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Students in Owen Cegielski’s ninth-grade history class at Carbon Valley Secondary Academy in Frederick show off a report and collage they compiled documenting their experiences in Project Citizenship. Students rang bells for the Salvation Army and visited a nursing home in Broomfield as a way to experience firsthand what it’s like to participate in community service. Kimberly Pursel/Times-Call  |

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Students learn firsthand the importance of helping othersCVA launches Project Citizenship program *By Kimberly Pursel The Carbon Valley Edition* FREDERICK — “No matter how little you do, it’s widely appreciated by your community.” That’s the way Emily Higbee, a ninth-grader at Carbon Valley Secondary Academy in Frederick, summed up what she learned as a participant in Project Citizenship.She is one of 13 students at the school who completed the project, a new program that encourages kids to focus on their communities and learn the importance of volunteering.“I implemented the program to teach the students how important it is to be a responsible community member,” said Owen Cegielski, a history teacher at the school. Project Citizenship requires students to volunteer four hours to helping others in the community.On Dec. 15, six students from Cegielski’s class rang bells for the Salvation Army at the Super Walmart in Westminster, while the other students visited a Broomfield nursing home on Dec. 16.The students said it was an educational and “eye-opening” experience, and they said they plan to again volunteer their time in the future.At the nursing home, student Daniel Judson played his guitar for Alzheimer’s patients for nearly two hours.“The attendant at the nursing home said that the patients all had short attention spans and liked to move around a lot,” Cegielski said. “But Daniel’s music was soothing to them and kept them very still.”While peeling an orange for an elderly man who was unable to do it on his own, student Haley Dennis said she learned about the importance of life.“I was talking to Bob, who was married for 50 years, and his wife died about one year and three months ago,” Dennis said. “He told me to cherish what you have before it’s gone.”Student Ladd Embrey also spoke with Bob, a veteran of World War II.“He taught me that whatever I decide to do in my life now will etch out the rest of my life,” Embrey said.The students who helped out the Salvation Army braved strong wind and temperatures that dipped below zero.Dakota Bingham put socks over his cold hands to keep them warm.“Some guy donated money to us like three times,” said April Silva. “And Rafa (Ventura) went to help a woman who fell when she slipped on the ice, and she ended up donating afterward,” added Hannah Partee.Cegielski’s students reflected on their day by writing a report and compiling a group collage filled with photos of their experiences.“It was definitely a rewarding opportunity,” said student Joey Rener.Kimberly Pursel can be reached at 303-684-5326 or kpursel@times-call.com.  |

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