



Course name: **COM 2225**: Small Group Communication
Division: Liberal Arts, Communication, & Social Sciences (**LCS**)
Project: Donated Clothing Sort & Organize
Community Partners: Master's Closet, The Locker



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students were expected to learn about small group communication. By forming teams focused on a task, each member experienced positive and sometimes negative aspects of working with a group. Every challenge taught the students something and made them better communicators.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The class worked with *The Master's Closet* in Huber Heights. *The Master's Closet* also houses a smaller organization called *The Locker*. Both of these offer free clothes to the community. Students spent an hour talking to the founder about the workings and needs of *The Master's Closet* and then spent three hours working to sort clothing and fold and stock the shelves and the "stores." Two teams formed after that based on who wanted to work in what areas. One team worked on gaining volunteers from the high schools and updating the Facebook pages and incorporating new photos. Also, they created Excel spreadsheets for a customer data base as well as a volunteer database. A local high school newspaper article was written and published about *The Master's Closet* as a place of community service. The other team focused on the process of clothing intake and worked to improve work flow. They started with a bare room and organized it with shelving and bins, including directions for use. This team spent about six more hours at *The Closet* working. Students researched other clothing organizations for good ideas and solicited free clothing racks, hangers, and boxes from local businesses.



RESULTS

At the end of the semester, students delivered presentations to the founder, as well as other stakeholders, with their insights about how the organization could work more efficiently. Facebook pages included new photographs and information as well as converting them to business pages instead of personal sites. Databases were given to the non-profit organization and mission statements were created for each entity. A new organizing room was opened at *The Closet* with well-thought ideas and integrated a system for effectiveness.

Students developed a relationship with the founder and on the evening of the presentation, students were in tears saying goodbye to her. She provided pizza for the class and had a grateful heart. Students were interested to remain in touch and to be sure *The Closet* was in good working order. Students also bonded after the first three hours of working together. They were better communicators in the classroom and much more supportive than a class without service learning. The students were excited to have helped in the community and to know that people who needed clothes were being helped.



Profiles can be viewed online at ctl.sinclair.edu

OUTCOMES

I do believe the service learning project enhanced student success. Students were more open with questions in class and were motivated to learn the material. Students were laughing about class concepts in the midst of working together. The fact that they realized cohesion was happening became the “joke” and funny tales of leadership and groupthink highlighted their time together. The quiet students were rolled into a team and leaders sought their strengths to use for the clothing sorting project. They found creative ways to hold one another accountable and communicated frequently via texts and Facebook. All of the students believed this project made the class material much more exciting, fun, and easier to learn.

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