

COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING

Projects that make a difference!



A CATALOGUE OF CSL PROJECTS FOR INSPIRATION



learnquebec.ca

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What is Community Service Learning?

Community Service Learning is a hands-on, project-based learning approach where students engage with real-life community issues. By actively contributing to meaningful projects, they apply classroom knowledge to solve real problems and make a positive impact in the community.

This approach helps students achieve academic and social education goals while also developing subject-specific competencies, cross-curricular skills, and abilities related to the broad areas of learning. It's a powerful way to connect learning with real-world experience and responsible citizenship.

Why Community Service Learning?

We have observed that students appear more engaged when involved in authentic, community-connected projects. . Reflect for a moment, when do you see your students most engaged in learning?

Volunteering vs. Community Service Learning

If students collect trash off a riverbank, they are providing a valued service to the community as volunteers. If students collect trash from a riverbank, analyze their findings with a local fisherman, and share the results with residents, they are engaging in Community Service Learning.

Benefits of Community Service Learning

- School staff have noticed that students often show greater enthusiasm on days that include CSL project activities.
- Community partners provide specialized knowledge/expertise/resources
- CSL projects can be embedded into most subjects at every grade level
- CSL projects are seen to provide opportunities that align with a range of learning preferences

Recent research highlights that meaningful collaboration between schools and community partners enhances students' sense of belonging.

Authentic approaches such as Community Service Learning (CSL) are particularly impactful in French as a Second Language context, where using French in purposeful, community-based situations strengthens confidence and communicative competence.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the findings from a recent UQAM study examining the *Ma place est ici* initiative – a collection of CSL and classroom-based projects featuring local artists working alongside teachers to explore youth's sense of belonging within Quebec society."



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WHERE TO START?

To begin, CDAs are encouraged to explore and draw meaningful connections between the three categories to help guide the development of their project.

PEOPLE TO KEEP IN MIND

Seniors
—
Local organizations Local businesses Farmers
—
Alumni Parents
—
Clubs & groups

Education for Reconciliation Environment Life Skills Politics Travel Social
—

Justice Local History
—

Current Affairs
—

Intergenerational projects Health & Wellness
—

Arts & Culture Literacy
—

English French Geography

TOPICS FOR INSPIRATION

Mathematics
—

Science & Technology
—

Arts Education
—

Physical Education & health
—

History & Citizenship Education
—

Ethics and Religious Culture Program

CURRICULUM TOPICS



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Authentic Writing

Subject Areas: English Language Arts and Français langue seconde

“The more real-life contexts we can provide in our classrooms for student reading and writing, the better. There is a close relationship between authentic literacy activities and improvement in reading and writing a variety of genres.” Literacy Today

Authentic writing connects students to real-world literacy tasks. As part of Community Service Learning (CSL), these activities allow students to apply their reading and writing skills in ways that benefit their communities, deepen learning, and foster social responsibility.

Through CSL, students experience the relevance of literacy by working on writing projects that address community needs, tell local stories, and promote social connection.

AUTHENTIC WRITING IN A CSL CONTEXT:

- Engages learners through purposeful, relevant writing
- Improves literacy across multiple genres and formats
- Builds community connection and cultural awareness
- Supports bilingualism through writing in both languages

STUDENTS FROM ELEMENTARY TO SECONDARY LEVELS WRITE AND PRODUCE:

- Personal and community letters (e.g., to local leaders or seniors)
- Lists, recipes, how-to guides for community gardens or events
- Poems and short stories capturing local experiences
- Picture books for early readers in the community
- Editorials and opinion pieces on youth concerns
- Event posters, advertisements, and social media copy
- Newsletters and blogs sharing school or community updates
- Scripts and recordings for podcasts or radio shows

EXAMPLES FROM CLC SCHOOLS:

- [C is for Coast](#) – Early literacy book developed by students
- [Up Next Recordings](#) – Student-led promotional media
- [Special Edition Community Newsletter](#) – Created by secondary students at Metis Beach School

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates appropriately • Uses creativity • Uses information • Students wrote real-life texts like blogs and newsletters, requiring communication and information processing skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Literacy • Citizenship and Community Life • Writing projects aimed to inform and engage the community, linking learning to public discourse.



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Unearth our Past:

Subject Areas: History, English Language Arts, Visual Arts

CLC Schools: Quebec High, New Carlisle High School and Laurentian Regional High School

Unearth Our Past is a powerful example of Community Service Learning (CSL) in action, bringing together students, educators, and community partners to explore local history through creative expression.

In partnership with **Blue Metropolis**, three CLCs – **Quebec High School, New Carlisle High School, and Laurentian Regional High School** – participated in this province-wide educational initiative. The program invited students to investigate **local cemeteries** in search of buried **heroes and role models** whose lives and legacies could inspire current and future generations.

This experiential learning journey led students to uncover untold stories, conduct historical research, and transform their findings into **original short dramatic presentations**, performed at their schools and in their communities. These performances fostered dialogue between students, families, and local citizens, reinforcing the importance of preserving and sharing local heritage.

As part of the project, **Blue Metropolis facilitated connections between schools and professional filmmakers**, guiding students in creating short films under the theme “Heroes in **My Backyard**.” These creative works not only showcased students’ learning, but also served as lasting contributions to their communities’ cultural memory.

Listen to a [CBC interview featuring students from Quebec High School](#) discussing their visit to **Mount Hermon Cemetery**, highlighting the meaningful impact of combining classroom learning with community-based exploration.

Unearth Our Past is a shining example of CSL: students engage with real-world issues, collaborate with community members, and contribute to the collective understanding of local history—all while developing skills in research, storytelling, and civic responsibility.

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unearth Our Past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises critical judgment • Solves problems • Communicates appropriately • Students researched historical figures and dramatized their stories, engaging in critical analysis and creative expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship and Community Life • Personal and Career Planning • Encouraged students to explore community history and develop future-ready communication skills.



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Feed Your Body, Heart, and Soul

Subject Area: Social Studies, Language Arts
CLC School: Netagamiou School, Chevery, QC

Teacher Marguerite Cox led a CSL project titled Feed Your Body, Feed Your Heart, Feed Your Soul, which wove together **Social Studies and Language Arts** through an engaging, hands-on experience rooted in community heritage and global citizenship.

What began as a simple idea—to gather traditional recipes and document the history of food in the remote community of **Chevery, Quebec**—quickly evolved into a rich, multi-layered learning experience. Primary students reached out to seniors and family members to gather cherished, old family recipes. This intergenerational exchange fostered storytelling, listening, and deepened students’ appreciation of local culture.

Inspired by their recipe collection, students rolled up their sleeves to bake the very recipes they had researched. With guidance and support, they launched a **student-run pop-up bakery** that served both students and staff. Through this entrepreneurial venture, learners developed practical skills in **cooking, kitchen safety, leadership, and teamwork**.

The heart of Community Service Learning came alive as students decided to donate the proceeds from their sales. Their compassionate action reached far beyond Chevery:

- ➔ They contributed to disaster relief in the Philippines following a devastating typhoon.
- ➔ They helped support a student’s education in Kenya through the Hilde Back Education Fund.
- ➔ They donated funds to aid the protection of endangered elephants in Kenya.

The students’ generosity also touched their own community. They visited local seniors, sharing baked goods and stories, strengthening community bonds and practicing empathy, kindness, and communication.

“The students learned so much... Leadership, mentoring, cooking, safety in the kitchen, compassion, writing, storytelling, listening skills—and most of all, they learned that it takes a team to make it all happen.”

— Marguerite Cox

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed Your Body, Heart and Soul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperates with others • Achieves potential • Adopts Health and Well-Being • Citizenship and Community effective work methods • Students collaborate on Life -Addressed nutrition, emotional wellness, and baking and fundraising, building teamwork and organizational skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Well-Being • Citizenship and Community Life • Addressed nutrition, emotional wellness, and altruistic values through community service.





Blanket Exercise

Subject Areas: History, Geography & ERC

CLC Schools: Howard S. Billings Regional High School, Chateaugay, QC

The **KAIROS Blanket Exercise** is a powerful **Community Service Learning (CSL)** activity designed to deepen understanding of Indigenous history in Canada. Rooted in the recommendations of the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, this interactive workshop addresses over 500 years of history—most of which is not taught in mainstream education.

In just 90 minutes, participants step into the roles of Indigenous peoples and explore key historical events, including pre-contact life, treaty-making, colonization, and resistance.

Blankets on the floor represent Turtle Island (Canada); as history unfolds, the space around participants changes, reflecting loss and displacement.

Guided by trained facilitators, participants engage through scripted narratives, role cards, and movement. The exercise is both emotional and educational—prompting critical reflection and empathy.

The experience concludes with a **talking circle-style debrief**, often led by an Indigenous elder. This reflective dialogue is essential for processing the activity and connecting it to themes of reconciliation, justice, and community responsibility.

By participating, students fulfill CSL goals through **active engagement, intercultural awareness, and meaningful dialogue** with Indigenous history and perspectives.

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blanket Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercises critical judgment Uses information Uses creativity Required reflection and empathy through role-play of Indigenous experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizenship and Community Life Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights Supported reconciliation and deeper understanding of Indigenous and civic rights.

Please note: Opinions on the Blanket Exercise may vary and its use can be considered controversial. CDAs should always consult their local Indigenous partners before proceeding,

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Food In Our School & Community

Subject Area: WOTP, Social Studies

CLC School: St Michael’s High School, Low, QC

When a local restaurant stopped providing school meals, students from the Work- Oriented Training Pathway (WOTP) at St. Michael’s School took action. As part of a Community Service Learning (CSL) initiative, they began preparing food twice a week for the school and made daily sandwiches for students in need.

Looking beyond their school, the students expanded their efforts to support seniors and shut-in community members. Using food by-products like chicken bones, they created soups and meals, offering nourishment and connection to those with limited mobility.

The project was fully integrated into the curriculum, allowing students to develop essential life and vocational skills such as:

- ➔ Safe food handling
- ➔ Working in a professional kitchen
- ➔ Planning and teamwork

Their teacher, Billy Boudreau, observed: *“The students are more engaged by projects, especially those that require much hands-on work. This project helped to allow for that to happen.”*

This CSL experience helped students grow not only in skill but in empathy, responsibility, and awareness of healthy choices. It stands as a strong example of how service learning empowers students to identify real needs, create meaningful solutions, and build stronger communities—while preparing for future work and life.

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food in Our School & Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopts effective work methods • Cooperates with others • Achieves potential • Students organized school meal programs, practicing responsibility and teamwork. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Well-Being • Citizenship and Community Life • Focused on nutrition, supporting peers, and caring for the community.





Grand Plants

Subject Areas: Français, langue seconde, Science, Arts and Citizenship

CLC School: Riverview Elementary School, Verdun, QC

The “Grand Plants” project at Riverview Elementary School engaged Cycle 2 students in a hands-on Community Service Learning (CSL) experience that combined environmental education with intergenerational connection. Students began by learning the basics of planting and gardening, developing curiosity and appreciation for plant life and sustainability. As their excitement grew, they invited their grandparents to join them at school, creating shared learning moments that strengthened family and community ties.

Through the project, students gained a deeper understanding of the importance of plants, how to care for them, and the broader environmental impacts of climate change. The experience also highlighted how simple gardening practices can build empathy and connection. Students were especially engaged—many amazed by how well their plants grew—and enjoyed spending meaningful time with their grandparents.

One standout moment was students’ shift in attitude toward composting. Some who were initially repelled by soil and worms became fascinated by how compost supports healthy plant growth. Their curiosity was sparked, and learning came to life through active participation in the school’s community garden.

“Grand Plants” clearly demonstrates the value of CSL: academic learning tied to meaningful service, fostering student engagement, environmental responsibility, and stronger community relationships.

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses information • Communicates appropriately • Uses creativity • Involved scientific learning, explaining plant growth, and promoting environmental stewardship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Awareness • Citizenship and Community Life • Fostered environmental consciousness and intergenerational relationships.



Slice of Life

Subject Areas: History, Français, langue seconde

CLC School: Pope Memorial Elementary School, Bury, QC

Slice of Life is a powerful example of how a local artifact can spark rich, meaningful learning that connects students to their community and the wider world. What began with a simple slice from a 109-year-old pine tree outside Pope Memorial Elementary in Bury, Quebec, grew into a cross-curricular Community Service Learning (CSL) project that engaged students in science, history, language, and civic life.

After counting the tree rings and discovering its age, students explored historical changes over the past century. Their teacher, Jocelyn Bennett, introduced a story about a thousand-year-old tree to inspire reflection. In French class, Celine Carbonneau invited students to bring in artifacts and write about them in French, later presenting their work to the community. This bilingual storytelling encouraged broader research into local and global history, as students and residents together voted on the most significant events of the past 109 years.

The project wove together science (tree aging), literacy (reading and writing), French (second-language expression), and social studies (local history and civic engagement). Students gained research and critical thinking skills, deepened their connection to place, and practiced active citizenship—all while making learning relevant and rooted in their own community.

Slice of Life demonstrates how Community Service Learning transforms curriculum into something living, collaborative, and deeply personal.

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slice of Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses creativity • Exercises critical judgment • Communicates appropriately • Used storytelling and artifact exploration to reflect on historical changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship and Community Life • Media Literacy • Encouraged civic pride and public communication through local history.



Music Through the Decades

Subject Areas: Music, Mathematics, English Language Arts & Français, langue seconde
CLC Schools: Centennial Park Elementary School & St. Willibrord, Châteauguay, QC

Music Through the Decades is a meaningful Community Service Learning (CSL) initiative that addresses senior isolation at the Mary-Elizabeth Residence in Châteauguay. Led by Moira Lemme (Centennial Park Elementary) and Melissa Ianniciello (St. Willibrord Elementary) of the New Frontiers School Board, this project connected students and seniors through music, stories, and shared experience.

Students began by interviewing seniors about the music that shaped their lives. These conversations not only honoured the seniors' memories but also helped students understand the emotional power of music. The data gathered was then brought into the classroom, where students created surveys and bar graphs to analyze musical trends— integrating math and critical thinking into the experience.

Teachers observed significant academic and personal growth. Even students typically less engaged with math became enthusiastic about calculating averages and interpreting results. As Ms. Lemme noted, "Projects like this lead to better understanding for students, especially typically lower-scoring students who can make connections and be excited about the work they are doing."

The project culminated in a heartfelt performance, as students sang the songs beloved by the seniors. In doing so, they not only brought joy to the residents but deepened their own sense of purpose, empathy, and community connection.

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Through the Decades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses information • Uses creativity • Cooperates with others • Combined data analysis with music, enhancing engagement and teamwork. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and Career Planning • Media Literacy • Explored seniors' life experiences while promoting social and analytical skills.



Students “GrEAU”-ing Organic crops with Hydroponic Garden

Subject Areas: Science & Technology

CLC School: Mecatina School, La Tabatière, QC

Faced with food insecurity and environmental concerns, students at Mecatina School turned a local challenge into an opportunity through GrEAU—a student-led hydroponic gardening initiative. They addressed the village’s reliance on expensive, low-quality imported produce by creating an indoor system that grows up to 600 plants in just 48 square feet.

Using organic, GMO-free seeds, they cultivated lettuce, chives, dill, and basil, supplying fresh, affordable greens weekly to local stores—quickly selling out and reducing the environmental impact of long-distance food transport.

GrEAU is a powerful Community Service Learning model, combining real-world service and deep academic learning:

- ➔ Service: Improved local food access and sustainability.
- ➔ Learning: Hands-on application of science, entrepreneurship, and environmental care.

CROSS-CURRICULAR INTEGRATION INCLUDED:

- ➔ Science/Environmental Studies: Sustainability, ecosystems, plant biology.
- ➔ Business: Budgeting, marketing, grants, and operations.
- ➔ Language Arts: Bilingual communication via websites and media.
- ➔ Civics: Food equity and rural resilience.

Beyond academics, students showed leadership, teamwork, and determination—working after school and through harsh weather. They built pride and civic responsibility by contributing meaningfully to their community.

GrEAU goes beyond gardening—it’s a blueprint for empowering youth, enriching education, and building stronger communities.

➔ [See Gr'EAU's website at greau.weebly.com](http://greau.weebly.com), for more photos, their proposals and additional details about the business.

PROJECT	CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES	BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students GrEAU-ing Crops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopts effective work methods • Uses information • Solves problems • Students built and managed a hydroponic garden, applying research and entrepreneurial thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Awareness • Health and Well-Being • Citizenship and Community Life • Advanced sustainability, food justice, and community service through innovative gardening.

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Feeling Inspired?

That's wonderful! At the end of this document, you'll find some helpful tools to get started with planning your next Community Service Learning (CSL) project. If you'd like the full-size versions of the appendix documents, just click the links provided.

Here are a few questions to help spark ideas:

- ➔ What topics get me excited?
- ➔ What are my students passionate about?
- ➔ Are there any needs or challenges in our community where students could make a difference?
- ➔ How can local partners help support and enrich student learning?

Keep in mind:

CSL projects are a great chance to bring together different parts of the curriculum—like subject-specific skills, cross-curricular competencies, and broad areas of learning—all through real-life, community-based experiences.

Need more ideas? You can check out other amazing CSL projects from across the CLC Network at clcpresents.blogspot.ca.

- Student Video: [Important To Us](#)
- LEARN's Community Service Learning - [Video](#)

