

The Nino's Restaurant 9/11 Fund



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Program Outline and Overview

Grade Levels and Population: The students selected for this project included thirty eighth graders. The program is appropriate for grades seven through twelve. Teachers can build on this program by using different organizations that responded to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Alternatively, the same literacy skills can be taught by adapting the program to a major social issue.

Major Goals and Overview: My initial goal at the beginning of this project was to help students discover *things that really matter to them*. I started by sharing my own writing about volunteer work at Nino Vendrone's Restaurant in which I was involved. The student response was overwhelming and completely unanticipated. The students wrote me letters in their journals and asked questions about Nino Vendrone and his restaurant that fed workers at Ground Zero. They were persistent.

The instructional purpose of this program is to encourage students to write and think critically about things in their community that impact and interest them. The ELA performance standards this program supports include:

- E1c. Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of informational materials
- E1d. Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of public documents
- E2a. Produce a report of information
- E3c. Prepare and deliver a presentation
- E4a. Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work
- E5a. Respond to non-fiction writing using interpretive and critical processes



Lesson Plan I: Writers' Workshop

Aim: To introduce intriguing, motivating topics in writers' workshop.
To create a sense of community and empathy.

Materials: sketch journal

Procedure: In an effort to encourage my eighth graders to write and think about things that really matter to them, I use my sketch journal – a collection of my writing, newspaper clippings, photos, and sketches—to model one way of responding to life in a notebook. Some of this unedited writing includes opinions, poetry, wondering, theories, predictions, letters, quick writes, and rough drafts.

1. I read excerpts from my sketch journal, which described some experiences in my volunteer work at Nino's Restaurant.
2. The next step is to challenge students to learn about an issue in their community that interests them. (In the case of my project, students focused on organizations that provided relief for victims of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.)
3. Conduct a 3-5 minute free write wherein students brainstorm topics in their sketch journals.
4. Monitor responses as student in small groups share ideas, and record main idea after class. (You will need to collect sketch journals to get all these responses; it's not possible to record all responses during class.)
5. Praise students for their concentration in writing and tell them how the writers' workshop will proceed:
 - A. Next class, each student will get a word-processed list of student-generated ideas of possible funds/organizations to learn about more.
 - B. Cooperative groups will form to work on a project that they will research and present to a large audience. Ideally, there will be three or fewer groups working on a community issue in the neighborhood to ensure field trips to the site if appropriate.



Lesson II: Creating Questions

Aim: To formulate relevant pertinent questions for project

Procedure:

Background information:

Students have researched for information through observation, reading newspapers and periodicals, and perhaps even gathering information from local news reports on television and radio. They are prepared with background information on their topic. The teacher has a three-column chart set up for the class with the following headings:

Things I Know	Things I Wonder	Possible Resources for Inquiry
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1. Model on chart paper a list of three significant examples of “Things I Know” about my selected organization (Nino’s Restaurant).
2. For each example, use facts and questions that encourage the researcher to utilize different resources to ascertain answers. For example, consider these ideas for the chart:

Things I Know: Nino’s Restaurant is downtown Manhattan and is not open to the public.

Things I wonder: Why doesn’t management allow people to pay to eat there? Is this discrimination?

Possible sources for inquiry: Newspaper articles, Nino’s 9/11 fund web site (hard copy). Read aloud Nino’s mission statement and ask students to answer why the restaurant is closed to the public. (*Nino’s Restaurant serves workers at Ground Zero free of charge and provides a supportive, caring atmosphere.*)

Model important, not just *interesting*, facts. Develop logical questions as you think aloud. Explain why your sources are effective. This encourages students to gather and understand a substantial amount of information and reduces the risk of an ill-prepared interview.

3. Instruct students to copy the chart into their sketch journals. In small groups, students will fill in the information. As you monitor graph work, encourage students to take turns, volunteer contributions, respond appropriately to comments and questions, and clarify or expand on ideas.



4. After students have had guided practice in class, they will continue this writing for homework. Ask students to be prepared with a substantial amount of information in their charts for next writers' workshop.

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Lesson Plan III: Presenting Projects in a Creative Way

Aim: To create an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context of project.

Possible Materials: Cardboard Assorted markers
Scissors photos
Clay paint
Mixed mediums

Procedure:

1. Tell students you want to brainstorm creative ways to respond to Nino's Restaurant. Distribute handouts and explain your thumbnail sketches, writing genres, and ideas.
2. Ask students to work individually or in groups using their sketch journals to record ideas. Give them class time to draw and write plans. Encourage them to work on the class project after school. Provide more class time on other days for students to arrange, assemble, and create visual aids.

Extending Activities:

Students need class time to create the components of their presentation: various writing, artwork or replicas, computer-generated images, musical selections, etc. In addition, students may need to visit their project site to record more information. Digital and conventional devices can be very effective in making the research experience and presentation memorable.



Lesson Plan IV: Organizing Information for Presentations: Sequencing

Aim: To practice the sequence of the presentation to ensure effectiveness.

Materials: sketch journals

Procedure:

1. Use a typical or recent school assembly event as an example of sequencing. List the events arbitrarily and ask students to order them. (Example: The assistant principle asks all students to quiet down and pay attention. The principle introduces the dean and thanks him for his valuable program on the discipline code. The dean welcomes students and reads part of the student handbook. A short film is shown. The audience asks questions. The dean answers the questions...)
2. Instruct students to work in their sketch journals to record ideas. Working in their groups, students should examine all the parts of their presentation and order them in a logical way. A few factors they need to consider include: stage set-up space, equity in taking turns speaking, an appropriate time to dim lights for video/slide show/presentations, and the most effective way to introduce and conclude presentations. Students will discover more considerations for sequencing presentations especially if they include skits or require closer interaction with the audience.
3. Students also need to practice in the space they will use for the presentation. Facilitate the seating arrangement. Encourage students to project their voices or use microphones to make presentations run smoothly.



Lesson Plan V: Organizing Information for Presentations: Memory Aids

Aim: To use notes or other memory aids to structure presentations.

Materials: index cards sketch journals
 overhead projector transparencies
 pens pencils
 thin markers

Procedure:

Background information:

Students are usually familiar with the concept of using index cards to present information. They need practice reading from the cards so they look at the audience most of the time and the cards once in a while. The two skills the students need are the ability to write briefly on the cards and familiarity with the script.

1. Prepare overhead transparencies before class by drawing lines on them to look like an index card. As an example, write the entire script of one groups' introduction on the transparency. Use no abbreviations, shorthand, or bullets/lists. Embellish it a bit so it is wordy.

2. Show the prepared example. After you read it aloud, ask students, "Will a wordy script help you speak more easily in front of an audience?"

3. Tell students about a more effective way to organize way to organize their notes: using cue cards written in shorthand with key words and practicing the script.

4. Model the way you would normally abbreviate or shorten the first line of the student example. Ask students to help you shorten the remainder of the cue card.

5. Show students how you can memorize parts of the cue cards by practicing aloud. Encourage them to practice after they have only key words or main ideas on their index cards.

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Lesson Plan III handout

Project Nino's Restaurant 9/11 Fund

The point of this project is to create a collection of writing and art that will promote understanding and give reaction to Nino's Restaurant 9/11 Fund. Students may use photos taken at the restaurant, information from The Daily News, other articles & the Internet for research information.

There are so many possibilities to achieve the objectives in this project. Let me describe a few that might work.

- Collages with images and poetry
- Angel sculpture (or image & inscription used somehow in project)
- Genuine letters sent to workers at Nino's, people at Ground Zero
- Political/Social commentary: editorials, drawings, cartoons
- Letter to Nino Vendrome (perhaps containing some type of honor?)
- A song you create the lyrics to, based on a song whose tune you like

This project should be visually exciting. Viewers should be able to understand your perspective since you are informing and remarking on this fund. The project should be accurate, contain quotes and show tremendous critical thinking.

For the purposes of providing an example of what might work in this project, check out my sloppy copy, thumbnail sketch below.

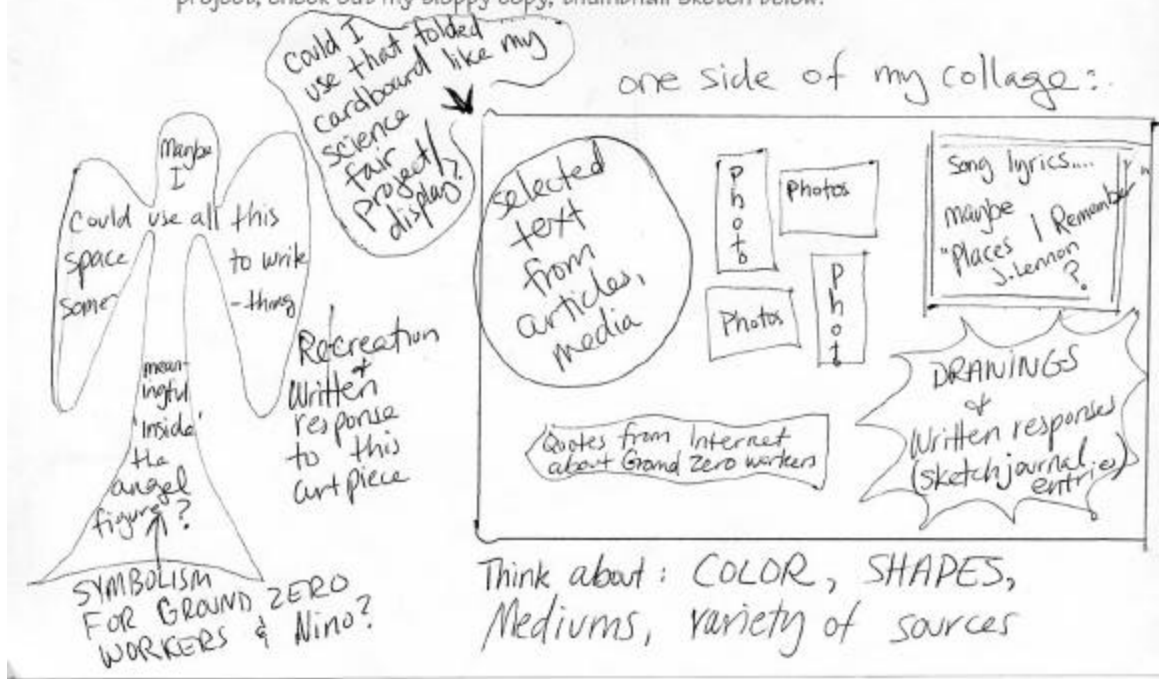


Photo taken by a student at Nino's Restaurant



Delicious haven for rescuers

By Lan N. Nguyen
Daily News Staff Writer

Antonio (Nino) Vendome, owner of Nino's Restaurant, is proving the adage that the way to the heart is through the stomach.

Since the World Trade Center attacks, he has thanked rescue workers and civil servants by offering free hot meals – such as lasagna or eggplant in tomato sauce – 24 hours a day at his family's Canal St. restaurant.

"It is not a birthright to have people risk their lives and their families endure that risk with them and us not address and appreciate it," said Vendome, whose family immigrated from Italy in 1995 with four suitcases and \$40.

Vendome, a 49 years old square-shouldered man with spiky, steel-gray hair, said he also wanted to provide the workers with a friendly place where they can recharge.

"Nino's has been fabulous," said Ken Brown, 48, a state trooper from upstate Waterloo. "The togetherness and love is overwhelming."

"Everything is somber down there, but there it's okay to joke around," said Alfred Faustini, a 37 years old traffic officer. "[Nino's] the hero. He's doing it for us."

Amid the thousands of cards, photographs and statements such as "We LUV You" decorating Nino's walls and the poster-size installations outside, a sea of blue and gray uniforms flows in and out of the restaurant steadily.

For some, Nino's also has offered an opportunity to reconnect.

"You feel at home and you get to meet old friends because everyone come here", said Sgt. Graig Foster, 30, a Bronx police officer. "It's like a reunion"

Since Sept. 11 the restaurant, which typically served 150 meals a day, has dished out 5,000 to 7,000 meals daily. To pull it off, Nino's relies on its old staff of 10 to 15 plus 50 new hires and 100 volunteers, and uses outdoor trailers and smokers for additional cooking space.

Vendome, whose primary business is real estate, estimated the restaurant has spent close to \$2 million on the effort, half of which has come out of his pocket. Nino's also has received donations from such companies as Scaturro Supermarkets and Coca-Cola.

To keep the free meals rolling for a year, Vendome established the Nino's Restaurant 9/11 Fund (45 E. 57th St., Eighth Floor, New York, N.Y. 10022). Since Sept. 24 the charity has received \$45,000 and many food donations, including 1 million paper plates and ~~36,500~~ 37,600 pounds of chicken.

For more information or to volunteer, call (212) 966-5110.

An angel on scene

Outside Nino's restaurant, an 8-foot-tall bronze peace angel sculpture serenely stands, presiding over the hundreds of cops, firefighter and World Trade Center disaster workers eating inside.

Commissioned through artist Lin Evola's not-for-profit Peace Angels Project, the 7,000-pound statue was ferried to New York in an 18-wheel truck from Santa Monica, Calif., where it spent two years outside a high school.

A plaque crafted of street weapons and decommissioned nuclear missile casings reads, in parts, "We strive to overcome obstacles of fear and hatred as we melt the weapons- the tools of destruction of our time."

"It's very nice. It gives me a lump in my throat," said National Guard Sgt. Ed Kirchoff as he took a photo.

"It's beautiful," gushed Lourdes Rosado, 43, who works nearby as a benefits counselor. "It's what everyone has in their heart now. We'll pull through this-we're not crying alone."

Emily Gest



Resources

Many articles were taken from *The New York Post* and *The Daily News*.

Students used camcorders, cameras, and Microsoft PowerPoint.

Various web sites (including Ninos911.org) were utilized.

Workers, both volunteer and paid, were interviewed by students.