

AMERICAN HISTORY: TOM JOAD SERVICE PROJECT



The Tom Joad Service Project begins by asking students to draw from a metaphor originating with John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. The Metaphor suggests, as written in Bruce Springsteen's Song *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, that someone who is out trying to fight against poverty and oppression is "searching for the Ghost of Tom Joad." Students initially study the Great Depression and analyze not only the economic effects but resulting society and culture. Part of this analysis involves watching the film *Grapes of Wrath* and synthesizing WPA Photos, various articles and pieces of film, investigation of New Deal Programs and various data. Students are then asked to create a 6 hour service project of their own, which may or may not be connected to a local organization. The goal of this project is to expose students to what Sociologist Michael Harrington identified in his book *The Other America* as an invisible America. The unit is culminated by reading an excerpt from this book, various articles, speeches by Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and writing about their own experiences in order to create historic empathy. In light of the Nation's current economic struggles this project takes on greater meaning.

IN THE FALL OF 2012 300+ HOURS SERVED IN SUPPORT OF...

DuPAGE HUMANITARIAN SERVICE TOY DRIVE

TOYS FOR TOTS

BATAVIA INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY

THE WELL COMMUNITY YOUTH GROUP

NEEDY FAMILY CHRISTMAS DRIVE

BATAVIA ELDER DAY CENTER

MERCY CENTER

CARRIAGE OAKS RETIREMENT CENTER

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

PARK CITY, UTAH CHRISTIAN CENTER

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

BATAVIA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

LAZARUS HOUSE

LIVING WELL CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

BATAVIA CLOTHES CLOSET

THE SALVATION ARMY

MA CENTER CHICAGO

MARKLUND

HOLMSTAD

ANDERSON ANIMAL SHELTER

LDS BISHOP STOREHOUSE

BRIGHTON GARDENS NURSING HOME

NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK