their homework kids gather around in a circle in the cafeteria. Mr. Robert is in charge of the circle, where they go over the standards and do a small activity such as games or as simply as a dance. The idea of the circle is to help the kids develop listen skills and participate in order to be more comfortable speaking or doing activities in front of others.

After done of going over the standards and activities students get to play for a thirty minute period. The activities range from board games, puzzles, art, jump rope and other activities that indoors. Outside activities consist of soccer, basketball, tennis, football or kids playing in the monkey bars. In case of rainy days only inside activities are done. Majority of the kids tend to do outside activities. If a student doesn't finish his homework they are not allowed to any activities until finish. Mrs. Bakers tries to enforce and encourage the students to ask CPY workers and volunteers to check their homework.

For the last part of the CPY students are called by grade groups and given a snack which varies from chips and salsa, cookies, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, or a granola bar, with

either water or milk and other snacks. After receiving their snack they head back to the cafeteria benches and get to watch a movie for the last part. Students throw their trash away and gather to watch the movie. Overall, students seem to enjoy the activities and have fun, by far the activities they seem to join to most is Fridays dance. The dances consist of CPY workers getting involve to encourage the students to dance along; the songs are energetic and fun to dance along from dancing along with the kids.

Appropriate environments: sufficient safe and clean space for indoor and outdoor activities, attractive and welcoming décor, appropriate space, supplies and furnishings to support the program's activities.

CPY is a very humble program that compared to others receives a small amount of funding. Spacing in this location of CPY is relatively good. Having mentioned that the program takes place in the school cafeteria and sometimes the students are allowed to play in the school playground with supervision from someone from the staff; the playground consist of monkey bars, soccer field and basketball courts.

Staff members always clean after students leave the program; cleaning consists of wiping tables, mopping the floor and checking the restroom is clean. They are also in charge of taking out equipment for students to play and collecting such. There seems to always be enough for students to do, that wait they don't have to wait and take turn or fight over equipment. Needless to say the program does a good job regarding the safe and clean spacing.

On the not so bright side, there is little to no decorations or because they are not allowed to hang papers in the walls because they only use to cafeteria to provide their program. "I wish

we could hang your guys work on the walls sometimes instead of having other stuff, you guys are the ones that put hard work and time for activities...” said Mrs. Baker to one of her students. I really related to Mrs. Baker because she wanted to do something to motivate the kids, but she didn’t have the power to do so. All this and small little details reflect that they don’t receive a lot of findings and have a tight budget.

Strong partnerships with young people, families, schools, and communities: active relationships with all stakeholders in the program; input from families, schools, and young people on all aspects of the program; involvement of school staff, parents, and community volunteers in running the program.

Perhaps the weakest part of the program, over the time I have been in my service site there has been one volunteer. Majority of the kids walk home and only a couple are picked up by their parents; which causes to parents in a way to not be involve with the school. It is kind of sad to see that these parents can’t pick up their kinds, because most of them work and don’t have time.

Effective staff and administration: committed and well-trained staff and volunteers, frequent and efficient staff meetings, sufficient funding, program policies that are understood and accepted by all stakeholders.

My first day as a service learner I had created a small fear within myself for a couple reason. My thoughts were what if these kids don’t like me, or what if the staff doesn’t like me for certain reason and small things like that. Although I had a small advantage, which was I had tutor before and knew a thing or two about tutoring which made me feel a little more relaxed.

Mr. Bruce coordinator of CPY was who I contacted to begin my service learning. The first day was not the best or the worst. I set an appointment with Mr. Bruce where he explained to me what the standards, clothing allowed, what was expected from me as a service learner and to set my schedule. CPY policies were very clear and straightforward.

After going thru paperwork the fun and interesting part began. I was introduced with the CPY workers, who were very professional, introduced themselves and welcomed me; this made me feel comfortable and eliminate that small fear I had. Shortly after being introduced the students arrived, I was also introduced with them. One of the biggest problems was that I was not told what to do, the schedule or their daily routine. In other words I was just thrown out there and expected to know what to do. Looking at this as a positive experience this help me interact with the students and engage with them more by me asking them and jumping around to see who needed help.

Another thing I had to do was observe the CPY workers and staff which help me see what they did and how they interacted with the students. Both staff and workers knew what they were doing which was a great help and none of them seemed to leave the group, they all interacted with the kids. Towards the end of the day, having said I didn't know what to do I tried to help them clean Mr. Robert approach to me in a nice manner and with a laughing type of simile said "Mr. Marco you don't have to clean, you are here to engage with the students and help them, not us we are here because we work so that's our job." Overall it was a good day where I learned that their workers were well trained and they usually stay after the program for a couple minutes to talk about the any problems they came across or if a student needs more help.

Something interesting and somewhat sad was that there has probably been one volunteer in the last month. I believe to be sad because the community should be more involved taking in mind that these kids are the future. Many times it can take seconds to change someone's life, in this case make a smile in this kids by helping them do homework, playing with them, talking and giving advice, to the most simple thing.

Walking around King elementary was an adventure. There were many factors that made my interviews a little difficult. Starting with my program having a two week spring break. Not having enough time to go out into the community at the correct time; during the time when people are out in the street. People not wanting to talk about the community, and other small factors. Even though it took me a while I came across people who were a little bit more open and willing to talk.

-Mrs. Maria

As I was walking around to try and know more about the area and try to interview people I came across Mrs. Maria. A Young woman whom looked like had just got off work and was walking home; with her were a couple kids whom I happened to know from CPY. My procedure to try and talk to Mrs. Maria was very friendly and in Spanish, I didn't want to scare her. So I introduced myself and what my goal was, trying to get to the point to avoid taking her time. My first question for Mrs. Maria was "Que beneficios le da ah usted el programa de CPY"? Her response was quick "the benefits that CPY provides for me are a couple, because my sons are able to finish their homework there and are still in school. Plus I have to work and I don't have enough time to pick them up. I know there in a safe place." I was not amassed, because I went

thru all that growing up my parents would make me stay after school because they couldn't afford someone to take care of me and couldn't pick me up from school. My next question was "Le gustaria poder estar más involucrada en el program que asiste su hijo"? Mrs. Maria took a deep breath and a sad gesture said "Yes, I would really like to become more involved and support my kid and help him become a better person and student so he does have to go thru what I went when I was younger, and then later end up working in the fields for a small amount of money." After her response she seemed look a little upset and told "am sorry but I have to go." I said thank you and she left.

Mr. Ramirez

Mr. Ramirez a young man, who I encountered at a store nearby, was willing to be interviewed. I asked a couple questions regarding CPY and if he knew anything about King elementary. Mr. Ramirez had moved from Aptos a couple months ago. I as suspect he knew a little about the school. He had not much to say about CPY. Something interesting he did tell was that the school was known for not being a decent school. Having talked to Mr. Ramirez showed me that the community is not really involved or well informed about programs.

ü I was unable to interview people who work and students because of their spring break which was two weeks. Although over the time period I have been in my site I have managed to incorporate some questions about the program and other questions.

Alexis Leyva

Alexis is one of the several students that attend King elementary. Interacting with Alexis brought many memories of when I grew up. Although I was unable to interview Alexis I had asked him questions about the school and what he thought about CPY. One of my questions was if he liked CPY and what he thought about it, his response was that he liked it because he got to hang out with his friends, and got to play games that he didn't have at home, which made me realize that his family perhaps was a low income and had have to work a lot to provide something for their them. Things like that make me sad at points because these kids shouldn't have to worry about things like that. I also asked Alexis what he thought about Mrs. Baker. His response was somewhat funny "oh Mrs. Baker is a nice but she can be mean and scream a lot, you don't want to make her scream. If you make her scream she will talk to your parents." Alexis wasn't the only one with the same response, I asked a couple other kids and told me the same, which I found somewhat humoristic. Having helped Alexis a couple times I asked what was a subject he wanted to become better, his response was interest, "I want to become better in English so I can help my parents when they are trying to read English. Once again going to the idea that these kids come from a family whose dominant languages is not English and they have problems in an everyday basis. Many kids since a very young age go have a large responsibility.

Camila

Camila was a very shy girl whom I came across, until I started speaking Spanish that shy girl was gone. As part of the learning experience and engaging with students I walk around asking kids if they need help; many times students don't ask because they are too shy. This happened to be the case with Camila, I walked up to her and asked if she need help. I felt she

didn't understand me, so I spoke slowly and trying to be clear. It happened to be that Camila was an English learner who only spoke Spanish at home and was really shy. I asked Camila if she liked to read in English and her response was an immediate "No" because she couldn't understand. Feeling the obligation to help her I began to help her read by articulating words and read with her. After a couple days I noticed that she was a little bit more talkative and spoke a little more English without the same amount of fear.

Mr. Robert

One of the right hands of Mrs. Baker, Mr. Robert is in charge of many things in the program. Mr. Robert has been living in Marina for a couple years "moving from Georgia was a new adventure". I asked Mr. Robert the difference between school systems. His response was that many things were different starting by the multicultural and ethnicity that attend school. Mr. Robert attends school in Georgia, where he played volleyball. MR. Robert is in charge of circle time and helps the students out. Which made me ask him what motivated him to help these kids out. "Growing up I didn't have the best childhood. Just like them my parents work and it was very difficult for them. I like to be around kids because they shouldn't worry for stuff when they are younger they should enjoy their childhood." Mr. Robert along with other CPY workers create activities that involve dancing so students can participate. Mr. Robert is always motivating the kids to participate and helping them out.

Mr. Kevin

Mr. Kevin one of the workers work in King elementary grew up attending CPY when he was younger. Interacting with MR. Kevin he would tell me stories of when he was in CPY and

the difference and similarities. He said, “The program has been changing little by little every year, becoming better. When I attended CPY we didn’t really have many things to play with. All we did was homework, play outdoors and watch movies in those huge televisions with video tapes. My parents were always working, CPY became my second home.” I asked him if CPY helped him become a better student and help the youth, his response was immediate “Yes, CPY help me a lot when I was growing up because I struggled with my homework and no one at home could help me. If I wasn’t in CPY I would of probably been in the streets hanging out with friends and not doing productive things.” With a smile he told me “that’s why I help out these kids so they go on the right path and stay away from trouble.”

studying educational systems

Since the moment I was able to interact with most of the students I was able to identify many of the kids are English learners; I was able to identify that a couple ways. Most of them don’t feel as comfortable speaking English or reading it. An example is Camila; she was shy when I talked to her in English, although after I spoke to her in Spanish she was talking more. Another way I found out was when some of the older kids didn’t like to read because they weren’t fluent doing so or could pronounce some words. How I tried to know part of their ethnicity was by asking the students were their parents were and if they liked to talk Spanish.

A strange way I tried to separate the kids was by looking at their backpacks, growing up many of the times the “richer” kids tended to have better clothes and backpacks, even though it was not their fault sometimes you are able to distinguish by so. After doing so I noticed that many of these kids come from lower income families. Another theory I tried was trying to identify the kids that normally hanged out and tried to see similarities among them. Which I

believed to be a little bit more difficult because kids at a young age have different mentalities and just do what they think is fun. They don't really understand what's correct and what is wrong. The most helpful way to understand where these kids came from and some of their background was by interacting with them and asking them questions.