

**C.A.R.T. Program (Cavaliers are Readers, Too!)**

Kankakee Community College

**What issue or need is addressed by the effective practice?**

In April of 2005, the Kankakee Community College Athletic Department envisioned a program that would assist elementary schools in the community college district #520 to promote literacy. Thus, the Cavaliers Are Readers, Too (C.A.R.T) program was “born.” In April 2005, 77 introductory letters were sent to elementary school principals in the district. This letter introduced the program and the intent to each school. Twenty three schools responded positively that they would welcome the college’s athletes coming into their school to provide reading activities.

**Description of the effective practice:**

The College visited 23 schools in an 8 month period. Reading activities were provided in 3 different styles chosen by the individual school. Those styles included: classroom rotation, all school assemblies and reading circles in the gymnasium. In each case, there were 4-5 athletes that went to each school providing children with a brief history of who they were and why they thought reading and comprehension were important to them. They would then read 2 or 3 stories to the children that were their favorites when they were growing up. Athletes were always dressed in “appropriate” gear representing the sport that they played. To the College’s knowledge this is the only project of this kind in the State of Illinois among community colleges.

**How does this practice achieve sustainability?**

It is the philosophy of the athletic department at Kankakee Community College to integrate their student athletes into the community with various community, social and academic endeavors. This philosophy sustains the marketability of the C.A.R.T. program for years to come. Secondly, children look to positive role models in their lives to emulate and the athlete is a very visible source to impact the child. The college provided these reading activities to over 2,500 children ranging from kindergarten through 4th grade. Finally, athletic integration into the community provides the student with a sense of ownership and pride to what they are doing and also directly enhances their ability to present themselves in group situations not only with children but also professional educators. The college had approximately 95 athletes this past year and 60 of those participated in the C.A.R.T. program.

**What are the results/measurable outcomes?**

- to create a positive marketing scheme with stakeholders, which includes our elementary schools and children. With overwhelming positive response with this program, the college has done that.
- to reach out to at least 25% of the elementary schools the first year of the program. The schools that participated represented 30% of the districts’ elementary schools
- to provide these reading activities for at least 2,000 elementary school children in the first year. Reading activities were provided to over 2,500 children
- to promote positive media coverage for the college to enhance athletics through other “worthy” efforts that go beyond the field of competition. The local newspaper ran a special article on the third page of the paper promoting our activity.

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