

# Close Up Civics Clubs

A Close Up Club is an extracurricular activity which teaches students about government, service, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Close Up Clubs are found in middle and high schools across the country sponsored by the school and the Close Up Foundation, a nonpartisan not for profit organization in Washington, D.C. With Congress as our partner, clubs provide a comprehensive civics curriculum and opportunity for students to directly apply what they learn in Washington, DC with Close Up Club students from across the country.

## Why implement a Close Up Club at your school?

- ***Close Up Clubs provide a laboratory for civic participation while enhancing the social studies curriculum***

Active citizenship in a democratic society requires an understanding of rights and responsibilities, knowledge of processes, critical thinking, and public speaking skills. Club members meet monthly to practice civic skills, hear from community leaders or take on a service project at the school.

- ***Close Up Clubs provide the opportunity for students to apply their skills in Washington, DC***

Interested club members travel to Washington, DC, with their teacher advisor, to participate in either the High School or Middle School Close Up Civics Academy. In Washington, students join peers from across the country for workshops, a Mock Congress, monument study visits and Capitol Hill visits which challenge students to directly apply their Close Up Club skills and explore the links between history and the rights and responsibilities of citizens today. With students participating from places like Alaska, Florida, Nebraska and Puerto Rico, students return home with new friends and new viewpoints, and are inspired to take on an active role in their community.

- ***Close Up Clubs Provide Professional Development for Teachers***

Teacher Advisors receive ongoing support from the Close Up program manager including school visits and academic resources. Teachers travelling with students to Washington, DC participate in our Close Up Teacher program which provides access to expert speakers, partnership workshops including the Smithsonian Institute, study visits such as Mt. Vernon, Harper's Ferry and Lincoln's cottage, a National Press Club Luncheon, and networking with other civic educators from across the country.

- ***Close Up Clubs provide members with opportunities for leadership and direct action***

Students in the club may take on elected roles inside the club and following the Close Up Civics Academy, students take on a community project of their choosing. Some schools run voter registration drives, start recycling programs, create a video or play about youth civic engagement or talk to younger students about how important it is to be an active member of their community.

- ***Close Up Clubs provide high school students the opportunity to gain college credit***

High school students who participate in the Close Up Washington, DC program can apply to receive 1 college credit from the University of Virginia. Students must apply before travelling to Washington and successfully complete a follow up policy paper. Some schools provide Close Up as an elective course or independent study, using our Current Issues book as a guiding text.



# Examples of Close Up Clubs

Close Up Clubs provide members with opportunities for leadership.

★ At Halls High School in Halls, Tennessee, club officers plan activities that give all members a sense of belonging, from the new member induction ceremony (a dressy affair held on a Sunday afternoon at the local community center) to the festive end-of-the-year club banquet. In many clubs, including the one at Albert M. Lowry High School in Winnemucca, Nevada, officers organize a full slate of projects, both political and fundraising. Lowry's club members are also likely to show up at local school board, city council, or county commission meetings.

Close Up Clubs provide opportunity to participate in the Close Up Civics Academy

★ At Bigfork High School in Bigfork, Minnesota, the current year's club members meet with the previous year's members to find out what they can expect in Washington. At many schools, including the Erskine Academy in Augusta, Maine, students going to Washington meet frequently in study/discussion groups to prepare academically and get to know each other better before the trip. This gives students an extra kind of support group during their time in Washington. Clubs throughout the nation hold post trip briefings to help students process the information they learned at Close Up Washington.

Close Up Clubs help members raise funds for Close Up Washington tuition.

★ Students at John Burroughs High School in Burbank, California, learn how to mobilize their resources for effective fundraising with a well-planned system of guest speeches, phone calls, and visits to businesses and organizations. At the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin, Texas, fundraising is a multifaceted undertaking with a variety of projects ranging from doughnut and hot chocolate sales before school to presenting to the Young Democrats and Republicans.

Close Up Clubs provide opportunities for students to gain college credit

★ At Newton North High School, in Newton, Massachusetts students take a semester long Close Up Current Issues course. Students examine local, state and national issues from various viewpoints, using the Close Up Current Issues text and directly apply what they have learned in Washington, DC by discussing these issues with peers, policy experts, media and members of Congress.

**For More Information** contact Close Up's Educational Outreach Director Sara Emhof at 1 800 CLOSE UP ext 3587 or [semhof@closeup.org](mailto:semhof@closeup.org)

