

Anser Junior High Story Human Home Expedition

Junior High students engaged in a yearlong expedition around the theme **Story Human Home**. Through exploring ideas related to this theme in each of the content areas, students develop a deep understanding of what their story is, others' stories, what connects us as humans, and where and how we find home. In past years, Science students have explored scientist biographies and what makes us human through DNA and the mapping of our own human histories. In Spanish, students have explored ways to tell their own stories and stories of other through our basic language skills. They also explore what "home" means in cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. In Social Studies, students have explored these topics through the lens of African history, from the African Apartheid to experiences African refugees face in Boise. In Language Arts, they have looked at other stories to write their own Home story and explored the ways we connect through and the boundaries we put up for home via immigrant and refugee experiences. Application of math skills in the arena of data analysis and data representation supports the understanding of these themes through a quantitative lens. These intertwining areas of study create the critical thinking skills and broader perspective that a junior high student needs to be successful. This curriculum is enhanced by the use of expert speakers, field work, labs, and real products to engage learning. Past products have included poetry books, DNA extraction mobiles, the Genographic Project, and self-written and performed plays.

In 2016-2017 **Story Human Home** took a new direction as a result of a grant received from Capital Educators. This grant allowed our Science, Spanish and Social Studies classes to work through a yearlong study of how food systems and immigration have impacted each other through the study of the rise of agriculture, modern American food systems, migrant agricultural workers and the impact of our food choices on the environment.

Feeding Our Minds:

Soil, Food and Community - What story does our food tell us? What is the true cost of our food? How does food makes us human?

The kickoff event began as the science classroom was transformed into a clay studio for a week while designs were attempted and revised, ultimately resulting in 110 beautiful and unique clay soup bowls. Throughout the fall, winter and spring we read "The Omnivore's Dilemma", welcomed guest speakers on topics including agricultural sustainability, local agriculture systems, the migrant worker experience, agricultural workers civil rights movements, and the impact of agriculture on human migration. We planted native Idaho grass seeds for our outdoor classroom area, and fed food scraps to our worm bin.

The culminating event was a dinner and informative food system tour with over 350 people attending, including families, community members, and the Garden City Mayor. Students taught their families about food systems, showed them infographics designed using data from our anchor text, and ate dinner from the bowls they had made.

Each of the meals shared was prepared by students with each ingredient tracked, labeled, and connected to one of the four food systems. In the weeks prior to the event, students contacted over 25 local businesses and farms for donations; the highlight of this particular endeavor was the final tally of 1,300 fresh local rolls donated! One of the most important aspects of the overall project was that the final event was brainstormed, designed, and presented entirely by students. No adult ever got on the mic to keep the event flowing, and students were responsible for everything from writing and organizing informative panels, designing table settings, cooking the soups and chili, and setting up their bowls and food manifesto statements in a gallery form. Below are some pictures that document our work throughout the year.

Anser wishes to recognize instructors Allyson Maynard and Dani Zeplin for conceiving of this year long interdisciplinary study that wove together many facets of our education program. This study was a unique, at times controversial, in depth study of the environment, agriculture and immigration that not only engaged our students on a deep level, but empowered them to be a power for change in the world.





