

Phi Beta Lambda

Chapter 3306

2018-2019

Community Service Project

“Give Kids the World”



Broward College
Florida

Table of Contents

Project Overview	2
Purpose of Project	3
Statement of Project Goals	3
Service to Community	4
Planning and Development of Project	5
Planning	5
Development	6
Implementation of Project	7
Impact and Benefits to the Community	9
Impact to the Community	9
Benefits to the Community	10
Evidence of Publicity	11
Conclusion	12

Give Kids the World Project Overview

The Give Kids the World (GKTW) village is a non-profit organization geared towards granting wishes to children with critical illnesses. Located in Orlando, FL, this 84-acre resort facility houses numerous themes driven villas. Through the years over a quarter of a million volunteers have provided transportation, accommodation, meals, as well as tickets to Disney, Universal, and Sea World amusement parks to kids and their entire families at no cost. For every dollar that is donated to GKTW, 93 cents are spent on making the dreams of the children that visit the village come true. GKTW is a top-rated charity by Better Business Bureau, Charity Navigator, America's Charities, and GreatNonprofits.

GKTW has a wish pillow initiative that focuses on delivering pillows for kids undergoing care and treatments (radiation, chemotherapy, etc.). These pillows are meant to keep them warm and comfort them during the aggressive process, the hope is to make the treatment easier. During their visit at the village, kids are given a cozy and colorful 'Wish Pillow' that they keep as a reminder of their time at the village, a keepsake. These colorful wish pillows are small, made with soft fleece, flannel or cotton fabric, and are designed to have pockets for the children to insert their hands in to cuddle. According to the GKTW official blog, approximately 21,000 pillows are given to children visiting the village each year.

The number of children that are diagnosed with critical illnesses such as cancer and heart disease in the United States each year is staggering. While their illnesses might shift the way they experience the world, GKTW provides an opportunity to live their days—for this one special week to the fullest. With the help of several wish-granting partner organizations and major corporate partners including Hasbro, Alex and Ani, Unilever, and Hilton Hotels, more than half of the participating kids choose to visit the theme parks in Central Florida. GKTW has been helping make the process easier for more than 165,000 families since 1986.

Purpose of the Project

The 2018-2019 Community Service Project GKTW has given Broward College's Phi Beta Lambda (PBL BC) an opportunity to deliver smiles to children with critical illnesses and their families. With the help from our chapter and community members, we continue to make a difference and inspire hope by spreading awareness about this cause, making wish pillows, and volunteering at the GKTW village.



Statement of Project Goals

PBL BC is committed to making a difference in our community and carrying out that commitment to make a difference everywhere we go. We created specific goals for this community service project to help us excel and deliver as many smiles as possible:

- 100% participation from chapter members and other students at Broward College during planning, pillow-making, and volunteering
- Encourage our members to seek out other volunteer and community service opportunities within the community
- Share the vision of GKTW by volunteering and participating in the wish pillow initiative

- Share with all an understanding of helping make a difference for those people that face hardships, and recognize the opportunities we are blessed with and to give back to the world

Service to Community

Henri Landwirth's vision behind the Give Kids the World Village was inspired by a small child named Amy. Amy had been diagnosed with leukemia and had a wish to visit the theme parks in Orlando, FL. Landwirth, having faced his own hardships as a child, including spending some of his formative years during World War II separated from his family, and moved around multiple Nazi camps, he wanted to grant Amy's wish. Years later, Landwirth became a prominent member of society as a hotelier. This meant he had the ability to provide accommodations for her and her family, however other aspects of Amy's visit took longer to arrange and, sadly, Amy passed away before her wish could be granted. Landwirth was determined to never let that happen again. Landwirth, with the help of his colleagues in the hospitality industry, created Give Kids the World village a nonprofit organization. They transformed his 31-acre hotel into an 84-acre resort filled with entertainment, attractions, and activities for every child and their family to visit, free of charge.

Today GKTW has 14 venues and 2 bedroom/2 bathroom fully equipped villas to accommodate and entertain children and their families. Iconic venues include the Castle of Miracles which has a spa and a pillow-making tree, the Ice Cream Palace serving ice cream morning, noon, and night, and Amberville and interactive train station with an arcade inside.

Our chapter became involved after our adviser and some of our members had an opportunity to visit the GKTW Village in Orlando, FL with Broward College's Student Life Department. They helped the village put on some of their iconic weekly events and put smiles on

kids' faces. The impact this experience had on them transformed into a passion for our chapter making this something we wanted to participate in. A typical week at the village includes:

- **Sunday** - Ashley's Art Corner, Ms. Merry's Tea Party, The World's Largest Candy Land Party, Movie Night, Teen Night: Archery Tag
- **Monday** - Disney Character Photos, Mayor Clayton's Hare-Raising Halloween Party, Movie Night, Teen Night
- **Tuesday** - GKTW Character Photos, Fishing, Mayor Clayton's Birthday Party, Story Time with Rugby and Reme, Teen Night: Laser Tag
- **Wednesday** – Horse Rides, Village Idol, Movie Night, Teen Night
- **Thursdays** – Disney Character Photos, Winter Wonderland Festivities, Teen Night: Archery Tag
- **Fridays** – Universal Character Photos, Once Upon a Village, Movie Night, Teen Night
- **Saturdays** – Horse Rides, Big Splash Bash, Ready Set Think! Game Show, Movie Night, Teen Night: Laser Tag

And of course, no day at the village would be complete without 24-hour ice cream.

With the help of all our chapter members PBL BC made and donated 75 wish pillows in March. From finding the patterns and instructions, going shopping and choosing the brightest most colorful fleece, to cutting, hemming, and sewing it all together every member helped in one way or another every step of the way.

Planning and Development of the Project

Planning

Our chapter was determined to find a cause that resonated with our members. During our search, members worked with Feeding South Florida to help combat food insecurity in the community, participated in beach clean-ups, and reached out to Swab-a-Cheek to register bone

marrow donors. Our chapter ultimately decided to shift our focus to GKTW. We wanted to help a cause we hadn't worked with before and to have a more direct interaction with the people we were helping with the worlds we were changing.

This decision set our group on another mission, to find out how else we could help. We came across two ways to help the organization. The first was a project titled Wish Pillows which consisted of making pillows that would be given to each child undergoing critical and painful treatment. The pillow is meant to comfort them and provide some relief from the aggression of the treatment. Another way to give to this foundation was to visit the village and volunteer at the village. With everything in motion, the group set out to make a difference.

Development

After careful planning PBL BC members set out to achieve our goal. The main part of our project was to make the Wish Pillows. Our goal was to complete 75 pillows by March 2019. With funds raised by our chapter we visited our local fabric store and purchased colorful fabric to create the pillows. Everyone involved in the organization brought in as much material as they could to help cut, measure, hem, and sew the pillows together. Those with sewing machines and some sewing experience even brought their machines in. Starting in October our chapter members would stay after our meetings on Wednesdays to set up the classroom and help with the pillows. This project worked as a great team building exercise and was a good way to get everyone involved in the project even prompting some members to bring friends to help. We had cutting stations where members



would measure and cut the fabric accordingly, hemming stations, and a sewing station.

Communication became essential to the development of this project. The instructions on how to make the pillows, while easy to follow, were very specific so everyone had to be aware of what stage of the process they were working on.

Once we had reached our goal we would begin to prepare for the next step in our plan which was to attend the village to volunteer and help with the children. After planning and finally settling on a date to attend the village we were forced to postpone the date for some time after the State Leadership Conference due to the village being fully booked by volunteers during spring break. The group plans to attend the village in the month of May. Time management and date coordination became one of our biggest challenges but with cooperation from our members we settled on realistic, achievable dates and goals which the community service committee is determined to accomplish.

Implementation of the Project

Preparations for the Wish Pillows project began in mid-October 2018. First, we had to research what the requirements for the pillows were. We found a website detailing which fabrics to get and how much, step by step detailed instructions with pictures included, and what the final measurements of the pillow cases were, as well as a link to a quick YouTube tutorial. The fabric requirements were cotton or fleece with bright yet gender neutral colors and prints. One yard of solid colored fabric makes 4 pillow cases and one yard of printed fabric makes 12 pockets. No stuffing was required since participants are only asked to provide the pillow cases.

One of our members took the initiative to test out the instructions and see how feasible the project would be based on ease and time of completion. She averaged 45 minutes per pillow including cutting, hemming, pinning, and sewing. After receiving the thumbs up and rundown of

how the pillow cases would be completed the community service committee did some math and decided to start small and buy enough fabric to make 24 pillow cases.



Our first shopping date was planned for October 31, 2018. All our chapter members were invited to join us in helping us choose prints and colors. We visited our local fabric store and bought 6 yards of solid fleece and 4 yards of printed fleece fabric. That following Wednesday marked the first day our chapter stayed after or meeting to help make the pillow cases. We worked in stations. While some members cut fabric others hemmed and pinned, and others sewed. Our chapter was so committed to the project that our members decided to turn our annual Holiday Party into a Pillow Party turning the classroom into a Wish Pillow factory after our gift exchange. That same enthusiasm carried on with us throughout each shopping trip and sewing workshop.

Along the way we have faced obstacles and experienced hiccups. For instance, on our first shopping trip we bought half-yards of printed fabric instead of full yards. This turned out to be a misstep since we were only able to get half of the pockets we needed. Lessons were learned

from this mishap allowing us to move forward smoothly. We were also able to develop methods that would allow us to work faster and more efficiently. Pre-cutting and hemming the fabrics before dedicating ourselves to the assembly of the pillows became our go-to move.

As of the day of completion of this report our chapter has worked incessantly to meet our 75-pillow goal which was hand delivered by PBL BC right before the State Leadership Conference. Our chapter decided to visit the village and hand deliver the pillows, but because our group was so large we decided that only four of our members should go to represent our group.

Impact and Benefit to the Community

Impact to the Community

The outstanding engagement from our chapter members has helped us throughout the process of the project. Their involvement each step of the way has been an essential element to our success as a group and in terms of personal development. This served as a learning experience for members who didn't know how to do things that serve as part of the pillow-making process. Things that other members in our chapter already knew how to do and taught to the rest such as cutting the fabric, and/or using a sewing machine to sew the pillows together. This wasn't only a pillow-making process, it was a team-building activity where we exercised communication skills, guidance, and a lot of patience.



Additionally, with project engagement outside our chapter through our Instagram account, we can reach a wide variety of people from our community in Broward College and

beyond. This way, we shared with people outside of our chapter and school know about this project and the purpose.

We were often reminded of how fortunate we are to be here today. Thinking back to our own childhood putting into perspective how different it would have been if we were in other kid's shoes allowed us to see that the opportunities we are given every day to make a difference in someone else's life matter. Even the simple things, such as these Wish Pillows, can make a big impact in its recipients' life. This project gave our chapter so much more than pure joy of helping contribute to this worthy cause, but it also helped our chapter bond which helped strengthen us as a team.

Benefit to the Community

The saying "children are our future" is a good example of how Give Kids the World greatly benefits our community. The foundation's aim to bring joy to the lives of children battling life threatening illnesses inspire others to do the same and they give ordinary people the opportunity to do something extraordinary by volunteering to help bring a little joy to kids' lives. This is important, especially in these situations where people often feel helpless. This project not only helps give the volunteers purpose, it also gives the children hope which in turn gives our community hope for a bright future.

Another celebrated aspect of GKTW is the sense of normalcy the village provides for the children. Upon arriving to the village to deliver the pillowcases, we were warmly greeted by the staff. We were brought to the volunteer coordinators area and met with Aaron Dinkins, one of the volunteer services coordinators and presented the hand sewn mass of pillow cases to him. Aaron was awesome and so appreciative of the donation, he wanted to give us a tour of the village and share future volunteer opportunities for the PBL BC. The tour was an amazing



experience – Aaron took the time to explain all the parts of the village and the significance that every part means to the whole village. During our tour, we visited the ‘Star Tower’ which displays stars with the names of all the visitors who made wishes in the village dating back to 1989. The experience was breathtaking, beautiful, and inspiring, especially listening to

Aaron share his experiences of past families, some of which suffering through intense cancer treatments, and went on to live good and happy lives to this day after they left the village. PBL BC members were enamored by the entertaining games and rides that were available to accommodate individual needs (walkers, wheelchairs, etc.). Give Kids The World is so much more than an amusement park but it is a safe haven, a place to show these kids that there is more in the world than hospitals and treatments, a place that gives them hope and that’s all we can really ask for – sometimes hope. This project gave our chapter so much more than pure joy of helping contribute to this worthy cause, it also helped our chapter bond which helped strengthen us as a team.

Evidence of Publicity

PBL BC wanted to share the project with other students at Broward College and members of the community to increase involvement and be able to make more pillow cases. An Instagram account @givekids_wishpillows where we post upcoming sewing workshops and shopping days was started to achieve this goal. Using social media not only have we been able to reach out to other students at Broward College, we’ve also caught the attention of past chapter members who have expressed interest in coming in to help and have even encouraged other chapters to explore GKTW and what their mission is.



Conclusion

PBL BC wanted to be part of something different and with a big purpose. GKTW has become one of our favorite causes to work with because of the array of helping opportunities it counts with. We also love the idea of interacting with the kids and families we're helping. For our chapter the Wish Pillows and volunteering at the village is only the beginning. Even though 75 pillows by march is our goal we will continue making them after reaching that number. Our contribution doesn't stop at what we can give the children, it also encompasses those little extra

things we can do for them. Things such as inspiring others to seek out community service opportunities whether it be GKTW, Feeding South Florida, or volunteering at the Humane Society. Our chapter hopes to leave behind a legacy of team-work and service to the community.

