



EDUCATION

“WE’RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE” VOLUNTEERS

Are young people a part of the problem or a part of the solution? Linden High School’s “We’re Making a Difference” volunteers exemplify the positive impact service-learning can have on cognitively impaired and physically challenged students.

Student volunteers help educate children and young adults with physical and mental disabilities by assisting the teaching staff, working individually with children, participating in field trips and helping with special celebrations.

The program began in 1994 with a grant from New Jersey’s Learn and Serve America Program funded by the Corporation for National Service. The grant funded 65 bi-weekly student volunteers who provide services for 260 children with mental and physical disabilities attending one of four Union County facilities: the Cerebral Palsy League’s Jardine Academy; the ARC of Union County Kohler School; the Department of Children and Families, Regional Day School; and the Early Childhood Program of Children’s Specialized Hospital.

Some of the services provided include refurbishing playground equipment, beautification of gardens, building and developing a memorial garden, development of disaster kits, volunteering for holiday events and community outings, creating a horticulture therapy program and renovating a kitchen facility to make it more accessible.

Linden High School’s Learn and Serve America program has had a tremendous impact on the educational, social, and emotional growth of the participating students and the disabled community.