

Service Learning Topics & Activities

The goal of adding an educational element to the La Puente Work Group experience is to provide a larger understanding of the issues that face the homeless and migrant populations of this rural area and exploring how various issues affect and contribute to the situations of these marginalized groups. It is also our hope that this extended exploration and discussion process will help make the experience more personal and enable participants to effect change in their local communities as well as continue to interact in their communities with an attitude of service. Some possible activities include visiting relevant organizations, small group discussion, reflection, and other hands on activities. Content of topics and activities are flexible and can be tailored to the interests and age of each group.

Immigration & Border Issues

Explore the life of an immigrant, documented or undocumented, including the economic and personal reasons that motivate immigration, in addition to larger policy motivations and effects. Other issues that will be addressed are the effects of immigration on the local community, the rights of immigrants, and the racial and economic contributors to these issues. Possible activities include visits to the Immigrant Resource Center and immigrant housing.

Gender Issues & Poverty

Explore how systemic gender inequalities contribute to the feminization of poverty and learn about domestic violence and its effects in the community. Work groups will discuss the power of language and gender roles that perpetuate these inequalities as well as brain storm on active ways to break the cycle. Possible activities include visiting Tu Casa, a local domestic violence intervention program.

Economic Issues, Hunger & Cycles of Poverty

Explore cycles of poverty and the culture of poverty, as well as the issues of a living wage, through discussion and dialogue. Possible activities include hearing the personal story of a shelter guest, visiting the Boys and Girls Club and discussing the calculation of the poverty line to better understand the humanity of poverty and the multiple ways it exists.

Farm Labor & Agriculture

Explore how migrants are integral in U.S. agriculture and the rights of laborers, migrant and non-migrant, as well as the importance of agriculture and the rights of laborers, migrant and non-migrant, as well as the importance of agriculture in this rural community. Possible activities include visits to local farms and the Rakhra Mushroom farm and hearing first hand experiences about the agriculture industry.

Mental Illness, Addiction & Other Health Issues

Explore the role of addiction and mental illness in poverty and the specific health issues faced by impoverished and homeless populations. Possible activities include visiting Crossroads, Mental Health and the Valley Wide Health Clinic to learn about how these issues contribute to poverty cycles.

Legislation & Local Government

Explore the welfare system and the aid programs available to impoverished peoples and families as well as discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these policies. Possible activities include a visit to Social Services and discussions that further explore the responsibility of the individual to be educated and involved in legislation.

Sustainable Living, Ecology & Its Larger Implications

Explore how sustainable lifestyles have an impact on the larger community and global health. Discuss the resource use of the privileged, emphasizing the interconnectedness of world communities, as well as understanding the resources not available to the poor that we take for granted in our daily lives and how being ecologically sensitive can have an overall beneficial impact.

Veterans and Homelessness

Explore the national, state and local (San Luis Valley) statistics concerning homeless veterans. Discuss the reasons and causes of homelessness among veterans and why there is an increasing number of female homeless veterans. Learn about the initiatives occurring at the federal and state level to combat homelessness among veterans and the controversies surrounding these initiatives.