

hungry people? Are there stray animals? Is there discrimination? Then see if the class can collectively identify an organization whose mission is to address that need. This process should help students develop a better understanding of what is meant by the philanthropic or non-profit or third sector.

The Minnesota Council on Foundations produced a short film called "Philanthropy Is..." that depicts everyday people responding to the question, "What is philanthropy?" Their answers and interpretations are both funny and poignant and the film can serve as a good introduction to this discussion.¹⁵

P

PHILANTHROPY IN THE NEWS

This activity encourages student awareness of philanthropy in the news. Students will read (or see on television news) stories about philanthropy and then answer a series of questions about the story. If assigned as homework, students can be asked to find their own stories. In class, you may want to provide some articles having to do with philanthropy. Questions students should answer include:

- Who is being helped?
- Who is doing the helping?
- What need is being met?
- Why is it necessary?
- How is the project being accomplished?

N

INDEPENDENT STUDY

In this activity, individual students or small groups are assigned a philanthropic organization to look up on-line. Based on the research, each student or group can form a detailed picture of the organization, including information about its mission statement, goals, history, activities, and area of operation. Each student or group can produce a poster or brief oral report presenting this information to the class or to the larger community, including ways to donate money to and/or volunteer for each organization.

Q

BRAINSTORMING AND DECISION-MAKING

BRAINSTORMING

AS IN NEARLY every creative group undertaking, brainstorming will play a central role, especially in the formative issue selection process. Teaching brainstorming skills is a crucial part of the process and will provide an opportunity to emphasize the importance of mutual respect and active listening in discussion and deliberation.

It is therefore crucial that students have an opportunity to practice the skills of respectful brainstorming before using those skills as Trustees. Once guidelines have been developed, use brainstorming frequently to give students practice. This can be done as part of a game (e.g. a Sing Down) or in the

process of making class decisions or planning class activities. The guidelines listed below are a good baseline set for any group.

- Do not allow commentary. (Not even “good idea.” Those participants who don’t get as many positive comments may feel left out.)
- Only one person speaks at a time and only on the matter at hand.
- All ideas are welcome. (This includes silly ideas. They may spark a good idea in someone else.)
- Avoid self-censure. (This is the greatest barrier to effective brainstorming. Even if you don’t think it’s a “good” idea, say it anyway. It may stimulate someone else’s thinking and/or be modifiable with someone else’s perspective.)
- Leave reality for later.

F

THE MAYSPORE REPAIR COMPANY¹⁶

THIS ROLE-PLAYING exercise helps students practice brainstorming and explore their ability to advocate for their own interests while maintaining a sense of the overall well-being of a group. Divide the class into small groups of 6-7 students (the role of Observer is optional – you can ask all students to pay attention to these things). Give each participant a role (you’ll find these at the end of the chapter on p58), and a few minutes to read through the scenario and their role and ask questions. Then give each group 15-20 minutes to work out a solution

to the problem. Let them know that they’ll be asked to share their solutions with the entire class as well as talk about the way they made the decision. Make sure students understand that there is no right answer and that the objective is to agree collectively on the fairest way to allocate the new truck.

Suggestions for Debriefing

Concerning the Simulation

- Who got the truck and why did that person get it?
- How did you arrive at your decision and what factors went into the decision?
- What roles did each member of the group play (e.g. leader, peace-maker, etc.)?

Concerning the Process (If you have an Observer, pose these questions first to that person and then ask the other participants to react/comment.)

- What steps were taken in the decision-making process?
- Was a systematic method used to solve the problem?
- When tentative solutions were first posed, was there any consensus? Was the consensus maintained and/or how did it evolve?
- What conflicts (if any) arose in your group?
- Did any of the participants compromise? If so, how and why did they do so?
- What alternatives were considered before you reached your final decision?