



2017-2018 School Year Unity Projects

ANNUAL MIX IT UP DAY: All Schools

Each year, Unity partner schools participate in a nationwide day of inclusion and bravery known as Mix It Up Day. Students make it their mission to seek out other students who they don't already know and share a meal with them. The cafeterias are filled with music and "getting to know you conversations" as Unity Club members and other student leaders encourage their peers to step outside their comfort zones and into the broader community.

FIRST ANNUAL UNITY CARES PROJECT: South Mecklenburg High School

This year, the goal was to add more service-learning to the Unity Club curriculum by facilitating the first annual Unity Cares Project. South Meck, one of our most dedicated Unity Clubs, stepped up to lead in this endeavor. After reaching out to Gracious Hands Housing, a transitional housing facility for women and children in Charlotte, we found that five children would be residing there over the holiday. We quickly put together a wish-list with the help of parents and program directors, and students were able to successfully provide all items on the list and more. Two days before Christmas, club members visited the housing facility to deliver the gifts. This project sparked discussions about homelessness in Charlotte and was eye-opening for many students.

WHAT'S YOUR 17? PROJECT: South Mecklenburg High School

On Valentine's Day of this year, Unity students watched in horror as coverage from Parkland, Florida flooded news outlets. Both South Meck and Butler High Schools were so deeply moved and shaken by what they saw that they decided to take a stand. South Meck's Unity Club decided to honor the 17 students lost in the tragedy with a project called "What's Your 17". With this project, they invited students to make a promise to perform an action 17 times that would positively affect the community around them. Students wrote messages such as "I will let 17 people skip me in line" and "I will give to 17 homeless people". These messages of humility and humanity were then taped to lockers and left to light up a main hallway of the school with hope.

HOW MANY MORE? PROJECT: Butler High School

Butler High's Unity Club took a different approach in response to the Parkland tragedy. Students were visibly upset and worried. These feelings of exasperation prompted them to take a political stand. They began voicing their opinions about gun laws in our country and the losses that they were taking as children. Students wanted to facilitate a walkout, but after approaching the principal with the idea they realized a walkout was risky for students. Instead, Club members created a program with more depth. Alongside other clubs at the school, students put together an hour and a half long program at the football stadium. They left their classes and gathered together to pay their respects to the students lost, registered their peers to vote, contacted legislators, and used their voices to stress the importance of being a catalyst for change.

THE STUDENT HUNGER PROJECT: Myers Park and Mallard Creek High School

This project was a joint effort between Myers Park and Mallard Creek High School, after students were shocked to find out how many of their peers were homeless. Students, teachers, and parents decided to host a large "yard sale" to benefit their classmates in need. Shoppers could either negotiate prices or take certain items for any donation amount while supporting an amazing cause and idea. The hope is that this will become an annual event.