



Faces of South County

*Dalya Almansour, Chemistry; Laszlo Folks, Humanities;
Marisol Franco, Spanish
High Tech High Chula Vista*

In this semester-long project, 10th grade students dissected, analyzed, predicted and suggested specific ways to improve the lives and livelihood of six South County communities, based on their ethnography and current needs. Each group studied the complex intersection of culture, politics, economics and technology to create real world change for those around us. Students assumed a variety of roles (from anthropologist to politician) and generated projects that utilized professional consultants along with their own ethnographic research. The wide-range of final products included building a local park for families in Logan Heights, and implementing enrichment and wellness programs at a retirement home in Bonita. Our essential questions were: How do individuals' wants vs. needs affect the direction of a community? What actions are necessary for a community to continue to thrive in the long term?

Teacher Reflection

I was struck by how much our students grew in areas that were not specific to any of our disciplines, but nonetheless integral pieces of their learning repertoire. Students rose to the occasion and delved into our communities, learning to empathize with perspectives other than their own. As they grappled with the intricacies of collaborative problem-solving, they developed both their abilities to voice their opinions and compromise, working through their disagreements and owning their decisions.

Student Reflection

When we first visited Imperial Beach we were overwhelmed by the beautiful surroundings of the community. While there, we interviewed several locals in order to better understand the community. We noticed right away that there was half of IB that welcomed new changes and another half of the community that wanted things to stay the same. As a cohort we needed to figure out something that addressed the needs of both parts of the community. —Mariano

To learn more visit www.hightechhigh.org/hthcv/projects