



Radical Self-Love

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Radical Self Love is a year-long, social justice project that unpacks the complex idea of self love for eight and nine year olds. In the first half of the year, students explored identity to better understand themselves and appreciate differences in others. Who am I? Who are others? What parts of myself can I love? were the questions that guided this identity work. Each week, the project focused on a different facet of identity: family, family traditions, culture and cultural traditions, language, skin color and race, gender and gender identity. Students learned to identify these parts of their identities through the lens of “This is something to love about myself.” They exhibited this work by creating Día de los Muertos style Empowerment Altars to honor the parts of who they are. Their altars showcased products they made throughout the first half of the project: empowerment boards, photos of an outfit they chose that makes them feel powerful, words of affirmation they wrote for themselves, a family portrait, and more.

Teacher Reflection

The idea for this project came to us during the Summer of 2020 as we were witnessing racial and social injustices all while being isolated in the middle of a global pandemic. During a planning session, we talked about the ways we as teachers are practicing self-care. The discussion furthered when we discussed the ways we are each learning to love ourselves and how self love has been a difficult journey for us. The world teaches us that we should not love ourselves and this experience is amplified for people of color. We believe the first step to social justice is self-love. In the beginning of this project when we asked students who or what they love; not one student said themselves. We recently did heart maps and so many students included themselves as something they love!

I think every project time has been very uplifting because we know that this is meaningful work. It just reminds me that I need to be focusing on this: This is the heart of social justice work.

—Candice Arancibia

Student Reflection

In the beginning of this project, I used to think that I was all of these good things, but now I know that I am all of these good things.

— Stella