

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Student Service Learning Guide*  
Grade 8 Social Studies



Rockville, Maryland

We would like to thank  
Ms. Maria Tremontozzi and Ms. Carol Starr  
for their contribution to this guide.

This material is based on work supported by the Corporation  
for National and Community Service under the Learn and Serve  
America Grant No.601014. Opinions or points of view expressed  
in this document are those of the authors and do not necessar-  
ily reflect the official position of the Corporation or the Learn and  
Serve America Program.

# Student Service Learning Activities in Middle School Courses

All Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) middle school students participate in student service learning (SSL) activities that are infused into the curriculum in Grade 6 science, Grade 7 English, and Grade 8 social studies. The attached lesson plans are models that can be used to imbed SSL activities into the existing curriculum.

The following guidelines provide an overview of the broader SSL requirements and expectations in MCPS. More comprehensive SSL information is available by contacting the school SSL coordinator or visiting the MCPS SSL website, [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org).

The three required phases of SSL activities are as follows:

**Preparation.** The community need is identified, background knowledge is developed, and student expectations are stated.

**Action.** The identified community need is addressed through at least one of three ways:

*Direct Action*—Students are face-to-face with the recipients of their service, such as in tutoring, visiting children in hospitals, and serving at soup kitchens.

*Indirect Action*—Students have no direct contact with the service recipients, such as in collecting food and clothing or conducting fund-raising events.

*Advocacy Action*—Students work to raise awareness or create change, such as participating in community events, writing letters, giving legislative testimony, or creating public service announcements.

**Reflection.** Students look back on both the service and learning they experience and its significance to their personal growth, the service recipients, and/or the community.

**Working with Nonprofit Tax-exempt Organizations**—*All* SSL activities must be conducted with preapproved organizations. Organizations and Opportunities must be tagged as MCPS SSL approved at [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org) or they must be preapproved by the SSL coordinator after the student has completed and submitted MCPS Form 560-50: *Request for Student Service Learning Preapproval*

**Please note the following:**

- No door-to-door solicitation is allowed.
- All activities in a public place must be conducted with adult supervision from MCPS personnel or nonprofit representatives.
- All activities must be secular in nature.

**Regarding Reflection**—Oral reflection activities may be conducted as whole-class discussions in preparation for individual student-written reflections. As with all other SSL activities, students must complete the standard MCPS Form 560-51: *Student Service Learning Activity Verification* to record their reflection and document the service infused in the curriculum area. A completed verification form will be filed in each student's SSL folder.

**Documenting the Hours**—Students may earn 10 SSL hours through successful participation in the SSL aspects of Grade 6 science, Grade 7 English, and Grade 8 social studies. Students who complete the preparation, action, and reflection phases of the activity, and successfully complete the course will receive 10 SSL hours. These hours automatically appear on student report cards at the end of each middle school year. No partial hours can be awarded. If a student does not complete the infused SSL activities for the course, MCPS Form 560-54: *Deletion of Student Service Learning (SSL) Hours* must be completed and submitted to the school SSL coordinator.

# Best Practices of Student Service Learning

1. The Student Meets a Recognized Need in the Community.
  - Examines pressing community needs—preparation
  - Strategizes to address problems associated with community needs—preparation
  - Provides direct, indirect, and/or advocacy service—action
  
2. The Student Achieves Curricular Objectives.
  - Uses academic standards to establish mastery objectives—preparation
  - Applies academic learning to recognized community needs—preparation, action, reflection
  - Assesses progress toward and attainment of mastery objectives—preparation, action
  
3. The Student Gains Necessary Knowledge and Skills.
  - Explores citizenship and career options—preparation, action
  - Understands expectations associated with participation—preparation
  - Cooperates with team members and community partners—action
  
4. The Student Plans Ahead.
  - Identifies tasks, timelines, and outcomes—preparation
  - Assesses own skills and interests—preparation
  - Takes leadership opportunities—preparation, action
  
5. The Student Works with Existing Service Organizations.
  - Identifies nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations with which to partner—preparation
  - Creates collaborative, reciprocal relationships through involvement—action
  - Respects the human dignity and contributions of others—action, reflection
  
6. The Student Develops Sense of Responsibility.
  - Evaluates own performance—reflection
  - Strengthens character through civic engagement—action
  - Participates in a range of service opportunities—action
  
7. The Student Reflects Throughout the Experience.
  - Evaluates overall impact of service and learning—reflection
  - Analyzes what was learned from multiple perspectives—reflection
  - Explores next steps to continue service-learning involvement—reflection

2-06 Adapted from Maryland's *Seven Best Practices of Service Learning*.

## Session 1

# Local Government and Citizens Work Together

### Materials

- Class set of *The Worst Day Ever*
- Transparency copy of Political System Principles
- Class set of Montgomery County departments and services, from website
- Class set of The Montgomery County Volunteer Center
- Group sets of the five topic sheets
- Student copies of *Choosing a Community Need*
- Copies of letter to middle school student, parent, and/or guardian for distribution to all students

### Suggested Time

Two days

### *Introduction—Student Service Learning Sessions*

As part of the Grade 8 social studies program, students are expected to participate in a service-learning experience that is imbedded in the curriculum. The following sessions are a model for how service learning can support the goals of the curriculum by building skills of citizenship while meeting Maryland State Department of Education indicators.

#### Estimated Time:

Five 45-minute class periods (classes do not have to be consecutive)

#### When to Teach:

These sessions should be taught during Unit 8.2, Lesson Sequence Two. They are most appropriate after students have gained an overview of the U. S. Constitution, including the functions of the three branches of government and citizens' rights and responsibilities.

### *Overview of SSL Sessions 1 & 2: Introduction and Choosing an Issue to Address*

Students learn how the Montgomery County Government meets the purpose of government, "to provide public services." Students discuss the role of nonprofit organizations and individuals in supporting this purpose of government through service to the community. Students learn how service to the public may be direct action, indirect action, or advocacy.

### *Assessed Indicators*

#### Political Systems

- Explain how various groups provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process and ways in which individuals can advance or impede political decisions.

#### Directions

### **1. Engaging Students—Scenario: Local Government in Our Lives**

Read aloud the scenario *The Worst Day Ever*. Direct students to record in their social studies journal (SSJ) all the ways Sophie's morning is affected by the Montgomery County Government. Suggested answers include the following:

Ride-On bus, school, recreation center, recycling, snow plows, others

### **2. Setting a Purpose—Introduction of Service Learning**

Post on the overhead Political System Principles. Review both principles with students and explain that they will be engaging in a service-learning activity that demonstrates these principles in action. Both principles should be familiar from Units 8.1 and 8.2. They will learn how the Montgomery County Government and Montgomery County citizens work together to fulfill one of the purposes of government.

Montgomery County  
Services website  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

Ask students to identify the purpose of government most clearly met in the scenario *The Worst Day Ever* (provide public services). Explain that this is the purpose of government they will examine through a class service-learning activity.

Review key aspects of service learning if necessary. See *Student Service Learning Activities in Middle School Courses* on page 4 of this guide for a brief overview of talking points.

### **3. Building Understanding—Montgomery County Government Services**

Ask student pairs to join with another pair and brainstorm all the public services the Montgomery County Government provides. Post a class list of student responses.

Distribute to student groups one or two pages from the website printout of Montgomery County Government services (see sidebar). There are approximately 11 pages, so each group should be able to receive a different section of the entire list. Ask students to compare the list they have with what is on the board. Ask students the following questions:

- What services does the county government provide that you were not aware of? (Tip: The list is extensive, so don't try to write them all down!)
- Which services impact you, your family, or neighborhood the most?

### **4. Extending Understanding—Government and Citizens Work Together**

Remind students of the responsibilities of citizenship, particularly the responsibility to participate. Ask students to list organizations they know of that also try to meet the needs listed on the board, but are not part of the county government. Review a few responses.

Distribute the handout, *The Montgomery County Volunteer Center*, to students.

Ask them to review the list and identify and match organizations on the list to the needs listed on the board. For example, Montgomery County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Montgomery County Humane Society.

Ask students,

- Why do you think these organizations were started if the county government is already addressing the problems?

Answers will vary.

### *Choosing a Topic & Project*

This lesson models letting students choose the topic and project. However, you may choose other methods such as the following:

- Tally votes of all your classes; then choose the most popular for all your classes to do.
- Narrow the choices down to two; then let each class re-vote.

### **5. Building Understanding—Focusing on Key Issues**

Divide students into five groups and distribute one of the following issue sheets to each group—Environment, Hunger, Homelessness, Vandalism, and People with Disabilities. Explain that each group will read about a different area of need that the county government attempts to address. Each group will prepare a poster that highlights the key points about their issue to share with the class. The class will then vote to choose one of the five areas, and design and complete a service project that addresses that issue.

This is a natural place to break up student work between Session 1 and Session 2. Plan for students to complete the posters and conduct the gallery walk and voting during Session 2.

### **6. Gallery Walk and Voting**

Distribute to students the Choosing a Community Need voting sheet. Explain that they will walk around the room to examine each of the posters created. They will read the posters to decide which issue they would like to focus on for their service project. Remind students that the project will be done as a class, not individually. Collect voting sheets.

### **7. Formative Assessment and Homework**

On an index card, direct students to write, in a complete sentence, one way the Montgomery County Government provides public services.

For homework, distribute to students the letter to middle school student, parent, and/or guardian, on page 6 of this guide, that explains the service-learning requirement for Grade 8 social studies students.

Review student choices and be prepared to announce the choice to students in the following class. See sidebar note for alternative methods of choosing a service-learning project.

# The Worst Day Ever

## Directions

Read this story and identify all the ways Sophie's morning is affected by the Montgomery County Government.



- 6:00 Alarm goes off. I hate mornings, especially Monday mornings. I can just tell today is going to be the worst day ever. Take extra long shower today. Brush teeth and wash face. New pimple on chin. Lovely.
- 6:30 Mom works at Montgomery College in the admissions office. She has to catch the 6:40 a.m. Ride-On bus to Rockville. She leaves pancake batter for breakfast. Doesn't she know I hate pancakes? Turn the gas stove on and heat up the pan to fry an egg. Burn my toast.
- 7:00 Get dressed in favorite T-shirt and jeans. Bad hair day.
- 7:20 Take recycling bin to curb. Half-empty soda can spills on favorite T-shirt. Go back inside to change—only clean shirt left is ugly green color. I hate it but have to wear it. Know everyone will notice and make fun of me today.
- 7:30 Wait outside for bus. It's really cold. Bus is late. I think I have frost bite. Bus driver says he's late because of an accident. Ambulance and police cars had blocked the road. Got to school with 1 minute to go to locker and get to class. Of course I was late and Mr. Hardy didn't even care. Got lunch detention.
- 12:30 English class. Got to sit with my friend Ana, first good thing to happen all day. We talked about joining the county softball team this spring. Ms. Fernandez saw us talking and made me move. Gave me lunch detention.
- 2:00 Social studies class. Had a guest speaker. A lady from the Montgomery County Historical Society talked about the Underground Railroad. She helps preserve homes in the county that used to hide slaves escaping to the north. Forgot to do my homework over the weekend. Ms. McGuire gave me lunch detention.
- 3:00 Finally home. Took Rusty, my dog, for a walk. We got him from the Humane Society. Forgot my gloves, my fingers froze. I stopped by the recreation center to see my friends. We played a game of basketball. I missed all the shots I took. Took Rusty home, walked along the bike trail.
- 6:00 Mom took me to the library to do research for social studies project. I used the computer and checked out a few books.
- 8:00 Saw a few snow plow trucks on the side of the road on the way home. It's really cold and is starting to snow a little.
- 9:00 Watched TV before going to bed. Snowing harder now. Montgomery County Cable TV station announces schools are closed tomorrow! Maybe today wasn't so bad after all.

# Political System Principles

## *Principle #4 (From Grade 6 and Grade 8)*

The purpose of democratic governments is to provide for the common good, including the following—

- ◇ Provide public services
- ◇ Promote rule of law
- ◇ Protect rights
- ◇ Prepare for a common defense
- ◇ Support the economic system

## *Principle #5 (From Grade 6 and Grade 8)*

In a democracy, government and citizens work together.

# The Montgomery County Volunteer Center

The Montgomery County Volunteer Center (MCVC) is a clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities in Montgomery County. It is funded by taxpayer money through the Montgomery County Government. MCVC hosts a website with hundreds of county government offices and nonprofit agencies that provide services to residents of Montgomery County. The chart below lists just a few of the nonprofit agencies.

Looking for ways to earn your student service learning (SSL) hours with approved organizations? You can search their database by interest, agency name, or geographic location.

Go to [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org) for a link to the MCVC.

<p>A WIDER CIRCLE 4808 Moorland Lane Suite 802 Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	<p>The mission of A Wider Circle is to create change from the inside out by providing programs for people challenged by poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and other health and social issues.</p>
<p>AMC CANCER RESEARCH CENTER 9010 Kimblehunt Drive Gaithersburg, MD 20882</p>	<p>AMC Cancer Research Center is a nonprofit research institute dedicated to the prevention of cancer and other chronic diseases. They are a local fund-raising chapter with AMC's National Volunteer Organization. All funds go directly to support AMC's research and education missions.</p>
<p>JOBS UNLIMITED, INC., THE UPSCALE RESALE THRIFT SHOP 1075 Rockville Pike-Talbott Center Rockville, MD 20852</p>	<p>This organization provides paid employment and job training to individuals with serious mental illnesses.</p>
<p>JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE 8700 Georgia Avenue, Suite 500 Silver Spring, MD 20911</p>	<p>The Jane Goodall Institute promotes the power of individuals to take informed and compassionate action to improve the environment for all living things.</p>
<p>MANNA FOOD CENTER 614 Lofstrand Lane Rockville, MD 20850</p>	<p>Manna Food Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the elimination of hunger in Montgomery County. Manna collects and distributes food to families, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, group homes, emergency assistance organizations, and low-income housing projects daily.</p>
<p>MARVATEENS, INC. 5636 Randolph Road Rockville, MD 20852</p>	<p>Marvateens teaches progressive gymnastics in a fun and safe manner.</p>
<p>MEALS ON WHEELS, WHEATON 3211 Paul Drive Wheaton, MD 20902</p>	<p>Meals on Wheels is a volunteer-based nonprofit agency that provides meals to homebound aging, disabled, and convalescent persons.</p>



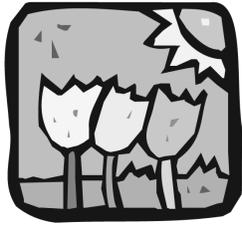
## The Montgomery County Volunteer Center, *continued*

<p>MOBILE MEDICAL CARE, INC. 9309 Old Georgetown Road Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	<p>Mobile Med provides health care for uninsured residents of Montgomery County. They also provide care for people who are homeless and people with low incomes.</p>
<p>GRAFFITI ABATEMENT PARTNERS, INC. (GRAB) P.O. Box 623 Kensington, MD 20895</p>	<p>GRAB promotes the eradication of graffiti in Montgomery County through education and enforcement. They engage at-risk youth in positive projects in the community to benefit the community and participating youth.</p>
<p>GREAT AND SMALL 17320 Moore Road Boyd's, MD 20841</p>	<p>Great and Small gives lessons in horsemanship and horseback riding to children who are abused and neglected, as well as children with emotional or cognitive disabilities. Great and Small adopts horses from abused and/or neglected situations.</p>
<p>HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY 18247-D Flower Hill Way Gaithersburg, MD 20879</p>	<p>In a spirit of collaboration and fellowship, Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County works with individuals, institutions, businesses, and the Habitat families themselves to build simple, decent, affordable housing for those living in substandard conditions in our community.</p>
<p>SANDY SPRING MUSEUM 17901 Bentley Road Sandy Spring, MD 20860</p>	<p>The mission of the Sandy Spring Museum is to collect, arrange, preserve, and exhibit books, maps, manuscripts, newspapers, artifacts, objects, structures, and other materials relative to, or illustrative of, the history and heritage of the greater Sandy Spring community.</p>
<p>THE SHEPHERD'S TABLE, INC. 8210A Colonial Lane Silver Spring, MD 20910-3350</p>	<p>The goal is to provide food, clothing, counseling, and medical and other support services effectively and compassionately to individuals and families seeking assistance in meeting their basic needs and helping them reach their fullest potential. Serves as a resource center for homeless and needy persons.</p>
<p>MONTGOMERY COUNTY SPCA, INC. P.O. Box 637 Washington Grove, MD 20880</p>	<p>The Montgomery County SPCA is dedicated to improving the welfare of animals through spay/neuter procedures, placement of homeless animals, and education to promote responsible pet ownership. They are committed to a no-kill policy for animals in their care, and strive to make Montgomery County, Maryland, a no-kill county.</p>
<p>SALVATION ARMY 20021 Aircraft Drive Germantown, MD 20874</p>	<p>The Salvation Army provides help in emergency, family, or personal times of difficulty. Promote character-building and independence.</p>



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# Environment



Global warming, pollution, erosion, contaminated water, endangered species—these are just a few of the environmental concerns facing the world today. In Montgomery County, Maryland, these con-

cerns are especially critical because of the county's growing population and urban areas. As the county grows, so do the number of cars, houses, shopping centers, and roadways. This means less and less "green space." Green space refers to area tracts of land that have not been developed for housing or other uses. Parks and nature preserves are examples of green space.

Why should we care about the green space in Montgomery County? What purpose does it serve? Green space has two main purposes:

1. To promote a healthier environment.
2. To provide recreation areas for people.

Green space along waterways helps to keep pollution out of streams. This pollution may be dangerous to humans and animals. Trees help to reduce pollution in the air and prevent erosion of soil. Parks in Montgomery County provide a safe place for animals and plants to exist and be enjoyed by people. They provide quiet places for people to hike, bike, and enjoy nature. The lakes and rivers of the county provide fishing and boating opportunities as well. All of these things are important for maintaining the high quality of life that Montgomery County is known for.

There are many local government agencies and environmental organizations in Montgomery County that work toward preserving green space. There are also organizations that focus on specific rivers, parks, or issues such as recycling or pollution. The partnership between the Montgomery County Government and environmental organizations is particularly strong as both attempt to maintain and improve the land we all share.

## *Montgomery County Air Pollution Statistics*

A 2003 nonprofit environmental survey found that Montgomery County—

- failed to meet national ozone air-quality standards, and
- rated extremely unhealthy for carbon monoxide emissions and others.

In 1999 The Clean Air Task Force, an environmental nonprofit, stated that, in Montgomery County—

- the risk of developing cancer from diesel soot is 398 times greater than national acceptable levels (national: 1 in 1 million; Montgomery County: 1 in 2,512), and
- 42 people died a premature death and there were 1,198 asthma attacks related to diesel soot.

The American Lung Association graded Montgomery County's air quality in 2005 as follows:

- F—ozone.
- C—particle pollution.

Sligo Creek, Montgomery County Water Quality—

- rate of water flow exceeds standards during storms,
- several sections of the creek contain unacceptable levels of bacteria,
- pH levels sometimes do not meet standards, endangering water life, and
- poor variety and abundance of bottom-dwelling aquatic insects live in the creek.

## *What's Being Done?*

### **Local Nonprofit Organizations**

The following nonprofits (and others) can be found on the Montgomery County Volunteer Center website, which can be accessed through the MCPS Student Service Learning website, [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org).

- Friends of Sligo Creek—Promotes the restoration of the water quality, natural habitat, and ecology of the Sligo Creek Watershed.



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## Environment, *continued*



- ◇ Izaak Walton League, Rockville Chapter—  
Monitors stream health, and maintains league lands for public enjoyment and recreation.
- ◇ Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL)—  
Promotes public understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of United States natural and cultural heritage.

### **Montgomery County Government**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

Many county programs are operated through the use of federal and state funds. The county uses the funds to provide the services to residents.

- Department of Environmental Protection—  
Protects and restores the natural resources of Montgomery County. Their work includes energy, biodiversity, air quality, light pollution, landscaping, pollution, trees, and forests.
- Department of Public Works and Transportation—  
Coordinates and manages the county's recycling program.
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning—  
Collaboration between Montgomery and Prince George's counties to develop and operate the public park systems and provide land-use planning (created in 1927).

**[www.mncppc.org/](http://www.mncppc.org/)**

#### Sources:

American Lung Association. State of the Air, 2005.  
[www.stateoftheair.org/](http://www.stateoftheair.org/)  
Clean Air Task Force. Diesel Soot Health Impacts, 2005.  
[www.catf.us/](http://www.catf.us/)  
Scorecard: The Pollution Information Site.  
[www.scorecard.org/index.tcl](http://www.scorecard.org/index.tcl)



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# Hunger



It's easy to think of hunger as a problem in other countries. The United States is too wealthy a nation to have people who can't afford to buy enough food, right? Wrong. Hunger is a very real problem even in our own backyard, Montgomery County,

Maryland. The problem of hunger includes more than people who have no way of obtaining food, such as the homeless and jobless. It also includes people who are unable to obtain enough food for a healthy life. This is especially a problem for children, who need nutritious foods in order to grow and develop properly.

The number of people who struggle to get enough food for a healthy life is growing in our county for many reasons. One key reason is that the cost of living, —what it takes to pay for housing, clothing, transportation, and food—keeps going up in Montgomery County. When a family's rent goes up, there is less money available for food. Food stamps, provided by the federal government, help the poorest of families get food. However, most people in danger of hunger in Montgomery County make too much money to qualify for food stamps, but still not enough to live adequately in this county. The answer for many people has been to turn to nonprofit organizations for help, such as local churches and food banks. Clearly, government and citizens are working together to address the problem of hunger in Montgomery County.

## *Montgomery County Hunger Statistics*

- One in four families is in danger of hunger. (They earn less than \$60,341 a year, the amount estimated needed to live without assistance in Montgomery County.)
- One in four students in MCPS is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

- Close to 10 percent of elderly residents are among the poorest residents in the county, living on less than \$18,850 a year.
- In 2005, Manna Food Center distributed food to 67,088 people, and half of them were children. They reported that this was an increase of 9 percent since 2004, and expect another 10 percent increase in 2006.

## *The Problem of Hunger*

Not having enough to eat may cause—

- school absences,
- lower grades,
- poor health,
- discipline problems, and
- depression.

Hungry elderly are—

- at risk for worsening health problems and diseases,
- often unable to prepare food on their own, and
- likely to have limited access to obtaining food.

## *What's Being Done?*

### **Local Nonprofit Organizations**

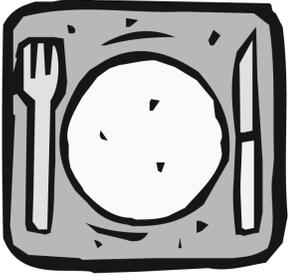
The following nonprofit organizations and others can be found on the Montgomery County Volunteer Center website, accessed through the MCPS Student Service Learning website, [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org).

- Manna Food Center—  
Distributes boxes of fresh, nonperishable food to families in need as well as food to soup kitchens, homeless shelters, group homes, and low-income housing communities.
- Shepherd's Table Soup Kitchen—  
Services include hot meals, clothing, showers, counseling, mobile medical, psychiatric, mental health, legal counseling, veterans outreach, and an eye clinic.



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## Hunger, *continued*



### **Montgomery County Government**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

Many of the programs the county has in place are operated with the use of federal and state funds. The county uses the funds to provide services to residents.

- **Food Stamps** —  
Households earning less than \$18, 850 may obtain stamps to purchase food.
  
- **Free and Reduced-Price Meals System (FARMS)** —  
The Montgomery County Public Schools ensures that all students, regardless of family income, are able to purchase meals at school.
  
- **Senior Nutrition Program**—  
Meals are served to seniors at locations across the county. Those who are unable to travel may have their meals delivered. Nutritional counseling is also provided.



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# Homelessness



Have you ever met a homeless person? Or someone who used to be homeless?

Chances are you probably have and just didn't know it! Homelessness is a problem that affects

thousands of people in Montgomery County each year. People can become homeless for many reasons. The main reason people become homeless is they do not have enough money to pay rent. This can happen to a family when one parent loses his/her job or becomes too sick to work. It can happen when the cost of rent goes up, but a family's income stays the same. Some women become homeless when they leave an abusive relationship, often taking their children with them. Other people become homeless when they are released from prison or from drug rehabilitation centers. Ready to begin their lives again, they reenter society, but have no place to go.

The needs of homeless people are complex. They often need more than just a place to sleep. Most homeless people need jobs, food, clothing, medical care, and counseling. Just building more homeless shelters with beds for sleeping is not enough. The homeless system of Montgomery County provides services to help people avoid becoming homeless, help those who are homeless, and support those who have recently ended their homelessness. There are many nonprofit organizations in the county that also provide shelter and other services for the homeless. Many of them work not only to provide immediate help to families and individuals who are homeless, but also to change laws to avoid the problems that cause homelessness.

## *Montgomery County Homeless Statistics*

- More than 1,500 people are homeless each day, more than 300 of them are children.
- Each year more than 4,500 people receive help from the homeless system in the county.
- 40% have been homeless for at least 1 year, 25 percent from 1–6 months.
- The average stay in a shelter is 66 days.
- 23 percent of the homeless are between 4 and 17 years old.
- Most homeless people also have poor health due to lack of medical care and proper nutrition.
- 25 percent of homeless people in the United States have jobs.
- A person working full time must earn more than \$18.00 per hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment in the county. Minimum wage is \$6.15 per hour.

## *The Problem of Homelessness*

- Once a person or family becomes homeless, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to regain housing and stability.
- Losing a home may also mean losing a job because transportation is no longer convenient or possible.
- A person or family may lose many possessions after becoming homeless, including furniture, clothing, and toys.
- Homelessness often makes mental and physical health issues worse because access to medical care becomes more difficult or impossible to attain.

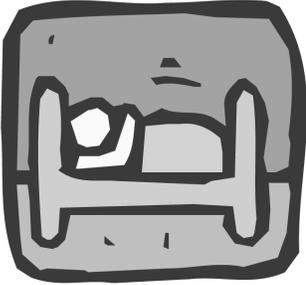
## *What is Being Done?*

### **Local Nonprofit Organizations**

The following nonprofit organizations, and others, can be found on the Montgomery County Volunteer Center website, which may be accessed through the MCPS Student Service Learning website, [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org).

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## Homelessness, continued



- **Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless—**  
Provides shelter, financial assistance, and counseling for people who are homeless. Works with local, state, and federal government to change the conditions that cause homelessness.
- **Bethesda House—**  
Provides temporary housing, meals, and counseling. Serves only males with mental illness.
- **Dorothy Day Place—**  
Provides transitional housing, meals, and counseling for women.
- **Greentree Shelter—**  
Provides emergency housing (46 beds), employment counseling, child care services, parent education, and meals.
- **Helping Hands Shelter—**  
Provides emergency shelter, meals, and counseling (24 beds) for women and children.
- **The Open Door—**  
Transitional housing for youth ages 12–17 (6 beds), food, and counseling.

### **Montgomery County Government**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

Many county programs are operated with the use of federal and state funds. The county uses the funds to provide the services to residents.

- **Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services—** provides services through a variety of programs including the following:
  - **Transitional Services.** Help for families who demonstrate potential for self-sufficiency (able to provide for themselves) within two years.
  - **Family Self-sufficiency.** Provides subsidized housing for families who show potential for self-sufficiency within five to seven years.
  - **Rental Assistance.** Subsidizes rental costs of low-income families and elderly and disabled people.
  - **Shelter services.** Provides emergency shelter for the homeless.

Sources:

Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless. Homelessness in Montgomery County: Beginning to end 2002–2012. [www.mcch.net](http://www.mcch.net)  
Department of Human Resources. Snap Shot 2004 Montgomery County. [www.dhr.state.md.us](http://www.dhr.state.md.us).



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# Vandalism



You see it all over school, on desks, table tops, walls, and especially in the bathrooms. It is so common, many students don't even think of it as a crime. What is this? Vandalism.

The most common form of juvenile (under age 18) vandalism is graffiti, but there are many other types of vandalism too. Vandalism is defined as any deliberate act that destroys or damages private or public property.

Some people think of vandalism as a “victimless crime.” In other words, it doesn't hurt anyone. However, all crime hurts someone in some way, even vandalism. Think of the person who owns or takes care of the property that is damaged. It might cost him/her money to repair or replace the item. Smashing mailboxes with baseball bats might only damage the mailbox, but the homeowner now has to buy a new mailbox.

What about public property? Who is hurt when the flowers in the local park are torn up or graffiti is spray-painted on the blacktop at an elementary school where children play? Even though this was public property, people are still affected by the crime. Local government must replace the flowers and clean up the graffiti. That costs money that could go to other programs that help people. The people who enjoy the park and the children at the school may now feel afraid to use the park or playground. They may be angry and upset about what was done to an area they used to enjoy.

Vandalism should not be treated as a harmless prank. It should be treated for what it is—a crime that hurts the whole community.

## *National Juvenile Vandalism Statistics*

- More than 5.8 million households experienced vandalism in 2003.
- The cost of school vandalism in 1990 was estimated at \$600 million.
- Three out of 10 high school students had property stolen or were victims of vandalism in 1997.
- 44% of all vandalism is committed by people under 18.
- Female arrests for vandalism have risen from 8% to 12% of all arrests for vandalism since 1994.

## *The Problem of Juvenile Vandalism*

Juvenile vandalism has the following effects on a community:

- Costs thousands of dollars each year.
- Destroys and damages places meant to be enjoyed by many.
- The loss of materials, facilities, and equipment can mean other people can no longer use or enjoy them.
- Communities and schools with high rates of vandalism often lose community pride and respect.
- Experimenting with juvenile vandalism can lead youth to attempt more dangerous acts of vandalism based on a disrespect for property, including arson, breaking and entering, shoplifting, and stealing.

## *What's Being Done?*

### **Local Nonprofit Organizations**

GRaffiti ABatement Partners, Inc. (GRAB)  
[www.graffitifree.org/](http://www.graffitifree.org/).

- GRAB—a nonprofit private-public partnership. Community, business, and government are working together to eliminate graffiti vandalism in Montgomery County through eradication, education, and enforcement strategies.

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## Vandalism, continued



- **Street Law**

[www.streetlaw.org](http://www.streetlaw.org)

Originally founded to support law-related education, Street Law now has several outstanding programs to support safe schools and communities. The curriculum Teens, Crime, and the Community addresses many issues, including vandalism, and what students can do about it in their schools and neighborhoods.

- **Montgomery County Government**

Many of the programs the county has in place are operated with the use of federal and state funds.

The county uses the funds to provide services to residents.

- **Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

This department provides services through a variety of programs, including the

- **Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program.** This program offers support to victims of many different kinds of crimes, including vandalism. Victims may receive counseling, assistance with the judicial process for reporting and testifying about the crime, and assistance with monetary needs as a result of the vandalism.

- **Montgomery County Public Schools, Division of School Plant Operations**

[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolplantops/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolplantops/)

This department in MCPS is responsible for repairing damage to school property and removing graffiti.



# People with Disabilities



What would it be like to be invisible? It might seem fun at first, but think a minute. No one would say hello to you.

No one would help you when you needed it. People would not even think about you. Well, for some residents of Montgomery County, this scenario might actually sound familiar. People with disabilities often feel as if they are “invisible.” People often ignore them, pretend they don’t see them, and avoid making eye contact with them. When a person with a disability needs help, those around often walk away or pretend not to notice.

Who are the people with disabilities? What challenges do they face? Why do some people treat them as if they’re invisible?

People with disabilities in Montgomery County are children and adults who have physical or mental handicaps that make a “normal” life difficult. They might have blindness, deafness, or use a wheelchair. Some people have mental disabilities such as Down’s syndrome or autism. These disabilities make them think and react to things around them differently than nondisabled people might. Some people are born with disabilities. Others acquire them later in life due to diseases or injuries from car accidents, falls, or even war.

People with disabilities face many challenges in life. Often things we take for granted can be huge obstacles and challenges for them. It may be difficult for them to find jobs that they are able to perform. They may have trouble getting a driver’s license or renting or owning a home. Just because a person has a disability, however, doesn’t mean he or she can’t do these things. Often, it just means they need extra support or help. For instance a person who is blind will have difficulty getting to places. He or she can’t drive, and riding the bus is also too difficult, as is knowing where

the bus stop is and when they have arrived at their destination and need to get off. Although it is difficult, it is not impossible.

Sometimes people are uncomfortable around one with a disability. Usually this is because they don’t know how to act or they are afraid. They may have negative stereotypes about people who are disabled and prefer to avoid them. It is important for people to learn the truth about the disabled. One of the best ways to do this is to get to know people with disabilities. Just because a person has a disability doesn’t mean he or she is not smart, funny, or interesting. Just like with everyone else, you shouldn’t judge people before you get to know them.

## *Montgomery County Statistics*

- 12.3 percent of Montgomery County residents have a disability.
- 32.7 per cent of the elderly (age 65 or older) in Montgomery County have a disability.

## *National Disability Statistics*

- Nearly one in five Americans over the age of 5 has a disability.
- 25 million Americans have difficulty walking 1 mile or climbing 10 stairs or used some sort of walking aid (wheelchair, cane, etc.).
- 14.3 Americans have a mental disability such as Alzheimer’s disease.

## *The Impact of Disabilities on People*

- 22% of students with disabilities drop out of high school.
- 12% of Americans with disabilities receive university degrees—about half as many as Americans with no disabilities.
- Close to 70% of disabled Americans are unemployed or work part time.
- Three times as many Americans with disabilities live in poverty compared with those without disabilities.
- Only 34% of Americans with disabilities report that they are satisfied with their lives.



*What's Being Done?*

**Local Nonprofit Organizations**

The following nonprofits and others can be found on the Montgomery County Volunteer Center website, which can be accessed through the MCPS

Student Service Learning website, [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org).

- The ARC of Montgomery County— Provides the supports necessary for the disabled to participate fully in their communities. Programs are available for children and adults, including residential homes; job assistance; counseling for families; and exciting, fun programs geared to people with disabilities.
- Disabled Sports USA— Provides the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to gain confidence and dignity through participation in sports, recreation, and related educational programs.
- Community Support Services— Provides high-quality, community-based services to children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities. Individuals are supported in school, work, home, and their community.

**Montgomery County Government**

Many of the programs the county has in place operate through use of federal and state funds. The county uses these funds to provide the services to residents.

- Montgomery County Public Schools [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentinfo/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentinfo/)
  - Parent Information and Training Center— The center is a resource for parents and families of students with disabilities in MCPS. Parents can learn about services the county provides to students with disabilities, the rights they have as parents, and how to be a strong advocate for their children.

- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

This department provides services through a variety of programs including the following:

- Aging and Disability Services— Provides Montgomery County's elderly and those with disabilities with the means to remain safe, healthy, and self-sufficient.
- Community Support Network— Provides services and support to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

See the *Disability Network Directory* for a full list of programs and supports offered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Sources:

National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey on Disabilities. Released 2004. [www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org).

U.S. Census Bureau. Facts for Features. "12th Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)" [www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2002/cb02ff11.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2002/cb02ff11.html).



# Choosing A Community Need

Directions.

Use the tables below to evaluate each community need represented on the posters created by your classmates. Remember, you are evaluating the need, not the poster.

After evaluating each need, you will choose the one you think your class should address through its service-learning project. The one you choose does not have to be the most serious need, but be prepared to defend your choice.

Community need	
Number of people impacted	
Why is the need a problem for Montgomery County?	
Rate the seriousness of the need Scale of 1–4 (1 = not very serious, 4 = very serious)	

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## Session 2

# Local Government and Citizens Work Together

### Materials

- Transparency copy of three types of service
- Student copies of *Research Guide Sheet*
- Transparency copy of *Research Guide Sheet*

### Suggested Time

Two days

These sessions do not have to follow immediately after the previous two sessions.

### Research Central

Set up a web page on your school's website with links to the sites students may visit.

Use the websites noted on each issue handout and on the website supplement provided on pages 29 and 30.

### Overview of SSL Session 2: Preparation

After students sample the five community needs from the previous session, they learn which community need they will focus on for their service project. Students learn about the three types of service and choose how they would like to address the issue as a class. Students conduct research on the issue to learn more about why it is a need in the community and how the county government addresses the need.

This session focuses on helping students gain more information about the issue and what may be done to support the work of the county government. This may take the form of Internet research at preselected websites (see the list provided for each issue), reading articles about the issue provided by the teacher, or hearing a guest speaker discuss the issue. The directions below support using the Internet to research additional information. This will likely take two class periods.

**1. Engaging Students**—Announcing the Issue and Learning About Types of Service. Tell students which issue the class will be focusing on for its service project. Explain that they will work in groups to research more information about the issue and brainstorm possible service activities that address that issue.

Direct students to record in their student service journal (SSJ) the following three terms: direct service, indirect service, advocacy. Post the handout Three Types of Service to review with students the three types of service learning and record definitions. They should be familiar with these from Grades 6 and 7, but will probably need a review.

**2. Conducting the Research**—Direct students into research teams of four and distribute copies of the Research Guide Sheet. Each team should research to learn more information about the issue and what different groups (both governmental and nonprofit) are doing to address the issue. Consider assigning different websites to different groups.

**3. Sharing Information**—Post on the overhead a transparency of the Research Guide Sheet and use student responses to fill in the sheet, being sure to hear from each of the groups that conducted research. Direct students to add any information they did not already have on their own sheets.

**4. Choosing a Service Activity**—Direct each group to brainstorm possible direct, indirect, and/or advocacy projects they could conduct related to the topic they researched. Post ideas on the board without evaluating or judging them. Direct students to vote on which service activity they would most like to complete as a class, keeping in mind the feasibility of the projects. All final decisions, of course, are up to you as the teacher. You may wish to provide parameters for the possible activities, or offer several options of your own.

# How Do People Help?

## There are Three Types of Service

### *Direct action—*

This involves students meeting face to face with the recipients of their service. Activities may include tutoring, visiting children in hospitals, serving at food kitchens, or visiting residents in homeless shelters.

### *Indirect action—*

This involves activities where there is no direct contact with the service recipients. Activities may include collecting food, clothing, or toiletry items for distribution to people in need.

### *Advocacy action—*

This involves supporting social or political issues of interest. Activities may include lobbying the legislature about public issues, participating in community events, or participating in letter-writing campaigns.

# Website Resource Supplement

## Hunger

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### *Kid to Kid*

Kid to Kid has a website designed to give children the opportunity to help other children who lack the things we take for granted every day—like food, clothing, and shelter. The site may offer suggestions for service projects appropriate for students.

[www.servicelearning.org/static/link/pages/1181.htm](http://www.servicelearning.org/static/link/pages/1181.htm)

### *Each One–Teach One, Inc.*

A California-based nonprofit organization that fights hunger using government and nonprofit resources. The site contains a lot of useful information about hunger in America.

[www.each1-teach1.org/HungerinAmerica.asp](http://www.each1-teach1.org/HungerinAmerica.asp)

### *National Hunger Awareness Day*

Now in its fifth year, this day serves as a platform for hunger-relief organizations to raise awareness about hunger in America. The website includes information on hunger and ways to support National Hunger Awareness Day.

[www.hungerday.org/content/index.php](http://www.hungerday.org/content/index.php)

### *America's Second Harvest*

The Nation's Food Bank Network is the nation's largest charitable hunger-relief organization. The website contains lots of information about hunger in America and what the organization is doing to help the hungry in America.

[www.secondharvest.org/](http://www.secondharvest.org/)

## Homelessness

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### *The National Coalition for the Homeless*

A national network of people who are currently experiencing or have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community and faith-based service providers, and others committed to changing the nature of homelessness in America.

[www.nationalhomeless.org/index.html](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/index.html)

### *Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc.*

This organization seeks to reduce substandard housing by providing a hand up rather than a handout to help families realize their dream of home ownership. Working in partnership with families, Habitat volunteers build affordable housing in Montgomery County, Maryland.

[www.habitat-mc.org/](http://www.habitat-mc.org/)

### *Community Ministry of Montgomery County*

This organization's mission is to pursue social justice, with an emphasis on identifying and meeting the needs of the poor by leading and engaging Montgomery County's faith communities in service, education, and advocacy.

[www.communityministymc.org/](http://www.communityministymc.org/)

### *The National Alliance to End Homelessness*

A nonprofit organization whose mission is to mobilize the nonprofit, public, and private sectors of society in an alliance to end homelessness. The website includes fact sheets for kids on homelessness.

[www.endhomelessness.org/](http://www.endhomelessness.org/)

## Vandalism

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### *Police Information Sheet*

This website includes an information sheet from the Bristol Township of Pennsylvania Police Department. This site includes information and tips on how to avoid vandalism and what to do if you are a victim.  
[www.btpolice.com/vandalism.htm](http://www.btpolice.com/vandalism.htm)

### *Graffiti Hurts®*

The Graffiti Hurts® program is dedicated to raising awareness about the harmful effects of graffiti vandalism on communities.  
[www.graffitihurts.org/](http://www.graffitihurts.org/)

### *NoGraf*

A dynamic resource that provides background and best practice information for those involved in combatting graffiti vandalism.  
[www.nograffiti.com/](http://www.nograffiti.com/)

## Environment

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### *Program Open Space*

A nationally recognized program that provides dedicated funds for Maryland's state and local parks and conservation areas.  
[www.dnr.state.md.us/pos.asp](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/pos.asp)

### *Green Spaces for DC*

This organization helps to make the nation's capitol a truly great city by creating, protecting, and improving public parks and other open spaces.  
[www.greenspacesfordc.org/](http://www.greenspacesfordc.org/)

### *Keep America Beautiful, Inc.*

The nation's largest nonprofit community-improvement and educational organization, with three areas of focus—litter prevention, beautification and community improvement, and waste reduction. Check out the toolkit for Community Change and the programs on Green Spaces.  
[www.kab.org/kabtoolbox/toolbox.asp?id=374&rid=375](http://www.kab.org/kabtoolbox/toolbox.asp?id=374&rid=375)

## People with Disabilities

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### *Jubilee Association of Maryland*

This organization offers services for adults with developmental disabilities by providing group home living arrangements and support services. It promotes dignity, worth, growth, and development of individuals with disabilities.  
[www.jubleemd.org](http://www.jubleemd.org)

### *Fidos for Freedom, Inc.*

Offers training and places assistance dogs with mobility- or hearing-impaired individuals.  
[www.fidosforfreedom.org](http://www.fidosforfreedom.org)

### *Maryland Resources for People with Visual Impairments*

American Council of the Blind of Maryland is one of the affiliates of the American Council of the Blind. They advocate for access to meaningful employment, public transportation, literacy, health care, information, and community life.  
[www.linc.org/resvis.html](http://www.linc.org/resvis.html)

### *National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders*

This organization is part of the National Institutes of Health. It conducts research in hearing, balance, smell, taste, voice, speech, and language.  
<http://nidcd.nih.gov/about>

# Research Guide Sheet for Service Learning Activity

*What I Found Out About...* \_\_\_\_\_  
(topic)

Information about the problem (statistics, stories, explanations, descriptions).

What is being done about the problem (list individuals, nonprofit organizations, and/or government programs and what they are doing to address the problem)?

Brainstorm ideas of service-learning projects your class could do to address the problem (direct, indirect, or advocacy).

*Materials*

- Group sets of Reflection Questions
- Student copies of MCPS Form 560-51: *Student Service Learning Activity Verification*

MCPS Form 560-51: *The Student Service Learning Activity Verification* may be obtained from the SSL coordinator or from the website, [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org)

*Oral vs. Written Reflection*

In groups of more than 20, oral reflections may take the place of written reflections. However, one of the goals of this lesson is to familiarize students with the correct form and how to complete it. In high school they will have to complete the form independently.

*Overview of SSL Session 3: Action and Reflection*

Students complete their service activity if it is appropriate to be done in a classroom setting (such as writing advocacy letters, creating Public Service Announcements, or posters for raising awareness of an issue, etc.). The session concludes with students reflecting on their service using MCPS Form 560-51: *Student Service Learning Activity Verification*.

No specific directions are provided for this portion of the class period, since this session will depend on what is chosen for the service activity. The directions below focus on the reflection process that is required for a complete service-learning experience.

**1. Debriefing Service Learning in Small Groups**—Divide the class into six small groups and choose one student to be the group facilitator. Give the handout Reflection Questions to the facilitator. This part of the reflection is very important. It allows students to think about what they have accomplished, share aspects of the experience they enjoyed or were dissatisfied with, and think about their role in the community. It is an important processing strategy that will help students before they complete the written reflection statement.

**2. Writing Reflection Statements**—Distribute MCPS Form 560-51: *SSL Activity Verification* to students. Explain that this form is used whenever they complete service-learning hours. After middle school, their hours will be earned on their own rather than in class projects (some exceptions apply). This form is submitted to their school's student service learning coordinator to record their hours on their report cards.

Consider modeling an appropriate reflection statement before asking students to complete their own reflection. A sample is provided. Provide students time to complete the reflection statement, either in class or as homework. Collect the forms and submit to your school's student service learning coordinator to be filed in the students' SSL folders that will follow them to high school at the end of the year.

Reflection Questions

1. What did you enjoy most about the service-learning project? Why?
2. What did you enjoy the least? Why?
3. What would you do to improve the service project?
4. What did you learn about how local government and citizens work together through this project?

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This document is available in an alternate format, upon request, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, by contacting the Public Information Office, at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 112, Rockville, MD 20850, or by phone at 301-279-3391 or via the Maryland Relay at 1-800-735-2258.

Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration in communicating with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) may contact Interpreting Services in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program at 301-517-5539.

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ROCKVILLE, MD

Published by the Office of Communications and Family Outreach  
for the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs  
0099.09 • EDITORIAL, GRAPHICS & PUBLISHING SERVICES • 400 • 9.08

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