



All Things Ignatian



Blackburn High School students from the 2011 program students show off their projects at our annual open house.

Forge Ahead! Bringing Science, Art and Vocational Skills to Students of All Types

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Introduction: Blackburn Alternative High School, an Omaha Public Schools program, in conjunction with Creighton University, the Blacksmith Shop, and a grant from the *Sherwood foundation* has developed a service learning program for at-risk high school students. The original project goal was to engage the students in experiential education that crosses the science and art curriculums. We have expanded our Forge Ahead method of technique based projects and reflection to be used in all our classes.



Master Blacksmith Elmo Diaz setting up the coal forge for 3,000 °F work

Assessment: The students learn blacksmithing techniques each week and have a project that highlights the new technique. At the end of each period the students perform oral reflections about their project, skill development confidence etc. The student's reflections on their progress personally, emotionally and technically are discussed and built upon each week. After the ten weeks of working the students were able to explain science concepts that they had learned and how they used those concepts to craft the projects they had on display at their art open-house.



Boy Scouts are learning the basic technique of how to draw out the metal. Accommodations to the techniques are made based on age and ability

Progress: Forge Ahead! provides an experiential education opportunity, within a service learning program for at-risk students to learn skills, demonstrate their abilities, and share works of art with the Greater Omaha community. Utilizing the forge as an applied laboratory the students developed and shared an understanding of how accessible science and art can be to our daily lives.



The girl shown is practicing keeping her eye on the target she wants to strike as she swings her hammer.

Our success with this approach to teaching science, vocational skills and creative art through metal has had an impact on all the classes we teach. Our curriculum for the boy and girl scouts, adult classes and art students from the Kent Bellows foundation has been modified based on the Ignation approach, reflection methodology, and qualitative-quantitative assessments of student progress.

We are deeply appreciative to the *Sherwood foundation* for their continued financial support of our program.



Our reflective ignition approach to teaching science and vocational skills is now employed in our adult weekend courses.



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