

USD

CAMPUS
COMPACT
CONTINUUMS
OF
SERVICE

Photo: The City Project



Greater Community as Educators for Social Justice

Helping Students Understand Their Purpose

In a time of continued focus on all things divisive and based in consumption and surface realities, educators are faced with greater responsibility to make the needs of our communities and our world more real and accessible to our young. In areas of service and learning, students need to be challenged not just to the “doing,” but to the “knowing.” By knowing I am referring to the lives with whom students come into contact with through their opportunities to serve. Community, meaning people, already exist and the transforming question revolves around, whether students are willing to open their lives to engaging with those in our communities, both local and global, to be more whole people themselves. When students understand themselves better in the context of our world, they defy the perpetuated oppressions of our world. “While there remains even one case of

discrimination in our societies, all of us remain oppressed, and so it is in the best interest of all that we educate ourselves in order to bring a greater justice, understanding and coexistence to our humanity . . .” Sara Dean, Seattle University. Such education, in my opinion, is called educating for solidarity. On trips across the U.S. border into Tijuana, Mexico, I have become more intentional with the statement that “I know it was (Spanish) class that brought you here, but I hope that it is not the reason that you (students) will return.” Solidarity is not necessarily something that simply occurs, it is a journey and a process. Service learning has the potential to nurture the student towards living in solidarity through good education on community issues and through solid reflection on how their experiences and relationships push them towards engaging in their community for social justice to evolve in our world.

For USD students, Chicano Park, and its community, has offered the opportunity to

work and grow through the use of successful elements of community as educators for social justice. The elements can be simply identified as; spirit of the approach, accountability of the students and the staff, understanding issues impacting community and reflection for the purpose of transformation towards lives that contribute to social justice and life long learning. Best practice; that we are examples of the work.

reading recs:

Tattoos on the Heart - Gregory Boyle

Floodlines - Jordan Flaherty

Development as Freedom - Amartya Sen

Let Your Life Speak - Parker Palmer

The art of reflection is making it a life discipline



SOLIDARITY

“Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage in it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose, and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed.” - Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach