

Renaissance Academy students volunteer in community

75 students take part in Service Learning Day

By ERIN WALDEN Dec 1, 2017



From left, freshman Julian Harris and sophomores Alexis Elder and Hannah Berger from the Renaissance Academy prepare a pan of grilled cheeses at the Jeffersonville Soup Kitchen in the file photo.

File Photo By Josh Hicks



CLARKSVILLE — Rather than studying English or taking tests, a handful of students from the Renaissance Academy spent Friday hard at work painting Popsicle sticks and gluing pipe-cleaner smiles on snowmen.

Those students were at Riverview Village, a nursing home off Eastern Boulevard, spending time with the residents and lending a hand in making holiday crafts.

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Community service is an integral part of the New Tech School model, to which Renaissance Academy adheres, and students who volunteer 100 service hours during their high school education can earn a "New Tech" seal on their diploma.

Volunteering also teaches collaboration and problem-solving, soft skills that employers look for in workers, Allred said.

At Riverview Village, the residents benefit from the interaction as much as the students.

“It’s important on so many levels, especially intergenerational activities, because it’s what they would be doing if they were at home — socializing with their family, their church family or friends,” Sandra Bottom, activities director for Riverview Village, said. “Their lives just continue here even though they’re not in their own homes.”

These visits are especially vital during the holiday season, Bottom said, as seasonal depression can affect anyone, but those in a nursing facility can suffer greater. “It has the power to alleviate depression, gives them a purpose... It just takes your mind off stuff for a while,” she said.

Carson Butner, a sophomore, enjoyed spending time with the seniors because they have “funny jokes and stories.”

For Na’Mya Duvall, volunteering shows that “no matter what happens or what is going on in the world, coming together and helping each other out in some way is important.”

Students also volunteered at the Jeffersonville Art Commission, Jeffersonville Soup Kitchen and the other buildings in the Clarksville school district.

"They love it. And the really interesting thing is who you would immediately think just love anything that gets them out of class take this seriously," Allred said. "They come back full of smiles and talking a mile a minute about what they did."