

Meaning of Service
AmeriCorps Hillsborough Reads
Florida Humanities Council
Tampa, Florida

Introduction

The Florida Humanities Council engaged in Meaning of Service discussions on behalf of volunteer tutors in the “Hillsborough Reads” program for elementary school children. The goal of the program was to offer more opportunities for growth and reflection to the community. At the conclusion of the discussion series, participants indicated that they felt a stronger bond within the group as a result of the series readings and discussions. The success of the program was a direct result of the facilitator's skill and the member’s willingness to participate in discussions.

The Council's discussion planners say, "Programs such as these are wonderful in providing a picture for who we are and whom we serve and why. We were extremely pleased with the program and hope to be offered this and other opportunities in the future."

Participants

Participants in the program were AmeriCorps Hillsborough Reads members that serve as tutors in area elementary schools. All had similar issues dealing with children in an inner-city setting. The group consisted solely of women. The educational background varied from high school graduates to those with graduate degrees. Participants were diverse in age and ethnicity. The variance in age groups proved to be most important in conversation. The group met weekly for five weeks at the Hillsborough Reads office on the campus of Shaw Elementary School in Tampa, FL. Refreshments were provided. Average group size was 7 – 9 participants for each discussion.

Readings

<u>Session</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Session 1	"Reveries of a Solitary Walker" by Jean Jacques Rousseau "Saving the Crippled Boy" by Jan Beatty
Session 2	"Ghandi in Bihar" from The Ghandi Reader "Fellowship" by Franz Kafka
Session 3	"Theme for English B" by Langston Hughes "The Lovers of the Poor" by Gwendolyn Brooks
Session 4	"Humanitarian to a Nation" from Saudi Aramco World
Session 5	"The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements" from Twenty Years at Hull House by Jane Addams

Facilitator

The facilitator was Brian McHarg, an instructor at Eckerd College.