

# **SAMPLE CULMINATING PROJECT PROPOSALS**

## **NATHAN HALE 07-08**



### **Culminating Project Proposal #1**

By Student McStudent

#### **MUSIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Changing My Community With “Changes”

#### **Short Summary of My Project:**

Jazz musicians call the chords in a tune “changes.” When you know the changes to a tune, you can improvise with a group of musicians, make up your own melody, and still stay with the group. Knowing the changes helps you to be free and creative. Change in society can come when you know the rules, the ins and outs of a society. Through my project I will use musical “changes” to create community change. I

#### **Overview**

I will research the history of the AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians), learn about the community work they did in Chicago, and then try to do the same kind of work in my community by promoting music and giving free music lessons to kids in my neighborhood and in other schools at community centers and elementary schools. I will also work with an after-school music program directing the school’s first ever jazz combo. All will be welcome to be part of this ensemble, and we will perform for members of the community.

I will also research the impact of musical education on other learning for students, since I believe that there is a connection between having musical experience and having high academic achievement. Teaching music to younger people in my community and in other schools will help me to learn to be a great teacher, a better musician, and a friend and mentor to others

#### **Prior Knowledge**

One of my favorite jazz musicians is a man named Henry Threadgill. He plays saxophone, clarinet, and flute, and has an amazing band that I saw once in New York City. In researching his life, I found out that he is a member of a group of artists and musicians called the AACM, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. Another famous group that is part of the AACM is the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

These musicians and the collective became famous in the 1960s in Chicago, during the civil rights movement. They believed that their music, jazz, was primarily an African American music but that it had been taken over by a white society. They wanted to create music that honored the artistry of its heritage. As a collective, they supported one another so that they could pursue their musical projects and not have to rely on “gigs” to make money.

Another thing that was an important part of the collective was community outreach. These amazing artists and musicians went into the community and taught free music lessons, sharing their talent and vision with others. I was inspired by their use of music as a form of activism and fighting for social justice. Their work was an important part of the civil rights movement!

I have played the saxophone since fifth grade in school bands and in my own combos. I like to play jazz most of all, and listen to jazz in all of my spare time. I would like to be a music teacher some day, and have spent a lot of time analyzing how my great teachers work to motivate me and encourage me to always try harder. I have coached some music ensembles at my old elementary school, and I believe that I have a talent for teaching.

As I said, I have learned about teaching from the great teachers I have had throughout my school life.

### **Expected Outcomes**

I will read the following books to guide me through my project:

**Wilmer, Valerie. *As Serious As Your Life: John Coltrane and Beyond*. New York: Consortium Books, 1999.**

**Lewis, George. *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2005.**

**Lawrence, Joy and William M. Anderson. *Integrating Music into the Elementary Classroom*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2004.**

I will collect grades and WASL scores from the students I teach if they are willing to tell me so that I can see if there is a connection between studying music and doing well

in school. I will also survey my students and their families before, during, and after my lessons to see if they feel more confidence at school.

I will approach my project from the perspective of a teacher, with a guiding question about how confident students feel in school.

### **Final Presentation**

For my final presentation I will perform a piece that I have transcribed by Henry Threadgill on the tenor saxophone. Then I will have one of my student ensembles perform. I hope that the universal language of music will communicate to members of my panel. I will also have my students tell how music has impacted their lives.

My hope is to one day be a professional musician and an educator, but also a community activist. This project combines all three!

I also will submit some of my original compositions that I will create with my students as evidence of my learning.

### **Culminating Project Proposal 2**

By Pupil O'Pupil

## **HATE CRIMES: A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR**

# **THE NATHAN HALE COMMUNITY**

### **Short Summary of My Project:**

According to the Department of Justice, Hate Crimes are on the rise in the US. Whether this is supported statistically, or anecdotally through recent events like Jenna 6 or the two well-publicized attacks on the New York City Subway, public perception is increasingly drawn to issues of racial, religious, sexually oriented, or mental or physical disability-based crimes of bias. The purpose of my Culminating Project is to shed light on this phenomenon through in-depth research, as well as to create a resource guide for the Nathan Hale community in educating ourselves and preventing such crimes.

### **Overview**

I plan to conduct thorough research of this increasingly complex civil rights issue beyond the headline stories garnering much national attention. How much have hate crimes increased over the past decade? What areas of the country, particularly Washington state and Seattle, deal with bias-based attacks? And, how exactly does the government define a hate crime? Beyond these particulars, I will also research the level of awareness of the surrounding Nathan Hale community by surveying and interviewing

students, families and community members. The purpose of this is to provide a thorough and complete illustration of the issue of hate crimes in the Nathan Hale area.

Lastly, the insight and information from government and civil rights organizations, coupled with the knowledge I gain from the community, will support my work to create a resource guide for Nathan Hale and its neighbors. I hope to incorporate factual information with current local and national programs that aim to prevent hate crimes while providing strategies in case a hate crime occurs.

### **Prior Knowledge**

Beyond the recent news headlines of hate crimes, I have recently studied hate crimes in Social Studies and Language Arts classes. We have compared some statistical data with that of the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, while also comparing literature from that era and today.

One of the key differences I have learned thus far is that hate crimes have much broader definition today. As I mentioned above, these crimes of bias include race, religion, sexual preference or orientation, mental or physical disabilities, and other categories. This contrasts greatly with the 1960s' focus which was primarily on racial bias.

I also know that the federal government has passed laws to deter hate crimes , though I strongly believe that the awareness of such laws by the American public is far from ideal.

### **Expected Outcomes**

In order to better understand the issue of hate crimes, I will research the topic from literature, as well as from websites such as:

<http://www.civilrights.org/issues/hate/>

<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/hc2006/index.html>

<http://www.stophate.org/stophate/>

These websites provide substantial data and information on the scope of hate crimes in the US. I will use them to provide relevant evidence of the issue of hate crimes nationally and in our community in Seattle. This research will also help me to formulate a better series of strategies for hate crime education and prevention in the form of a resource guide. This resource guide will be published and made available to each classroom at Nathan Hale High School, as well as to other schools in our community,

along with the numerous other Lake City, Wedgwood and Northgate public facilities and organizations.

### **Final Presentation**

My final presentation will include a PowerPoint presentation that highlights the important information and data that represents the realities of hate crimes in America and Seattle. The purpose of this presentation is also to communicate the survey and interview data I collected from Nathan Hale High School and the surrounding community. I hope this convinces my fellow students and community members to be more aware and motivated to address this growing issue.

Finally, I will also present the resource guide which, again, will offer current statistical information of hate crimes in the Seattle area and strategies to prevent or confront current and future problems of hate crimes.