



## **Civics in Action! Washington, D.C. 2018/2019**

### **Overview:**

Civics in Action! - Washington, D.C. is a unique experiential learning program jointly developed with the Carlthorp School's sixth grade service learning team. The program will allow students to research public policy issues of their choosing and to experience participatory democracy through the lens of investigative journalism. Civics in Action! complements Carlthorp's sixth grade service learning curriculum by situating service and civics lessons directly in the community and allowing students to experience first-hand how to be engaged citizens, capable of effecting social and political change.

This year's program culminates in a five day trip to Washington, D.C. where students will meet with journalists, lawmakers, government officials, and policy advocates/experts. In the nation's capital, students - playing the role of journalist - will research and report on social problems, current events, and their policy issues. The program will emphasize the role of a free press in fostering productive civil discourse and sustaining democratic norms.

This year's program builds on our civics and service learning trips over the past three years in which students traveled to the Iowa presidential caucuses as student journalists, and traveled to Washington, D.C. as public policy advocates.

Preparation for the Washington, D.C. experience will begin in the Fall of 2018 through Carlthorp's sixth grade service learning curriculum. Students will create service learning/public policy research teams and develop an understanding of a specific social problem. Starting in January, KidUnity will help augment classroom work by allowing students to engage with outside experts in journalism, direct advocacy, policy research, and legislation. By the time the students leave for Washington, D.C. in March 2019, student teams will be prepared to engage in deeper investigation and thoughtful discussion of their policy issues. Students will reflect, report on, and advocate through traditional and social media. Upon their return, students will work with their sixth grade teachers to present their work to the Carlthorp community and develop their policy research into student-led service projects.

### **Important Dates:**

#### **Information & Registration**

- Thursday, November 8 - In-class presentation to sixth grade classes

- Tuesday, November 13, directly after flag-line (CS Board Room) - Informational meeting with parents
- Friday, November 30 - \$500 deposit and registration forms due (please drop off checks payable to KidUnity and forms at front desk at CS)
- Friday, January 11 - Remaining balance due of \$1,650, payable to KidUnity

### Workshops

- Eight mandatory workshops will be held after-school on Thursdays (3:15 - 4:45) at Carlthorp beginning in January. Some workshops may include opportunities for special meetings and field work that may occur off-site at local social service agencies and organizations.

### Workshop Dates:

- January 10, 17, 24, 31
- February 7, 14, 28
- March 7

### Travel to Washington, D.C.

- Saturday, March 9 - Wednesday, March 13

### **FAQ:**

#### What is KidUnity?

- KidUnity started as a series of conversations between two Carlthorp School dads (Peter Sheehy and David Snow) about the need for fun, high-quality, and readily-available service learning and civic leadership programs. Exhaustive conversations and research, combined with their respective backgrounds as educator and non-profit executive, resulted in forming a 501(c)(3) non-profit where our mission is to engage kids in their community. For more info about KidUnity, please visit [www.kidunity.us](http://www.kidunity.us).

#### Why should my child participate in this program?

- KidUnity's Civics in Action! program integrates with Carlthorp's sixth grade service learning curriculum and is designed to be a capstone academic experience that pulls together many cross-curriculum skills and experiences Carlthorp students have developed over the past seven years: leadership, public speaking, critical thinking, writing, research, informed project design, teamwork, and civic literacy.

#### What if my student is unable to make the trip to Washington, D.C.?

- Students who are unable to participate in the trip to Washington, D.C. in March will remain at school and staff the "Carlthorp Newsroom" and support their policy teams. These students may have opportunities to meet with local officials and journalists to investigate and report on their team's policy issues.

#### Who is leading this program?

- Civics in Action! workshops and the Washington, D.C. trip will be led by KidUnity Directors (and Carlthorp parents) Peter Sheehy and David Snow.
- All five Carlthorp sixth grade teachers will join the trip as policy group leaders.
- Several Carlthorp Fellows who are high school students (and who are all also Carlthorp graduates) will participate in workshops and join the trip as teaching assistants, secondary school mentors and social media experts.

What does this experience cost?

- The fee for workshops and four day trip to Washington, D.C is \$2,150. The program fee should not exclude participation so please contact Carlthorp School directly about confidential financial assistance.

What are some activities students will do in Washington, D.C.?

- Our time in D.C. will feature meetings with lawmakers, policy experts, national media, and fun activities related to the various policy groups (last year's events included an evening visit to the Lincoln Memorial for a recitation of the Gettysburg Address, visits to the Newseum and the National Museum of African American History & Culture, morning fun runs around the reflecting pool to see the Cherry Blossoms, and much more!).

For photos and videos from last year's Civics in Action! Trip, please visit [www.kidunity.us](http://www.kidunity.us).