English professor Dr. Claudia Reder and Charmon Evans, Service Learning Community Partner from University Preparation School (UPS), collaborated on the development of a Service Learning project for Professor Reder's English 312 course: Introduction to Children's Literature in fall 2005. Citing the importance of literacy in a child's life Professor Reder's students learned about various genres of children's literature, and a variety of response tasks to children’s books. Students then volunteered at UPS for 6 class sessions 1.15 hours each, working on oral storytelling traditions with 4th, 5th and 6th graders in an after-school setting.

During each session CSUCI students worked in small groups, told folk tales to children at UPS, the children would then create their own folktales. UPS students used various media to tell their own stories while CSUCI students helped write them. UPS students shared their works of art and stories in a celebration at the end of the project.

CSUCI students shared highlights of their sessions on the discussion board and kept an anecdotal journal on their storymaking sessions. At the end, CSUCI students handed in a reflective paper on storytelling with 4-6th graders.
Villa Cesar Chavez Project

Oxnard lawyer and labor advocate Barbara Macri-Ortiz approached CSUCI History Professor Frank Barajas with an idea about preserving legal papers that documented a civil rights case involving wrongfully evicted Ventura farmworkers from their homes, in 1996, after they raised questions to their landlord (rancher and landowner) about the safety of their living conditions. Eventually six lawsuits, represented by Ms. Macri-Ortiz and lasting from 1996-2002, were brought against the landowner that resulted in the creation of Villa Cesar Chavez, a 58 unit farm worker housing development on Hueneme Road that is now nearing completion of construction.

Case files documenting the proceedings and organized by pleadings, correspondence, notes, research, discovery, evidence, and appellate proceedings have historical value for the farm worker community in Ventura County, and were in need of some type of permanent depository. Together, Professor Barajas and Ms. Macri-Ortiz created a Service Learning Capstone class (History 492) that provided a service learning opportunity for two CSUCI students who were interested in archiving these documents. The documents were transferred to the CSUCI library where the Capstone students are now spending time sorting through them, developing an archiving system and preserving a piece of farmworker history.

As Barbara Macri-Ortiz stated upon delivering the documents to the CSUCI library, “Today was the first time I set foot in the CSUCI Library. What a pleasure to be greeted by words of wisdom from Cesar Chavez. Yes, these files are definitely housed in the right location.”

Concurrently, oral histories of the now residents (58) of Villa Cesar Chavez are being documented by CSUCI students enrolled in English 102 and 331. Residents are being interviewed about how their lives have changed as a result of living at Villa Cesar Chavez enabling their stories to be documented and preserved in a vibrant and living way.