

newsworthy trends

Majority Of Parents Support Community Service As Part Of School Curriculum

(NAPSA)—A surprising majority of American parents are encouraging their children to get involved in community service. Many feel this is an important life lesson that kids should be learning in school, too.

According to the “Caring About America” Survey, 58 percent of parents think community service should be emphasized as much as or more than traditional subjects in their children’s schools. Beyond the classroom, 70 percent of moms and dads play an active role by taking time to volunteer with their kids. In fact, nearly four out of 10 parents surveyed say they participate in community service with their children at least once a month or more.

This strong influence has not been lost on their children. Nearly three-quarters of kids in the U.S. say their parents are the ones who taught them the importance of caring about others.

“It’s encouraging to see parents leading the way in teaching our children the importance of giving back to others in their communities,” said Betsy Rogers, the 2003 National Teacher of the Year. “Showing kids the difference they can make in the world with even the smallest of gestures is an invaluable life lesson.”

According to the survey, parents also can learn a thing or two from their kids when it comes to optimism. More kids (83 percent) than parents (68 percent) think the world we live in is a caring place. Children also are more apt to follow the “golden rule,” with nearly half saying they do nice things for others because they would want to



be treated the same way.

One example of how kids are exercising the golden rule—and learning about community service in the classroom—is the Teaching Kids to CARE initiative. For this annual program, more than 130 Doubletree hotels across North America team with local schools and youth organizations to introduce more than 4,000 kids to the concept of social responsibility.

As part of the lesson plan, each student writes an essay to vote for a group or organization in their community to whom they want to show appreciation by giving them more than 2,000 chocolate chip cookies. For this year’s program, more than 250,000 cookies were awarded to groups ranging from doctors and nurses, police, and firefighters, to orphanages, food banks and homeless shelters.

Many of the students also voted for the U.S. Armed Forces and shipped “cookie care packages” to troops stationed in Iraq.

“We believe this program is an excellent way to teach future generations about how we all win when we care for one another,” commented Dave Horton, senior vice president, brand management for the hotels.