

Freshmen spend some time getting to know GLTHS

The Lowell Sun

UPDATED: 07/30/2017 06:36:06 AM EDT

TYNGSBORO -- Going to school is usually the last thing on students' minds in July, but Greater Lowell Technical High School lured them in by featuring sun, fun and learning on the menu of the Summer Service Learning Program.

The annual program acted as an orientation and community-building opportunity for incoming freshmen, providing a variety of options for involvement.

This year's focus was "urban living," with the 65 students in the program breaking down the topic into three components: crime, homelessness and vacant structures. Their primary objective was to develop project-based presentations to raise awareness and offer suggestions about what citizens can do to help solve each problem.

The three groups formed subcommittees in charge of one aspect of topic management, such as video production, research, presentation methods, etc. Though mainly student-centered and learning-driven, the exercise included traditional classroom activities, incorporating math, science, and English lessons into the curriculum.

The program culminated in final presentations, which student families, friends and staff attended.

Featured guest speakers, field trips and volunteer service opportunities covered a number of other issues related to the urban environment.

Retired Somerville police Lt.

Joe McCain, currently director of Lowell's Alliance House, spoke about youth criminality; herbalist Lynn Iverson of Lowell's Eir's Garden covered the basics of urban herbalism; Stacey Robert of Dracut's Farmer Dave's discussed community-supported agriculture; and Anna Corey, owner of Dracut's Coreypride Farm, explained the benefits of local animal husbandry.

The field trips included an excursion to restaurant chain B. Good's Hannah Farm in Boston Harbor, taking a short boat ride to the farm, where they assisted Manager Casey Ballin with such chores as harvesting kale. The other major trip was to view whales in Stellwagen Bank off Gloucester.

The program's volunteer service opportunities found students donating their time to the Merrimack Valley Food Bank, Mill City Grows, Corey Crane and Equipment Corp., and Catie's Closet in exchange for the satisfaction of feeling vested in their communities and in each other.