Service-Learning: From Vision to Reality at UDMercy

Charlotte Wyche, RDH, MS
Associate Professor,
Department of Periodontology and Dental Hygiene
Course Director, DSD 832 - Dental Care for Special Patient Populations

Jason Souiyas
Senior Dental Student
Articulating the Vision

- Teaching modality that makes sense
- Dental School mission
  - to be a source of oral health education and information to city of Detroit
  - to graduate socially and ethically sensitive dental professionals
- Role of reflection
Building the reality
by using what is already in place

- Existing community-based clinical sites
- Other outreach activities
- Current partnerships and community contacts
- Student volunteer interests and contacts

Dental health education is always in demand
Service-Learning in the Dental Hygiene Program

- Small class size
- Oral health education is always in demand
- Community health program planning competency already included in the DH curriculum

Service-Learning components
- Specific info about community they will be in
- Site orientation
- Education project plans made after orientation
- Variety of reflection tools
Service-Learning in the Dental Program

- 76 dental students
- Only one class - Special Patient Care
- Limited community contacts
- Pilot program for 2 years
- Last year a 3 hour service learning experience became a requirement of the course

Approximately 50 community agencies serving special needs individuals were contacted and provided service-learning opportunity for students.
Service-Learning
Objectives and Desired Outcomes

■ **Course Learning Objectives**
  – significant treatment planning considerations
  – operational/procedural modifications in providing dental care for individuals with special needs.

■ **Service Objectives**
  – oral health education
  – individual focused time and attention
Service-Learning Objective

The student will be able to

- describe observations of special needs of individuals by identifying course concepts that apply

- correlate those observations with modifications that might be necessary during clinical treatment of similar individuals
Service-Learning Reality Check

- Student preparation
- Service requirement linked specifically to course content
- Student learning about community
- Interaction and reciprocal learning
- Student reflection
Reality of Student Learning

- Classroom concepts brought alive
- Ability to articulate modifications in standard methods of providing care
- Realization of barriers to receiving dental services
- Realization of ethical responsibility to under-served populations
Future Vision

- Not just one class requirement, but rather, a program requirement
- Community context of dental care interwoven throughout curriculum
- Linking service provided in outreach clinics and community rotations to existing courses
- Orientation / reflection components
A student’s viewpoint