

## Creating new harmony in a community through restoration, preservation, and utilization

Start with an old gymnasium in disrepair. Mix in committed students seeking a meaningful project where they can apply problem-based learning strategies. Soon you have the “New Harmony Ribeyre Gymnasium Restoration Project” – a showcase CILC Vista community partnership.

This project features middle and high school students joining with community members for a cause: “to enhance the quality of life in this community through the redevelopment of this historic structure.” The project involves students, teachers, an architect, and other community members working toward a unified goal.

To assess the needs and wishes of the community, the planning committee surveyed local citizens during a neighborhood charette – an intense, on-the-spot design effort – to determine which school activities, community activities, and commercial uses are in greatest demand and to gather input from students and residents on design ideas. Students began to craft plans



and ideas, sharing these with other high school students in the southern Indiana area. These collaborative discussions helped students dialogue and think critically about the steps necessary to move their visions to action. Students successfully created a business team composed of both students and community members who meet regularly. The group applied for and earned 501(c)(3) status and is now applying for a significant grant to fund the restoration.



“Students bring insight to a community that adults don’t always have.” – Community Member

### Impact on Learning

- n Students’ awareness of their communities – awareness of issues within the community and the development of skills to be active members of the community – grew significantly.
- n Community leaders and citizens were accessed more often as resources.
- n Collaboration opportunities with teachers and students at other schools were tapped more frequently.
- n Over 70% of participating teachers indicated that presentation skills, problem solving skills, and research skills became key components of the process.

### Event Stats

Number of participating students . . . . .30  
 Number of collaborating sites . . . . . 2  
 Number of participating sites . . . . . 1  
 Community partners:  
 Red Geranium Enterprises,  
 town president, and other  
 community members