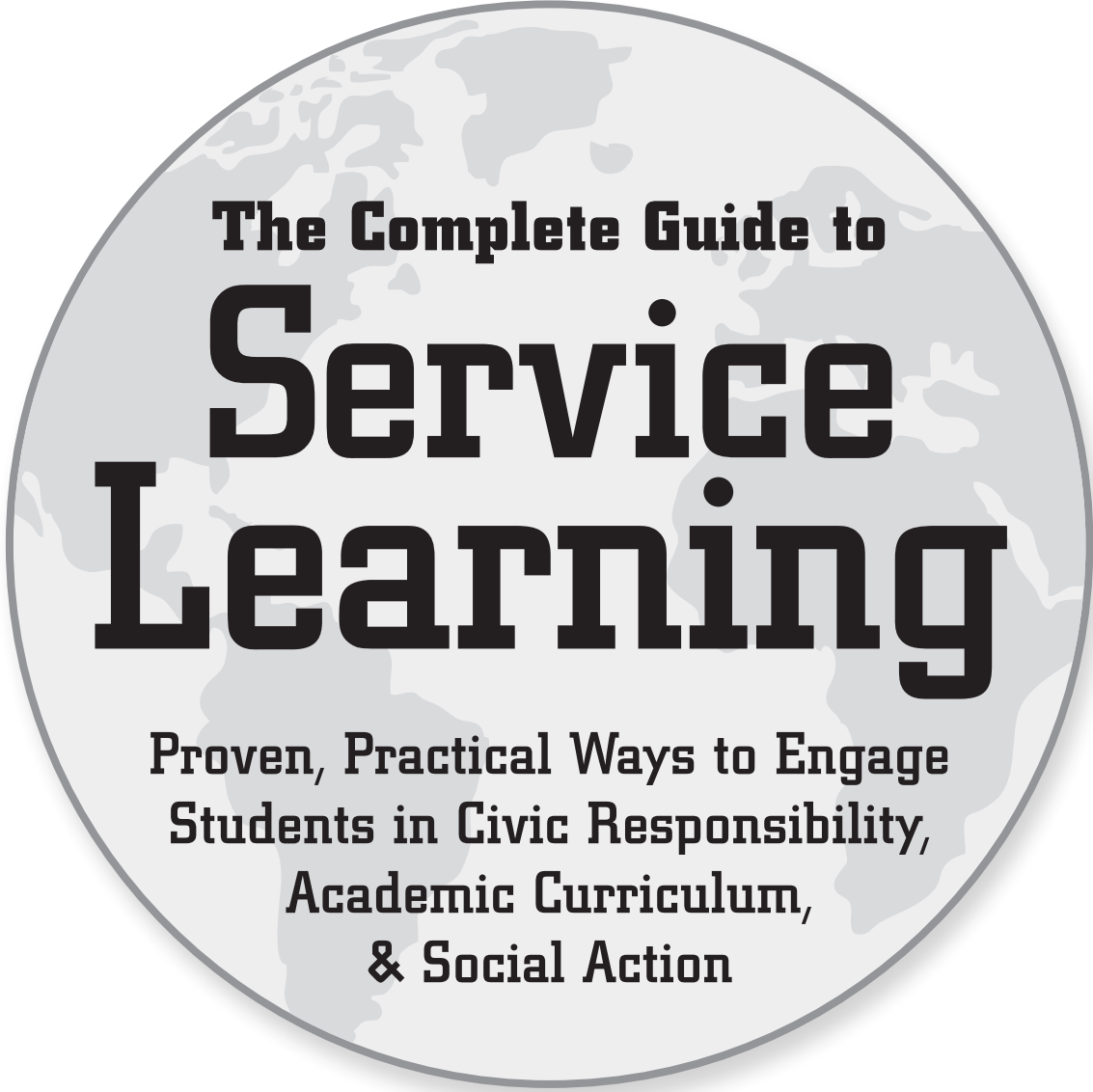


Reproducible Forms and Bonus Materials for



The Complete Guide to
Service
Learning

**Proven, Practical Ways to Engage
Students in Civic Responsibility,
Academic Curriculum,
& Social Action**

Revised & Updated Second Edition

Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A.

free spirit
PUBLISHING®



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Digital Content

Forms from the Book

Click on the form name to open the file.

W indicates a writeable PDF document

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Planning for Service Learning Examples

[Click here to open the PDF.](#)

Elementary, AIDS Education and Awareness

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High School, AIDS Education and Awareness

Elementary, Animal Protection and Care

Middle School, Animal Protection and Care

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Elementary, Elders

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Elementary, Emergency Readiness
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Elementary; Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices
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Elementary; Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty
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Elementary, Literacy
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Middle School, Social Change: Issues and Action
High School, Social Change: Issues and Action

Elementary, Special Needs and Disabilities
Middle School, Special Needs and Disabilities (*see Forms from the Book*)
High School, Special Needs and Disabilities

**Interviews with Authors:
The Story Behind the Story**
[Click here to open the PDF.](#)

AIDS Education and Awareness: Author Interviews

James Cross Giblin
Allan Stratton

Animal Protection and Care: Author Interviews

Kathe Koja

Elders: Author Interviews

Eve Bunting
Richard Michelson
Eileen Spinelli

Emergency Readiness: Author Interviews

Danica Novgorodoff
Dana Reinhardt

The Environment: Author Interviews

Laurie David
Don Madden

Gardening: Author Interviews

Pat Brisson

Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty: Author Interviews

Lindsay Lee Johnson
Marion Hess Pomeranc

Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices: Author Interviews

Jordan Sonnenblick

Immigrants: Author Interviews

Francisco Jiménez
Tony Johnston

Literacy: Author and Illustrator Interviews

Janet Tashjian
Jake Tashjian
Ann Whitehead Nagda

Safe and Strong Communities: Author Interviews

Sharleen Collicott

Phillip Hoose

James Howe

Jerry Spinelli

Social Change: Author Interviews

Deborah Ellis

Sonia Levitin

Diana Cohn

Special Needs and Disabilities: Author Interviews

Ellen Senisi

Cynthia Lord

Voices from the Field

[Click here to open the PDF.](#)

(Note: Brief excerpts of these essays are included in the book.)

Building the Sustainable Service Learning Partnership
by Susan A. Abravanel

Creating a Culture of Service Through Collaboration
by Roser Batlle

Creating and Supporting a Culture of Service Through Professional Development
by Anne Thidemann French

District-Wide Implementation: Character and Service
by Dr. Ada Grabowski

Getting Started in the Process of Creating a Culture of Service: Developing Service Learning in a Texas School District
by Mike Hurewitz

A Local Service Learning Association
by Cathryn Berger Kaye and Donna Ritter

The Legacy Project: From Student Voice Comes a Transformative Model

by Ron Perry

Mission and Coordination: An Independent School Perspective

by Nan Peterson

Youth Empowerment to Create a District-Wide Culture of Service

by Evelyn Robinson

Urban Service learning

by Jon Schmidt

Additional Bookshelf Titles

[Click here to open the PDF.](#)

(Note: These lists include Recommendations from the Field.)

The AIDS Education and Awareness Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Animal Protection and Care Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Elders Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Environment Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Gardening Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Immigrants Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Literacy Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Safe and Strong Communities Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Social Change Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Special Needs and Disabilities Bookshelf:
Additional Titles



Establishing Curricular Connections: Points of Entry

1. Identify an existing program or activity to transform into authentic service learning.
 - Select an activity or project already existing on campus.
 - Examine it for cross-curricular learning opportunities that meet or enhance academic standards.
 - Exchange resources and ideas with teachers, students, and community partners.

Example: Canned Food Drive

Before students brought in cans of food, classroom activities included studying nutrition, visiting the receiving agency to identify needed foods, and reading related literature. Students led peer discussions on social issues, replacing misconceptions with an understanding of hunger in their community. Graphs showing the food collected along with student-authored articles about the impact and continued need of this service were printed in school and community newspapers.

Bookshelf suggestions: *The Can-Do Thanksgiving*, *Soul Moon Soup*, and *Homeless Teens*

2. Begin with standard curriculum, content, and skills, and find an age-appropriate extension into service that meets a community need verified by the students.
 - Identify the specific content and skill areas to be addressed.
 - Select an area of emphasis that supports or adds to classroom learning and addresses learning objectives or state standards.
 - Guide students as they investigate the related community need and create a plan for applying classroom content that improves a situation or benefits others.
 - Look for additional learning opportunities as the plan is transformed into action.

Example: Learning History through Discussion with Elder Partners

To be better informed about current events and to improve listening and communication skills, students met weekly with elders at a senior center. Shared experiences included studying news events, learning about aging, interviewing, collaborating on oral histories and photo essays, displaying results in the school and public library, and building a Web page to reach a broader audience.

Bookshelf suggestions: *Stranger in the Mirror*, *Growing Older*, and *We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History*

3. From a theme or unit of study, identify content and skill connections.
 - Begin with a broad theme or topic, often with obvious service implications.
 - Identify specific standards-based content and skill areas to be developed.
 - Select a service application verified by students as an authentic need, including a baseline of the situation so they can monitor progress.



Example: The Individual's Role in Society

During a lesson about the individual's role in society, teachers encouraged students to consider options for civic participation. Curriculum included reading nonfiction stories of adults and young people contributing to their communities, researching local agency needs, providing regular assistance to an agency, and publishing an informative pamphlet for young people about the agency.

Bookshelf suggestions: *Sisters in Strength: American Women Who Make a Difference* and *Free the Children: A Young Man's Personal Crusade Against Child Labor*

4. Start with a student-identified need.

- Identify student skills, talents, and interests.
- Students define a problem, verify a need, and establish solutions, usually with community input.
- Students lead implementation as teacher facilitates, adding interdisciplinary learning opportunities.

Example: Transform an Empty Lot into a Community Garden

A student initiated a conversation about starting a community garden in an empty lot near the school. With teacher guidance, academic standards were met as students communicated with a government agency regarding property use, conducted Internet research to find funding sources, partnered with special needs students to maintain the garden, and donated the harvest to a local shelter.

Bookshelf suggestions: *Seedfolks*, *Just Kids: Visiting a Class for Children with Special Needs*, and *A Kid's Guide to Social Action*

5. Start with a community-identified need.

- Community requests assistance, perhaps through an agency that has worked with the school before.
- Teacher, students, and community partners identify learning opportunities.

Example: Tutoring/Literacy

A school received a request to participate in a citywide book collection to benefit local children. Teachers in several grades collaborated on cross-age projects, in which older students helped younger children write and illustrate bilingual books on mutually agreed-on themes. The books were donated to youth clubs, hospitals, and childcare facilities. Student representatives served on a city committee to plan future literacy activities.

Bookshelf suggestions: *La Mariposa*, *Just Juice*, and *Thank You, Mr. Falker*



K–12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

Meaningful Service. Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

Students identify, authenticate, and learn about a recognized community need. Student actions are reciprocal, valued by the community, and have real consequences while offering opportunities to apply newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.

Link to Curriculum. Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

The process includes deliberate cross-curricular connections whereby students learn skills and content through varied modalities that meet academic standards, and enables the transference of skills and content to new applications. The content informs the service and the service informs the content.

Reflection. Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.

Students participate in systemic varied processes that integrate empathetic response with cognitive thinking related to social issues and their lives. This affective and cognitive blend deepens the service learning as students apply and transfer new understandings of themselves, others, and the world around them.

Diversity. Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

Student experience affords opportunities to form multidimensional understanding and varied points of view. This process allows students to gain perspective and develop mutual respect and appreciation for others, while replacing stereotypes with accurate information.

Youth Voice. Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

Students experience significant age-appropriate challenges involving tasks that require thinking, initiative, and problem solving as they demonstrate responsibility and decision-making in an environment safe enough to allow them to make mistakes and to succeed.

Partnerships. Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

Students participate in the development of reciprocal partnerships and share responsibility with community members, parents, organizations, and other students. These relationships afford opportunities to interact with people of diverse backgrounds and experience, resulting in mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation.

Progress Monitoring. Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

Once students identify and authenticate the need, they use varied methods to observe and track change and improvement as they carry out the service learning process. Advancement toward intended or developing outcomes is examined, along with effectiveness of applied procedures and recognized mutual benefits. Findings are shared with stakeholders.

Duration and Intensity. Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

The length of the experience allows for a complete and thorough process as articulated in the Five Stages of Service Learning, with age-appropriate content, skill development, and depth of material covered.



The Five Stages of Service Learning

Inventory and Investigation

Using interviewing and other means of social analysis, students:

- catalog the interests, skills, and talents of their peers and partners.
- identify a need.
- analyze the underlying problem.
- establish a baseline of the need.
- begin to accumulate partners.

Preparation and Planning

With guidance from their teacher, students:

- draw upon previously acquired skills and knowledge.
- acquire new information through varied, engaging means and methods.
- collaborate with community partners.
- develop a plan that encourages responsibility.
- recognize the integration of service and learning.
- become ready to provide meaningful service.
- articulate roles and responsibilities of all involved.
- define realistic parameters for implementation.

Action

Through direct service, indirect service, research, advocacy, or a combination of these approaches, students take action that:

- has value, purpose, and meaning.
- uses previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.
- offers unique learning experiences.
- has real consequences.
- offers a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed.

Reflection

During systematic reflection, the teacher or students guide the process using various modalities, such as role play, discussion, and journal writing. Participating students:

- describe what happened.
- examine the difference made.
- discuss thoughts and feelings.
- place experience in a larger context.
- consider project improvements.
- generate ideas.
- identify questions.
- encourage comments from partners and recipients.
- receive feedback.

Demonstration

Students showcase what and how they have learned, along with demonstrating skills, insights, and outcomes of service provided to an outside group. Students may:

- report to peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members.
- write articles or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern.
- create a publication or Web site that helps others learn from students' experiences.
- make presentations and performances.
- create displays of public art with murals or photography.



Service + Learning = Service Learning

Service:

Service means contributing to or helping to benefit others and the common good.

Learning:

Learning means gaining understanding of a subject or skill through study, instruction, or experience.

Service Learning:

The ideas of service and learning combine to create service learning. **Investigation, preparation and planning, action, reflection, and demonstration** are the five stages of service learning. By understanding how each stage works, you can be more effective in making plans to help in your community.



Planning for Service Learning

Grade level(s): _____

Essential Purpose or Question:

Content—Learning About:

Service Need:

Service Idea:
Investigation of the Need:
Preparation and Planning:
Action:
Reflection Methods:
Demonstration to Others:

Youth Voice and Choice:

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Social Studies/History:

Mathematics:

Science:

Languages:

Art and Music:

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

Books and Other Media Used:

Community Partners:



Opportunities for Students to:

- Experience and explore diversity:

- Participate in progress monitoring:

- Learn about careers:

- Strengthen social, emotional, and character traits:

- Make global connections:

- Develop leadership:

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Teacher Collaboration:

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Additional Notes:



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, The Environment*

Grade level(s): 3

Essential Purpose or Question:

How can teaching others about helping the environment enable us to be better students and citizens?

Content—Learning About:

- Ecology
- Composting
- Waste reduction
- Recycling

Service Need:

There is too much waste in our community that could be recycled. If the students and community are informed about options for composting, they can choose to participate.

Service Idea: Give It to the Worms

Promote composting at school and in the community.

Investigation of the Need:

Weigh the amount of food thrown away at lunch that could be composted. Interview a school custodian.

Preparation and Planning:

Study ecosystems, hear guest speaker from Integrative Waste Management Board (IWMB), create chart to record waste quantities and reduction, prepare video presentation on waste management.

Action:

Install compost and worm bins, monitor school food waste, donate compost soil to school garden and nearby senior housing (gardening by elder residents), host parent information night with site tour and composting lesson.

Reflection Methods:

Keep journals made from recycled paper, weekly meetings to review project success, annual review of progress with IWMB partners.

Demonstration to Others:

Distribute monthly copies of newsletter “Worm Ways” to school community, participate in Chinese New Year parade as a giant worm while handing out “Give It to the Worms” brochures about worm bins and composting.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Since the project is ongoing, each year students add a new component based on their ideas (for example, making journals, being worm in parade).

Curricular Connections:

✔ *English/Language Arts:*

Design a campaign to promote use of school composting and reduce waste at school, write video script, write letter to parents describing project, write “Worm Ways” newsletter, plan and write “Give It to the Worms” brochure

✔ *Social Studies/History:*

Study environmentalist Rachel Carson

✔ *Mathematics:*

Graph waste quantities

✔ *Science:*

Study life cycles; review ecosystems, waste reduction, and composting; maintain compost and worm bin

✔ *Languages:*

Create Spanish-language signs to place by the compost and worm bins

✔ *Art and Music:*

Design poster campaign

✔ *Technology:*

Make a how-to-compost video with help from high school students

☐ *Other:*

Skills Being Developed:

- Paragraph construction
- Graphing
- Vocabulary
- Time management
- Following directions
- Sequencing
- Public speaking, including planning a talk
- Patience

Books and Other Media Used:

Compost Critters

I Want to Be an Environmentalist

Compost! Growing Gardens from Your Garbage

Rachel Carson

Community Partners:

Integrative Waste Management Board

Chinese New Year planning committee

PTSA for participation at back-to-school events

Nearby senior housing



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**

Students used the composting as a way to discuss all the different foods people eat and their cultural connections. After learning more about Chinese New Year, they added another level of understanding diversity. In creating their brochure, students considered who their audience would be and wrote to a range of populations in their community.

- **Participate in progress monitoring:**

Students measured the reduction in garbage waste at school. They also visited each classroom at the beginning of the year to inform students about the compost, and revisited at the beginning of February to see how many students used the compost and how many planned to use it.

- **Learn about careers:**

Students learned about careers in waste management and city commissions.

- **Strengthen social, emotional, and character traits:**

Students strengthened their perseverance and patience. Patience was especially challenging at first since the students wanted results; they wanted everyone to use the compost bins and they wanted to see the compost “magic” happen! By charting progress, they became more patient and saw how the activities and success evolved over time.

- **Make global connections:**

The connection with Chinese New Year added to our sense of celebration occurring in many parts of the world. This was an exciting notion for the students to understand.

- **Develop leadership:**

Students worked diligently on organizational skills, which are definite traits of leaders. They planned the collection for the compost, formed speaking teams, and tracked details that were essential to progress.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

The service began with the commitment of a yearlong effort. With the students’ excitement and success, it has grown to an annual experience with ongoing learning opportunities. At the beginning, we spent about a day a week on this, spread out among many subject areas. As the process grew more established, we spent about two to three hours a week doing upkeep and monitoring. Students had roles during lunch and other out-of-class times that they gladly fulfilled.

Teacher Collaboration:

All teachers willingly incorporated into their lessons the books about composting recommended by our class. They welcomed our students for lessons and announcements.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

A newspaper article reported on the worm at the Chinese New Year parade. Students made annual presentations and gave tours to parents and community members, including residents of a senior living community.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

“Worm Ways” newsletter, “Give It to the Worms” brochure, how-to-compost video created with high school partners

Additional Notes:

This activity started on a small scale with one elementary school teacher in Palo Alto, California, and grew to involve many more. This plan shows what evolved over four years.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Immigrants*

Grade level(s): 6–7

Essential Purpose or Question:

Can student learning move from simulation to making a real community impact?

Content—Learning About:

- Immigration to the United States
- Process of becoming a citizen
- Resettlement of refugees
- Civic involvement

Service Need:

Becoming a U.S. citizen requires dedication and hard work that deserves to be honored by the community, which can increase tolerance and understanding between cultures.

Service Idea: In Honor of New Citizens

Sponsor a citizenship swearing-in ceremony at school.

Investigation of the Need:

Interview an official from Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) to find out about the need for swearing-in ceremonies and community involvement.

Preparation and Planning:

Meet with INS, read about the countries of origin of the people being sworn in, plan the event, get food donations, decorate auditorium and library, arrange for coverage by educational television channel.

Action:

Set up rooms, greet guests, interview the new citizens, and take photographs.

Reflection Methods:

Write in journals, lead discussion groups, identify needs for written materials and resources for children of these families, write a letter to INS to share what has been learned and suggest ideas for next time, send forms to partner agencies for feedback, read and share letters received from new citizen families expressing thanks for the special event.

Demonstration to Others:

Compile interviews and photographs for each family, and make “welcome kits” for the children of these families with: a cartoon-style area map, recommended places for sports and entertainment, a list of after-school and weekend activities, a guide of youth idioms, a small journal, and a pen.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Develop the idea, establish partnerships, organize into committees, plan interviews, design and make welcome kits for children of families.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Write letters for donations and thank-you letters, keep journals, read literature about the immigrant experience, write press releases, learn new vocabulary

Social Studies/History:

Participate in an Ellis Island simulation; hear guest speaker from INS; research the countries of origin of the people being sworn in—their history, current events, and culture (foods, music, traditions); interview immigrants about their transition to citizenship

Mathematics:

Science:

Languages:

Identify greetings in the languages of the countries studied, including the correct pronunciations; use the greetings on banners

Art and Music:

Collect music from many cultures; school choral group participates by singing a medley with cultural references

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Organization and planning
- Letter writing
- Interviewing
- Problem solving
- Teamwork

Books and Other Media Used:

The Skirt

The Circuit and Breaking Through

The Middle of Everywhere: The World’s Refugees Come to Our Town (excerpts)

Behind the Mountains

The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee’s Story

The Kid’s Guide to Social Action

Immigration: How Should It Be Controlled?

A Very Important Day

Community Partners:

Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS)

City multicultural program

Educational TV channel

Portland Press



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**

Students researched the immigrants' countries of origin as they were making plans for the swearing-in ceremony. They held discussions about the many different reasons people immigrate to the United States, and the specific circumstances related to people seeking refugee status. They saw the differences in needs from one generation to the next.

- **Participate in progress monitoring:**

N/A

- **Learn about careers:**

Students learned about careers in government and nonprofit organizations related to refugee assistance, both national and international.

- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**

Students replaced stereotypes with accurate information about people within their community. They also gained empathy, compassion, and open-mindedness.

- **Make global connections:**

Students increased their knowledge of why people immigrate and gained awareness of contemporary global issues in many parts of the world.

- **Develop leadership:**

This experience presented a tremendous opportunity for youth initiative and creativity. Students had fun learning about other cultures and creating a welcoming environment. They showed initiative in their studies and showed exemplary leadership in making complex issues easier for their peers to understand.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Roughly two to three months, with more time spent at the beginning and right before the event. This service experience has been adopted by each class for several years.

Teacher Collaboration:

Teachers school-wide saw the value to their classes and to the entire community and collaborated by allowing release time from class as the event neared. Many classes generously participated by making posters and decorations, helping with translations, and reading relevant literature to become well-versed on the topic.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students sought donations from the community and educated local businesses about their work and about the need being addressed. Students wrote press releases and invited media to attend the swearing-in ceremony. Students also invited local elected officials and school board members. The event closed with a celebration for the new citizens.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Welcome kit prototype, area maps, lists of community information

Additional Notes:

This service learning experience took place at Lyman Moore Middle School in Portland, Maine. It evolved from student interest and initiative resulting from an Ellis Island simulation, which taught them more about their community as a resettlement area for people from all over the world. Partnerships with INS and city offices were essential components.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Literacy*

Grade level(s): 9

Essential Purpose or Question:

How do mentoring relationships help students become more cognizant about their own learning styles?

Content—Learning About:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Civic participation
- Child psychology
- Bookmaking
- Being role models

Service Need:

Reciprocal learning occurs in mentoring relationships between older and younger students with mutual benefits; young children need encouragement to read and write.

Service Idea: Book Buddies

Instruct young children in bookmaking and collaborate on making books for the community.

Investigation of the Need:

Interview a kindergarten teacher about the needed products, interaction with young children, and involving a child development specialist.

Preparation and Planning:

Write reflections on childhood and favorite books; participate in an interactive workshop with a child psychologist about learning styles and Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences; read children’s books; in small groups, discuss methods of working with young children; design lessons reflecting different types of intelligence; reach consensus on theme for the new books (“friendship” is chosen to combat bullying); get resources for bookmaking; learn bookbinding techniques; arrange logistics and transportation.

Action:

Visit a kindergarten class three times: (1) get acquainted with children and read books, (2) discuss book ideas on the theme of friendship and begin story development, and (3) write and illustrate the story. Copies of the books are given to the children, the school, and public libraries.

Reflection Methods:

Write in journals with peer “journal partners” who read entries and respond; teacher also reads and gives feedback weekly. Engage in a class discussion after each visit, using role plays and problem solving. Write reflective essays on how the theory of multiple intelligences applies to daily student life.

Demonstration to Others:

Present the service experience with the kindergartners at the school district service learning committee meeting.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Created plans, found a partner kindergarten classroom, wrote a proposal for a literacy grant, made phone calls, got donations, and designed activities.

Curricular Connections:

✔ *English/Language Arts:*

Write a grant proposal; read and analyze children’s books for content, format, and style; write a book; write letters requesting donations and reduced-cost supplies

✔ *Social Studies/History:*

Research child psychology

✔ *Mathematics:*

Manage a budget of funds received from the school and a literacy grant

✔ *Science:*

Study how the brain works with multiple intelligences

✔ *Languages:*

Prepare for working with young bilingual children with assistance from a Spanish language teacher

✔ *Art and Music:*

Art students make presentations on illustration to inform students about various styles; create illustrations with children; bookbinding

✔ *Technology:*

Use computer skills to create a design and template for the book-making process

☐ *Other:*

Skills Being Developed:

- Organization
- Leadership
- Planning
- Writing in different styles—proposals, thank-you letters, stories
- Communication—phone calls for supplies, interaction with elementary teachers, interaction in small planning groups, partnerships with children

Books and Other Media Used:

- The Sissy Duckling*
- Toestomper and the Caterpillars*
- Margarita y Margaret* (bilingual)
- La Mariposa*
- Hey, Little Ant!*

Community Partners:

- Will Rogers Elementary School
- Kelly Paper Supplies
- School District Service Learning Advisory Committee



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**

Working with children of many ethnicities and connecting with their interests—often without a common language—led to thoughtful conversations. Students also saw how bilingual development is an advantage and marveled at some of the children who were already fluent in two languages at a young age.

- **Participate in progress monitoring:**

With each visit to the kindergarten class, students paid specific attention to the interaction on two levels: social comfort and academic growth. They used information from the child psychologist to look for responsiveness from the children and continued positive affect. They also looked at retention, what the children remembered from one visit to the next. At the end of the first two visits they asked, “What do you want to remember from this visit?” and then checked in with the children later. They also asked the teacher after each visit what progress she had noted by observing the children’s interactions.

- **Learn about careers:**

Students learned about careers in child psychology and education (teachers and administrators).

- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**

Students gained skills in self-reflection, especially when comparing their own learning styles and preferences with those of the children; caring; humor; and supportive interactions with peers and with younger children.

- **Make global connections:**

N/A

- **Develop leadership:**

Students revised the initial plans made by their teacher to have them go read books to an elementary class. Students reframed the experience to work with children over time to gain a better grasp of the learning process and to create books for the community. They wrote a new service plan; obtained approval from the principal; and found a class liaison for the elementary school, logistics specialists, a budget manager, and donation solicitors. They also had representatives present at the school district’s Service Learning Advisory Committee meeting.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

The experience lasted three weeks.

Teacher Collaboration:

Teachers collaborated at two different school sites.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students presented at the school district’s Service Learning Advisory Committee meeting and were featured in a local newspaper with a photograph.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Books for the kindergarten students, with additional copies permanently placed in the school libraries and classrooms.

Additional Notes:

This service learning experience began as a service requirement at Santa Monica High School in California. Through student initiative and planning, the plan changed from a one-time read aloud to elementary children into a three-week reading program and bookmaking venture. An ongoing relationship was established between the classrooms and the schools.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Special Needs and Disabilities*

Grade level(s): PreK–8*

Essential Purpose or Question:

How can children with special needs make a contribution to their community while learning transferable skills?

Content—Learning About:

- Our neighborhood
- Life cycle of plants
- Elders
- Acts of generosity

Service Need:

Two populations are in close proximity with no interaction; communication could be mutually beneficial.

Service Idea: Being Good Neighbors

Give flowering potted plants to elders at a senior residential center

Investigation of the Need:

A group of students with special needs and their teachers visited a neighboring senior center, bringing Halloween decorations. They noticed there were no flowers or plants in the center, except for artificial flowers. They also saw seniors sitting outside next to an empty garden bed. The students were learning about plants and thought the residents needed something fresh and beautiful.

Preparation and Planning:

Study about plants, grow plants from seeds to seedlings, paint and decorate pots with glitter and ribbons, work with high school students in an environmental science class to plant pots.

Action:

Deliver plants, interact with elders, create picture stories to give to the senior center.

Reflection Methods:

Students write or dictate to teachers their reflections on the experience. Teachers reflect and discuss each student's level of participation and development.

Demonstration to Others:

Success led to a follow-up weekend with the students and their families planting an outdoor garden in a courtyard at the senior residence. Elders and staff members helped or watched and interacted with the children. Most parents noted this was the first time their children had participated in community service.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Making choices is a significant skill for autistic children. This project affords many opportunities for choice: selecting colors, choosing plants to grow, and choosing to plant pots for their families.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Learn about the life cycle of plants through story books and flannel board activities, make sequence books about plant life cycles, practice conversation skills with elders

Social Studies/History:

Learn about the community (the high school and the senior residential center); discuss community involvement, service, and generosity

Mathematics:

Measure plant growth and chart data

Science:

Plant seeds in plastic bags to watch seedlings sprout, transfer seedlings to soil, draw diagrams of plants

Languages:

Art and Music:

Draw and label pictures, write picture stories

Technology:

Use computer skills in typing stories

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Art—cutting, pasting, tracing
- Handwriting
- Drawing
- Making choices
- Staying on task
- Transitioning from one setting to another
- Social communication and interaction

Books and Other Media Used:

Jack's Garden

Bud

A Harvest of Color: Growing a Vegetable Garden

Community Partners:

High school environmental science teacher

Senior residential center

* Children with autism were assisted in part by high school students in grades 10 and 11.



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**

Most students had never been in a senior residential center. This was an opportunity to visit and meet elder people. Through their experience, the students learned they had something to give to the elders. They worked with high school students who helped them prepare the plants they presented to the center.

- **Participate in progress monitoring:**

The students monitored the growth of their seedlings to determine when the plants were ready to be delivered to the senior center.

- **Learn about careers:**

Students learned firsthand about the careers of doctors, nurses, caretakers, and cafeteria workers. During a celebration of their work, they each chose an occupation and dressed as if they worked in that profession.

- **Strengthen social, emotional, and character traits:**

Students practiced social greetings and demonstrated generosity, caring, cooperation, and kindness to others.

- **Make global connections:**

Students' exposure to elders from different countries led to a class conversation about immigration.

- **Develop leadership:**

Some students helped their peers who required assistance with the artwork, planting, or delivery. When students and their families planted the garden, they worked together to complete the tasks of digging holes and placing plants in the ground so all students—no matter their skill level—could participate.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

This project took three to four months, from planting the seedlings to gifting the plants.

Teacher Collaboration:

All teachers and staff members helped in collaborative planning.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

N/A

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Each resident of the senior center received a potted plant. The residents had a new garden bed full of flowers and vegetation by their sun deck where many go outside to sit. Students also began volunteer jobs at the center.

Additional Notes:

The senior residential center became a long-term service recipient for our students with special needs at the Giant Steps program in St. Louis, Missouri. We shared holiday decorations with residents, put on holiday shows, performed gymnastic demonstrations, and taught the seniors exercises they could do while seated. One student visited weekly to tell stories to a group of residents. Other students volunteered in the cafeteria setting up the dining room for lunch, and delivering mail, calendars, and newspapers to the residents.

The program is individualized to student ability. The school is on a high school campus; all of the students with autism visited the high school environmental science class and the high school students came to their classrooms. Some students requested extra pots to plant and give to their parents, along with a book of stories written about their service learning experience.



Getting Ready for Personal Inventory

Every student brings interests, skills, and talents to the class. Your task is to discover what those are by doing a personal inventory. Using the Personal Inventory form, you will interview another student to discover abilities and interests that will be helpful to the group. Complete this form to prepare.

Coming to Terms

What's the difference between these three terms?

Interest:

Skill:

Talent:

Active Listening

List three signs that someone is being a good listener.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List three behaviors to avoid when listening:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Form groups of three. One person speaks about a subject for two minutes, one person listens, and one person observes the listener and notes the following:

- Examples of good listening:

- Ideas for improvement:

Now, switch roles and repeat.



Interviewing

Questions for Getting Information

Look at the Personal Inventory form. What questions will you ask to find out the person's interests?

Encouraging Questions

Sometimes, people need a little encouragement to answer a question. If the person you are interviewing says, "I don't know," be ready with a response like:

1. "Everyone has interests. For example, I'm interested in _____. So, what about you?"
2. Add another response:
3. Add another response:

Probing Questions

A probing question goes deeper. For example, if you ask, "What are your interests?" and the person you are interviewing answers "Music," what would you ask next? *Hint:* A person could listen to music and/or play a musical instrument, and there are many kinds of music.

Write two sample probing questions:

- 1.
- 2.

Note Taking Tips

- Write legibly so you can read your writing later.
- Be on the lookout for key words.
- Do not use complete sentences. Notes are meant to be short phrases and words that capture key ideas.
- Add a tip of your own:



Personal Inventory

Interests, skills, and talents—we all have them. What are they?

Interests are what you think about and what you would like to know more about—for example, outer space, popular music, or a historical event like a world war. Are you interested in animals, movies, mysteries, or visiting faraway places? Do you collect anything?

Skills and talents have to do with things you like to do or that you do easily or well. Do you have an activity you especially like? Do you have a favorite subject in school? Do you sing, play the saxophone, or study ballet? Do you know more than one language? Can you cook? Do you have a garden? Do you prefer to paint pictures or play soccer? Do you have any special computer abilities?

Work with a partner and take turns interviewing each other to identify your interests, skills, and talents and to find out how you have helped and been helped by others. Then, compile a class chart of your findings. This will come in handy on your service learning journey.

Interests: I like to learn and think about . . .

Skills and talents: I can . . .

Being helpful: Describe a time when you helped someone.

Receiving help: Describe a time when someone helped you.



Gathering Information About a Community Need

What does your community need? Use the questions in the following four categories as guides for finding out. As a class, you might agree to explore one topic, for example, how kids get along at school, hunger and poverty, or an environmental concern. Or you might decide to learn about general needs at school or in the surrounding area.

Form small groups, with each group focusing on one category and gathering information in a different way.

Finding out about _____

Media

What media (newspapers—including school newspapers, TV stations, radio) in your community might have helpful information? List ways you can work with different media to learn about needs in your community.

Interviews

Think of a person who is knowledgeable about this topic in your area—perhaps someone at school or in a local organization or government office. Write four questions you would ask this person in an interview.

An interview with _____

Questions:

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.



Survey

A survey can help you find out what people know or think about a topic and get ideas for helping. Who could you survey—students, family members, neighbors? How many surveys would you want completed? Write three survey questions.

Who to survey:

How many surveys:

Questions for the survey:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Observation and Experience

How can you gather information through your own observation and experience? Where would you go? What would you do there? How would you keep track of what you find out?

Next Step: Share your ideas. Make a plan for gathering information using the four categories. If you are working in small groups, each group may want to involve people in other groups. For example, everyone could help conduct the survey and collect the results. Compile the information you learn into a list of community needs.



Who Is Helping?

Government & Community Groups

Who is helping with the community need you've identified? Learning about who addresses this need in the world can help you plan your service learning experience, find partners to work with, and make your contribution count.

Government agencies and community organizations are two kinds of groups that help with community needs. They work to meet immediate needs and to find long-term solutions. Government agencies and community organizations are:

- **local**—in your town and city
- **regional**—in your state or province
- **national**—across your country
- **international**—across the globe (While no single government agency is “international,” the United Nations organization is one way the governments of many nations work together to meet needs.)

Where to begin? To learn about government and community groups, contact social service departments or the office of an elected official in your area. You might also start with an organization such as a food bank or animal shelter that helps with the problem.

Research Tips

Phone book—the front pages often list local, state, and national government offices.

The Internet—government offices and many community organizations have easy-to-use Web pages with information about issues and how to learn more.

School office—ask if there are lists of community organizations the school works with already.

Elected officials—they often have people on staff to answer questions and provide contact information and resources.

Phone Call Tips

1. Write a list of questions you want to ask.
2. Practice with a friend before making calls.
3. Begin by introducing yourself and briefly describing what you're working on. Then ask if this is a good time to talk.
4. Let the person know how long the call will take.
5. Follow up with a thank-you card or an email.

Complete the chart on the next page to see how government and community groups help with the need you've chosen. You may decide to work on your own, with a partner, or in small groups.



What Government and Community Groups Are Doing About _____

Identify a Group That Is:	Key Issue	Web Sites/ Other Contact Info	What They Are Doing	How Kids Can Help
Local:				
Regional:				
National:				
International:				



Taking Action

Step 1: Think about the needs in our community. Make a list.

Step 2: Identify what you know.

- Select one community need:
- What is the cause?
- Who is helping?
- What are some ways we can help?

Step 3: Find out more.

- What do we need to know about this community need and who is helping?

- How can we find out?

Step 4: Plan for action.

- To help our community, we will:

- To make this happen, we will take on these responsibilities:

Who	will do what	by when	Resources needed



Service Learning Proposal

Students or class: _____

Teacher: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Project name: _____

Need—Why this plan is needed:

Purpose—How this plan will help:

Participation—Who will help and what they will do:

Students: _____

Teachers: _____

Other adults: _____

Organizations or groups: _____

Outcomes—What we expect to happen as a result of our work:

How we will check outcomes—What evidence we will collect and how we will use it:

Resources—What we need to get the job done, such as supplies (itemize on back):

Signatures:



Our Service Plan

Students or Class: _____

Teacher: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Project name: _____

Our idea: _____

This helps others by: _____

Student names and jobs:

My name _____ My job _____

My name _____ My job _____

My name _____ My job _____

Others who will help:

Students: _____

Teachers: _____

Other adults: _____

Organizations: _____

Supplies needed: _____

Our expectations: _____

Signatures:



Community Contact Information

Name of agency: _____

Key individual: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Location (note proximity to school):

Service needs (note ongoing versus short-term):

Learning opportunities:

Date contact made: _____

Contact made by: _____

Follow-up information (record all calls, visits, etc.; continue on back or new sheet as necessary):



Promotion—Turning Ideas into Action

What We Already Know

Service idea:

Need—the community issue:

Community partners:

New Ideas and Possibilities

New community alliances: Think outside the box

Donations: What is needed (e.g., flyers, T-shirts, balloons)? Who might donate items?

Fund-raising ideas and resources:

Evidence: Keeping track of our activities, accomplishments, and outcomes

Media madness: Press releases, radio spots, cable access, news stories, blogs

Presentation opportunities: School and community events, organizations

Follow-Up

Roles and responsibilities: Who will do what?



Capture the Action

As you put your plan into action, use this page as a scrapbook to record what happens. Add art and photos or glue in a newspaper article.

What happened today?

One page may not be enough. You may want to start your own service learning journal in a notebook or start a large scrapbook for the entire group to use.

Any new bright ideas to help the service experience be even better?

Capture the moment! Add a photo or drawing of what you did or saw.



Progress Monitoring

What progress monitoring methods will you use?

- Observation
- Data Collection
- Interviews
- Surveys

Other Methods:

- _____
- _____

Date _____

Step One: Establish your baseline—what is the need?

Date _____

Step Two: What noticeable changes have been made?

Date _____

Step Three: What other changes have taken place?

Date _____

Step Four: Describe evidence of your progress.

Date _____

Step Five: Provide a summary of your findings.



Sequence for Reflection

Use this document as a checklist and to record your own reflections. Remember to align reflection with your essential purpose or question.

In Preparation

As the service learning process begins, find out what students know: What beliefs and assumptions are already in place? Where and how were they learned? What do students expect to happen? What do they expect to learn, and how do they expect to feel? Depending on the situation, you may give students a thought or question to take with them into the service experience. This may encourage them to be more observant or heighten their awareness of a particular need or action being taken.

What happened:

During Action

Be observant. What are the students paying attention to? What comments do you overhear? What behaviors do you see? You may make notes and refer to them later, during the reflection that follows the service. During on-the-spot reflection, students sometimes have insights or make recommendations that improve their experience and the impact of their contributions.

What happened:

Following Service

Vary the reflection methods. Before discussing the service, ask students to first write their responses to discussion prompts. This can protect the integrity of each student's experience and assure that everyone has something to contribute. As students become more adept, ask them to design a reflection process for themselves and their classmates. Have students draw upon their reflections during demonstration of their service learning.

What happened:

Feedback

Provide *nonjudgmental* feedback. If you may read journals, ask if you can write a response in the journal or on an attached piece of paper. Listen well. Ask questions. Appreciate what is being revealed and discovered.

What happened:



Four Square Reflection Tool

<p>What happened?</p>	<p>How do I feel?</p>
<p>Ideas?</p>	<p>Questions?</p>



Community Response

Name of agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Contact person: _____

Teacher/class: _____

Date of visit: _____

Purpose of visit: _____

Please respond to the following questions to help us learn from today's service experience and better meet your agency's needs in the future.

What were the benefits of today's experience for your agency?

What suggestions do you have for future visits or interactions?

What service needs do you have that our school could assist with in the future?

What did you and others at your agency learn about children and our school that you did not know before?

Additional comments are appreciated.

Thank you! Please return this form to the teacher listed above at the following address:



Once You Know It, Show It!

You've put your plan into action and seen the results. Now it's time for demonstration—the stage where you show others what you've learned about the topic, how you learned it, and what you've contributed to the community. This demonstration of your service learning can take any form you like: letter, article, video, pamphlet, artistic display, performance, or PowerPoint presentation.

To help you make the most of your demonstration, answer these questions:

Who is your audience?

What do you most want to tell about what you've learned?

What do you most want to tell about how you provided service?

Are there any community partners who you might like to participate in the demonstration?

What form of demonstration would you like to use?

On a separate sheet of paper, write your plan for demonstration.

If you are part of a class or youth group, share your ideas for demonstration with the others you're working with. How can you best use each person's talents and skills as part of your demonstration?



Assessment for Service Learning: *Part One*

Service Learning Experience: _____

Respond to the questions relevant to your service learning activities.

Student Learning

- Were the defined content and skill objectives met?

- Were there any unforeseen outcomes?

- Did students show initiative or develop leadership skills?

- Were students able to reflect and place their experience within the larger context of community or society in general?

- Could students identify both their cognitive and affective growth?

Impact of the Service

- Were students able to explicitly state the need and purpose for their service efforts?

- What contribution was made?

- How did the service help or hinder community improvement efforts?



- Is the partner agency satisfied with the interaction?
- Have new relationships been formed?
- Were planned service programs, activities, or products completed?

Process

- How did this experience affect or change how teachers teach and how children learn?
- How effective was the planning process?
- What are your ideas for overall improvement?
- In future activities, how can students take greater ownership?
- How can community partnerships be improved or strengthened?



Assessment for Service Learning: *Part Two*

Service Learning Experience: _____

Identify what methods were used for each stage and whether each standard was present.

Five Stages of Service Learning

Investigation

- Conduct Personal Inventory
- Verify Community Need
- Other:

Preparation and Planning

- Research
- Literature
- Field trips
- Interviews
- Other:

Action

- Direct service
- Indirect service
- Research
- Advocacy

Reflection

- Discussion
- Journals
- Role play
- Other:

Demonstration

- Presentation
- Performance
- Article
- Other:

K–12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

Meaningful Service.

Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

Link to Curriculum.

Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

Reflection.

Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.

Diversity.

Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

Youth Voice.

Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

Partnerships.

Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

Progress Monitoring.

Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

Duration and Intensity.

Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

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Student Self-Evaluation

Name: _____ Date: _____

Service Learning Experience: _____

Learning

- What information did you learn in preparing to do service?

- What skills did you develop through the activities?

- How did this experience help you better understand ideas or subjects we have been studying?

- Through this service learning experience, what did you learn about:
 - yourself?

 - working with others, including people in your class?

 - your community?

- How will you use what you learned in this experience in different situations?



Service

- What was the need for your service effort?

- What contribution did you make?

- What overall contribution was made by your class?

- How did your service affect the community?

Process

- How did you and other students help with planning?

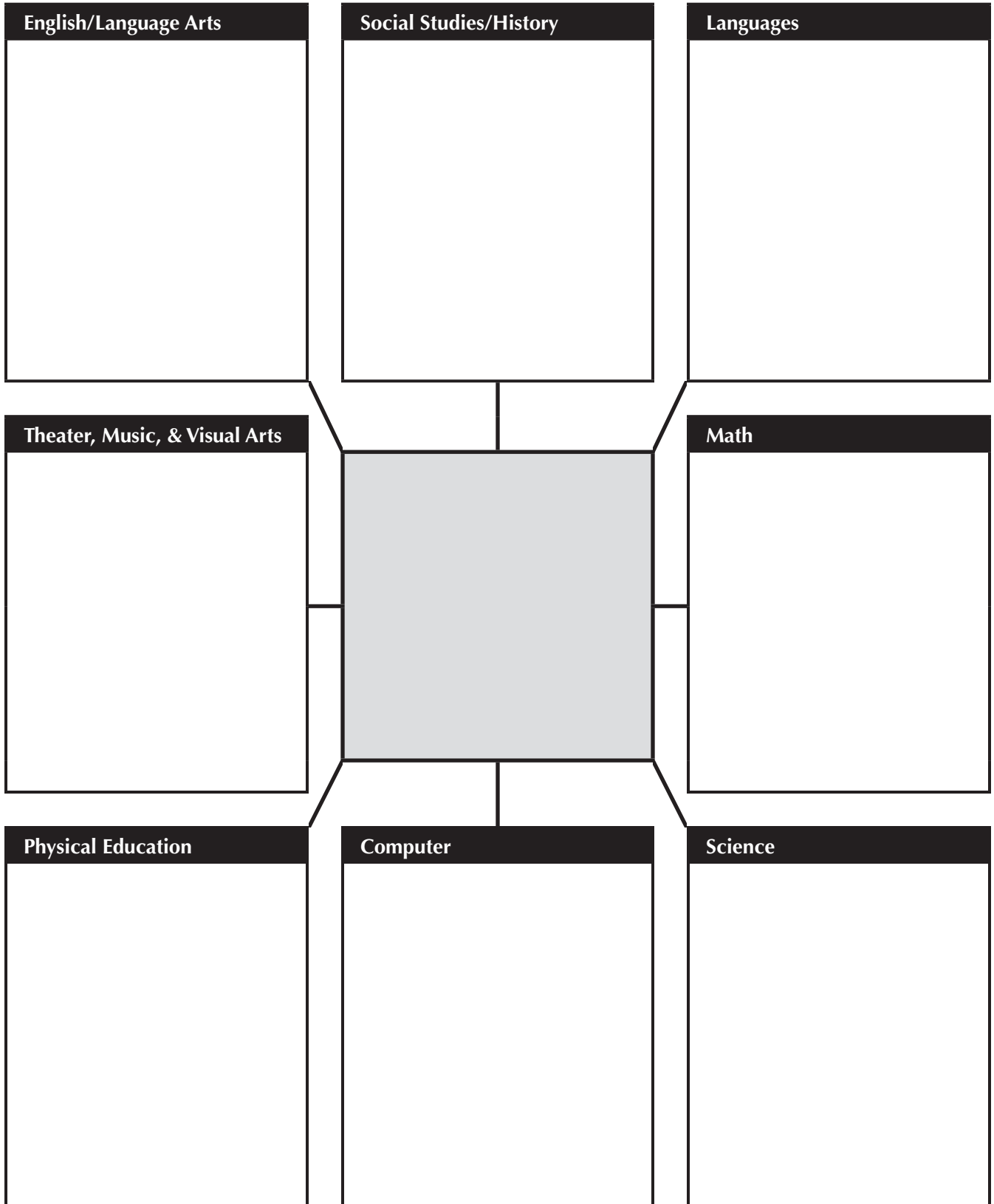
- In what ways did you make decisions and solve problems?

- Were there any differences between the initial plans and what you actually did?

- What ideas do you have for improving any part of the experience?



Across the Curriculum





Literature Circle Roles

Form groups of four to discuss a story.

Assign each person in the group one of the “connector” roles below. Each connector’s job is to lead a group discussion about the story from a specific point of view. He or she asks the questions listed (along with others that come to mind) and encourages group members to respond. Write notes and ideas on the Literature Circle.

To begin, review these tips:

Tips For Effective Group Discussions

- Use active listening skills
- Ask questions
- Take turns speaking
- Welcome all comments

Personal Connector

Ask questions that connect the story to group members’ experiences, such as:

1. Do characters remind you of people you know? How?
2. Have you been in situations similar to those described in the book? What happened?
3. How have you or people you know resolved similar situations?

Literary Connector

Ask questions that connect this story to other stories group members have read, such as:

1. Which characters remind you of characters from other stories? Why?
2. What situations are similar to what happens in other stories? Why?
3. What might a character in this story say about these other characters or situations? Why?

Service Connector

Ask questions that connect this story to ideas for service projects, such as:

1. What needs to be fixed in this situation?
2. Did any characters in this story participate in service activities?
3. What service ideas did you think of when you read this story?

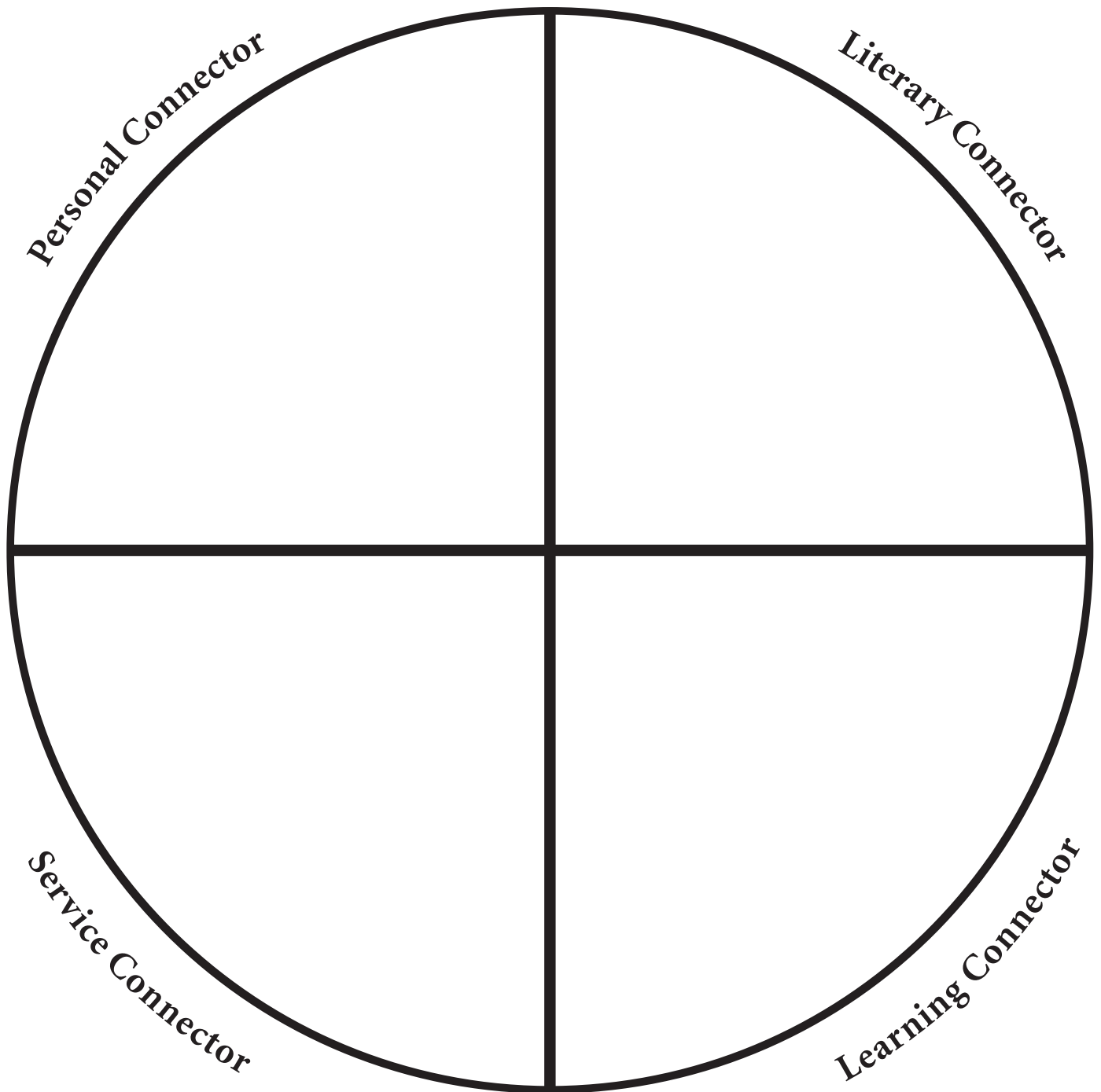
Learning Connector

Ask questions that connect this story to learning opportunities, such as:

1. What would you like to learn more about as a result of this story?
2. What topics in this story have you learned about or experienced in school?
3. What do you think people your age would learn from reading this story?



Literature Circle for _____





Quotable Quotes

Choose a quote and follow these ten steps.

Step 1: Draw the quote

Make a picture that visually represents the quote. Integrate the words of the quote into the picture or the frame. Consider unique ways to display the finished art piece.

Step 2: Find the meaning

Write a paragraph explaining what the quote means to you.

Step 3: Opinions & feelings

What do you *think* about the quote? Do you agree or disagree with it? Write your thoughts in a paragraph. How does this quote make you *feel*? Describe your feelings in a separate paragraph.

Step 4: Be creative!

Write a poem, short story, song, or other creative work that includes the quote.

Step 5: Who in history?

Find out who made the quoted statement and when. How was the statement influenced by world events at the time, and what relevance does it have today?

Step 6: The moral of the story is . . .

Write a brief story with a conflict between two characters; characters can be people, animals, or objects. End your story with a life lesson that can be explained through the quote. Conclude with the line, “The moral of the story is [insert the quote].”

Step 7: Comparative study

Select a second quote to compare with the first one. How are their messages alike and different? Consider, for example: “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” —John Dewey, and “Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.” —Helen Keller.

Step 8: Putting the quote into practice

How can the quote be used to teach or influence others? How could it be used in a service learning activity?

Step 9: What quote will I be remembered by?

Write a quote of your own for which you’d like to be remembered.

Step 10: Reflect by answering one of these questions.

- What about this quote is most memorable to you?
- Write a letter to the author of this quote, sharing both your thoughts and feelings.
- Who would you like to give this quote to, and why? Describe how you could present the quote to this person so that it has the effect you intend.



Benefits of Service Learning

Who benefits from service learning? Students, teachers, the school population as a whole, and the community benefit from well-designed service learning programs. Benefits vary depending on program design and what occurs through preparation, implementation, reflection, and demonstration. These lists have been compiled by school and community stakeholders based on their service learning experiences. While research continues to examine the benefits of service learning, presently service learning is known to promote resilience, empowerment, prosocial behaviors, motivation for learning, and engagement. These are mediators of academic success and help create the conditions for students to do better academically.

Through service learning programs, STUDENTS may:

- increase motivation and desire to learn.
- develop responsibility, think critically, make decisions, and solve problems.
- improve academic knowledge and performance, including writing and communication skills.
- cultivate self-perception.
- develop ability to work well with others.
- experience reciprocity.
- replace stereotypes with respect for others.
- interact with adults who have different roles in society.
- be exposed to career options including those in public service.
- become more knowledgeable about their community and the resources available for themselves and their families.
- experience civic responsibility.
- begin to develop a lifelong commitment to public service and to learning.

Through service learning programs, TEACHERS may:

- observe students' enthusiasm for learning.
- improve communication and understanding among students.
- increase the relevancy of education for students.
- develop curriculum through collaboration with other teachers and community partners.
- learn about many different community organizations and how they serve the populace.
- identify resources to enhance educational opportunities for students.
- bring the classroom and community together.
- feel inspired professionally and personally.
- participate in professional development and become mentors for other teachers.



Through service learning programs, SCHOOLS can:

- combine academic development with civic and social responsibility.
- strengthen career outreach programs.
- develop community partnerships.
- publicize educational opportunities available for students.
- involve more parents.
- give students a sense of the practical importance of what they are learning.
- develop a more inclusive and cooperative school climate and culture.
- invite students to become active community members.
- increase confidence in the school system.
- improve public relations.

Through service learning programs, COMMUNITIES can:

- increase resources to address problems and concerns.
- lend expertise in a particular issue area.
- become more knowledgeable about school programs and needs.
- collaborate in planning service learning projects.
- participate in student learning.
- publicly acknowledge the contributions of young people.



Clarifying Roles for Success with Service Learning

Service Learning Experience: _____

Current Percentages of Engagement: _____ Teacher _____ Students

Desired Percentages of Engagement: _____ Teacher _____ Students

Role of Teacher—K–12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

MEANINGFUL SERVICE

LINK TO CURRICULUM

REFLECTION

DIVERSITY

YOUTH VOICE

PARTNERSHIPS

PROGRESS MONITORING

DURATION AND INTENSITY

Role of Students—Five Stages of Service Learning

INVESTIGATION & INVENTORY

Personal Inventory:

Media:

Survey:

Interview:

Observation/Experience:

PREPARATION & PLANNING

ACTION

Direct:

Indirect:

Advocacy:

Research:

REFLECTION

Journal:

Discussion:

Visual:

Kinesthetic:

Creative Nonfiction:

DEMONSTRATION

Talents/Skills Utilized:



Building Foundations for Service Learning

Consider:

- What elements within a school contribute to establishing a culture of service?
- What steps do we need to take to move in this direction?

Discuss:

- understanding and visibility of service learning already in place.
- clear roles and responsibilities for all involved, including students, school administrators, faculty, support staff, community partners, parents, agencies, and government.
- leadership from within each group of participants.
- expectation of challenges.
- experienced teachers as coaches for new faculty.
- inclusion of service learning in school and district mission statements.
- flexibility in school schedules to allow for service learning opportunities.
- unequivocal expression of support from principal and other school leaders.



Establishing Curricular Connections

Consider:

- Are we letting community service pass for service learning?
- What steps do we need to take to move toward well-integrated service learning?

Discuss:

- teacher preparation and staff development opportunities for service learning.
- allowing for both community service and service learning where appropriate for students.
- collaboration in which teachers help, encourage, and challenge each other.
- classroom activities that demonstrate high-quality practices.
- expectation that every student will be able to have service learning experiences.
- resources to support practices, including transportation, books, materials, mailings, phone calls, supplies, grant-writing assistance, and so forth.
- establishing formal links between service and standards.
- making service part of grade and formal course assessment.



Increasing Youth Voice and Choice

Consider:

- How are young people given opportunities to make real choices and what opportunities do they have to express and act on thoughtful choices?
- What practices are already in place, and what will advance us to the next level?

Discuss:

- establishing a service learning vocabulary with students.
- developing authentic ways for students to be creative, have input, make decisions, solve problems, help design service activities based on preparation, and participate in project evaluation.
- developing an age-appropriate sequence for service learning.
- enabling students to experience success and failure—removing the “safety net” of adult intervention.
- encouraging intrinsic value over extrinsic rewards.
- listening to students and creating forums for their concerns, questions, and ideas.
- allowing experienced students to help their teacher and other teachers plan and implement projects.



Encouraging Teachers to Be Involved

Consider:

- How can teachers “buy in” and develop an engagement with service learning?
- Are opportunities available for teacher leadership and professional advancement?

Discuss:

- teacher in-service opportunities.
- collaboration options for making teacher-to-teacher connections.
- hiring teachers with service learning experience or interest, and providing learning opportunities and teacher mentors for new hires.
- regularly including service learning in discussions at staff meetings.
- establishing new school-wide service learning opportunities annually.
- resolving challenges involving transportation and out-of-pocket expenses.
- creating a library of service learning literature and resource materials.
- establishing college connections for professional learning and partnerships to advance implementation.



Parent Involvement in Service Learning

Consider:

- How can parents become advocates for and partners in service learning at school?
- Can parents help instill the value or idea of service within the family?

Discuss:

- keeping parents informed.
- finding meaningful roles for parents.
- preparing parents for their roles through workshops.
- creating a system run by parent volunteers to inform others about opportunities for family service.
- establishing parent service learning liaisons for grade levels or departments.
- designing activities that require students to work with parents and vice versa, such as collecting oral histories and learning about other cultures.

Note: The term *parent* as used here applies to any significant adult in a child's life.



Establishing Authentic Community Partnerships

Consider:

- How are valued, sustainable, and reciprocal partnerships built?
- What agencies, organizations, or individuals are or could be proponents of service learning?

Discuss:

- coming to understand “community” as a dynamic exchange between people.
- allowing for change and flexibility in partnerships.
- facilitating a process in which schools and organizations/agencies can learn about each other.
- identifying government partners.
- involving youth in community outreach.
- documenting partnerships.
- finding the intersection of interests between the school and community organizations.



Service Learning: Knowing the Terms

Service to others takes many forms and has many names and connotations. In a school context, examining different types of service helps clarify and define service learning as a teaching method.

Volunteer: One who contributes time without pay.

Community service: Helping the community by choice or through court requirement; may or may not be associated with academics, curriculum, or reflection.

Service learning: A teaching method that:

- enables students to learn and apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community, continue individual growth, and develop a lifelong ethic of service.
- focuses on both the service and the learning.
- is appropriate for all students and all curricular areas.
- encourages cross-curricular integration.
- helps foster civic responsibility.
- provides students with structured time to reflect on the service experience.



A Brief Step-by-Step Guide to Service Learning

Step One: *Points of Entry*

Select your method for getting started and making curricular connections, beginning with an existing program or activity, content and skills, a theme or unit of study, a student-identified need, or a community-identified need.

Step Two: *Review the K–12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice*

Familiarize yourself with these eight recommended categories that support best practices for service learning. Referring to this list will give you reminders for what will provide the greatest impact for both learning and civic participation.

Step Three: *Map Out Your Plans*

Identify your curricular objectives. Write out your specific ideas for curricula, community contacts, literature, and each stage (of the five stages) of service learning.

Step Four: *Clarify Partnerships*

Make contacts with any collaborators—teachers, parents, community members, agency representatives, or others—who will participate. Discuss and clarify specific roles and responsibilities for all involved.

Step Five: *Review Plans and Gather Resources*

Review your plans. Gather needed resources, such as books, newspaper articles, Web sites, and reference materials from partner agencies. Schedule any visits, guest speakers, or field trips. Note that these are good tasks for students to take on as they gain skills and experience.

Step Six: *Begin the Process of Service Learning in Action*

Initiate the process of investigation, preparation and planning, action, reflection, and demonstration. Encourage youth voice and choice as you move through the service learning process. Be flexible! Service learning works best when students are able to see their own ideas in action. Continue to look for opportunities for reflection.

Step Seven: *Assess the Service Learning Experience*

Once the demonstration and the closing reflection have been completed, review and assess the learning accomplished, the impact of the service, the planning process, the reciprocal benefits for all involved, and ways to improve for next time. Debrief with all partners.



Service Learning Vocabulary

During service learning, students develop or deepen their understanding of many terms. Some will be new and will add to their growing vocabularies. Here are some of the terms students are likely to encounter:

caring	implementation
helping	reflection
community	collaboration
respect	demonstration
need	documentation
purpose	outcomes
plan	interdependence
action	responsibility
skills	feedback
talents	commitment
interests	service
teamwork	civic participation
change	advocacy
resources	research
proposal	flexibility
contingency plan	reciprocity
preparation	

Discuss the words in class to enhance students' critical thinking skills. Use books and stories to broaden students' thinking and to generate discussion of these terms and concepts. Consider these ideas as well:

- Post a “word of the week” on a bulletin board.
- Use quotes containing the words to inspire thoughts about service and community involvement.
- Incorporate the words in writing assignments or dramatic activities.
- Keep an eye out for the words in news articles.
- Have students write about service learning for a school paper and include some of the terms.
- Ask students to develop a list of words that their peers will need to learn as they start working toward a more comprehensive service learning program; students can create a dictionary with definitions as a service to the school community.

Planning for Service Example Forms

Planning for Service Learning Examples

Elementary, AIDS Education and Awareness

Middle School, AIDS Education and Awareness

High School, AIDS Education and Awareness

Elementary, Animal Protection and Care

Middle School, Animal Protection and Care

High School and Special Education,
Animal Protection and Care

Elementary, Elders

Middle School, Elders

High School, Elders

Elementary, Emergency Readiness

Middle School, Emergency Readiness

High School, Emergency Readiness

Elementary, The Environment (*see Forms from the Book*)

Middle School, The Environment

High School, The Environment

Elementary, Gardening

Middle School, Gardening

High School, Gardening

Elementary; Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices

Middle School; Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices

High School; Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices

Elementary; Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty

Middle School; Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty

High School; Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty

Elementary, Immigrants

Middle School, Immigrants (*see Forms from the Book*)

High School, Immigrants

Elementary, Literacy

Middle School, Literacy

High School, Literacy (*see Forms from the Book*)

Elementary, Safe and Strong Communities

Middle School, Safe and Strong Communities

High School, Safe and Strong Communities

Elementary, Social Change: Issues and Action

Middle School, Social Change: Issues and Action

High School, Social Change: Issues and Action

Elementary, Special Needs and Disabilities

Middle School, Special Needs and Disabilities
(*see Forms from the Book*)

High School, Special Needs and Disabilities



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, AIDS Education and Awareness*

Grade level(s): 4

Essential Purpose or Question:

To find out what can be learned through books of different genres.

Content—Learning About:

- Current events
- Civic involvement
- AIDS education and awareness

Service Need:

Supplies are needed to care for babies born with AIDS in Africa.

<p>Service Idea: Blankets for Babies with AIDS Educate other students about babies born with AIDS, and then make blankets for a local agency to give to these babies.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students read a news article about the issue and contact two agencies mentioned and ask what they can do to be helpful.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Read books about people living with AIDS, read organizational literature, study quilt designs, conduct Internet research, make and send home questionnaire to recruit parents to help with sewing.</p>
<p>Action: Decorate blankets using patterns; create school tour of blankets with classroom presentations that incorporate the newspaper article, books, organizational literature, and students' reflections; have each classroom decorate a blanket to contribute; ship blankets with letters and photographs of the project.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Students have task cards for each action taken—on one side they write what they contribute and what they are learning; on the other side they write how they feel and their personal strengths developed in the process. This method supports discussion about the difference between facts, opinions, and feelings.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Students record their process of service learning along with their ideas, lessons learned, and personal reflections, and include this record when sending blankets to the receiving agency. Students also write an article for the school paper.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students work in teams to design classroom presentations; research and contact PTSA and fabric and craft stores for donations.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read and compare information gathered from fiction and nonfiction resources; critique organizational literature's effectiveness for kids, write mini-lessons for classroom presentations; use *You Can Call Me Willy* as a read-aloud selection; use *The Heaven Shop* and *Our Stories, Our Songs* to add global perspective

Social Studies/History:

Find current events on related health topics; look at historical designs of quilts made by pioneer women; read about AIDS in Africa and its impact on children

Mathematics:

Apply geometrical patterns and designs studied

Science:

Learn about body systems and health care, especially the role of nutrition and exercise in staying healthy and strengthening bodies when ill

Languages:

Art and Music:

Draw design patterns on paper, apply them to fabric, and add color

Technology:

Practice computer skills to write lessons, create feedback forms for students to complete after classroom presentations, conduct Internet research

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Compare and contrast writing styles
- Organization, including sequencing
- Note taking
- Writing directions, letters, thank-you notes
- Internet research

Books and Other Media Used:

You Can Call Me Willy: A Story for Children About AIDS
The Heaven Shop
Our Stories, Our Songs: African Children Talk About AIDS

Community Partners:

Pediatric AIDS Foundation
Robin's Art and Craft Supplies and Fabric Galore
Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students were introduced to populations in different parts of the world.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Task card reflection method allowed for ongoing progress monitoring. Students held sessions to generate ideas and examine the challenges encountered.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about careers as healthcare workers, nonfiction authors, and journalists.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students gained empathy for others.
- **Make global connections:**
The Heaven Shop and *Our Stories, Our Songs* were used to add global perspective.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students planned interactive presentations and led other students in decorating the blankets; this required them to be prepared as leaders ahead of time. Students also discussed different ways to lead, present, and engage an audience.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Six weeks, with varying amounts of class time used.

Teacher Collaboration:

Students wrote letters to teachers asking if they could make classroom presentations, explaining the purpose and how much class time was needed. Before making their presentations, students asked teachers if there was anything they should emphasize to help the students with their learning. The teachers' responses helped the students individualize their presentations for their assigned classroom and advance classroom learning.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Receiving agencies sent formal thank-you letters to the students. Students published an article with photographs in the school/family newsletter. The principal visited the students and asked them to explain what they did and learned.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Blankets were created and donated. A class blanket was created and framed (a gift from the parents) to display in class as a reminder of the service.

Additional Notes:

This service experience was initiated in a single fourth-grade class, and grew to include the art teacher, the PTSA, and all classes in grades three through five.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, AIDS Education and Awareness*

Grade level(s): 7

Essential Purpose or Question:

Can we actively intervene and prevent history from repeating itself?

Content—Learning About:

- Persuasive writing
- HIV and AIDS
- Stereotypes

Service Need:

Prevent misinformation among peers that can lead to prejudice and stereotypes.

<p>Service Idea: Get the Word Out Educate peers about HIV/AIDS by creating informational brochures.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Survey students to find out what is known and what is misunderstood about HIV and AIDS; compare findings to other statistics.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Read <i>Too Far Away to Touch</i> and <i>When Plague Strikes</i>; conduct interview with medical professional; conduct Internet research on facts and myths; develop survey, presentations, and brochures.</p>
<p>Action: Give presentations to PTSA meeting, English classes in grades 6–8, and representatives from local middle schools.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Journal writing, class discussions, and critiques of presentations.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Make presentations to representatives from three middle schools to introduce the project; show materials, demonstrate lessons, and distribute a complete package of student-developed resources.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students develop persuasive writing and speaking skills and design products. Students also choose methods of demonstration to local middle schools.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read books, conduct Internet research, write persuasive essays

Social Studies/History:

Research historical overview of AIDS

Mathematics:

Examine statistics and present findings using math language; learn about demographic studies and the math skills involved

Science:

Review the human immune system and communicable diseases

Languages:

Translate the student-written brochure into Spanish by working with a Spanish language class

Art and Music:

Create posters with the Arthur Ashe quote: “What you get makes a living; what you give, however, makes a life.”

Technology:

Design brochures; conduct Internet research

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Writing persuasive essays
- Presentations and public speaking
- Note taking
- Research

Books and Other Media Used:

When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, AIDS
Too Far Away to Touch

Community Partners:

Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)
Local middle schools
Community AIDS clinic



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students learned that HIV and AIDS extend globally and reach every demographic group, including teens.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students distributed a follow-up survey two months after their presentations. In addition to the questions on their original survey, they asked for feedback about what attendees had learned from the presentations. The students noted a high percentage of changed belief systems and attitudes.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about the careers of medical researchers, immunologists, and authors.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students read the interviews with the authors of *Too Far Away to Touch* and *When Plague Strikes*. Learning about the personal connection these authors had with the books evoked empathy within the class and generated discussion of how past experiences could lead to writing a book.
- **Make global connections:**
Students understood the global context of AIDS by reading about world history in *When Plague Strikes*.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students developed leadership skills by stepping outside of their school to educate other middle schools. They took this as a serious and important responsibility.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Four weeks from start to finish.

Teacher Collaboration:

After reading *When Plague Strikes*, the class discussed the cross-curricular possibilities, which led to the service idea. Working with teachers from local middle schools was a benefit and will likely lead to other joint experiences.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students made presentations to other schools.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Informational brochures and posters were created.

Additional Notes:

The service was initiated in a single social studies class, and other teachers in the core group—including elective teachers—became involved. English curriculum was a natural fit for the project. Math lessons did take a worthwhile diversion that made other studies more relevant. Students raised questions in science classes about the immune system, and the teacher modified lessons to cover this topic. Spanish and art teachers also made contributions.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, AIDS Education and Awareness*

Grade level(s): 9–12

Essential Purpose or Question:

To demonstrate art (theater) as a medium for exploring contemporary issues and social change.

Content—Learning About:

- HIV and AIDS
- Critical thinking
- Social dilemmas

Service Need:

Students need opportunities to practice making smart decisions about high-risk health situations in safe settings where they can explore behavior options.

<p>Service Idea: Theater Works Prepare and perform skits to depict youth in situations where choices must be made, including those involving HIV and AIDS.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: In theater class, students select high-risk health issues and use the Internet to find out which put teens at greatest risk.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Research HIV and AIDS, including data on youth; interview local resource people and ask them to attend performances to help with questions; view and discuss the movie <i>Milk</i>; interview students to collect scenarios about dilemmas they face in social situations; script dramatic scenes; use the book <i>The Beat Goes On</i> as a model dilemma; role-play possible audience questions and responses; gather resource materials to hand out to audience.</p>
<p>Action: Schedule and perform skits followed by question-and-answer sessions.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Maintain online journal to provide a forum for dialogue among the students and with community partners; host a feedback session with partners and a few students and faculty from schools who saw the performance.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Make a ten-minute video with introduction including the dates of the research, descriptions of the scenes performed, and follow-up discussion questions; combine video with a resource list of further information.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Research, community contacts, scenarios, and scripts are student-generated. Students also determine content for the video and identify school and community resources for filming and making copies.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Conduct research on character development using *The Beat Goes On*, learn scriptwriting, prepare handouts presenting data and resources

Social Studies/History:

Interview students, identify social service agencies and resource people

Mathematics:

Collect and review data

Science:

Research health concerns related to HIV and AIDS, including transmission and prevention

Languages:

Find students to translate handout materials into Spanish

Art and Music:

Identify art students to design the program and handout materials

Technology:

Learn how to use online journals set up by an advanced computer class

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Critical thinking
- Decision making
- Research
- Interviewing
- Script development
- Theater production

Books and Other Media Used:

The Beat Goes On
Frequently Asked Questions About AIDS and HIV: Can This Epidemic Be Stopped?
Quicksand: HIV/AIDS in Our Lives
Web site: www.dosomething.org
Film: *Milk*

Community Partners:

Community health clinic
City government (Human Services Division)
School psychologist and nurse



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students learned that HIV and AIDS extend globally and reach every demographic group, including teens.
- **Participate in progress monitoring**
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about the careers of city government workers and health advocates.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students gained skills in decision making and began to see themselves as positive influences on others.
- **Make global connections:**
The Beat Goes On, which takes place in England, inspired a discussion of the global impact of HIV and AIDS.
- **Develop leadership:**
Using theater arts helped students see that any role in any field can become one of influence and that leadership is about stepping into the moment and being collaborative and resourceful.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Six weeks, with varying amounts of class time used.

Teacher Collaboration:

Students approached other teachers to solicit help from their classes. Little class time was used, except to see performances and provide feedback. In most cases, students volunteered on their own time to help the theater class with performances. Teachers were universally supportive.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

City government health service workers attended. School newspaper articles gave great reviews. A local newspaper covered the story and included photographs and student interviews.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Resource materials were distributed to the audience and the ten-minute videos were given to other schools.

Additional Notes:

This project was developed in a theater elective that focused on using theater to explore contemporary issues. This convinced students that theater and other art forms can be used as a means for social change and caused them to reflect on other messages they might be able to convey through art.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Animal Protection and Care*

Grade level(s): 2

Essential Purpose or Question:

What can kids do to improve the lives of animals in our community?

Content—Learning About:

- Living things
- Our community

Service Need:

Animals require mental stimulation for their health and well being.

Service Idea: Brain Challenges for Zoo Primates

After learning about primates in the local zoo, students design and create brain challenges that will be interesting to the primates.

Investigation of the Need:

Interview zoo officials.

Preparation and Planning:

Visit the zoo to see animals and meet with education staff about needs. Learn about primate behavior. Research primates. Identify sources for donations. Develop campaign—flyers and posters—to gather supplies from school families, neighbors, and community.

Action:

Make brain challenges for the zoo animals—papier-mâché tubes stuffed with sugar-free cereal and pinecones stuffed with peanut butter and dried fruit that can be hung up—to stimulate activity and reduce boredom.

Reflection Methods:

After each zoo visit, students and teachers discuss what has been learned, observations, ways to use information, and improvement ideas (with suggestions sent to the zoo staff); students write concluding reflective paragraph about what they learn and remember from their experiences.

Demonstration to Others:

Presentations at school-wide assemblies and other area schools. A group of second graders taught a lesson on primates to sixth graders. Students can also give lessons to other classes.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students guide direction of service through a series of problem solving steps. (For example, “Now that we have this idea, how will we make it happen?”) Teachers provide guidance and help students assess the practicality of ideas.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read books and newspaper articles, conduct research, write in journals, vocabulary anagrams, compare dictionary definitions, study advertising methods for promotion campaign, make flyers and posters, write thank-you letters

Social Studies/History:

Study “What makes a community”; learn about natural and zoo habitats and animal behavior; write a report on a specific primate, type and illustrate

Mathematics:

Basic equations; sorting and counting, number use, graphing

Science:

Compare movement and exercise between animals and humans

Languages:

Art and Music:

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Dictionary
- Paragraph writing
- Spelling
- Counting, combining, sorting
- Using numbers over 100 up to a 1000
- Graphing
- Problem solving

Books and Other Media Used:

A Pelican Swallowed My Head—and Other Zoo Stories
The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours

Community Partners:

Zoo
Supermarkets and Food Co-ops



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students interacted with adults.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students kept graphs and charts of all that was collected and produced. They compared this to the amount of zoo games and toys in stock at the zoo when they began and saw they had increased the supply by 500 percent.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about many diverse zoo jobs, animal behavior specialists, and animal psychologists.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students strengthened their empathy, responsiveness, and creativity.
- **Make global connections:**
Students gained awareness of animals being brought to a zoo from habitats all over the world that cannot be simulated due to climate and other conditions in the host locale.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students divided tasks, supported other students who had challenges in getting their jobs done, acknowledged the good work and contributions of others, and became capable spokespersons.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Six weeks.

Teacher Collaboration:

Students presented their idea to a faculty meeting and asked to speak to every class and place collection bins in every classroom.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Presentations made in several school assemblies and parent events.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Sample zoo toys were made into a display for the school during Back-to-School Night.

Additional Notes:

The teacher noted that class learning went beyond curriculum requirements and academic standards. The students' interest level and progress were high. All objectives were met by integrating the curriculum with service learning.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Animal Protection and Care*

Grade level(s): 6

Essential Purpose or Question:

To transform passive knowledge into action research.

Content—Learning About:

- Local endangered animals
- Marketing campaigns
- Civic responsibility—citizen collaboration to protect all species

Service Need:

The Ridley Sea Turtle is endangered and community awareness and participation are needed to safeguard and improve its chances of survival.

<p>Service Idea: Save Our Turtle! Create a marketing and fundraising campaign to alert the community about the circumstances of this local endangered turtle.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Respond to a local newspaper article about immediate need to protect local wildlife. Work in teams to gather data including background information on the Ridley Sea Turtle.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Identify opportunities to inform the community, potential partnerships with agencies for fundraising, and possible speaking engagements. Develop assembly. Visit National Marine Fishing Services to observe conservation efforts.</p>
<p>Action: Present assemblies, speak at local meetings and events, attend and help with turtle release events, promote and host fundraiser at local restaurant.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Maintain journals, class discussion, request feedback forms from partners.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Submit article to local newspaper to discuss what was accomplished, thank partners, and continue educating the public.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students identify areas of interest and how they will engage the community, maintain all records, contact restaurants, and plan fundraiser.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Develop vocabulary, write cause and effect essays about endangered turtles, prepare and give presentations to other classes and community groups

Social Studies/History:

Study government policy and its impact on endangered animals, identify the role of each partner in community collaboration, attend town meeting about fishing pier construction near turtle nesting beach

Mathematics:

Compare mailing costs for flyers and invitations for events, maintain budget of expenses and donations gathered

Science:

Gather information from the Sea Turtle Restoration Web site, review and prepare information for class discussions and presentations

Languages:

Research international involvement with sea turtles and the role assumed by other governments

Art and Music:

Create posters on turtles and invitations to events

Technology:

Using a computer, prepare invitations, flyers, posters, and a fundraising program

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Research
- Persuasive writing
- Public speaking
- Organization
- Writing a news article
- Budgeting

Books and Other Media Used:

The Kid's Guide to Social Action
Interrupted Journey: Saving Endangered Sea Turtles

Community Partners:

Turtle Restoration Project
National Marine Fishing Services
Local hotels and restaurants
Bank (to set up turtle savings account)
Newspaper
Web site: www.seaturtles.org



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**

- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students designed a brief survey to give out before and after presentations to measure progress. Students made a difference by organizing a turtle rescue event.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about careers in marine restoration, animal research, finance, Web design, and digital media.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students strengthened collaboration skills as they recognized talents in themselves and every member of the class.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Students were eager to find ways to be involved, help, and contribute. They continually added new ideas and showed their commitment and ingenuity. Many students stayed involved on weekends and during the summer.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One semester, but it could have lasted an entire year.

Teacher Collaboration:

As teachers saw the dynamics of the process, they were eager to contribute and find ways to be supportive with their classes.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Local newspapers ran articles; content was added to the Web sites of school and partner organizations; local officials attended the turtle release events.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Students created a scrapbook that documented the entire process.

Additional Notes:

This approach to collaboration was a first for this locale and had a positive impact on school and community relations.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School and Special Education, Animal Protection and Care*

Grade level(s): **High School (Special Education Class)**

Essential Purpose or Question:

Can we help animals to be adopted?

Content—Learning About:

- Work experience
- Animal care
- Technology

Service Need:

To find homes for animals living in shelters.

<p>Service Idea: Promote a Pet Adoption Program Students promote pet adoption within their school community through an ongoing advertising campaign.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Visits to a shelter to learn about animal care show that many animals need to be adopted and that the community should know about them.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Hands-on experience at the shelter, technology knowledge and practice, select animals for the campaign, write script for school announcements, and create a print advertisement design.</p>
<p>Action: Students document the animals and develop their media campaign, creating flyers and a video for distribution in the school; students provide information on how to adopt pets through the shelter.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Students keep journals with weekly entries, group discussion.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Students write an article for the school newspaper; students appear in school media broadcast; coverage in local newspaper.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students discuss the need, the plan of action, and the reflection; make decisions on photography and filming regarding animal selection and set-up; design advertisements. After the students achieve results with increase in animal adoption, they can set up a display at the local shopping mall or community events.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Students plan the sequence of events, discussing animals and the role of the shelter; vocabulary development, composition—students write about their experiences, create posters about the animals for adoption, write scripts for videos, write article for newspaper

Social Studies/History:

Research evidence and point of view by exchange of ideas; purchase supplies, interact with shelter staff and school community to put up displays and promote increased adoption

Mathematics:

Graph statistics on adoption rates before and after promotion and compare results; measure and design posters; maintain a budget for supplies

Science:

Learn about animal health

Languages:

Art and Music:

Graphic design of posters

Technology:

Use digital camera/video and software

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Cost comparison
- Sequencing
- Teaching/learning how to use equipment
- Video editing process
- Communication

Books and Other Media Used:

Before You Were Mine
A Day at Wood Green Animal Shelter
straydog (used by students with behavior issues)

Community Partners:

Animal shelter
Local access cable channel
Shopping mall



Opportunities for Students to:

- Experience and explore diversity:

- Participate in progress monitoring:

- Learn about careers:

- Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:

- Make global connections:

- Develop leadership:

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Teacher Collaboration:

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Animal videos, marketing tools, and a banner about the “Promote a Pet” service for use at information tables around the community.

Additional Notes:

Two classes were involved in this experience: students with mental retardation and students with emotional or behavioral problems. While this description emphasizes the learning and service for the students with mental retardation, benefits were also noted for the students who taught them the technology, including learning about mental retardation and teaching methods, and the opportunity to develop and strengthen communication skills, interpersonal relations, and patience. The perceptions of the teacher and high school students were notably changed regarding people with disabilities. There was an increased appreciation of the skills, knowledge, and abilities of students living with disabilities.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Elders*

Grade level(s): 3

Essential Purpose or Question:

As we become healthier and stronger, how can we share what we know with others?

Content—Learning About:

- Healthy living
- Life cycles
- Community involvement

Service Need:

Exercise has myriad benefits for elders who need mobility. Children who learn about exercise can educate others apply what they’ve learned in the community.

<p>Service Idea: Yoga for Elders Teach yoga to elders and promote exercise throughout the community.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students interview the education director at a local senior center.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Study and practice yoga. Design and write a yoga brochure that includes benefits, basic poses, suggested clothing, and other tips; discuss the needs of elders with staff from senior center; read books. Plan and practice ways to teach yoga to older people with limited mobility; develop “armchair yoga” exercises. Rehearse and film a public service announcement called “Exercise!” with easy tips to increase daily walking and stretching.</p>
<p>Action: Visit a senior center weekly for two months. Air public service announcement on exercise daily on local cable channel.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Write a story about the value of visiting the senior center. Create several bound editions of the story along with reflective letters exchanged with the elders. Give them to the senior center and local and school libraries.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Perform a yoga demonstration at the community’s kids’ fair. Distribute “We Love Yoga” brochures.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Student choose the brochure topics. Every child suggests idea for writing and artwork.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Write and illustrate “We Love Yoga” brochures; collaborate on public service announcement which involves theatrical staging and public speaking; and write invitations and thank-you letters to government and agency officials

Social Studies/History:

Learn about how city government supports school and community projects; study the role of city government and meet government officials

Mathematics:

Measure art and text for brochure design

Science:

Study life cycles and science of the body

Languages:

Learn basic greetings in Russian (there are many Russian immigrants at the senior center)

Art and Music:

Draw yoga poses for brochure

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Paragraph construction
- Editing
- Descriptive writing
- Communication

Books and Other Media Used:

Blood and Guts: A Working Guide to Your Own Insides
Hurry, Granny Annie

Community Partners:

City of West Hollywood
Senior Community Center
City Cable Access



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students came to understand and appreciate elders and interacted with people who speak a different language. They were able to teach yoga, even if verbal communication was ineffective.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students revisited the senior center after their service and saw that many of their “students” had remembered the exercises. They also kept track of how many brochures they distributed, helping the community learn to be healthier.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students met many people who work with seniors at the senior center. Also, as they learned about city government, they became familiar with the many different divisions and departments needed to make a city thrive.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students were determined to find a way to adapt their favorite exercises so everyone, regardless of physical limitations, could benefit. Students also developed resourcefulness and empathy.
- **Make global connections:**
Students discussed where many of the elders were from, since there is a large Russian immigrant population in the community. This involved looking at maps and learning how countries and their borders have changed.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students lead elders when demonstrating yoga poses and exercises.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

The yoga lessons within the classroom were ongoing all year. Students worked with elders for three months.

Teacher Collaboration:

Other third-grade classes let the students come in and practice teaching before working with seniors.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students met many city government officials; an article about this program was included in a city publication.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

The “We Love Yoga” brochures were distributed and the “Exercise!” public service announcements continue to play on the local cable network.

Additional Notes:

The teacher wanted students to learn yoga for exercise (especially with fewer opportunities for physical education classes in the school) and to help them learn to be more in control of their bodies. Once the students developed their skills, she sought ways to involve them in community learning and sharing. The teacher requested and received assistance from local city social services department.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Elders*

Grade level(s): 7

Essential Purpose or Question:

To help young people develop manners and communication skills through relationships with elders—while meeting academic standards.

Content—Learning About:

- Manners
- Appropriate behavior during interaction with elders
- Nutrition
- Cooking

Service Need:

Intergenerational relationships provide multiple opportunities: meaningful companionship for elders and development of communication skills and manners for youth.

Service Idea: Project Cook 'n' Serve

Middle school students partner with senior citizens to learn about nutrition, share meals, and create a community cookbook.

Investigation of the Need:

Teachers see the need for manners in students. Newspaper articles show statistics on the need for nutrition in elders.

Preparation and Planning:

Students read and discuss the aging process and interview seniors about rules of etiquette. Seniors and middle school students attend nutrition and cooking classes together. Students role play setting tables, serving food, and having appropriate conversation at meal time.

Action:

Cooking with elders and then serving food.

Reflection Methods:

Email exchange with senior friends, and role play potentially awkward situations to practice social options and manners.

Demonstration to Others:

Students maintain communication with their senior friends through frequent emails and occasional visits. The cookbook offers recipes for food and for intergenerational interactions.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students propose a plan, research options, develop a “manners scale,” create interview questions, design the cookbook, plan meals, and devise methods for ongoing collaboration and communication with elders.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Follow multistep directions, interview seniors for stories and recipes, write essays, write formal letters, address envelopes, and write thank-you notes; create promotional materials and press releases

Social Studies/History:

Social interactions, learn about the aging process, and develop community partnerships

Mathematics:

Recipes and organization of cookbook, measuring, budgeting, and recording data

Science:

Use the nutritional pyramid to evaluate recipes

Languages:

Learn polite expressions in different languages to correlate with ethnic recipes and celebrations

Art and Music:

Make posters, design and construct cookbook, make place mats

Technology:

Use the Internet to research nutrition and aging; use a computer to create cookbooks and write correspondence and thank-you notes

Other:

Much of this activity centered in the required elective class “Health and Life Skills” and involved all the teachers in the middle school team

Skills Being Developed:

- Social behavior
- Written and verbal communication
- Ability to follow multistep directions

Books and Other Media Used:

Doing Time Online

Growing Older: What Young People Should Know About Aging
A Handbook for Boys

Community Partners:

Senior center

Newspaper

Local access cable television



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Learn about the aging process and interact with elders.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Teachers challenged the students to develop a “manners scale” and to self-assess how these skills were developed during the course of the experience.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about careers as a nutritionist and a city government employee (through meeting people who work with Parks and Recreation at the senior center).
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students learned about listening, compassion, and manners.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Students divided tasks and worked in collaborative teams to make arrangements with the senior center and to create the cookbook.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Six weeks.

Teacher Collaboration:

Core classes and electives met together to plan what would be done, shared time when needed, and discussed and adapted the process in team meetings.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Photos and an article with participant interviews appeared in school newspapers.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

The cookbook.

Additional Notes:

The teacher observed increased evidence of polite and appropriate verbal exchanges among students and between students and teachers. Classroom management became easier and the students demonstrated caring and friendship with their senior partners.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Elders*

Grade level(s): 11

Essential Purpose or Question:

How does connecting the past to the present help us contemplate our future?

Content—Learning About:

- American history
- Living in times of war: World War II, Vietnam

Service Need:

People who have “lived history” have experiences and perspectives that should be preserved.

<p>Service Idea: We Were There: Living History Interview people who lived during times of war or unrest, and create books and a Web site with the gathered stories.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Participate in a local Living History project.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Research and select events from history to be central themes. Have a workshop on interview skills from historical society educator; plan interview questions and methods; and identify interview candidates through partners (send letters, post flyers in public library, senior center, veterans groups).</p>
<p>Action: Conduct interviews; research and write biographies; collect photos; and create photo exhibit for the library. Create books from biographies.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Keep reflective journals throughout process. Write letters to interview partners requesting comments and feedback. Hold a roundtable discussion with all participants at follow-up gathering after books are distributed.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Host evening community event at the public library with the students and interviewees. Announce Web site throughout school district and region in a teacher newsletter and contribute to a newspaper article.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students can select themes, including “On the Front Lines,” “At Home During Wartime,” “Teens: Then and Now,” and “Hiding Under Desks—Memories from Childhood.”

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read essays and novels from time period being studied; use interviews to write biographical narratives demonstrating well-defined perspective; develop presentations by using clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies

Social Studies/History:

Study people, events, and contributions affecting society; analyze participation in World War II and the Vietnam War, including the roles and sacrifices of individual soldiers and people at home; discuss forms of popular culture during post-World War II era and discuss the changing role of women in society

Mathematics:

Science:

Languages:

Bilingual students assist in conducting select interviews

Art and Music:

Find art and music reflective of the era represented and use in the books and on the Web site

Technology:

Use computer skills to scan photos and produce and design documents; collaborate with a computer design class to create Web page linked to school Web site

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Documentation
- Research
- Interviewing
- Writing essays and memoirs

Books and Other Media Used:

Too Young for Yiddish
We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History
Truce

Community Partners:

School librarian
Historical society
Veterans’ organizations
Chamber of Commerce



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students were exposed to the diversity of different generations and experiences.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Through their work with the historical society, students learned about the lack of documented stories. They made a difference by writing biographies and creating a Web site that the community can use.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about the careers of a school librarian and employees at the historical society and nonprofit agencies.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students gained empathy, patience, and perseverance.
- **Make global connections:**
Students discussed world issues and looked at maps to understand where these occurrences took place, the conditions of the times, and even the impact of weather and climate on how wars were fought. The book *Truce* highlighted universal aspects of humanity that transcend other allegiances.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students exhibited organizational leadership as they took on tasks, collaborated, and saw the work through to fruition.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One semester.

Teacher Collaboration:

While the project began in a history class, the English teachers adapted their reading choices to work in partnership; other teachers joined for portions of time as the need arose.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

An evening community event was held at the public library by community partners, students, and the interviewees. The students announced the Web site throughout the school district and region in teacher newsletters and a newspaper article.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Students created a Web site and a photo exhibit.

Additional Notes:

The teacher read the book *Too Young for Yiddish* to discuss how aspects of culture can be lost. After students read the interview with the book's author, Richard Michaelson, they discussed how the son had misrepresented the 1960s. This led to investigating specific historical moments from personal perspectives. Students organized groups based on interest, conducted research and interviews, and compiled books on each theme. Their perspectives on elders changed dramatically; they realized elders lived through these important events as younger people, often close to the students' ages.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Emergency Readiness*

Grade level(s): 5 (with grades 2 and 3)

Essential Purpose or Question:

Develop and refine communication skills while fostering an appreciation of the many possible modes of communication; mentor and guide second and third graders in their communication skills.

Content—Learning About:

- Causes of many kinds of natural disasters
- Myths and legends

Service Need:

Many children need a better understanding of the causes of natural disasters.

Service Idea: Weather—Amazing Facts and Original Folktales

Write a book for elementary children to inform about natural disasters and integrate a creative aspect. For every disaster report, include both facts and an original folktale about the cause; produce in English and Spanish.

Investigation of the Need:

Fifth-grade students asked first- through fourth-graders what caused hurricanes and the responses from children in grades 1–3 often were more amusing than accurate.

Preparation and Planning:

Research natural disasters by using the Internet, books, and speakers. Study about the influence of folktales on both science and culture. Work with third graders to write original folktales about eight different natural disasters. Work with second graders to produce related illustrations. Translate into Spanish.

Action:

Finalize the copy, integrate disaster images, and add original art and translations to complete the book *Weather: Amazing Facts and Original Folktales*.

Reflection Methods:

Work in triads to reflect on each disaster; create team journals, digital photographs, and skits. Design reflection activities for partner classes. The book included a reflective acrostic poem written by fifth graders on “Communication” and also included a page of “Notes and Reflections.”

Demonstration to Others:

At a book launch, students shared their publication with other classes and sent a copy to every school in the district.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students selected their teams, and brainstormed and reached consensus on book layout and involving the partner classes.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read examples of myths from many cultures; write lists of amazing facts and creative stories

Social Studies/History:

Create world maps of where the natural disasters being studied most frequently occur; read a newspaper article about current incidents and their impacts

Mathematics:

Apply geometrical patterns and designs studied

Science:

Research eight natural disasters—their causes and impact

Languages:

Work with ELL students to translate the facts and folktales into Spanish

Art and Music:

Technology:

Create collages using Web site images

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Cause and effect
- The writing process
- Communication in various forms
- Drawing and writing

Books and Other Media Used:

Natural Disasters: Hurricanes, Tsunamis, and Other Destructive Forces

Tsunami: Helping Each Other

Eyewitness: Hurricane & Tornado

Eyewitness: Volcanoes & Earthquakes

Community Partners:

Social Services (Emergency Preparation)



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students learned about the value of knowing multiple languages: “It helped everyone to learn that English isn’t the only language in the world . . . if only our book could be in every language!”
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students developed a step-by-step sequence for this service process and saw when progress was obvious and when variations needed to be made.
- **Learn about careers:**
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed communication skills, originality, and enthusiasm. In their own words: “I learned other people may be shy, outspoken, or speak directly.” “I learned to put myself in someone else’s position.” “I learned not to judge a book by its cover.”
- **Make global connections:**
Students did global mapping.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students developed initiative, planning skills, resourcefulness, and follow-through.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One semester.

Teacher Collaboration:

This service required teacher collaboration across three grades.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

The resulting student-made book has been used in workshops across Florida and the United States as an exemplary service learning product in which youth voice was integral and the process met multiple academic state standards.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Weather: Amazing Facts and Original Folktales.

Additional Notes:

This service experience received funding from Florida Learn and Serve and also from a local foundation.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Emergency Readiness*

Grade level(s): 8

Essential Purpose or Question:

How is preparedness important for adolescents and adults?

Content—Learning About:

- Contemporary social and economic conditions
- Compare historical and current events

Service Need:

As confirmed by a countywide survey, people of lower socioeconomic groups often lack the resources for emergency preparation.

<p>Service Idea: Be Prepared! Assist in countywide survey to find emergency resources for families in need and conduct a campaign to prepare and distribute kits.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students referenced the countywide survey and compared results to a survey they created and used with 200 adults—primarily people connected with their school and their parents.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Receive training from social service agency on identifying emergency resources, conduct telephone surveys of sixteen agencies, prepare findings summary and submit to lead agency, collect lists of needed items—one for elders and another for low-income families, initiate letter-writing and media campaign to ask for donated merchandise.</p>
<p>Action: Prepare and distribute emergency kits through adult education classes, senior citizen programs, and displays at high school sporting events.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Journal writing; maintain a photo journal of the class experience to create an annotated historical timeline complete with quotes from student journals (modeled on a timeline in their history book).</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Submit article with photographs to L.E.A.D. agency for annual report, and an article for school newspaper.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students had experienced a wide-scale natural disaster several years before this issue was presented in class, and they wanted to get involved in helping others. They showed initiative in planning, resourcefulness, and community outreach.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Write letters to solicit donations, create annotated project timeline with student reflections

Social Studies/History:

Trace the development of American society and economy; learn about the challenges facing the new nation; compare those societal challenges with current issues facing people of low socioeconomic means, with an emphasis on the causes and effects; help social service agency meet community needs to understand and participate in process of social change

Mathematics:

Use graphs to show findings from telephone surveys

Science:

Discuss natural disasters and their short- and long-term effects on the environment (land, people, economic structures)

Languages:

Spanish classes assist with translation of promotional flyers and instructions for kit use

Art and Music:

Draw design patterns on paper, apply them to fabric, and add color

Technology:

Students volunteered to upload project timeline onto class Web page

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Cause and effect
- Compare and contrast historical events
- Social analysis
- Civic participation

Books and Other Media Used:

- Natural Disasters: Hurricanes, Tsunamis, and Other Destructive Forces*
- We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History*
- Teen Power Politics: Make Yourself Heard*
- The Kid’s Guide to Social Action*
- The Killing Sea*

Community Partners:

Social Services (Emergency Preparation)



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
From the history classes to the experiences preparing the kits, students were consistently examining issues of diverse populations and the impact of disasters on those populations.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students monitored every agency that received the kits to find out about distribution. They also inserted postcards into the kits to get feedback.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about an array of careers related to emergency response.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students gained empathy for others in difficult situations.
- **Make global connections:**
Students researched response systems in different countries; for example, they read about the slow response time in Kobe, Japan, following an earthquake due to a lack of volunteers.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students developed initiative, planning, resourcefulness, and community outreach skills.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One semester.

Teacher Collaboration:

While the project originated with social studies, other teachers in this team were delighted to do collaborative planning and made adjustments as they saw the value of this process evolving.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

An article ran in the school newspaper and in the social service agency's annual report.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Emergency readiness kits.

Additional Notes:

Following a hurricane that devastated a community, the teacher found an article about the need for emergency preparedness resources for low-income families and elders. This correlated to content being studied—immigrants and newly freed African Americans having limited access to needed food and materials.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Emergency Readiness*

Grade level(s): 9-12, and schoolwide

Essential Purpose or Question:

To practice authentic writing and to hone skills for a real audience.

Content—Learning About:

- Contemporary social and economic conditions
- Compare historical and current events

Service Need:

As confirmed by a countywide survey, people of lower socioeconomic groups often lack the resources for emergency preparation.

<p>Service Idea: Disasters—Flood & Ice Document the summer and winter of 2007 in a book that combines poetry, art, narratives, and photographs.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students referenced the countywide survey and compared results to a survey they created and used with 200 adults—primarily people connected with their school and their parents.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Review surveys about natural disasters; meet with photographers, journalists, and public health researchers; discuss how personal experiences can be translated into poetry.</p>
<p>Action: Based on students’ experiences with natural disasters, write <i>Disasters: Flood & Ice</i>. Use photographs and art to illustrate the stories.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Use writing and verbal discussion to glean real understanding on the nature of life and living, in many cases through poetry.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Submit article with photographs to school newspaper and to L.E.A.D. agency for annual report.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students had experienced a wide-scale natural disaster several years before this issue was presented in class, and they wanted to get involved in helping others. They showed initiative in planning, resourcefulness, and community outreach.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Experience writing as a tool to communicate experience and emotion; produce poems that reflect insight into the experience of disaster; use the skills acquired in a unit on diction

Social Studies/History:

AP History students conducted surveys after each disaster to collect stories from the community; Government classes discussed the local, state, and federal agencies involved in providing assistance; students compare their personal experience to the dust bowl of the 1930s

Mathematics:

Reviewed and reported statistics of how many peers were injured

Science:

Discuss natural disasters—particularly flood and ice—and their short- and long-term effects on the environment (land, people, and economic structures)

Languages:

Art and Music:

Make posters that show what occurred; take photographs

Journalism:

Devote an issue of school newspaper to students who suffered significant losses from a flood

Technology:

Computer use

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Cause and effect
- Compare and contrast historical events
- Social analysis
- Civic participation

Books and Other Media Used:

Natural Disasters: Hurricanes, Tsunamis, and Other Destructive Forces

Community Partners:

Gary Crow, local photographer
Harvard School of Public Health
Wellesley College
Cherokee National Learn and Serve
L.E.A.D. Agency



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students of diverse backgrounds collaborated and drew from different community perspectives to create this compelling story of their unfortunate disasters.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
This comprehensive process required keeping exceptional track of what was being written and other elements such as photographs, art, and research. Students managed all aspects of the process.
- **Learn about careers:**
From photographer to journalist to public health researcher, students have been privy to many roles and careers—including that of volunteers. Participation from Red Cross, FEMA, United Way, Salvation Army, and other agencies showcased both the careers in nonprofits and the many ways we can all serve regardless of our professions.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students gained appreciation, sensitivity to the experiences of others, compassion, resilience, collaboration, and caring.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Students developed initiative, planning, resourcefulness, and community outreach skills.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One year.

Teacher Collaboration:

All teachers worked together and with the students. Faculty and department meetings were often used for planning and to address specific issues or needs as they arose.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Journalism students reported their classmates' stories for the Miami News Record in Miami, Oklahoma.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Disasters: Flood & Ice (95-page book).

Additional Notes:

As the book neared completion, a tornado hit this community; students added their thoughts on this disaster in the epilogue. Harvard School of Public Health and Wellesley College reported information on post-flood soil samples in the book. Cherokee Nation Learn and Serve assisted with funds from Learn and Serve America and Rebecca Jim of L.E.A.D. Agency served as editor. This book involved and engaged the entire school population and many in the surrounding community. Students in this community have written a prior book on Tar Creek, a polluted stream in their community.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, The Environment*

Grade level(s): 6–8

Essential Purpose or Question:

Find the intersection between government agencies and public opinion. How can young people participate with and influence both?

Content—Learning About:

- Nonpoint source pollution caused by common daily uses and activities: lawn fertilizer runoff, oil dumped in drains, etc.
- Community needs through interaction with senior citizens
- Habitat impact

Service Need:

A local agency identified that the community lacks knowledge about the impact of nonpoint pollution (polluted runoff).

Service Idea: Making the Point of Nonpoint Pollution

Teach the community about polluted runoff and remedies with slide show and brochure.

Investigation of the Need:

Take a walking tour with representative from the Water Quality Board.

Preparation and Planning:

Read about water usage and pollution and their impact on habitats. Conduct research and prepare presentations.

Action:

Monitor storm drains, record dumped items, work with utilities to stencil slogans near storm drains, and make a presentation to the community.

Reflection Methods:

Keep a journal about experiences and feelings about environmental problems; write haiku water poems.

Demonstration to Others:

Make a presentation to the city council.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students agreed to do the project at community's request and selected slide show and brochure projects. Students also self-selected one of two working groups.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Design and write community "report card" on nonpoint pollution, and repeat every two months

Social Studies/History:

Learn about the role of government in monitoring water safety and research habitat protection laws

Mathematics:

Use math skills to track, analyze, and compare environmental statistics from before and after the information campaign, record keeping, and determine statistics for presentation

Science:

Monitor and maintain records, study nonpoint pollution and community impact including the effect of pollution on living things, habitat changes caused by pollution, and adaptation

Languages:

Translate brochure

Art and Music:

Stencil design; and a unit on advertising campaigns, art, and slogans

Technology:

Design brochure on computer and create Web site to post findings

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Record keeping
- Data collection
- Research
- Team work
- Application of science knowledge to local context

Books and Other Media Used:

Our Poisoned Waters

A Cool Drink of Water

I Want to Be an Environmentalist

Gone Fishing

Community Partners:

Adopt-A-Watershed

Regional Water Quality Control Board

City Planning Department

Public Utilities



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Designed and wrote community report card on nonpoint pollution, and repeated every two months. Compared and contrasted results.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about government and nonprofit agency positions, and a range of environmental occupations.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students saw their personal impact on larger issues and the importance of the actions done by one person or group of people.
- **Make global connections:**
Students gained awareness of global issues through literature and follow-up discussions.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students formed working groups and kept track of progress.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Three months.

Teacher Collaboration:

Science, art, and computer classes collaborated with ongoing conversation among teachers and many students involved in these classes.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

City Council presentations and a news story covering what the youth reported.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Brochures and slide show presentation.

Additional Notes:

This service learning activity developed through a community request. Different grade levels had different responsibilities. The students continue to present a report card of pollution with recommendations to “clean up your act.”



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, The Environment*

Grade level(s): 9–12

Essential Purpose or Question:

To find out what can be learned through books of different genres.

Content—Learning About:

- Habitats
- Local history
- Civic collaboration and participation

Service Need:

Invasive plants harm the natural environment of the town park, while graffiti and other destructive acts indicate a lack of ownership and participation by area youth.

Service Idea: Our Park—A Restoration Project

Restore our town park with native woodland habitat and historical information about settlers.

Investigation of the Need:

Interview park officials.

Preparation and Planning:

Conduct interviews and learn about invasive plants and pre-settler habitats. Research local and historical Native American populations and pre-settler land use. Compare woodland habitat with current park ecosystem, visit and assess park needs. Read primary source material on early settlers, and create timelines and family trees of early settlers.

Action:

Clean up park while learning to identify invasive species of plants. Construct benches that fit the chosen historical period. Plant trees and vegetation to reestablish woodland habitat.

Reflection Methods:

Various media used in different classes, but teachers primarily rely on journals and class discussion.

Demonstration to Others:

Pamphlets are presented to Chamber of Commerce and Preservation Society, and groundbreaking ceremony follows the plantings and the installation of park benches. There is newspaper coverage, and student-written articles appear in the school paper.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Collaborate with teacher to continue and expand/promote the project, and identify needs that could be met by other classes.

Curricular Connections:

✓ *English/Language Arts:*

Compose an informational brochure about the history of the park with emphasis on the settlers buried there, interview elder community members to collect information about the park and other relevant community changes

✓ *Social Studies/History:*

Learn about the area before settlers arrived through primary source materials and general research, and participate in community activities for the common good

✓ *Mathematics:*

Create statistical charts showing population changes over time in the region that impacted the environment

✓ *Science:*

Learn how biodiversity is affected by changes in habitat, research native plants and species in woodland habitats, and study and determine pre-settlement vegetation

✓ *Languages:*

Research languages of indigenous Native Indians in the area and include words and translations in materials

✓ *Art and Music:*

Art students did graphic design for the project pamphlets

✓ *Technology:*

Computer graphic design

✓ *Other:*

Photography students create a photo display that chronicles the restoration process; woodshop class built benches to replicate those used by early settlers; debate team hosts community event showing hypothetical debates about community changes in times past that parallel current issues of growth, with discussion following on the topic

Skills Being Developed:

- Research
- Collaboration
- Community awareness
- Documentation
- Social analysis
- Informational writing

Books and Other Media Used:

The People Who Hugged the Trees: An Environmental Folktale Issues in the Environment

Community Partners:

Cedarburg Preservation Society
Chamber of Commerce
Local newspaper



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students interviewed the park officials intermittently to review how progress was advancing and to adapt plans.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about government and nonprofit agency positions, historian careers, and careers in environmental preservation.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students learned about teamwork, handling frustration and delays, and communicating to different populations.
- **Make global connections:**
The class discussed how biodiversity is impacted globally through current climate change conditions.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students formed working groups and kept track of progress.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Three months.

Teacher Collaboration:

This school had an initiative in place to encourage cross-curricular collaboration. These teachers planned together and were able to involve a wide range of students who participated in different aspects of the experience.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students made presentations to the City Chamber and a news story covered what the youth accomplished.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Brochures and slide show presentations.

Additional Notes:

Students decided to create a book of the photographs and stories of what they accomplished. This became the next service learning experience for this team of teachers.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Gardening*

Grade level(s): 2 and 7

Essential Purpose or Question:

Students learn about nature and their local environment so that they can appreciate its importance and value.

Content—Learning About:

- Cause and effect
- Gardens
- Life cycles

Service Need:

Students need an opportunity to learn about and value nature.

<p>Service Idea: Plant a Butterfly Garden Establish a garden for ongoing community use.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: After reading related literature, students investigated places near the school where a community garden did would be accessible to many populations and be appreciated, and where a local garden did not exist.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Read and discuss <i>Butterfly Boy</i>. Identify site for a butterfly garden, and arrange permission for it with the City Parks and Recreation Department (using parent help). Meet with seventh-grade collaborators. Study gardening and life cycles of plants and animals, and meet with experienced gardeners from the senior center, college life science students, and conservation club. Take a field trip with partners to community garden and college garden. Create map for garden with seventh graders, and review safe use of tools.</p>
<p>Action: Plant the garden. Make weekly visits to the garden to maintain it and work with senior partners. Set up information placards for walking tour of garden.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Students write their thoughts and feelings about the projects in their journals. Some of their comments are written on student-made cards decorated with butterflies and sent to their partners as thank-you notes.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Students made posters about the project for display in the public library with large butterflies.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students initiated the idea of the butterfly garden. They designed the garden and did all the planting.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read literature—fiction and nonfiction—about gardens and butterflies; maintain journal, help initiate writing prompts, and write thank-you letters

Social Studies/History:

Map migration routes of butterflies

Mathematics:

Measure and graph plant growth, make drawings of garden design, and measure distance for planting seeds

Science:

Identify plants that attract butterflies, observe growth of plants in root-view, and study the life cycles of butterflies and plants

Languages:

Students learned how to say butterfly in every language spoken by students and faculty at the school; these words were used in the art and posters

Art and Music:

Design posters about the garden and make giant butterflies for display in the library

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Sequencing
- Mapping
- Graphing
- Measuring
- Paragraph writing

Books and Other Media Used:

- Butterfly Boy*
- Jack's Garden*
- The Green Truck Garden Giveaway:*
A Neighborhood Story & Almanac
- Grow: A Novel in Verse*
- Seedfolks* (Grade 7)

Community Partners:

- Spencer Middle School
- Grand Oak Senior Center
- City Parks and Recreation Department
- Community College
- Westfield Conservation
- PTSA



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Cross-age experiences from second graders to seventh graders to members of the senior center.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about careers in landscaping, horticulture, academia, and city government—from Parks and Recreation positions to Senior Center staff.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students gained appreciation of the natural world and the balance they see around them.
- **Make global connections:**
Mapping migration patterns led students to discuss how events that occur in one country have repercussions in others. For the younger students this was an essential revelation that may not have been made as explicitly before.
- **Develop leadership:**
Seventh graders acted as role models for their younger partners.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Yearlong, with more time spent in the planting season.

Teacher Collaboration:

Partnership between the second- and seventh-grade teachers.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

A pair of college students made an eight-minute video of the process for a video production class.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Butterfly garden and posters.

Additional Notes:

The City Parks and Recreation Department came on board as a full partner with the project and contributed the heavy labor to prepare the soil and provide the supplies for the garden. The PTSA purchased child-size gardening gloves and tools.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Gardening*

Grade level(s): 7

Essential Purpose or Question:

To teach the value and meaning of community through participation in a collaborative experience: a memory garden.

Content—Learning About:

- Gardening and biology
- History of civic participation

Service Need:

Honoring the victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

<p>Service Idea: A 9/11 Memory Garden Create a garden in memory of 9/11 victims on the school site in public view.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Survey the teachers and student body for ideas of meaningful ways to commemorate the memory of 9/11.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Read about gardens including World War II and the victory gardens planted, and interview community members from veterans associations and the historical society. Study garden planning and cultivation of plants, and research plants from different countries that would be compatible and noninvasive. Secure funding for garden by making presentations to Chamber of Commerce and by making a mini-grant request to a youth-run philanthropy board. Purchase plants and seek donations of plants. Prepare booklet on the garden with a dedication and stories by each student on their experience with the garden and on the meanings of the plants.</p>
<p>Action: Plant and maintain garden, enlist student volunteers to be responsible for garden care over the summer, and distribute gardening booklet.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Keep journals.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Host garden dedication party with guests who provided research and information. Provide “memory potted plants” as a thank you for assistance and to encourage others to create gardens.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students charted their course of research and investigation of victory gardens in their community by asking elder friends and neighbors for resources, selecting who would be remembered in their garden, and planning the dedication event.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Write essays on civic participation in times of war and peace, read books and write summaries, journal writing, booklet preparation

Social Studies/History:

Conduct research on victory gardens, community interviews with veterans and others who planted victory gardens, cultural study of plants from different parts of the world, current events surrounding events of 9/11 and how it has been memorialized by other students and communities

Mathematics:

Develop budget, keep records of donations and expenses, prepare final report of expenditures

Science:

Study plant growth and life cycles, maintenance of garden, study of invasive plants

Languages:

Spanish language class translated brochure

Art and Music:

Madrigal choral group performed at the dedication event

Technology:

Advanced computer use for design of booklet

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Essay writing
- Research
- Communication
- Computer use—scanning photos

Books and Other Media Used:

No!
The Victory Garden
Alloy Peace Book
Truce
Seedfolks

Community Partners:

Veterans groups
Historical Society
Senior Center
Horticultural Society
City Council representative
Chamber of Commerce
Youth-run philanthropy board



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students engaged in dialogue with veterans.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
- **Learn about careers:**
Students often remarked about the diverse careers they learned about through interviewing the veterans. They found a vast array of backgrounds and experience and realized that some of the careers described were no longer in existence due to changes in the economy, technology, and manufacturing.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Honor and respect were two key concepts often discussed, defined and re-defined, and written about by students.
- **Make global connections:**
Having this concrete experience to respond to 9/11 gave students a sense of being part of an international call for peace. They brought in examples of what other people were doing around the globe.
- **Develop leadership:**
Student initiative was constant as new ideas were often presented and adopted by the group. When a student's idea was not adopted, students knew this was less related to the quality of the idea than to time restraints.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Six weeks, with varying amounts of class time used.

Teacher Collaboration:

This project was initiated by six teachers in a small learning-community group. Several elective teachers also became engaged with the work and developed an understanding of service learning in the process.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

The Chamber of Commerce presented a plaque to the school for outstanding community participation. A local veterans groups made a donation to the school library.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Gardening booklet and memory garden.

Additional Notes:



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Gardening*

Grade level(s): 9–10

Essential Purpose or Question:

To take what has been accomplished within a school to a community level, and to grow from lessons learned.

Content—Learning About:

- Community gardens
- Applying content to meet community needs

Service Need:

A residential facility for elders asked for help constructing an on-site working garden.

<p>Service Idea: Gardening Partnership After establishing a successful garden on the school campus, students would extend their knowledge to assist in establishing gardens where needed in the community; the elder partners extended the project to teach gardening to elementary children.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: During the initial project, students learned that many seniors at the residential facility enjoyed gardening and no longer had the opportunity. The staff reported this would be excellent therapy for many residents.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Environmental biology classes, exploratory visits to residential facility, small group work to design garden, redesigning garden to meet an unexpected need for raised garden beds, and collaboration with other classes.</p>
<p>Action: Design, install, and plant raised-bed gardens.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Use “Four Square Reflection Tool” to record responses: what happened, how do I feel, ideas, and questions; drew from these writings to compile a reflective book to give to residential facility.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: This project was in part a demonstration for the students following completion of their school greenhouse. To demonstrate the community outreach aspect of this project, students gave a computer presentation to parents about their collaboration at the year-end open house event.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students decided to respond to the community request to create a garden, engaged in problem solving, and recruited other collaborators.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read *Seedfolks* and donate a copy along with student writings and reflections to the facility

Social Studies/History:

Community collaboration, knowledge about elders by recognizing that many had vast knowledge and information about gardens not found in student texts

Mathematics:

Design garden plots, shop students (see below) apply math to building raised platforms

Science:

Study about soil, ecosystems, California geology, ground contaminants, and testing methods; learn gardening methods from elders

Languages:

Seniors at residential facility spoke several languages and helped students with language skills development in Spanish, French, Russian, and Yiddish

Art and Music:

Technology:

Other:

Shop class built raised-bed garden containers and then built steps

Skills Being Developed:

- Analyze situations
- Solve problems
- Apply knowledge in authentic situations

Books and Other Media Used:

Seedfolks

Community Partners:

Ocean Front Retirement Villa
Marina Elementary School



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students established ongoing relationships with elders.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students took photographs to show the different stages of their work and how the garden evolved. They documented how mistakes were corrected, how challenges were met, and how new ideas resolved all.
- **Learn about careers:**
The elders were of many backgrounds and careers. In addition, students who especially enjoyed working with the elders had time to interview some of the staff at the center. Several also wrote about their new respect for teachers and expressed interest in possibly pursuing teaching careers.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed resilience and perseverance, particularly when challenges were met.
- **Make global connections:**
So many of the elders came from different places. As students developed relationships with them, they looked at maps to find the cities and countries the people came from. They knew their city was diverse, however this made them more attentive and responsive to the individuals they met and evoked a sense of curiosity evident in classroom conversations.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students saw the direct transference of their abilities from school to community. This led to deeper recognition of how education is truly preparation for life.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Two months with ongoing after-school and weekend time.

Teacher Collaboration:

While this was primarily the project of an environmental biology class, other teachers became involved and made contributions to the curriculum.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students held an open house showcase at school.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

The garden and a reflective book.

Additional Notes:

This project had several surprise twists: Students found a flaw in their initial garden plot design when they realized that the elders could not bend to work in an in-ground garden. This required rethinking and additional planning. Students sought and received assistance from the wood shop class to build raised-bed gardens. Following the installation, the elders wanted elementary children to visit so they could teach the younger students about gardening. The high school students then built steps so the younger children could reach the raised garden beds.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary; Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices*

Grade level(s): 4

Essential Purpose or Question:

How can kids take control of their own nutrition and fitness?

Content—Learning About:

- Health and nutrition
- Exercise and fitness

Service Need:

Reduce the rates of childhood obesity and diabetes

<p>Service Idea: Fit in 4th Being role models and leading peers in fitness and nutrition</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Research obesity traits in elementary age children, along with diabetes trends and other health concerns. Study prevention methods.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Contact local dance instructors, fitness centers, or recreational centers for guest speakers. Find books in school library that coincide with being fit and healthy, contain healthy recipes, and include ways to prevent certain diseases. Ask local health organizations to speak about diseases linked to poor nutrition. Brainstorm ways to promote health.</p>
<p>Action: Orchestrate a “Fit in [your grade and/or town]” program. Set up walking trails inside and outside the school grounds for the students, staff, and community. Create a “Fit Bag” containing easy, healthy snacks kids can make and eat. Provide ideas and tools to get kids physically active, such as jump ropes. Provide water bottles and educate other students about drinking water rather than sugary drinks. Host assemblies or classroom workshops on how to be active and healthy. Work with high school classes to make a workout video or CD of music kids can dance to. Prepare health info posters.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Keep journals and a class log about new ways to become active; add photos and posts to a bulletin board after each guest speaker comes in to show activities and discuss health trends. Send home articles from the school newspaper about trends and take suggestions from readers.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Make a presentation to parents and school board members about healthy habits and provide recommendations of ways to promote health at school and at home.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students chose activities that other students would participate in, such as developing an exercise music CD or video, design the Fit Bag and water bottles, and create posters.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Create and edit recipes; develop vocabulary as students create a visual map of a healthy person

Social Studies/History:

Mathematics:

Determine quantities of supplies needed; keep a budget

Science:

Study connection between nutrition, exercise, choices, and health

Languages:

Art and Music:

Design bags, water bottles, and the recipe pages; create music CD; create health info posters for schools

Technology:

Create a music CD or a workout video

Other:

Health, physical education

Skills Being Developed:

- Leadership: organization, preparation, delegating roles, record-keeping
- Problem solving
- Graphing
- Public speaking: communication, persuasion
- Compare and contrast
- Self-awareness

Books and Other Media Used:

The Edible Pyramid

Recipe books geared toward kids that require no cooking
Exercise videos

Community Partners:

Recreation programs
Fitness centers
Dance instructors
Health programs/agencies
High school music classes



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students reach out to an entire class level.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students create weekly reports and act as reporters and editors/directors to review plans, note changes, and collect evidence of positive impact.
- **Learn about careers:**
Guest speakers who enter the classroom share about their careers in the health and wellness field.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students discuss the social and mental benefits of eating healthy and being active, which builds perseverance, self-motivation, and self-respect.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Students take on different leadership roles as they follow up on their plans—such as director of walking trails, chef, recipe editor, historian, and pep leader (to keep everyone’s spirits up!). Students delegate roles to one another based on need.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Depending on the length of the CD or video, this service plan can take three to six months to complete, working on activities once or twice per week.

Teacher Collaboration:

Health teachers can work with physical education and music teachers, as well as community members outside of school.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Advertise the school walking trails in school and community newspapers and newsletters. Have press attend the opening of the trails and the assembly or classroom workshops.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

The “Fit Bags”, water bottles, workout CD or video, jump ropes, and healthy recipes.

Additional Notes:

This is an easy plan to add to every year, creating more activities to demonstrate movement and involve student ingenuity. The theme “Fit in 4th” was chosen, as fourth-grade students were the planners, developers and leaders. Each year a new group of fourth-grade health mentors and innovators take over.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices*

Grade level(s): 6–8

Essential Purpose or Question:

What motivates a person to stay nicotine-free?

Content—Learning About:

- Nicotine prevention
- Disease prevention
- Decision making
- Refusal skills

Service Need:

Preventing youth nicotine use.

<p>Service Idea: Be Free and Have Fun! Provide healthy alternatives and offer ways to stay nicotine-free for elementary children and oneself.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Research the number of teen smokers compared to non-smokers and study diseases associated with nicotine use and prevalence.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Identify Web sites with youth friendly information and prevention resources. Prepare questions for a representative from a local drug treatment agency or anti-tobacco agency. Schedule workshops with elementary students and ask the representative to co-facilitate.</p>
<p>Action: Middle school students educate elementary students on how to stay nicotine-free by holding workshops and starting a Stay Healthy Club.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Set up a “video confessional” where students record their progress in planning and working with elementary children, their own belief system about nicotine use, and their ideas for keeping kids nicotine-free.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Students co-host healthy alternative activity nights with their elementary students and parents to showcase decision-making skills and refusal skills.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students brainstormed reasons for smoking and what motivates people to do other things instead. They chose activities for the workshop and activity night. They also chose their area of interest to work on such as prevention, decision-making steps, alternatives, refusal skills, or health effects.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Create and edit worksheets and activity pamphlets with nicotine knowledge and prevention tools

Social Studies/History:

Research the laws associated with nicotine use and sales

Mathematics:

Analyze the financial effects of nicotine use and medical treatments associated with use

Science:

Study the parts of the body that are affected by nicotine use

Languages:

Art and Music:

Create skits or a video to help prevent nicotine use among elementary students

Technology:

Produce and direct a video about refusal skills

Other:

Health and Wellness Class

Skills Being Developed:

- Interviewing
- Organization
- Note-taking
- Active listening
- Sequencing
- Public speaking
- Refusal skills
- Financial responsibility

Books and Other Media Used:

Smoking

Teacher-centered activity books relating to smoking prevention

Community Partners:

Local drug treatment centers

Smoking cessation agencies

Health and Wellness agencies dealing with prevention and effects of nicotine

Local YMCA



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students worked within various elementary classes with a variety of ages and backgrounds.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students conducted weekly update meetings with a reporter for each group.
- **Learn about careers:**
As guest speakers visit, students discussed their health field in relation to working with people who use nicotine.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Through journaling and class discussion, students entered a dialogue about the emotional, social, and character effects nicotine use has on a person. They also discussed self-respect and choosing healthy alternatives, including the character traits involved in decision-making and refusal skills.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Students chose the activities and developed their own roles according to their interests, such as directing the video, hosting the workshop, or orchestrating the activity.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

It took two to three months to create and schedule workshops to fit into one semester. Healthy alternative activity nights were held monthly for nine months.

Teacher Collaboration:

Students worked with science teachers, physical education classes, and elementary teachers.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Members of the media were invited to the healthy alternative activity night to help promote healthy, drug-free lifestyles.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Refusal skills video.

Additional Notes:

While the target population was the elementary students, this was also prevention for the middle school students, as they will remain nicotine-free to demonstrate how they are living with healthy lifestyle choices.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices*

Grade level(s): **High School**

Essential Purpose or Question:

What can be done to help support someone living with cancer?

Content—Learning About:

- Healthy lifestyles

Service Need:

Being a support to people with cancer, and reducing risks of cancer.

Service Idea: Health Kick

Educate our staff and students about a new health issue every month through a bulletin board, newsletters, recipes, and announcements; offer resources, recipes, and inspiration to people surviving cancer.

Investigation of the Need:

Many students in health class have known family members with cancer and questioned what they could do to be supportive, where to go get help, and what, if anything, could be done to prevent it. Research local resources, interview the staff, and ask people with cancer what would be helpful for them.

Preparation and Planning:

Research cancer, report findings to the class, organize a list of guest speakers, prepare a brainstorming list of what the students want to accomplish and how they will get the message out, find recipes that help prevent cancer or help as a patient is going through treatment of cancer.

Action:

Create a booklet titled *The Book of Hope* that has food recipes that help at various stages of cancer, stories of encouragement from survivors, and quotes. Knit hats for people fighting cancer. Organize a districtwide walk-a-thon benefiting a local nonprofit organization that helps people with cancer. Hold a “Locks of Love Day,” during which students volunteer to get their hair cut and send to the charity Locks of Love.

Reflection Methods:

Weekly progress reports. Students write about the benefits of their actions, publish update articles in school and community newspapers and the principal’s newsletter. Post updates and photos on the Health Kick Bulletin Board at school.

Demonstration to Others:

“Locks of Love Day” at school. Walk-a-thon—health students act as team captains and find six people to walk on their team with donations. Host a “Women’s Only Night” event for cancer survivors.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students created *The Book of Hope*, brought in recipes, chose agency to donate money to, and became captains of their walk-a-thon teams.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Write and edit *The Book of Hope*

Social Studies/History:

Mathematics:

Science:

Develop research skills to understand forms of cancer and their physical impact; study the impact of nutrition on health

Languages:

Art and Music:

Create bulletin board displays and a cover for *The Book of Hope*

Technology:

Digital design

Other:

Health: Study of cancer, research prevention, and resources available

Skills Being Developed:

- Writing/creating a booklet and bulletin board
- Researching diseases
- Giving presentations and educating others
- Problem solving

Books and Other Media Used:

Melissa Parkington’s Beautiful, Beautiful Hair Side Effects

Brushing Mom’s Hair

St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital video

Community Partners:

Knights-Kaderli (nonprofit agency for people with cancer)

CURE: Childhood Cancer Association

Community members of Medina, New York

Local cancer survivors as guest speakers



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students were able to research the statistics of cancer as it relates to age and race.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students completed a weekly class report and were able to sign up for specific roles.
- **Learn about careers:**
Through researching cancer, students were able to discuss the careers associated with the disease and discuss career opportunities with guest speakers.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students were able to show compassion, empathy, perseverance, and kindness as they met the guest speakers and heard about their courageous battles.
- **Make global connections:**
Students looked at and discussed global statistics of cancer.
- **Develop leadership:**
From the beginning, the students were able to direct and orchestrate what would occur in relation to the need. They wrote a statement of purpose, brainstormed and voted on activities, and selected roles to match their area of interest. Students organized the walk-a-thon and acted as captains leading their teams, raising money, and organizing walking schedules. Some students spoke at a community event for women introducing *The Book of Hope* and handing them out to cancer survivors.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One semester (twenty weeks of ninety-minute classes). Students worked one day a week on *The Book of Hope*. They also knitted hats during ten class sessions.

Teacher Collaboration:

All the teachers within the district were able to participate either through walking, knitting, teaching students to knit, or donating a recipe or story to *The Book of Hope*.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

During the “Locks of Love Day,” a local hairdresser came in to cut participants’ hair and media was present to take pictures. During the walk-a-thon, the school newspaper was present, along with the receiving agency, local newspapers, and community members who wanted to walk as well. “Women’s Only Night” was hosted by community partners for women who survived cancer.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Knitted and crocheted hats, *The Book of Hope*

Additional Notes:

This multi-faceted experience touched the lives of so many. After reading the articles in the newspaper, community members were calling in asking how they could help. There were bins of knitting needles, yarn, and completed hats donated from people who didn’t even have students in school. Volunteers called in to help teach students how to knit, and local community members asked how they could get a copy of *The Book of Hope* for family members. Students involved their families; many students had families that took the day off from work to join the walk-a-thon in memory of someone. Family members who were also survivors came in to share their story with the students. Students left knowing how to be a support for someone with cancer, where to find resources in their area, and how to show compassion.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary; Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty*

Grade level(s): 2

Essential Purpose or Question:

To improve children’s skills of sorting, classifying, and having empathy for others.

Content—Learning About:

- People who help others in the past and present
- Nutrition
- Issues of hunger and homelessness

Service Need:

Students need an opportunity to learn about homelessness and poverty, and a local food bank is in need of assistance.

<p>Service Idea: Food for All Provide direct assistance to a local agency that helps feed people in need by providing canned food and helping to make and serve a meal.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students wrote a letter to the food bank asking what was needed; they included a checklist of ideas they had brainstormed about how to help.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Read and discuss books, interview people who volunteer at the food bank and community meals program, learn lessons on nutrition, sort food and read labels, visit food bank and meals program.</p>
<p>Action: Collect, sort, and deliver food to the food bank; help assemble sandwiches and bag lunches.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Draw and write about feelings and thoughts from the experience.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Act out the book <i>The Can-Do Thanksgiving</i> to teach other classes about helping.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students selected the book to perform, helped create lunch bag menus based on nutrition studies, and chose to decorate sandwich bags.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read books, create a play to teach others about providing assistance, interviewing skills

Social Studies/History:

Study of orphan trains, learn about the role of social service agencies, meet and interview people who make contributions to the community

Mathematics:

Sort canned foods, keep records of quantities and types of foods

Science:

Study nutrition, read food labels

Languages:

Learn the names of foods in Spanish

Art and Music:

Make props for the play

Technology:

Use computer to make flyers about the food drive for children to take home

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Asking questions
- Critical thinking
- Sorting and classifying
- Reading comprehension

Books and Other Media Used:

A Train to Somewhere
Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen
The Can-Do Thanksgiving

Community Partners:

Westside Food Bank
Turning Points Shelter
CHPHP: Children Helping Poor and Homeless People
SOVA Food Pantry (for their elementary curriculum on hunger awareness)



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students went to a facility that was new to them and saw the different ways people participate in helping others.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
- **Learn about careers:**
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed empathy.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Students learned about making a step-by-step plan and classified each step.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Three weeks.

Teacher Collaboration:

Two second-grade teachers collaborated on this experience, and on occasion they traded off their classes to teach lessons they had developed. Occasionally the two classes met together.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Additional Notes:

Parents helped with projects, including making contacts to bring in agency staff to be interviewed, being chaperones on field trips, and assisting with the play production.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty*

Grade level(s): 7

Essential Purpose or Question:

To move from initiative to action in response to an authentic need identified by students.

Content—Learning About:

- Community issues: How hunger affects children
- Careers
- Role of local government and nonprofit agencies

Service Need:

The health and learning ability of children are severely compromised when they do not receive adequate nutrition.

<p>Service Idea: The Great American Bake Sale Learn about childhood hunger and hold a bake sale to educate the community and raise needed funds to help children in the region; become part of the Share Our Strength National Campaign to End Childhood Hunger.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students read newspaper articles, used the Share Our Strength Web site to examine statistics on childhood hunger, and interviewed a representative from the local city council.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Study childhood hunger, learn about the roles of government and community organizations, develop teams for project management: finance, media, schedule speakers, information, community outreach, register for The Great American Bake Sale, get support from other classes, bakers, and solicitors (looking for baked good donations).</p>
<p>Action: Hold two bake sale events—one during school and one on back-to-school night.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Keep a journal to include entries following committee work, speakers (noting professions and career opportunities), and bake sales.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Announce revenue gathered through each bake sale on school PA system; hold recognition event for all partners from the school and community to hand out student-made thank-you certificates and have students present what they studied, learned, and accomplished.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students suggested the idea of participation in The Great American Bake Sale after reading about it in a magazine and visiting the Share Our Strength Web site.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Adapt the downloadable resources from Share Our Strength and hold discussions in book club format

Social Studies/History:

Create posters to show myths versus accurate information about people who are homeless, invite representatives from local agencies assisting families in poverty, hold a seventh-grade assembly to interview a local city council member about issues of hunger in the community and region

Mathematics:

Gather regional and statewide statistics of families who live at or below the poverty line; make a budget anticipating expenses and income from the bake sale; keep financial accounts

Science:

Identify dietary restrictions to note on baked goods, (sugar-free, low sodium, kosher, etc.); discuss physiological and psychological impact of hunger on children

Languages:

Art and Music:

Photography class used the theme of “Hunger in Our Community” to create photo displays at the school, library, and city hall

Technology:

Digital design computer class helped make posters and banners for promotion before and during the bake sale

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Organization
- Teamwork
- Research
- Community literacy
- Problem solving
- Public relations and marketing

Books and Other Media Used:

- Video: *Shelter Boy*
Homeless Children
Changing Places: A Kid’s View of Shelter Living
Soul Moon Soup
Money Hungry
Where I’d Like to Be

Community Partners:

- Share Our Strength
 City council representative
 Family Resources, Inc.
 School and community librarians
 (PTSA)



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students became sensitized about the varied reasons families experience difficult times and this replaced stereotypes with more accurate information.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students followed a step-by-step sequence to track the benefits from their efforts, including the understandings they gained and the donations to the target agency. They also conducted a survey to find out the reasons students donated money and bought food at the bake sale: Because they were hungry? To respond to the needs of children? This helped clarify what motivated people to action.
- **Learn about careers:**
Through the books they read and the people they met, students learned about the careers of social workers, city council deputies, and people who work in various social service agencies.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed empathy, enthusiasm, dedication, and problem-solving skills.
- **Make global connections:**
While looking at local statistics, students found a Web site that had global references and this led to a significant class discussion that helped inspire the next year's project.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students were excited and eager to take on leadership roles as they developed teams for project management: finance, media, speakers, information, and community outreach. Student-led research also inspired reluctant students to get more involved and commit to learning the necessary skills for maximum participation.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Three months.

Teacher Collaboration:

The social studies teacher presented the idea to the team and all teachers adopted the idea and helped developed the overall plan. With student input, the plans became more pertinent to the students while academic goals were met.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

At the demonstration event, students gave awards to other groups that helped.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Additional Notes:

The social studies teacher asked students on the first day of class to be on the lookout for a class service project. Student initiative determined the direction, while the teacher kept students connected with the curriculum. Teacher and students met with many schools groups including the PTSA and the entire faculty to generate school-wide support.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty*

Grade level(s): 11–12 AP English

Essential Purpose or Question:

To select and develop an idea to meet an authenticated need.

Content—Learning About:

- Literacy issues in the community
- Community involvement

Service Need:

Children who live in homeless shelters often lack educational resources to help them develop literacy skills and succeed academically.

<p>Service Idea: Shelter Lessons Supply new and gently used books for a children’s library at a family shelter; make educational workbooks.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Contact shelter for women and children to interview the director to learn about issues and needs,</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Find out about age levels of students and what books and educational materials would be most helpful; create promotional signs for book drives and art supplies for the children; make alphabet, numbers, and shapes workbooks.</p>
<p>Action: Collect and create books and materials and bring them to the shelter.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Completing journal entries using narrative, dialogue, and poetry; obtain feedback from the shelter using the Community Response Form.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Students made a presentation to the English department about what they learned and its relevance to their education. One student stated, “Often we are so directed toward AP classes, high grades, and college that we forget why we are in school in the first place. This reminded me of why I want an education.”</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students researched several project options and then presented them in writing to all of the participating AP English classes. Instead of opting for several different projects, students agreed they could have a greater impact by collaborating on one project.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Collect and review children’s books for age and content, make original ABC books for children

Social Studies/History:

Learn about how community agencies serve the populace

Mathematics:

Create math readiness workbooks on shapes and numbers

Science:

Languages:

Include outreach to collect Spanish language and bilingual children’s books (this was done through presentation at PTSA meetings and advanced language classes)

Art and Music:

Illustrate children’s books

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Collaboration
- Applied learning
- Reflection

Books and Other Media Used:

Home Is Where We Live: Life at a Shelter through a Young Girl’s Eyes
Soul Moon Soup (teacher used excerpts during reflection)

Community Partners:

A Book In Hand (a program model to provide books to children who have none of their own)
Riverside Shelter
PTSA



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students were exposed to a range of situations that cause women and children to seek shelter. They recognized that woman of all ethnicities and socioeconomic categories had common problems and treated each other as a mutually helpful support group.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about the careers of social worker, child advocates, and art therapists.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed empathy, resilience, understanding, and appreciation for complexity.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Students had guiding materials from this book to use, however they determined how to organize in teams, have regular check-ins to be sure work was being done, and developed collegial management/leadership abilities. Their journal topics often had students consider if what they were learning would be helpful in college or the workplace.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Three weeks.

Teacher Collaboration:

All of the AP English classes collaborated on this project.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students opted to avoid any recognition. Primarily a group of seniors, they stated that so much of that year had been about collecting accolades to add to college applications. With this project, they simply wanted to do a good job and feel the intrinsic motivation.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Original workbooks designed by students working in teams.

Additional Notes:

Students knew that the month following the AP English exam would be spent doing community outreach regarding literacy. After learning about needs of a local shelter, this plan expanded to include school readiness and educational resources. As a result of this project, nine students attended a four-week training program to be on-site volunteers at the shelter.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Immigrants*

Grade level(s): 4 Social Studies and Language Arts

Essential Purpose or Question:

To see how seeking accurate information replaces stereotypes.

Content—Learning About:

- Immigration to California
- Diverse cultures in our community
- Civic responsibility and the role of government

Service Need:

A lack of knowledge about different cultural groups in the community can lead to misunderstandings and stereotypes. Opportunities for cultural exchange need to be created.

<p>Service Idea: The Story Cloth Museum Students study and learn about Hmong story cloths, and create a museum to showcase this art as well as their interpretation of it by creating their own story cloths.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students looked at statistics on changes in immigrant communities and created a survey to find out which community seemed most understood.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Become familiar with Hmong culture through books, interviews, and research; design a museum format hosted in the school library; make a story cloth; prepare written support documents; and publicize museum opening.</p>
<p>Action: Host museum for the community and provide tours for classes within the school.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Journal writing and drawings of students' experiences, class discussion, and a reflections book available at the museum for community response.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Take the museum on the road! Requests came from a library, bank, and city hall to display their museum pieces. Each setting had an opening event with students as docents. The class decided to make a story cloth out of paper that told the story of their project. This supported the learning process, understanding of sequencing, and project development. The paper quilt was displayed in the school corridor.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Student enthusiasm and interest stemming from reading the book *The Whispering Cloth*, which led to the development of this project.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read books, including *The Whispering Cloth* and *Tangled Threads*, to teach about Hmong culture and the immigrant experience; use vocabulary from text in analysis writing; interview two school parents from Cambodia, who showed and explained Hmong story cloths; write a museum brochure about Hmong culture and immigration to central California; create museum placards to explain exhibit pieces

Social Studies/History:

Learn about the changing state by studying immigration patterns, research contributions made by immigrants to state history, research which local and state government agencies assist immigrants

Mathematics:

Measure and plot out design for story cloth, map display options for museum

Science:

Languages:

Contact local agency to translate museum brochure and museum placards into Hmong language, learn simple greetings and words to integrate into presentations

Art and Music:

Study how art is used to document experience and tell a story; make a story cloth, modeled on Hmong story cloths, to represent a personal experience

Technology:

Computer skills used to create brochures and exhibition materials

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Vocabulary development
- Literary response and analysis
- Write cohesive paragraphs
- Edit and revise drafts
- Develop a main idea in writing
- Organize and deliver oral presentation

Books and Other Media Used:

The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee's Story
Tangled Threads: A Hmong Girl's Story

Community Partners:

Central Bank
City Hall
Fairview Library
Hmong Community Referral Agency



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students learned how diverse cultures share their stories through varied art forms.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students kept track of how many people attended their museum openings and asked a sample of attendees to complete a survey of what they liked, learned, and would do differently after seeing the exhibit.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students were very motivated by *The Whispering Cloth* and discussed how authors have great potential for influencing others. They also learned about the careers of museum docents and immigrant assistants.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students expressed pride in how they took on a topic many were not familiar with and used this opportunity to have fun and get rid of false images and information. In their journals and group discussions, they described being more open-minded and less interested in cliques.
- **Make global connections:**
Students developed sensitivity for the issues surrounding Hmong immigrants and an increased awareness of Cambodia's history and the current situation for people living in Cambodia today.
- **Develop leadership:**
The idea of creating a museum and being docents enabled every student to develop public speaking skills and have multiple times to practice and improve.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

While this was a four-week unit, student interest kept the class continuing to develop ideas and ways to keep their museum up and running.

Teacher Collaboration:

The project was centered in social studies and language arts, and the art and music teachers became very engaged, as well.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

A local news story touted the students as community leaders and learners.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Paper quilt display

Additional Notes:

Community support grew throughout the project. Hmong families contributed food for the opening ceremony at each host site of the museum, and newspapers wrote up several stories as the program continued beyond expectations, including one story in a Hmong publication.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Immigrants*

Grade level(s): 11–12 Spanish

Essential Purpose or Question:

To improve Spanish conversational skills.

Content—Learning About:

- Immigration to the United States
- Literacy
- Civic involvement

Service Need:

Preserving stories that honor the experiences of immigrants.

<p>Service Idea: Documenting Stories of Recent Immigrants</p> <p>Document the stories, experiences, and history of recent immigrants for the community and for the immigrants’ families.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need:</p> <p>Students practiced Spanish while interviewing the director of the adult ESL (English as a Second Language) class held at the high school.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning:</p> <p>Meet with adult education teachers about literacy and ESL classes; learn interview skills (practice sessions held with an advanced Spanish language class).</p>
<p>Action:</p> <p>Meet four consecutive weeks, conduct interviews with ESL students in Spanish, compile the interviews in a book and distribute to high school history and Spanish language classes and to the interview subjects.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods:</p> <p>Write personal essays before the first visit, describing expectations of the project and the interviews and the challenges and benefits anticipated. Following every visit, students wrote reflective entries in Spanish, culminating with an essay that compares their original thoughts with what actually occurred and what was learned. Class discussions were held throughout and a final reflective session took place with the adult students and their teachers.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others:</p> <p>Make copies of the book for the high school Spanish language and ESL teachers and for the adult program ESL teachers; offer to make classroom presentations. (Twelve presentations were made—three in the adult program.)</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students chose the interview topics and devised the book’s design and content.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Write to teachers and adult students requesting participation, compose journal entries, write thank-you letters, read literature about the immigrant experience, study vocabulary

Social Studies/History:

Prepare background information about the ESL students’ countries of origin and the social, political, and economic situations that lead to their immigration

Mathematics:

Science:

Languages:

Use of Spanish, interaction with native speakers, written interviews

Art and Music:

Technology:

Use computer skills in creating the books, scanning photographs, graphic design

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Language fluency—verbal and written
- Listening
- Writing

Books and Other Media Used:

- The Circuit* (in Spanish)
- Breaking Through* (in Spanish)
- Reaching Out* (in Spanish)
- La Línea*

Community Partners:

Adult Education



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**

This experience included nonstop diversity—from the exposure to native Spanish speakers to hearing their captivating stories about the reason they moved to California and about their dreams to stay or to return home. A critical lesson was learned as the high school students learned that the immigrants all shared similar dreams for their families as their own parents.

- **Participate in progress monitoring:**

All students improved their written and verbal skills and grades were proof. The students also de-briefed with the adult ESL teacher who reported similar progress with the majority of her adult students.

- **Learn about careers:**

- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**

Compassion and empathy: students continually spoke about how hard these adults were working to learn English. One of the adults asked a student, “What do you want most—to get a passing grade or really learn to speak Spanish?”

- **Make global connections:**

Students became more knowledgeable about many countries in Central America. The book *La Línea* led to discussions and independent research on immigrant issues in contemporary politics.

- **Develop leadership:**

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

This lasted just over eight weeks, beginning on Martin Luther King Day and culminating on Cesar Chavez Day.

Teacher Collaboration:

The collaboration occurred between the high school Spanish teacher and the adult ESL teacher and administrators.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

The students sent a formal invitation to their principal to come observe their work. This was gratifying for all.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Immigrants’ memoirs.

Additional Notes:

Adult ESL classes are held at this high school three mornings a week. This simplified the process of getting approval from the adult students and the meetings were held during the high school Spanish class time. The partnership between the faculty and mutual benefits were recognized, motivating all of the participants. During the implementation, the high school students realized that the adult education students needed experience having conversations in English. The students visited the class on four more occasions to participate in English dialogue practice.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Literacy*

Grade level(s): 2 Language Arts

Essential Purpose or Question:

To have students from diverse backgrounds engage in a shared learning experience.

Content—Learning About:

- Idioms
- Cultures and languages

Service Need:

Many children struggle to learn idioms in the English language. For ESL students, however, this task is usually even harder. A useful resource is needed.

<p>Service Idea: Idioms in Pairs Students from second-grade classes in two different schools (one primarily English-speaking and one Russian-speaking) work in pairs to collaborate on a book that helps children of all language backgrounds to understand common English-language idioms.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Teachers confirmed that both groups of children have skills and knowledge that could be developed. Students discussed who would benefit from the book.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Learn about what an idiom is and how they are used in every language, study examples of idioms from different cultures, meet the partner class and participate with them in cultural experiences and games, review lessons on idioms together.</p>
<p>Action: Partnered students (one from each school) contribute two pages to the <i>Idioms in Pairs</i> book: one page shows the literal understanding of an idiom such as “let the cat out of the bag” by showing a cat escaping a bag, while the other page shows the figurative meaning of the phrase: a drawing of a person trying to keep a secret. Copies of the book are given to second-grade classes in four neighborhood schools.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Students write reflections for the book and write letters to their partners the day after getting together.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Students distribute the book with a note from teachers about its purpose and the process that went into creating it.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students selected which idiom they worked on and its accompanying art. They also decided the book should be a coloring book and have an “idiom challenge” for readers where they could draw their own pictures to explain an idiom.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Learn about idioms, be able to recognize and interpret common idioms

Social Studies/History:

Discuss the interdependence of cultures and communities, learn about people who have helped immigrants in the past and in recent history, consider ways we can all contribute to helping others

Mathematics:

Science:

Languages:

Both groups of students practiced greetings for each other in Russian and English

Art and Music:

Attend a performance of Russian music and storytelling

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Reading comprehension
- Word and sentence analysis
- Vocabulary use

Books and Other Media Used:

The Bookstore Mouse (used in predominantly English-speaking class)
Stella Louella’s Runaway Book

Community Partners:

Russian Community Center
West Hollywood Library
Social Services of the City of West Hollywood



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**

In addition to meeting and interacting with children of diverse backgrounds, students thought about the needs of those who would be new to English and developed a better understanding of how their work together would help others.

- **Participate in progress monitoring:**

- **Learn about careers:**

- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**

Students developed empathy, mutual respect, curiosity, and thoughtful ways to ask questions and learn about differences.

- **Make global connections:**

- **Develop leadership:**

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Three weeks.

Teacher Collaboration:

Teachers from two schools worked to plan and prepare their students for the visits.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Additional Notes:

Two second-grade classes in two schools collaborated on this project: one was an independent school with a high socioeconomic population, the other was a public school with low-to-middle income students primarily from a Russian-speaking background. The first visit took place at the independent school; the follow-up meeting took place at the public school. Both times students participated in service together to benefit the larger community.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Literacy*

Grade level(s): 7–8

Essential Purpose or Question:

To recognize how learning is improved when one teaches and models for others.

Content—Learning About:

- Conflict resolution
- Stress reduction
- Time management

Service Need:

Students often lack the knowledge and skills needed to reduce anger and stress and be successful in school.

Service Idea: Homework Helpers

Students design skits and materials to teach third graders life skills and strategies for homework management.

Investigation of the Need:

Students interview a counselor and third-grade teacher to learn about specific needs and issues faced by third graders.

Preparation and Planning:

Participate in anger and stress management classes as part of study skills and life skills electives, identify lessons and activities that can be used to teach relevant skills to third graders.

Action:

Lead lessons with classes and follow up with one-on-one practice sessions with third graders, provide each student with a “Homework Helper” activity book.

Reflection Methods:

Write reflections in journal throughout the project, design reflection activities to lead with third graders both in the full-class session and for the one-on-one lessons.

Demonstration to Others:

The school principal asked the students to present this innovative approach to the school board. They prepared a ten-minute talk and a lesson for the school board members to do and invited a third-grade teacher and two of her students to talk about the experience and its impact.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students presented their ideas for lessons in class and collectively decided how to organize their presentations. They used role play to practice and give feedback. Students designed an interactive presentation for school board members.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read and discuss books that show conflicts and the ways they may be resolved, write and role-play scenarios of how anger and stress interfere with homework, write an activity book for elementary students to use as a guide to success with homework, practice leading lessons

Social Studies/History:

Mathematics:

Science:

Learn how mood, emotion, and the body are affected by physical activity such as running, yoga, and slow breathing; students apply this to their own lives and analyze the results

Languages:

Art and Music:

Use various forms of music to identify which help students relax when doing homework

Technology:

Use computer skills in compiling the “Homework Helper” activity book

Other:

Engage in physical education by learning yoga

Skills Being Developed:

- Written and oral communication
- Organization

Books and Other Media Used:

The Summer My Father Was Ten

(an example of a child in a conflict)

Any Small Goodness

Increase the Peace: The ABCs of Tolerance

We Can Work It Out: Conflict Resolution for Children

Community Partners:

King Elementary School



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students explored different learning styles. When they worked with younger students, they came to understand some of the nuances of interacting with children for whom English is a second language.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students took the information they had gathered from the counselor and teacher as their baseline. They asked students what they had learned. They interviewed the teachers once per month to see what has going well and what might need adjustment. Students conducted reflection activities with children to find out what was memorable and ways they preferred to learn information.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about careers in counseling and teaching.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed patience, conflict management, stress management, conversation ability, and interviewing skills.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Each student became a model for another child. This gave each student the opportunity to individualize concepts of leadership.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One semester.

Teacher Collaboration:

Teachers collaborated between the elementary and middle schools.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

The school principal asked the students to present this innovative approach to the school board. They prepared a ten-minute talk and a lesson for the school board members to do and invited a third-grade teacher and two of her students to talk about the experience and its impact. The school district newsletter featured this story.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Additional Notes:

In her reflections, the teacher noted that since students knew they would be teaching conflict and anger management skills to younger children, they were motivated to take their own lessons in these areas more seriously than they had been in previous years.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Safe and Strong Communities*

Grade level(s): K–5

Essential Purpose or Question:

How can every school member contribute to a safe school community?

Content—Learning About:

- Respectful peer and cross-age relationships
- Conflict: current and in literature and history
- Peer mediation and problem-solving strategies

Service Need:

Notable increase in conflicts on school buses and playgrounds as reported to the office.

Service Idea: Peace Keepers Everywhere

Students partner with the administration and faculty as:

- 1) peacekeepers (grades 3–4) who help on the playground and school buses when problems between children arise
- 2) student mediators (grades 4–5) for student-to-student problem solving
- 3) all students study and practice conflict resolution strategies in their classrooms

Investigation of the Need:

Students survey school staff who work on the buses and playground about what incidents cause conflicts; they lead a peer survey about what could be improved on the buses and playground for safety and fun.

Preparation and Planning:

Training provided to students and teachers by local community organization for both roles, which includes learning about conflict resolution and problem solving, using role plays, discussions, and continued meetings throughout year. All classes participate in peacekeeper education activities.

Action:

Students perform their roles as peer mediators or peacekeepers in pairs and report results to teachers and peers.

Reflection Methods:

Students make journal entries when they perform their roles, teachers give feedback, groups discuss experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

Demonstration to Others:

Students showcase skills at open house and at partner agency board meeting, discuss program impact with administrators. Student-written information is presented to all new students who enroll. Students write stories to demonstrate knowledge.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Participation in peer mediation program; preparation of written materials.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Oral presentations on the program and student roles, examining conflict in literature and journal writing

Social Studies/History:

Studying conflict in historical events and role playing new solutions, media study of bullying in popular culture

Mathematics:

Record keeping about frequency of mediations, review statistics about reduction in referrals with counselors

Science:

Body chemistry during stressful times and relaxation

Languages:

Translation of student brochures for second-language needs of students and parents

Art and Music:

Second grade students perform *Hey, Little Ant* for all students and give out discussion questions for teachers to use in follow-up activities

Technology:

Other:

Third graders lead yoga classes for all grades to teach a new way to be calm

Skills Being Developed:

- Organizing ideas in writing
- Group dynamics and social interaction
- Communication and public speaking
- Problem solving

Books and Other Media Used:

- Peter Rabbit* (grades K–1)
- Nobody Knew What to Do: A Story About Bullying* (grades 1–2)
- How Humans Make Friends* (grades 1–3)
- Increase the Peace: The ABCs of Tolerance* (grades 3–5)
- We Can Work It Out: Conflict Resolution for Children* (grades 1–3)
- The Bully Blockers Club* (grades 1–5)
- Hey, Little Ant* (grades 1–5)
- Bat 6* (grades 4–5)
- The Misfits* (grade 5)

Community Partners:

- Community Mediation Services (a local agency that runs conflict resolution workshops)
- Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students learned about how diverse populations work out problems and conflicts.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students began by finding out the frequency of incidents on the bus and playground. After they had each element of the program in place, they began to check and compare the monthly statistics of incidents reported on the playground and school buses. The next step was to re-survey their peers and ask for feedback on what was going well and what could be improved.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned that people can work professionally in the field of conflict management and mediation. Fifth graders interviewed the community partners to find out about different careers and wrote letters to their parents about what they had learned about opportunities that may be of personal interest.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
This was a great benefit of the program. Through the education component in every classroom, a new school norm was established with common vocabulary and understanding of terms. Students became more aware of diverse options available to solve problems. The literature was key and led to many role-playing opportunities so students could rehearse and practice different ways to respond. Teachers reported that once students had an age appropriate understanding of the dynamics of what causes and remedies conflict situations, they behaved with greater confidence. Students began approaching each other individually to resolve minor upsets before they became full-blown problems. Name-calling between students was dramatically reduced.
- **Make global connections:**
Students discussed International Peace Day held in September and thought of ways to become involved during the next school year.
- **Develop leadership:**
Initially students who were peacemakers and peer mediators were seen as leaders. Then the classroom component spread the notion that we are all leaders if we choose to be.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Yearlong and continuing annually. Parent education became an additional component during subsequent years.

Teacher Collaboration:

To make this work, faculty meetings were devoted to professional development. A common agreement of the importance of this undertaking had to be adopted throughout the school by all personnel, both certificated and non-certificated. Everyone had a role and everyone attended workshops, some led by community partners and others led by teachers who had attended extended trainings and would be leading the peer mediators and peacekeepers. For this to be successful, administration and teachers had to also agree on how to model and use these same skills to resolve issues. All of these combined efforts over time reaped plentiful rewards!

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

The PTSA hosted a thank-you breakfast for the school to show appreciation. For Global Youth Service Day, students sent letters to local city officials to attend a Peace Party at school where they demonstrated what they had learned. Local partners and representatives from the school board and the mayor's office were among the attendees.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Using *Increase the Peace: The ABCs of Tolerance*, students in grades three through five wrote a series of ABC books called *Being Good Friends*, *Keeping the Peace*, and *The ABCs of Conflict Resolution*. During year three of the program, a peace garden was created in front of the school.

Additional Notes:

Disciplinary referrals reduced dramatically through this project.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Safe and Strong Communities*

Grade level(s): 6–8

Essential Purpose or Question:

To involve students as problem solvers with a recognized community need.

Content—Learning About:

- Identifying conflicts in literature and history
- Communication skills that improve peer relationships
- Options for managing conflict
- Being a role model

Service Need:

Students express frustration about peer relationships and they recognize that learning friendship skills in elementary school may make middle school easier.

<p>Service Idea: It’s About Friendship Teach elementary children about friendship; establish a No Name-Calling Day at school.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students interview elementary teachers to find out if teaching friendship to their students would improve students’ social skills.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Use characters in <i>The Misfits</i> to identify friendship issues and plan for action. Develop strategies for improving friendships in elementary school children. Work in committees to plan No-Name Day at school with each class planning an event. Review resources to use with young children—books, quotes, music; develop plays, skits, scenarios adapted from literature. Review plans with elementary teachers. Develop pre- and post-questions to ask students their thoughts and feelings about friendship.</p>
<p>Action: Each middle school class partners with an elementary classroom, visiting once a week for three weeks, offering student-led interaction; each lesson concludes with reflection activities for feedback from children. At middle school, No Name-Calling Day activities (play, workshops, mix-it-up lunchtime) are implemented.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Keep a journal to personalize subject matter, reflect on friendship, and receive feedback from teacher. Role play difficult situations and practice problem solving. Select a character in <i>The Misfits</i> to write occasional letters to about the project.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Participate in a mini-conference where three classrooms meet to share their experiences and to discuss what they will recommend for next year’s students. Prepare a guidebook for other schools.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

While based on a teacher-developed model, students made many choices during both preparation and implementation (for example, which skits to act out, lesson development, contents of guidebook, and more).

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read and then analyze *The Misfits* in literature circle, using role-play activities and responsive writings; read books on friendship written for elementary children and identify their lessons; practice storytelling techniques

Social Studies/History:

Select conflicts in history and analyze for alternate options; examine popular culture to find influences that impact communication such as sarcasm, bullying, teasing, stereotyping; find current events articles that show community building activities

Mathematics:

Create math problems for younger children with word problems that deal with friendship

Science:

Research the body’s responses to anger, stress, and relaxation

Languages:

Art and Music:

Find music appropriate for children on themes of friendship with recommendations by elementary school music teacher

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Critical thinking
- Expository writing
- Social analysis
- Teamwork
- Reflection
- Oral communication

Books and Other Media Used:

The Misfits
How Humans Make Friends
Hey, Little Ant (includes song)
Toestomper and the Caterpillars

Community Partners:

Fairway Elementary



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**

Students had to develop awareness of needs of diverse populations to succeed in this service plan. They considered age and background, languages of students, and many ways of thinking about problems, their causes, and ways to be better friends. This led to rich conversations about diversity and appreciation of all backgrounds. Middle school students were very surprised about the comments and insights of younger children!

- **Participate in progress monitoring:**

The middle school students received feedback from the elementary teachers during and at the conclusion of their visits. This allowed them to make adjustments as they prepared for subsequent visits. About three months after the visits were over, students re-interviewed the teachers to find out what changes seemed long lasting. Some of the elementary classes wrote thank-you letters to their middle school student mentors and this led to a pen-pal exchange.

- **Learn about careers:**

Students developed an appreciation for and exposure to the field of education.

- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**

Students developed creativity, patience, ingenuity, resilience, and determination throughout the process.

- **Make global connections:**

As students looked at situations of conflict that had global repercussions, especially with current wars, they gained understanding of underlying issues that need resolution—primarily based on mutual understanding and respect for others.

- **Develop leadership:**

Teachers reported widespread leadership development as most students found significant ways to contribute. Many stepped out of their personal comfort zone to reach the younger children. The students who were designing No Name-Calling Day received the most favorable feedback from the sixth and seventh graders for the programs they created.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

The preparation extended for about three weeks and the implementation was another three weeks for grades six to seven, and one additional week for eighth-grade students. Occasional follow-up—particularly with checking in with the host elementary teachers—provided a wonderful opportunity to revisit what had been accomplished. Students continued to speak about what they had done and several classes found reasons to go back and work with the elementary children again during the school year. The interactions were scheduled for different three-week periods throughout the year.

Teacher Collaboration:

Teachers collaborated for planning within the middle school and between the two schools. Middle school teachers also participated in workshops led by an outside consultant on improving staff relationships and working conditions; these skills became transferable to the classroom.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students wrote an article in the school paper about what they had done. District officials were invited by students and attended many of the No Name-Calling Day events.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Additional Notes:

The school established a mandate to involve every advisory class in activities to reduce teasing, peer pressure, and bullying. Each class approached this theme differently. Ideas and plans developed from teacher in-service sessions about transforming school culture, including teacher and student behavior.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Safe and Strong Communities*

Grade level(s): 9

Essential Purpose or Question:

How does violence affect individuals and the community as a whole?

Content—Learning About:

- Violence and community
- Community interventions to violence

Service Need:

To educate the community about issues of violence and use that knowledge as a prevention strategy.

Service Idea: I Have Been Strong

Write and distribute a book called *Oral Histories on Violence* and hold a conference on violence with local groups.

Investigation of the Need:

Students identified violence as a topic of common interest. They called different agencies to find out if there was a book that explored the themes of violence they found most important. None existed.

Preparation and Planning:

Conduct community needs survey. Read biographies, fiction, plays, newspaper articles, and expository text. Research one of four types of violence: hate crimes, relationship violence, gang violence, or police brutality. Conduct a practice interview with former teacher. Network with local organization to plan conference.

Action:

Conduct interviews, edit them into narratives, and compile them into a book after editing. Host conference with plenary sessions and workshops to raise community awareness of safety measures and to present student book.

Reflection Methods:

Keep journals, meet and discuss the conference impact with collaborators, and complete feedback forms from interview subjects.

Demonstration to Others:

Distribute book with letter from students to resource organizations listed in the book.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students came up with the idea of the need and what would be done; they provided leadership through group tasks and responsibilities, and they had many decision making opportunities.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read and analyze literature and different types of materials, conduct interviews and write and edit narratives

Social Studies/History:

Conduct community surveys; study role of institutions such as police and nonprofit organizations

Mathematics:

Analyze survey and study violence statistics

Science:

Discuss the health factors involved when fear of violence is dominant in teens

Languages:

Art and Music:

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Conducting survey
- Comparing literature styles
- Community collaboration
- Decision making
- Organization
- Making phone calls
- Keeping and managing lists

Books and Other Media Used:

Twilight, Los Angeles
Malcolm X
Give a Boy a Gun

Community Partners:

Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation
Community United Against Violence
Office of Citizen Complaints



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students met and interviewed people of diverse backgrounds and found out violence exists across every cultural and ethnic population in the city.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students provided a resource to the community that previously did not exist.
- **Learn about careers:**
By working with partners from many community agencies, students learned about careers in the nonprofit sector, including jobs working with teens to prevent violence.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed self-reliance.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Since this entire experience came from students and they led every component, this population of previously disenfranchised students became engaged and showed tremendous leadership. They learned about organizing into committees, time management, doing community outreach, and public speaking. They each developed as leaders.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

This lasted for one semester.

Teacher Collaboration:

Several core subject area teachers contributed, however the bulk of the work took place in English and social studies classes.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

At the conference, a representative from both the mayor and city council offices presented the students with commendations. The newspaper ran a story.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Oral Histories on Violence.

Additional Notes:

From the completed book's introduction: "During the week when [students were editing *Oral Histories on Violence*], one student at school accidentally shot another in a classroom. While police investigated the school, we teachers and students learned of the shooting over the radio . . . [and from the] front page [news articles]. The school described was not the place we knew intimately. [Our school story] was told . . . from the outside. With these oral histories, we strive to share stories of violence from the inside."

The next year the students conducted another community study and wrote a book about immigrants.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Social Change: Issues and Action*

Grade level(s): 1 and 5

Essential Purpose or Question:

What are the identifiable steps to make social change and improve our community?

Content—Learning About:

- Community
- Map making
- Basic use of money
- Responsibility for self and surroundings
- Understanding the rule-making process

Service Need:

Areas in our surroundings can be neglected; we can find out what is needed to improve our surroundings.

<p>Service Idea: Kids That Type First graders initiate a letter-writing campaign with support from fifth graders to help improve their surrounding area.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Make a map of the school and survey the grounds for any needed improvements.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Interview the principal to learn about how to request changes from the school district. Read and discuss the books listed to analyze processes for social change.</p>
<p>Action: Compose letters (students wanted to write their own letters) with fifth-grade buddy support, read letters to other first-grade students, obtain signatures of support, and mail letters to the district and await response. (The eventual repair was made within three weeks.)</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Students made a collaborative word map, writing down all the feelings and thoughts they had during each stage of the project.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Students held a ceremony with parents and school officials after improvements were made. They presented a book of their letters to the school with before-and-after drawings and photographs of the repairs being made. The principal thanked the students saying their letter got a faster response than her previous three written requests.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

After reading the book *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*, students came up with the idea of becoming “kids that type.” They wanted to get repairs made at school and asked if their fifth-grade buddies could help them. They wrote a letter to the principal asking her to visit the class to be interviewed and developed all the questions for the visit.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Discuss who makes up the community in the book *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* and how cows use letter writing to make change happen in their community, write letters to request repairs be made on the playground

Social Studies/History:

Draw a map of the school grounds, survey the area for needed improvements, discuss who makes up a community, discuss the way change is made in communities, interview school principal to find out how changes are made on school grounds and to whom letters should be sent

Mathematics:

Use measuring and drawing to map out school grounds

Science:

Languages:

Art and Music:

Draw before-and-after pictures of the area that needs improvement to send with the letters

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Follow simple written instructions
- Sequencing
- Retell simple ideas of stories
- Use descriptive words when writing
- Write a narrative describing an experience

Books and Other Media Used:

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type
Cat Up a Tree
Edwina Victorious (Grade 5)
The Genie Scheme (Grade 5)

Community Partners:

School District Superintendent’s Office
PTSA



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
The cross-age nature of the plan allowed students to work with kids often different from them.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students made weekly entries on a chart that showed progress made, stumbling blocks, new ideas, outcomes.
- **Learn about careers:**
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed observation, perseverance, and teamwork.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
As students led a sequence for making social change, they internalized a constructive process for leadership.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One year.

Teacher Collaboration:

All the first- and fifth-grade teachers worked together. When discussed in faculty meetings, other grade levels began looking at the value of these kinds of ongoing collaborations.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Student ceremony of appreciation.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

The Book of Social Change created by the students.

Additional Notes:

Fifth-grade students had been visiting the first graders twice a month to read stories and help with one-on-one reading skills. They spent thirty minutes per week working on tutoring skills, which also helped in their own skill development. This activity led to a letter-writing lesson for the class in preparation for helping the younger children. The first graders continued the Kids That Type campaign for the rest of the school year.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Middle School, Social Change: Issues and Action*

Grade level(s): 6–8 Social Studies

Essential Purpose or Question:

Can students fight for social justice following in the footsteps of the civil rights leaders?

Content—Learning About:

- Civil rights
- Unity

Service Need:

Students and community members lacked awareness of some aspects of the civil rights era; unity and understanding was needed in the community.

Service Idea: Unity and Diversity Week

Promote knowledge that transforms into action during a weeklong unity program in the school and community.

Investigation of the Need:

Students created a survey to find out what events were known from the civil rights era and what events were lesser known. They included students and parents in the survey, and based some of their ideas on what they learned.

Preparation and Planning:

Met with administrators and custodians to arrange for use of event space and permission for changes in school schedule when needed; arranged for speakers.

Action:

Students delivered famous speeches and choirs sang about peace and harmony at lunch rallies. Every social studies class had guest speakers from community agencies who led workshops on tolerance related to immigrants, people with special needs, and racial issues. During a “Unity Tonight” event, students and teachers performed music and slam poetry for the community.

Reflection Methods:

The students who had initiated Unity and Diversity Week led reflection sessions in every social studies class. In addition to finding out what was learned, they asked, “What ongoing activities can we establish at school to continue building unity?”

Demonstration to Others:

Students created podcasts of information and highlights to be posted on the school’s Web site.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students presented their ideas for lessons in class and collectively decided how to organize their presentations. They used role play to practice and give feedback. Students designed an interactive presentation for school board members.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read either *Bone by Bone by Bone*, *The Circuit*, *My Mother the Cheerleader*, or *Jakeman* for discussions and writings on social inequalities and racism in society

Social Studies/History:

Sixth-grade classes used *Through My Eyes*; seventh- and eighth-grade classes read and discussed selections from *Remember Little Rock: The Time, the People, the Stories*

Mathematics:

Maintain a budget of funds allocated by PTSA for the event

Science:

Languages:

Hold special workshops in Spanish to meet needs of local community

Art and Music:

Choral presentations connected with the civil rights era, students discussed the role of musicians today in taking a stand and how art has been used as part of civil commentary and protest

Technology:

Learn how to make podcasts

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Compare and contrast
- Interviewing
- Text analysis
- Documentation methods
- The power of persuasion

Books and Other Media Used:

- Bone by Bone by Bone*
- The Circuit*
- Jakeman*
- Through My Eyes*
- Remember Little Rock: The Time, the People, the Stories*
- My Mother the Cheerleader*
- Art Against the Odds: From Slave Quilts to Prison Art*

Community Partners:

- Chamber of Commerce
- San Francisco Examiner Speaker’s Bureau



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students learned about civil rights and the issues of justice that persist in society today.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students were so involved in the process and the school-wide participation was initially so surprising that only at the end did students realize they could have better monitored how the process evolved and the progress made. During the reflection activities they led, they were able to reconstruct a sense of accomplishment and discover what was most effective and what could be deepened in the future.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about the careers of community agency employees, authors, and journalists.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students gained resilience, active listening skills, open-mindedness, self-respect, and determination.
- **Make global connections:**
Students learned about issues facing immigrants and how political conditions have led to immigration across the world.
- **Develop leadership:**
The original class that instigated this weeklong event recognized they had become school leaders through the transformation of their idea into reality. They also identified key components of leadership to be: respect for others, listening well, finding out reliable information, integrating the ideas of many, and reflection.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Six weeks, with ongoing activities after Unity and Diversity Week.

Teacher Collaboration:

Teachers collaborated in their teams to ensure students were prepared across the campus.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

The podcasts; a scrapbook of the first annual Unity and Diversity Week.

Additional Notes:

This process began in an eighth-grade social studies class studying about the civil rights movement. Students decided to create a day of school unity that grew into a week. Once students knew their ideas had grown larger than their capacity, every social studies class in the entire school took part.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Social Change: Issues and Action*

Grade level(s): 11 American History,
with grades 9 and 10

Essential Purpose or Question:

To preserve sacred land revealed on the school campus and discover the values of indigenous culture.

Content—Learning About:

- Native American culture
- Local history
- Civic participation
- Community restoration

Service Need:

A historic sacred site of the indigenous Gabrielino/Tongva people on school grounds was neglected and in need of restoration.

<p>Service Idea: Restore the Kuruvungna Spring Initiate restoration of the spring traditionally used by the Gabrielino/Tongva before the settlers arrived and complete the restoration with community collaboration.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: Students saw the site at school was filled with trash and had no use to anyone. They researched multiple sources to verify existence of the spring rumored to be on the site.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Students learned about the spring’s use by the Gabrielino/Tongva, the restoration process, and how to notify and work with Gabrielino/Tongva people.</p>
<p>Action: Work after school and on weekends to clear ground and restore the area, collaborate with local Gabrielino/Tongva organization to ensure proper care is given, create sign to inform community, and notify media.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Use journals and a sitting council to share reflections.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Hold celebration to commemorate spring restoration for community. This event has been held annually at the high school every October as a “Before Columbus Day” Native American arts and crafts festival.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students’ enthusiasm and ideas of justice carried the project from idea to action.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Write press release for local media about restoration of the Kuruvungna Spring, write letter to government officials on behalf of the Gabrielino/Tongva people to regain their status as a recognized tribe

Social Studies/History:

Research local history from primary and secondary sources to learn of the Gabrielino/Tongva people, collaborate with community members, learn about current status of Native American tribes

Mathematics:

Create budget for restoration project and present to school and community groups to solicit funds and in-kind donations

Science:

Learn about native plants for ethno-botanical garden and for the purposes of reintroduction in the restoration process

Languages:

Art and Music:

Work with art students to create sign for the spring, learn about and experience the traditional music and art of the Gabrielino/Tongva people

Technology:

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Analyze primary and secondary source materials
- Teamwork
- Compare and contrast historical and current events

Books and Other Media Used:

Teen Power Politics: Make Yourself Heard

Community Partners:

Gabrielino/Tongva Cultural Heritage Organization
City council



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Students gained an appreciation of many aspects and practices of Native Americans, particularly of the stereotypes held when one has never met a person of that particular background.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students kept track of accomplishments through a visual time line created with photography and captions.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about careers in historic preservation and city council.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students learned respect for elders, value of history, and regard for the land and nature.
- **Make global connections:**
A science class conversation on global warming brought up how many historic sites are being damaged beyond repair due to changing conditions in history. Also, students brought up how war is always dangerous to historic monuments and how ancient treasures have been lost recently due to wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- **Develop leadership:**
Students saw their capacity for leadership and what is required to manifest a significant social change. They recognized traits of leadership from Native American culture in comparison to what is dominant in current practice. They saw the influence of native traditions and politics on our democracy.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

One year.

Teacher Collaboration:

This was mainly a project in American history, however the art teacher made contributions and other teachers provided information, as well. Some teachers came to assist after school and on weekends as the process evolved.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

The newspaper covered the celebration and interviewed the school principal, teacher, students, and representatives from the Gabrielino/Tongva Heritage Organization. Every year since this occurred, an annual celebration of the spring takes place on these grounds.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

The reinstated sacred grounds.

Additional Notes:

While this process caused a change in some of the standard curriculum, the teacher was able to cover all required course material. In fact, students were more attentive and participated more than in other classes as a result of this experience and their collaboration. This initiative resulted in the formation of the Gabrielino/Tongva Springs Foundation, which has a high school student on its board of directors.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *Elementary, Special Needs and Disabilities*

Grade level(s): 4–5 with Pre-K Special Needs

Essential Purpose or Question:

To improve respect, understanding, and mutual learning among students of all abilities.

Content—Learning About:

- Physical education—water safety
- Child care
- Special needs—disability awareness
- Civic engagement

Service Need:

Preschool special education students lack water safety skills and opportunities to interact with older children who can be role models.

<p>Service Idea: Swim Buddies Assist special needs preschool students in learning water safety and how to swim.</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: The elementary school teacher knew the preschool teacher from a prior working relationship and they discussed ways to collaborate that would help both classes academically and socially.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: Receive training in water safety and basic child care, participate in sensitivity awareness workshops on disability issues, read books with related themes—both preschool and grade level fiction and nonfiction texts, conduct research for paper assignment, interview community leader.</p>
<p>Action: Provide swim instruction for preschool children, plan additional activities and games, help at lunch and recess, read to younger children.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: Write journal entries; have “Buddy Buddy” discussion groups for peer-to-peer feedback on reviewing and improving interaction and instruction—a report back from each group to the teacher makes certain all topics are properly addressed; feedback from all teachers including swim instructor, special education teachers, and grade level classroom teachers.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Students made a presentation to the city disability advisory board and each student received a commendation certificate.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

Students planned special games and activities for interaction with swim buddies.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Read books about people who have special needs and disabilities, research and write three-page paper on a specific disability using fiction and nonfiction literary sources and information from a person or organization

Social Studies/History:

Identify stereotypes and patterns of discrimination, read about people with special needs and the many contributions they have made to society, interview local community leader who is in a wheelchair, read newspaper articles for current events that have subject matter related to special needs issues

Mathematics:

Science:

Study basic human anatomy

Languages:

Art and Music:

Draw design patterns on paper, apply them to fabric, and add color

Technology:

Do computer research about different special needs

Other:

Physical education—learn about swimming and water safety

Skills Being Developed:

- Write research reports
- Grammar
- Civic participation
- Communicate clear verbal and nonverbal messages

Books and Other Media Used:

All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!
Blood and Guts: A Working Guide to Your Own Insides
Friends at School
Just Kids: Visiting a Class for Children with Special Needs
Small Steps: Seeing Things My Way

Community Partners:

Evergreen Preschool



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Through the books, the preparation experiences, and the ongoing relationships and interactions, the elementary children became more knowledgeable and confident when meeting and interacting with people who have special needs.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
Students held discussions, wrote reflections, received teacher feedback, and kept swim scorecards of what the preschoolers were learning to confirm at the end that each child had made advancements.
- **Learn about careers:**
Students learned about the careers of preschool teachers.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students developed problem solving, caring, responsibility, humor, and friendship skills.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
Students began to perceive leadership as a quality with skills that are developed and that every person—regardless of ability—can be an effective leader.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Eight weeks.

Teacher Collaboration:

This evolved from relationships already established between teachers.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Students made a presentation to the city disability advisory board and each student received a commendation certificate. Parents of the preschool students hosted a party for the two groups of children to express their appreciation for the friendships that evolved.

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Additional Notes:

Teachers agreed peer-to-peer interactions improved among the fourth- and fifth-grade students as they became more appreciative of the special abilities and differences among all people. Students who didn't usually act in leadership roles also emerged as group leaders. Every child succeeded in this experience.



Planning for Service Learning Example: *High School, Special Needs and Disabilities*

Grade level(s): 10 Math and 9–12 Special Needs

Essential Purpose or Question:

For students of all abilities to help each other and experience reciprocity while serving their community.

Content—Learning About:

- Civic engagement
- Sustainable partnerships

Service Need:

- (1) A local hospital asked that paper flowers be made for trays.
- (2) Students with special needs benefit from peer interactions.
- (3) Typical students lack useful knowledge about students with special needs.

<p>Service Idea: Project Partners Working in collaboration, students from a math class collaborate with students with special needs on service learning projects where everyone benefits and the community is improved. (While there were many collaborations, the initial one is described here.)</p>
<p>Investigation of the Need: When asked to make paper flowers for hospital trays, a math student suggested partnering with peers who had special needs. Students met with the special needs teacher who verified this would be extremely helpful for students working on social interaction.</p>
<p>Preparation and Planning: With project partners, students made three flower samples and met with hospital staff to select the style and find out how they will be used.</p>
<p>Action: Make and deliver flowers to the hospital.</p>
<p>Reflection Methods: All students used either video or tape recorders to reflect, as this was easiest for students with special needs. The special education teacher remarked how her students were finally having the interactions with peers from the general school population that they had been needing and wanting for a long time.</p>
<p>Demonstration to Others: Photos and a video of the project and delivery are exhibited in the hospital lobby and at school. Students and teachers also presented a workshop at a local inclusion conference.</p>

Youth Voice and Choice:

All aspects of project planning and collaboration were led by students.

Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts:

Improve verbal communication skills, write report on history study (see below), write up of project for display

Social Studies/History:

Study of contributions made by mathematicians and scientists who have special needs and disabilities

Mathematics:

Follow simple and complex directions

Science:

Study basic human anatomy

Languages:

Art and Music:

Make decorative paper flowers

Technology:

Use photographic and video equipment to document the project

Other:

Skills Being Developed:

- Physical coordination
- Verbal communication
- Social interactions

Books and Other Media Used:

The Acorn People
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Community Partners:

Bronson Memorial Hospital



Opportunities for Students to:

- **Experience and explore diversity:**
Both sets of teens learned about each other and explored the benefits of mutual relationships.
- **Participate in progress monitoring:**
- **Learn about careers:**
When meeting with hospital staff, the typical students took a tour of the facility and met people working in many difference capacities, from reception to research to specialists.
- **Strengthen social-emotional and character traits:**
Students gained appreciation, mutual respect, conversation abilities, and emotional range. Students in both groups experienced similar emotions and discussed their differences in the forms of expression.
- **Make global connections:**
- **Develop leadership:**
The students with special needs saw their value to the community which made them want to do more and develop their own service ideas. The typical youth showed leadership from the initial suggestion throughout the process, and they continue to find new ways to collaborate.

Duration of the Service Learning Experience (approximate timeframe):

Initially two weeks, then ongoing with new opportunities.

Teacher Collaboration:

The math teacher and special needs teacher decided that the students would be responsible for the planning. So while they collaborated, they relied on “youth voice and choice” to advance the process.

Public Awareness or Presentations Planned (including media, alerting public officials, recognition, and celebrations):

Tangible Product(s) from the Experience:

Photos and video displayed in the hospital lobby.

Additional Notes:

This project was initiated by a math class teacher who wanted her students to become involved in the community. They had developed a reputation for past contributions (through newspaper articles), and a local hospital asked her students to make 500 paper flowers for tray decorations. With prior experience in service, a student realized making the paper flowers would not be a challenge for this group, so this student suggested they partner with students who have special needs and make them together. This was only the first of many collaborative projects. All teens experienced benefits as new lasting friendships were formed among the students. According to her teacher, one girl with cerebral palsy practiced for three days to be able to visit the math class and say the words, “Thank you for letting me do something for the community.”

Interviews with Authors

Interviews with Authors:

The Story Behind the Story

AIDS Education and Awareness: Author Interviews

James Cross Giblin

Allan Stratton

Animal Protection and Care: Author Interviews

Kathe Koja

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Eve Bunting

Richard Michelson

Eileen Spinelli

Emergency Readiness: Author Interviews

Danica Novgorodoff

Dana Reinhardt

The Environment: Author Interviews

Laurie David

Don Madden

Gardening: Author Interviews

Pat Brisson

Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty: Author Interviews

Lindsay Lee Johnson

Marion Hess Pomeranc

Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices: Author Interviews

Jordan Sonnenblick

Immigrants: Author Interviews

Francisco Jiménez

Tony Johnston

Literacy: Author Interviews

Janet Tashjian

Jake Tashjian

Ann Whitehead Nagda

Safe and Strong Communities: Author Interviews

Sharleen Collicott

Phillip Hoose

James Howe

Jerry Spinelli

Social Change: Author Interviews

Deborah Ellis

Sonia Levitin

Diana Cohn

Special Needs and Disabilities: Author Interviews

Ellen Senisi

Cynthia Lord



Interviews with Authors: The Story Behind the Story

Have you ever been curious about the story behind the story of a book? Would you sometimes like to pick up the phone, call an author, like Don Madden (Environment Bookshelf), and ask, “So why did you have the Wartville Wizard get the power over trash?” Perhaps you would ask the author to discuss the evolution of the character Alex in *Notes from the Midnight Driver* (Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices Bookshelf) from being self-absorbed to caring for a cantankerous elder fellow he is required to spend time with. Or perhaps you would ask what caused Richard Michelson to tell the story of sustaining language and tradition in *Too Young for Yiddish* (Elders Bookshelf).

Author interviews provide the story behind the story of why a person chooses to write. These inspiring essays help readers appreciate the varying reasons people write and the different ways they approach the blank page. Interviews always included these questions:

1. What inspired this book?
2. How do you approach the writing process?
3. How do you imagine this book leading students toward service?

Each interview gives a window into the process that goes into creating a story. Each demonstrates the writer’s intelligence and desire to reach others, and their passion for the written word. All of the writers offer thought-provoking insights into the writing process and the subject matter, and some even describe service learning ideas they’ve heard about from readers.

As the interviews illustrate, there are as many different approaches to writing and reasons for telling a story as there are writers themselves. Francisco Jiménez’s memoirs of a young migrant farm worker in *The Circuit* and *Breaking Through* (Immigrants Bookshelf), and the most recent addition to the trilogy, *Reaching Out* (Immigrants Bookshelf), share the travails faced by his family as they struggled to survive financially and send the first of their family

Contact Your Favorite Bookshelf Author or Illustrator

The Internet offers an easy way to contact many authors and illustrators. Some have their own Web sites and welcome notes and letters from readers. For those who do not have personal Web sites, you can write to the book’s publisher, who will then forward letters to the author. Many publishers’ Web sites also offer guides and supplementary materials for their books on the bookshelf lists.

What to write about? One idea for students is to write about their responses to the book and describe the service learning connection. In their interviews, several authors discussed receiving this kind of correspondence and how appreciative they were and described some wonderful service learning projects!

members to college. *Hey, Little Ant* (Safe and Strong Communities Bookshelf) began as a song written by a father and daughter team, Phillip and Hannah Hoose. In *Wanda’s Roses* (Gardening Bookshelf), Pat Brisson wanted to tell of a girl willing to work hard to make her dream come true. The loss of a dear friend inspired Lesléa Newman to write *Too Far Away to Touch* (AIDS Education and Awareness Bookshelf). Through *The Misfits* (Safe and Strong Communities Bookshelf), James Howe wanted to demonstrate how young people can collaborate to improve peer relationships for an entire school community—and this evolved into a National No Name-Calling Week. Author Tony Johnston captured ideas for her first novel *Any Small Goodness* on Post-its while taking morning walks.

Through the author interviews, teachers and students can enter the writers’ worlds. Hopefully, as a result of the interviews, your students will experience added depth when reading the books. They can practice some of the approaches to writing that have resulted in delightful and compelling stories. In this way, the interviews can also inspire many young people, and older ones as well, to craft their own experiences, ideas, and feelings into poems, plays, short stories, novels, picture books, memoirs, and nonfiction.



Using Author Interviews in the Classroom

You can use an interview for ideas on how to teach and use a book. An interview can provide you with ideas for reflections and questions for class discussions. You start a discussion by asking your students what they think the author wanted to get across in the book, what they think the author's inspiration could have been, or what they think the author was thinking when she wrote a particular plot twist. Interesting discussions can result from these questions and others like them, and the discussions only get more interesting when you read to students what the writer really was thinking. Your students may be surprised, amused, touched, or even motivated to write. No matter what their reactions, the class discussion can be enriched by exploring them.



AIDS Education and Awareness: Author Interviews

In the following interviews, we find out the “story behind the story” from James Cross Giblin (*When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, AIDS*) and Allan Stratton (*Chanda’s Secrets* and *Chanda’s Wars*). James Giblin’s book captivated me because of its description of the scapegoating that occurred during three terrible plagues, as well as its depth of information. I was drawn to interview Allan Stratton after reading *Chanda’s Secrets* and the vivid storytelling combined with this young courageous African woman seeking to protect herself, her siblings, and her friends while facing frightful discrimination after the loss of both parents.

James Cross Giblin, author of *When Plague Strikes*

I’m probably best known as a writer of nonfiction books for young people, but *When Plague Strikes* came from my work as an editor of children’s books. In the mid-1980s, as editor-in-chief of Clarion Books, I knew and worked with two young, talented men, Gary Bargar and Ron Wegen. Neither man knew the other; they lived in different parts of the country. Both died from AIDS in the summer of 1985. I had published two of Gary’s novels and two picture books by Ron and was looking forward to working with both of them again. When they died within two weeks of one another, it struck me as so unfair. I began to think about AIDS in the context of two other plagues that had hit humankind through the centuries. How were they similar, and how did they differ? I realized the book I had in mind would be a major commitment, and I didn’t feel ready to start writing it until almost a decade later, in the early 1990s. When it was finally finished I decided to dedicate the book to the two men who had inspired it: Gary and Ron.

Research reveals much that is provocative and surprising. For example, before I researched *When Plague Strikes* I didn’t realize how religion had thwarted the development of medicine for centuries. Because the Catholic Church forbade the dissection of human bodies, doctors were stuck with what the Greeks, and

to some extent the Arabs, had discovered hundreds of years earlier. Medical advancement was frozen, and this contributed to the spread of awful plagues like the Black Death and smallpox. People were not permitted to study medicine—everything was colored by religious interpretations and prohibitions.

Also, I didn’t realize how scapegoating keeps rearing its ugly head when people are confronted with a plague like smallpox or AIDS. Whatever the crisis, people invariably feel the need to blame someone else—a scapegoat. This pattern struck me when I delved into the history of all three diseases.

On the other hand, I met remarkable people in the course of the research—women like Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who took the lead with her own son in testing the effects of inoculation as a protection against smallpox. She was far ahead of her time. Some of the people who surfaced during the AIDS epidemic were outstanding, too—men like Dr. C. Everett Koop, U.S. Surgeon General in the Reagan administration, who surprised his conservative backers when he urged that all kids be educated about AIDS.

Even if I feel emotional about the content, I try in my writing to simply lay out the facts. I would rather have the reader feel the shock and horror of people boarding up their neighbors in their own homes to prevent the spread of a disease than spend a lot of words editorializing about it. I believe a factual approach is far more effective in the long run.

My hope is that *When Plague Strikes* will provoke discussion. We need more thoughtful interchange, especially where social issues are concerned. I would hope a teacher, a parent, or a librarian could get a conversation going about these plagues. A dialogue might start with a question: “What stood out for you in the section about smallpox?” for example. Other questions might be as simple as, “What did you find interesting?” or “What did you discover from reading about AIDS that you didn’t know before?” Building on the participants’ comments, the person leading the discussion could draw them out further.

I have heard of several splendid ideas for using *When Plague Strikes* with students. One imaginative teacher had her kids write poems about grief and examples of prejudice that they had observed in their



community. I read one poem by a middle school girl whose favorite teacher had died of AIDS. The poem movingly conveyed her reactions. Another idea was to set up a mock town meeting where students as “townspeople” considered ways to halt the spread of the Black Death. Imagine a student arguing, “We should board up the victims’ doors and windows so they won’t be able to leave their houses.” How would the other students at the gathering respond?

While the book was published in 1995, the foundations of each section are still valid today. But if I were writing about AIDS now, I’d add information about the drug “cocktails” that lessen the assault on the immune system and help to bolster the patient’s white blood cell count. I’d expand the section about the tragic spread of AIDS in third world countries, especially in Africa. In the original edition, I refer to thousands of African children orphaned by AIDS, and unfortunately this is even truer now than it was then. Also, I would go further into the spread of AIDS in Eastern Europe, Russia, and Asia—regions of the world where there has been much social and political change. I would also weave in more about today’s terrorist threat, including the possibility that disease could be used as a weapon in the wake of September 11. (A good exercise for students after reading the book would be to have them research and write new sections that they would like to see added in a revised edition.)

Above all, I hope the young people who pick up *When Plague Strikes* will find it a compelling read. Every good book, both fiction and nonfiction, contains a story line that unfolds in the natural progression of events. This is what makes a nonfiction book entertaining as well as informative.

I also hope the book’s readers will gain a better understanding of how to deal with new threats concerning AIDS and acts of terrorism that employ deadly viruses. In the years to come, they’re likely to confront many such threats. Books they’ve read like *When Plague Strikes* should help them decide on the best and most intelligent ways to respond.

Allan Stratton, author of *Chanda’s Secrets* and *Chanda’s Wars*

I wrote *Chanda’s Secrets* to put a human face to the sub-Saharan HIV/AIDS pandemic. I wanted to create a story that makes us care about families whose members are infected, so when we next see or read the news we’ll have literary “friends” to help connect the news to our hearts.

Annick Press, my publisher, had asked if I was interested in writing a book about AIDS orphans. I knew that orphans would create instant sympathy, but instead I wanted to address the stigma surrounding those suffering with HIV/AIDS—to have the reader live through the shame and fear and terror and, above all, the denial that is so prevalent with this disease.

I lived in Manhattan during the 1980s. It was a time, a place, and a culture so far removed from contemporary sub-Saharan Africa that it might have existed in a faraway galaxy. Yet the parallels between the early days of the pandemic in the New York gay community then, and sub-Sahara now, are striking: In both times, in both places, a large part of the community was infected. There was little available treatment. Discrimination was rampant. Most politicians were silent. Many religious leaders claimed AIDS was God’s curse on the afflicted, rather than a public health issue. And the stigma that resulted discouraged testing, encouraged denial, and left the sick and vulnerable to die alone in fear and shame with a lie.

My experience taught me the psychological, as well as the physical, horrors of the pandemic. But I also knew that its effects in sub-Saharan Africa were far worse than in the West, set, as they are, against a continental context of poverty, decimated civil societies, and a generation of orphans. So, before writing a word of *Chanda’s Secrets*, I traveled to Zimbabwe and Botswana to visit front line African HIV/AIDS workers, and to meet those in their care.

Then, with my research complete and a group of friends from sub-Sahara in place to vet the accuracy of my work, I began to write. My background is as an actor. So when I write I imagine myself into each



moment. For every character in the scene, I ask, “What does my character want? What will I do to get it?” For instance, in the first chapter, Chanda is sent to get a coffin for her baby sister because her mother is too sick to go. I imagined myself as Chanda in a similar place I’d visited that had sold construction goods and was converted into a morgue. If I’m Chanda, the first thing I want is to make my mother proud, so I’m going to refuse to cry. And to do that, I’m going to have to find something to concentrate on to distract myself. But on what? I know—I’ll stare at the fish in the mortician’s aquarium! Or when, in another scene, Chanda is rude to Mrs. Tafa, I imagined I was Mrs. Tafa. What will I say or do to put this girl in her place? This role play goes back and forth, much like an actor’s improvisation, in all my books.

I like this way of working because it connects to my bedrock conviction that under the skin, we human beings are the same. We’ve all felt love, hate, jealousy, generosity. We’ve been better than our best selves and worse than our worst selves. We’ve lived in grace and in despair. All of us know these feelings. They’re things that bond us together. So that, in the end, no matter what our ethnicities, genders, orientations, ages, or any of the other contexts that nuance our perception of reality, we share the same human heart. That’s why we can read books and connect to characters written across continents and centuries. The surface details and cultural expression may be different, but what’s real, and what really animates literature, is the guts of it, the heart of it. This is where we find the Other in ourselves, and ourselves in the Other. So, if I’m brutally honest about the workings of my heart, I have faith that I’ll be true to the heart of others.

This approach makes my characters very real to me. So real that after finishing *Chanda’s Secrets*, I had dreams about her and the other characters in the novel. I kept wondering if Chanda was able to raise her brother and sister, and if she was able to heal her family rift. One morning, I woke up out of a nightmare of flames and fire. I knew Iris and Soly had been stolen to become child soldiers and that I had to save them. I was dreaming as Chanda. *Chanda’s Wars* grew out of that nightmare.

This approach to character is also why I don’t think of my novels as “issue” books. HIV/AIDS, for instance, is a specific virus, but it also functions as a metaphor for anything that makes us afraid or want to hide. Everyone—writers, students, teachers—has a personal private secret they’re afraid others might find out. As a result, beyond everything else, *Chanda’s Secrets* is a universal human story about living with truth, about being unafraid with who you are and how you are. Similarly, *Chanda’s Wars* is set in a world of child soldiers, but at its heart, it’s about the pain of bereavement, the fear of failure, and the courage to live with truth. Yes, Chanda fights a literal war to recover her young brother and sister who’ve been kidnapped into the bush. But she also fights a war with her family, with tradition, with a fear of failure, with love and betrayal and hope, as she engages in the universal adolescent war of independence to forge her own identity.

That, at least, is my approach to writing, but there is no one way to write! When I lead writing workshops, I always say, “If an idea I mention works for you, use it; if it’s not helpful, don’t.” Everyone’s way of writing is unique. That’s part of why the reader gets a sense of knowing the writer—by reading books we can get a sense of how authors’ minds work in putting their books together, in addition to understanding what they care about. They become friends of the mind.

Through these friendships—through experiencing literary lives beyond our own horizons—I think we can change ourselves. And I believe that these changes can ripple out to create better communities, better societies, a better world. A single, changed individual is like a grain of sand. But together, grains of sand become a beach.

We authors want our books to reach an audience. Sometimes we’re fortunate to find out how they matter to others. I was contacted by the mother of a teacher who was serving in the Peace Corps in a small village in Namibia. The teacher brought several copies of *Chanda’s Secrets*. In the school where she was teaching, nobody ever talked about HIV/AIDS, even those whose parents had died because of it. One orphan teen, who lived on his own, was a bit of a trouble maker, and



skipped school a lot, wanted this book. At first hesitant, this teacher let him take it. He read the book, and told her, “Miss, I was reading this book, and the sun was pouring on my face, and I was crying. I haven’t cried in years.” And I’m told he began reading the book to his friends and others who could not read. They found a way to talk about their personal grief through talking about Chanda.

Now, high school students in New Hope, Pennsylvania, who have *Chanda’s Secrets* on their curriculum, are communicating with these Namibian students, brought together by this story. Seeing one’s book make these kinds of connections means so very, very much.



Animal Protection and Care: Author Interviews

The following interview tells the “story behind the story” of Kathe Koja’s novel *straydog*.

Kathe Koja, author of *straydog*

straydog originated as a short story for a magazine. Fortunately, my agent suggested there was more to be told. And the story grew into a young adult novel.

Animals are natural in literature. There’s an easy animal-kid connection. Both animals and kids get forced around. They are also one of the first confidants we turn to when we need to talk to someone. I still turn to my cats! Animals react to us on a different level than our peers.

Rachel’s character appeared spontaneously. Rachel is the kind of girl I wish I was, especially how she is brave. Like Rachel, I am furious animals are treated poorly. I hope *straydog* shows that some animals can be terribly damaged by how they are or are not treated. Even people with good intentions can contribute to this problem. They look away from a stray animal or avoid going to a shelter because it’s painful for them to see what’s really going on. Still, we can make decisions that show we share this planet with everybody and everything. It’s our humanity. We begin by caring. Rachel is angry about how she sees animals mistreated and is using her anger as rocket fuel to do something.

I resisted helping animals for a long time, saying, “It’s too sad, too terrible.” But then I started working at events for animals, like adoptions and walkathons, and I enjoyed being in a crowd of animal lovers. It’s easy to get drawn in more and more. Now I volunteer weekly at the Detroit Center for Animal Care. I do data entry and help keep track of volunteer hours and

assist the volunteer service team leader. Occasionally I work directly with the animals. This is not always a fun atmosphere, as Rachel points out. Some animals are euthanized; we can’t save every animal. This year, 48,000 animals came through three Michigan Humane Society Shelters. How do my actions help? I am doing data entry so my boss can do other things. I work with many passionate people who give their time to animals, and together, we save lives.

There’s a lot to be happy about. We have come a long way from the attitudes I saw in my childhood. I remember going to zoos and seeing terrible animal acts with dancing monkeys wearing shirts. Now, zoos try to preserve as much of the animals’ habitats and experience in the wild. Even the language we use today to refer to animals is changing. When I was a child, a person would “get” an animal from the shelter. Today we “adopt” animals. People are starting to say more and more, “My cat (iguana, dog, hamster) is part of the family.” When you change the words, you begin to change thinking. There are a lot of passionate kids out there, which is probably the happiest thing you can point to, and these kids will change the world. They will have to step up to protect everything that lives.

I hope *straydog* helps you understand that you are part of something much larger than you. You can honor this by caring for something or someone in this world in some way. If you see an abandoned dog chained to a fence or an animal left without water, you can respond, or tell someone who can help. The world is filled with creatures who can be afraid like you can, who can love like you can—it’s everybody’s world. Volunteer at a shelter! Adopt an animal! There are so many ways to express caring and passion. Like Rachel, find your passion, and go for it!



Elders: Author Interviews

In the following interviews, we find out the “story behind the story” from Eve Bunting (*Sunshine Home*, *Smoky Night*, and *A Day’s Work*, among other titles), Richard Michelson (*Too Young for Yiddish*), and Eileen Spinelli (*Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch*).

Three authors, three different reasons for their selection. I was familiar with many of Eve Bunting’s books, and I wanted to learn why she continuously writes stories on such important social themes. In the case of *Too Young for Yiddish*, Richard Michelson’s story of a language nearly lost along with its tradition and history captivated me. And after years of referring to the heartwarming story *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch* in teacher workshops, interviewing Eileen Spinelli, the book’s author, was simply a must—and a treat. After the interview, Eileen mailed me the recipe for Mr. Hatch’s brownies!

Eve Bunting, author of *Sunshine Home*, *Smoky Night*, *A Day’s Work*, *The Wednesday Surprise*, *Our Library*, and *Walking to School*

I grew up in Northern Ireland, where there was tremendous discrimination. As a Protestant, I was fortunate in that the prejudice was not aimed toward me; Catholics were the targets. Growing up in a small town, I thought all Catholics were poor and begged and had no bathrooms in their homes. I knew no Catholics personally until I was older and attending university. For the first time, I knew Catholics and began to see the intolerance in Ireland.

When my husband and I immigrated to the United States, one important reason was to bring our children away from prejudice and discrimination. However, in this country, we found prejudice of a different kind, and just as much unfairness. At the beginning, I did not understand. We lived next door to a Catholic family. Our children played together, and I was delighted. Then, as months and years passed, I became acutely aware of unfairness against other ethnic groups, people who are homeless, gender inequities.

As an author, I never intended to write about social issues. These stories came out of me; this is in my heart, what interests me and is important to me. Early in my writing career, when reviewers began to talk about my “social issues books,” I did not know what they were talking about. Now I fully understand this description.

I select a theme for a book from what is going on in my life. Once I identify a subject, I think more deeply, and then a catharsis occurs. Here is an example. My husband’s mother came here from Ireland and, at age eighty-six, lived independently in a little apartment near our home. I called her every day, and she often came for meals. One day I called and she did not answer. I rushed over and found her on the rug, where she had fallen and stayed all night with a broken back. We soon learned she would not walk again. Since I could not lift her or provide the care she required, having her live in our home was not an option. We decided to find a place nearby where she would be comfortable, and that was difficult. We did find a place. My book *Sunshine Home* was written out of a need to show her and tell ourselves that sometimes you don’t have an option for a beloved family member. As long as the person knows you love them and always will care for them and not abandon them, it will be all right. We all have pangs of guilt when we do this, even though we know it is necessary.

When I am writing a picture book, I think about the story for a very long time. I subconsciously examine the situations from all directions and from all the characters’ viewpoints—not thinking in order or logically. Every character has a problem, big or small. I come up with different endings; perhaps this is somewhat deliberate to have an element of surprise. This occurs in *Sunshine Home* when, after saying good-bye to Gram, seven-year old Timmy returns to give her his school picture and finds her in tears. The family gathers to share their true feelings about her living situation and their hopes.

I have had wonderful letters (and I answer each one) about this book. It seems like my words and the illustrations by Diane de Groat capture what most nursing homes look like. *Sunshine Home* is the generic



place. Many letters are from adults (they read picture books, too) saying, “This is just like the nursing home my mother is in. How did you describe this place so accurately?” A man wrote a letter that his wife was living in a similar facility. “Such a comfort,” he wrote, “for me to read this book.” Children also write me of their visits with grandparents.

For children who want to be writers, I recommend that you read. I was a voracious reader. There was lots of rain in Ireland and no television, and I would stay in and read and read. With the first break in the rainy weather, my mother would say, “Take your nose out of that book and go outside and play!” Also keep a journal. Think of things in your own life that you care about, and write for fun. Remember that words rarely come out right the first time. We all rewrite. Sometimes I bring stacks of different revisions into classrooms, each on a different color paper. The students are in awe over the piles of blue papers, then pink, then yellow—all to show the different stages.

Even though I write young adult novels also, I love to write picture books. They are my favorites. When I get stuck on a novel, I rejoice and go write a picture book and come back to finish the novel. The picture book is the truth being distilled through the economy of words and the economy of thought. When holding one of my newly published picture books, I know that in this tiny little book, I have the essence of truth as I see it.

To be a writer, or a learner of any kind, be open to all experiences and all people. My book that says that best is *Smoky Night*. This book reminds us to get to know other people. You might find out you like them a lot and they may not be so different from you. When we stick with our own kind, we miss a lot.

Sometimes we avoid knowing people because of fear. Being an elder myself, I think that some children are a little bit afraid of older people. We don’t have the same kinds of hands as their mothers. Our hair is gray. We can be intimidating to them or appear cranky or bossy. Many children are brought up by grandparents, and that can soften the feelings people have about us. We were young once, and now we, in part, live our lives through the young. I know this from having six grandchildren, whom I adore. When children communicate

with older people, there is a mutual advantage. We can give them so much, and they can give to us also. These interactions spark the older people and teach the younger people that they have so much to give to other generations. Examples of this reciprocity can be found in two of my books. In *The Wednesday Surprise*, a child teaches her grandmother to read. In *A Day’s Work*, a grandfather teaches his grandson a lesson about honesty. Stories make these wonderful relations apparent. We humanize people by removing the clichés and showing people in all situations and by helping and caring for each other.

Our Library had its genesis many years ago when our small local library was going to close. It was a charming building, surrounded by lawns and trees. With other concerned neighbors, I walked with my “Save Our Library” placard. I was, as I still am now, an avid reader. The experience of the community coming together to save our library lay dormant in my mind through the years.

My stories, as is true for many writers, often relate to important people, places, and incidents in my life. *Walking to School* was inspired by an article in the *Los Angeles Times* that told of a horrible incident in Belfast, Northern Ireland, involving Catholic children walking along a Protestant street to get to their elementary school. I knew of the street, the area, and the terrible hatreds. The last sentence sums it up for me: “If the grown-ups would let us.” Many of my books show the abilities of young people involved in our communities and the caring of others.

Richard Michelson, author of *Too Young for Yiddish*

I happened to know Aaron Lansky, who started the National Yiddish Book Center. During visits there with my own kids, I began to realize how little they and their friends knew of even recent ancestors’ life stories. With both parents often busy and overworked, our society doesn’t value the free time when family history is traditionally passed down from generation to generation. Swapping stories nightly around the dinner table is rarely part of the day-to-day routine in our fast-food culture. Even growing up in the fifties, I knew little about my own grandparents’ lives. I was too



absorbed in the American way of life to care, and they were too busy making a living to share.

When a young person does eventually become curious about his or her family history, there are often only a few relatives with firsthand knowledge still alive. With Eastern and Central European Jews, the situation is especially distressing, because the native Yiddish-speaking world was virtually wiped out by the Nazis during World War II. A whole link in the chain that reaches backward to teach us where we're coming from is cut off, gone. How can we know the direction in which we are heading? So there is an added immediacy to this situation. The few native speakers of Yiddish who survived the war by escaping to the United States tried hard to fit into the American way of life, abandoning their own language and customs for those of their adopted country. Even that generation is dying off, and we are in danger of an entire culture being lost.

I wanted to write about this, and my first inclination is always to create a story as an avenue for parents and children to start discussing their heritage. In this book, I make reference to the fact that in school we learn about "wars and kings and knights in shining armor." We don't think of history as what happens to real people. Our grandparents lived through history. The record of our own families is as valid as the events we study in school. My children learned French and Spanish, and they know many things—for example, about how the British aristocracy lived—but they've learned almost nothing about Polish *shtetl* life, and it never occurred to them to study Yiddish.

The final spark for the book occurred when my son was doing a school report on the sixties. Reading over what he'd written, I remarked on a section I thought was incorrect. "This is not the way it happened," I insisted, "and I know because I was there!" His response was, "I don't have time to listen to you right now; my assignment is due tomorrow!" In his class, they were already studying an era I'd lived through, but with the pressure-filled high school schedule, our teenagers don't have time to pay attention to our stories when we do offer them. I am hopeful *Too Young for Yiddish* will help inspire a conversation between generations.

Usually, the local community is filled with people eager to tell their stories. Schools should encourage grandparents or other family members to share experiences. In our local area, there is an organization that brings Vietnam veterans into the classroom. This is fascinating for kids and helps to make history come alive. War is something that can tear families apart, affecting our lives and those of our next-door neighbors.

I know that *Too Young for Yiddish* isn't going to change the world, but I hope it plants seeds in the minds of young people. Down the road, they might read another book that interests them on a similar subject. After a while, I hope they develop the curiosity to ask simple questions like, "Did you grow up speaking a different language? What was your neighborhood like?" Recently, I read my book at a reception held at the National Yiddish Book Center. Afterwards, Aaron Lansky's young daughter asked her father, "When are you going to teach me Yiddish?" That is the response I hope for from this book.

Eileen Spinelli, author of *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch*

When I was six years old, I wanted to be a writer. My father gave me his manual typewriter, and I began my career typing with two fingers. I first wrote poetry. After having children, I began to write picture books. I find picture books to be a form of poetry; they come from the same place. Children's books move on a thread with a sense of focus toward a clear culmination, a lyrical ending, almost like the punch line of a joke or the last line of a poem.

The story of *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch* began with the idea of kindness being important in life. I have known several people who were standoffish or who seemed stern or not so friendly. I discovered they were either very shy—which can appear unfriendly—or were dealing with a lot of sadness in their lives. This became "Mr. Hatch," who is a little shy and a little different and lonely. He may seem unfriendly, but his heart is friendly. He needs the little spark of love to bloom, which is the way we all are.

Once I had the main character, the idea came to me that he gets a message that someone loves him. How would this happen? I thought of the valentine. Stories



arrive in different ways. Some come fast; some come in little pieces that swish inside of you for years and do not come together as easily. I am tickled when the end comes first.

While developing a story I draw on memories of my own. For example, I was trying to think of a humorous place where he could work. I liked shoelaces when I was little. They always fascinated me! So Mr. Hatch works in a shoelace factory. That he eats prunes for dessert just seemed like a funny image.

Like many other writers, I wanted to make a statement that kindness is important, even underrated, and can make a big difference in the world. I was able to say this in a humorous way. Mr. Hatch is endearing, and the art makes him even more so. Artist Paul Yalowitz brings another layer of richness. I would never have thought to change the color of the book from dreary colors to bright cheerful colors so that the pictures and the text work together. The art is inspiring.

How have people responded to *Mr. Hatch*? A businessman in New York read *Mr. Hatch* and began to send flowers anonymously to his employees. He uses *Mr. Hatch* when making presentations and encourages management to honor employees in an anonymous way to create more kindness in the workplace.

One teacher told me that on Valentine's Day she placed a bag of candy at the door of a neighbor who had been giving her a hard time. She told the kids, and they made valentines for classmates they were having a hard time with. I have heard of kids taking brownies and lemonade to the fire department; others have visited nursing homes. They have done things for people who work at school.

Without kindness and love, life is pretty dreary. We have learned that on September 11, 2001, people in danger were not concerned about their bank accounts or revenge. They left phone messages saying, "I love you." This is what life is about.

We can also show kindness even to people we don't know very well. We underestimate what can come from going that extra inch to be nice to the person waiting on the table, to be thoughtful to a new kid at school, or to give a smile to a person you don't know in the cafeteria line. Mr. Hatch is a sweet character who, with just a bit of kindness from others, returns the kindness many times over.



Emergency Readiness: Author Interviews

The following interviews with Danica Novgorodoff (*Slow Storm*; *Refresh, Refresh*) and Dana Reinhardt (*How to Build a House*) tell the “story behind the story” of these books.

Danica Novgorodoff, author of *Slow Storm* and *Refresh, Refresh*

The story of *Slow Storm* draws from my growing up in Kentucky. I lived there again for six months after college and was working on a horse farm (I have been riding since I was seven). During this time, I worked with friends who are from Mexico. I was interested in their personal stories about how they came to Kentucky and how they felt about living in the United States, missing home, and being apart from their families. Rafi’s character was inspired by these collective stories. I have a firefighter friend who inspired the character of Ursa. The third lead character is the Kentucky landscape, a place of great beauty that often faces threats of tornadoes and other violent storms. All of these characters in *Slow Storm* are in jeopardy.

A graphic novel offers an atmosphere you can’t get from another medium. You set the pace as you read. This is different from a movie that tells you how fast to watch the story progress. With a graphic novel you can slow down and create the silence and stillness, explore the visual landscape, read the lines again and again. This is a unique way for an author to communicate to the reader. I make certain there is no redundancy, that the text and image each contribute something different that brings value to the other form.

Both the art and text contribute to the story’s consistent tension. Ursa’s relationship with her brother is pretty tense. There is sibling rivalry and she is doing “man’s” work. They compete professionally and within the family. He doesn’t accept her; as a tomboy and a loner, she doesn’t act as he believes a typical girl should act. The odd one out, Ursa turns to Rafi, even with their differences in culture, family, language, and

experience. Because of the situation they are thrown into, Ursa briefly finds in Rafi someone she can connect with emotionally—a connection she doesn’t have with her brother or anyone else.

To ensure accuracy, my firefighter friend became a primary source to understand weather patterns and information about natural disaster emergency response. To learn more about immigration, I read books and watched documentaries, but it was the words of my friends that were most compelling. I wanted *Slow Storm* to be a human story, rather than about politics.

My second graphic novel, *Refresh, Refresh*, came from a different source. This book is based on a short story written by Benjamin Percy and screenplay written by James Ponsoldt. I adapted both texts to graphic novel form and drew the pictures. It was a wonderful collaboration. The book follows three high school students whose fathers are all serving in Iraq. They spend their time playing, fighting, going to parties, hunting, chasing girls, and sneaking into bars—but their fathers’ absence is continually felt. As they move toward graduation, two plan to join the military and one intends to go to college.

How do I approach writing a graphic novel? I write the text first, which ends up being something between a short story and a screenplay. I perfect the story and the dialogue as much as possible before drawing, because once you add the art, any changes can cost months of work. *Slow Storm* took me three years, while *Refresh, Refresh* took only one year since I was adapting text. My current book should take just over three years. Sometimes it’s disheartening that I can work on something for so many years and someone can read it in forty-five minutes! I hope there is much to draw the reader back to look at it again and again.

So why do I devote all this time to such a process? With both of these books my aim is to tell what life is like for a single person, rather than to generalize and moralize. Story is a great opportunity to develop empathy, and this can transform our thoughts and actions.



**Dana Reinhardt, author of
*How to Build a House***

The idea for *How to Build a House* had several starting points. I wanted to write about divorce. Many books deal with divorce, but there is a specific set of issues involved when a second family divorces—a person is divorced out of relationships because the people aren't your original family.

While this idea of divorce was on my mind, I was living in Los Angeles and construction was going on all around me. People were buying small houses and knocking them down to build big places. Then Hurricane Katrina happened. One day, referring to the construction of yet another L.A. mansion, my five-year-old said, "Mom, why don't the kids from the storm just go live there?" This was such a simple five-year-old idea: Who needs this big of a house when so many people need a home? I was touched by this, how kids instinctively think these thoughts and want to do good things for others.

Everybody was thinking a lot about Katrina when it happened, and a question stayed on my mind: What about the disasters that don't get national attention? Calamities happen all the time. I wanted to write about a smaller place where this might happen and shed light on who we care about, who we protect.

I was once in Tennessee while driving cross-country and fell in love with the place. I wanted to set my story there. I returned midway through my writing. I had already created a fictional town and then I found it! It was there in Tennessee about an hour outside of Memphis, a small community hard hit by a tornado the previous April. This was a completely devastated community with no resources to pick it up and no group of teens like in my book.

In the early stages of writing, I had two parallel narratives: (1) the structural devastations to a family's home, and (2) what happens inside a daughter during a second marriage divorce. Then I had an "aha!" moment as a writer: I could deal with both of these different issues that really are similar thematically. Along with rebuilding the house, I would explore how to help this daughter heal by going outside her tiny universe and exploring other people's problems and putting hers in perspective.

How do I approach writing? I generally try to start at the beginning of the story and end at the end. I am a pretty linear writer and thinker. I am not a big plotter or outliner. I know generally where it begins and ends and the rest is a journey of discovery to find all the places in between. It sounds simple but it's not. Ideally I sit at my desk every day (this is my job!), however, I also have two young children. I am committed to both.

I imagined the protagonist, Harper, as a really decent soul, who is in tremendous pain going through a rough time, which clouds her judgment to handle complicated relationships. No one is perfect. Everyone has to learn how to handle complex relationships. I wanted to plop her into foreign territory (Tennessee for her was pretty foreign) and rethink and relearn on both the friendship, romantic, and familial level, preparing her to go back home to deal with her challenging relationships from a new perspective.

When writing books I want to be true to the kids and true to the experience. I try not to think about, "Oh if I include this topic or that topic some people may or may not want to read the book." My primary concern is keeping this real for the reader. The topic of sexual relationships comes up a lot for young adults. There are kids who opt out of sex, but even those kids are thinking about it. Every teen is touched with thoughts about sex and drugs, and I try to handle this realistically and responsibly, always having the characters learning from their experiences. Avoiding what is authentic and part of reality is silly. I set out to tell a story about real kids and what they are going through.

To write this book I had much to learn about disasters. I knew nothing about construction or rebuilding. While the practical part of the story had to do with rebuilding, the emotional side was when your real sense of "home" has been knocked down from one disaster or another. I read people's accounts of being in tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes—the sights, smells, and sounds—things I hadn't contemplated before. So much about natural disasters is beyond our control and is both scary and mysterious. This made me think deeply about the earth, how we treat the planet, and the relationship between human behavior and natural disaster.



Having Harper do service made sense. I do believe a lot of kids are looking for a way to get involved with all kinds of community needs involving issues of disaster caused by nature or humans. I see kids taking a year off from school to do service work. I think kids are searching for something to do that really matters. I hope readers see *How to Build a House* as an account of what this involvement and participation can be like. You can learn about yourself, and can have so much fun by becoming part of a community. Banding together with a common purpose enriches us all in many ways.



The Environment: Author Interviews

In the following interviews, we find out the “story behind the story” from Laurie David (coauthor of *The Down-to-Earth Guide to Global Warming*) and Don Madden (*The Wartville Wizard*). Laurie David’s book and extended work and outreach to stop global warming shows a commitment that deserves recognition. While there are many important and well-written books on the environment, there is one that captures a common desire: to completely rid the planet of litter. Author Don Madden’s ingenious book combines art and words to create a hilarious story that jumps off the page and sticks to your memory. Including an interview with the “real” Wartville wizard was simply a must.

Laurie David, coauthor of *The Down-to-Earth Guide to Global Warming*

My purpose in writing this book was perhaps subversive, but I think it worked. Educate parents about global warming by educating their children. Kids understand the urgency of helping the environment, and one of their first acts of activism is to involve and inform their parents. Reach kids—explain to them how to make changes in their own home, school, and classroom—and pretty soon they’re influencing their whole circle of friends and family, which can be pretty expansive. Combine a kid’s determination with important information from an easy-to-understand book kids can share with their parents, and next thing you know we are making some real progress!

Everyone is part of the problem so everyone has to be part of the solution. Everyone has a carbon footprint no matter the age. The question is: what choices are we making day to day that we can change to reduce our energy consumption? What behaviors are we engaged in that can be harmful or helpful? How long are our showers? How many items of electronics do we keep plugged in? How many water bottles do we toss every day? How many hamburgers do we eat, and how much water runs while we brush our teeth? Do we carpool? And this is just the beginning of the list! We all need to start connecting the dots. Every time we turn on a light or our computer we are using energy

that probably comes from a dirty coal power plant. So if we thought about that every time we use energy we might get better at using less energy. This is how a shift in behavior and consciousness starts—one person connects the dots and then teaches the next person.

When writing *Down-to-Earth*, I collaborated with a friend, Cambria Gordon, who I have known since we met at a park with our babies. She did a lot of the research. We organized the book into categories to cover the problems, the causes and effects, and what we can do. Our aim was to de-wonkify the science and explain it in a way everyone can understand. When I first heard the simple analogy of a blanket to explain what global warming is, a light bulb went off for me. A blanket of carbon dioxide is covering the planet, holding in the heat, and the planet, unlike us in the middle of the night, cannot kick off the blanket. I get it! Simple analogies can help explain complicated science.

What I learned after the book was published is how many adults didn’t understand the issue and are now learning it from their kids. Parents are busy and often overwhelmed, so reading with their kids is a good way to learn the essentials and connect with their kids about a problem that concerns their whole family. Kids have to become activists and demand change. They have to protect their future, now!

Global warming relates to many categories of study, not just science class; you can reference our changing climate in history, English, and math to name a few. I suggest we take these ideas and teach them in places that are not as obvious. Teachers of all subjects have had a great response to the book. Teachers can focus on the connection between our personal behavior, how we live, and consequences of our choices and actions. This is a critical message to teach kids. What is required to solve this is a giant shift in attitude. That’s a big task, but it has to happen. The only question is, how long will it take?

Visit our Web site (www.stopglobalwarming.org) to learn more and join the movement to stop global warming. We get tons of emails from kids asking questions and telling us what they are doing at their school. More than 1,250,000 people have signed onto the site including governors, musicians, and athletes, all saying why they are concerned and what we can all do.



We send monthly emails with great information about the effects of global warming and the exciting things people are doing to stop it. Every day our numbers go up and more people become “virtual” marchers. We march on the Internet instead of on the streets, and we march every day demanding action. Global warming is a worldwide problem and we are happy the book has a global reach—it’s been translated into ten different languages!

So to teachers, my request is this: Incorporate the issues of global warming into your curriculum. Your students today may be the ones who solve the problem tomorrow.

And to kids everywhere: We cannot wait until you grow up to solve this—you have to understand your own carbon footprint now and become part of the solution. By making choices that help the planet, we can solve this problem . . . small choices made every day can help us get on the path to sustainability.

This is not about everyone doing everything—but it is about everyone doing something. Start with changing a light bulb, pulling your plugs out of the wall. Then do more. We can each do something.

Don Madden, author of *The Wartville Wizard*

I am actually “The Wartville Wizard.” My home is situated on a road halfway between two fast-food restaurants. When I wrote the book in the early 1980s, people would eat and drive, and they would arrive in front of my driveway as they were finishing their meal. I got really fed up with their trash coming right out the window, landing on my front yard, and clattering up the roadway. How dare they throw their trash! That really lit my fuse. So I had the idea that all the trash should go back and stick to them. That’s what happens in the book. Kids like the illustrations; their favorite seems to be the one with the woman who has a filled trash bag stuck to her backside.

After I wrote the book, I felt better. I got the frustration out of my system. I’ve received a lot of mail from teachers and kids about *The Wartville Wizard*, as well as from recycling groups who don’t seem to mind that I don’t tackle recycling in this book. They enjoy the story and get the message.

I would like kids to come away with a feeling of taking care of the environment. I always enjoy hearing about kids getting involved and doing something to help out. I am actually a humanist and that’s the message of humanism—to look out for each other. That will make things better for everyone.

I don’t notice so much trash on the road anymore. I think some of the laws about bottle returns and so forth have done well in New York state. And I think kids are very aware, and that helps a great deal. Whether our young people will continue to be advocates for our environment, we will have to see. Once you start along those lines, you must continue the work to maintain the improvements.

The Wartville Wizard would definitely advocate taking care of the world we live in. It’s the only one we’ve got! So do your part to make this world a better place.



Gardening: Author Interviews

In the following interview, we find out the “story behind the story” from Pat Brisson (*The Summer My Father Was Ten* and *Wanda’s Roses*).

I called Pat Brisson to learn more about her protagonist Wanda, a girl with perseverance and creativity. Pat later introduced me to the story of *The Summer My Father Was Ten*, which moved me to tears.

Pat Brisson, author of *The Summer My Father Was Ten*; *Wanda’s Roses*; *Melissa Parkinson’s Beautiful, Beautiful Hair*; and *Mama Loves Me from Away*

I wrote *Wanda’s Roses* when winter was almost over but spring hadn’t yet arrived. Wanda’s longing for something beautiful was mine, too. Of course, this longing is not entirely for roses—it is for something beautiful beyond ourselves, something worth striving for, something we can give our hearts to. I wanted to show a girl who was willing to work hard to make her dream come true. When you share your dream with others, I believe they will do what they can to help you achieve your dream. I often ask students, “What is your dream? What are you willing to work hard at?”

Typically, when I begin writing a book, I don’t know how a story will end. With *Wanda’s Roses*, I wanted to have a little girl who had a rosebush. As the story developed, I thought, “Oh yes, she will turn this into a blooming bush with paper roses.” Wanda’s neighbors watch her work hard for a month cleaning the lot and caring for her plant. Wanda’s dedication touches the people around her; they sincerely want to help. I’ve been honored, too, that some students have helped to create beauty by planting rosebushes after reading *Wanda’s Roses*.

In *The Summer My Father Was Ten*, a group of boys vandalize a neighbor’s garden. When I first read the story to my son, he exclaimed, “Mom, those kids are really bad!” But kids who are not “bad” do bad things. The boy who threw one tomato did not intend to destroy a garden. The kids got carried away. While ravaging the garden, they were not considering their actions, only their “fun.” How did this happen? Kids can identify with this mistake.

Librarians tell me they can hear a pin drop when reading *The Summer My Father Was Ten* aloud. Sometimes at the end, children express relief saying, “Phew, he got through it.” The book is not just about the boy. This would have been a different story if Mr. Bellavista had denied the boy the opportunity to make amends. In the crucial moment when the boy asks to replant the garden, the man thinks, “Do I forgive? Do I give him a chance?” And the boy’s life is changed. A true friendship develops. When the boy becomes a father, he is compelled to relate this story every spring to his daughter. Mr. Bellavista’s moment of forgiveness affects future generations. The girl now tells us the story. We do not know how one moment of forgiveness will reach distant shores.

Does writing stories come easily to me? I wish I were brimming with ideas for stories that would flow forth as soon as pencil met paper. But for me, writing is work: occasionally frustrating, generally satisfying, but always worth striving for. It is something I believe in, something I have given my heart to, just as Wanda believed in her roses.

My approach is character driven. My interest is in what the characters are thinking and doing and feeling. Keep in mind that people approach the writing process in different ways. Writing requires a kind of problem solving—you figure out what words fit best, how much tension to establish, the number of characters to include, and whether if each character adds to the story or should be eliminated.

People often ask, “Did the book look like you expected?” I am not very visual when writing. I know the tone and feeling of the story. I know who the people are from the inside; sometimes I even hear the character’s voice in my head. I may not know what she looks like but I know what she is going through. I am happy if the illustrations match the tone of the story, as they do in these two books.

Do all people respond to my books in the same way? A book exists in relationship to the specific reader or the person listening to the story. Every person brings ideas, experiences, and personality. The reader may see what the author intended and may also find additional meaning. This has happened with a number of my books. For example, I did not write *Wanda’s Roses* as



a book on ecology or gardening. Only when a teacher described it as “a great ecology book” did I think, “Oh yes, I can see this is also about ecology!”

Literature enables the reader to think, “That could be me” or “That might be me someday.” Books allow us to know the reality that exists for others and broadens our limited perspective. A book can also lead the reader to have a change of heart. That is how social action begins, with a change of heart, with the ability to empathize. You don’t have to change the whole world. One kind action can change someone’s day or someone’s life and can in turn help that someone to see people in a fresh way. By tutoring one person or befriending a child who is ignored or teased, you can make a world of difference.



Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty: Author Interviews

In the following interviews, we find out the “story behind the story” from Lindsay Lee Johnson (*Soul Moon Soup*) and Marion Hess Pomeranc (*The Can-Do Thanksgiving*). As soon as I read *Soul Moon Soup*, I wanted to call Lindsay Lee Johnson and find out how she could capture so accurately the voice of her protagonist—a young girl grappling with her challenging life. *The Can-Do Thanksgiving* deals with a canned food drive—perhaps the most common community service project. How perfect to find a book on the subject! I had to find out what in particular had inspired author Marion Hess Pomeranc to write the book.

Lindsay Lee Johnson, author of *Soul Moon Soup*

We often talk about a person having a particular “mind-set” to accomplish something. But I credit my desire to write about homelessness and other social justice issues with having a “heart-set” for service. I grew up in a helping family. Whether that meant taking in stray, injured animals or bringing a meal to needy neighbors, it’s simply what we did. My father was a doctor and my mother a nurse. Their professional values of caring and helping became our family values.

Later I married a man with similar values, and not surprisingly, our children always seemed to befriend the outsiders and speak up for the “underdogs.” However, I don’t believe you have to come from a family like this to be drawn to service; this “heart-set” can be contagious and inspired by others. This happens friend to friend, teacher to student, author to reader. Adults and older teens can model behavior that encourages children to seek ways to live that give their lives meaning. The values of compassion and service are not derived from thinking “I ought to help” but from thinking “What can I do to help?”

When I began writing *Soul Moon Soup*, I did not think about “homelessness.” I began with a character who has a story to tell. She lived in my mind first, and it’s her story, but I believe the story is fed by my personal experience. I focused on words that have emotional currency beyond face value, radioactive words

that jump off the page. For instance, the word *home* means much more than a place of residence. In the same way, each word in the book’s title resonates with personal as well as universal meaning.

This story began to percolate during my experience as a volunteer baby rocker for a social service agency. These babies had been damaged by abuse or neglect. The moms were in desperate situations, either in jail or facing jail for various reasons. They had to prove their ability to be good caregivers in order to regain custody of their children. These were ordinary women who, for one reason or another, had experienced some catastrophe, and their lives had gone wrong. They were human beings who responded to love and friendship and wanted something better.

As a volunteer at various shelters, again I saw individuals in difficult circumstances, people experiencing homelessness rather than “homeless people” as a group. Labels can stop us from wanting to get involved and take action. People having difficulties certainly don’t choose their circumstances. When people experience homelessness, they lose a sense of identity gained by having a place to be themselves, a home. A person can feel lost and have difficulty moving forward. Growing up is hard under the best circumstances, but for children without that “home” in their lives, it is nearly impossible.

Homelessness is a huge and growing problem, especially for children. According to my research, about 40 percent of people who are homeless are children with an average age of six. The best way for me to contribute to people’s awareness of this situation is to tell a story, the story of one girl, Phoebe Rose, who lives on the “stoop-sitting, gutter-spitting streets.” Her voice spoke to me so clearly and powerfully. I had to pass on what she was telling me, heart to heart and soul to soul.

Phoebe Rose’s story is sad in a way, but it also contains hope. Phoebe learns to feed her imagination with art to keep her soul alive. When a child, or anyone, loses imagination and the ability to picture what might come next in life, this is true hopelessness. When Phoebe reclaims her ability to envision her future in the world of art, it is a turning point for her and indicates that she can survive. In writing *Soul Moon Soup*



I learned of a nonprofit organization that provides art supplies to children in homeless shelters, along with volunteers to help them explore and express the often unspeakable things in their hearts. It is this sort of service project that inspires me.

As I wrote *Soul Moon Soup*, Phoebe's voice naturally took the form of free verse, with a lyrical poetic quality. I wanted the book to have beautiful language in spite of the harsh realities of the story. Also, I wanted the book to be accessible. For reluctant readers, a book with a lot of text can be off-putting; short lines and sections appear more manageable, like little bites. A more accomplished reader is drawn in to the rhythm and music of the language, the pace of the story. I hope readers of all ages and abilities find their own hearts in these pages and the courage to make connections with people around them who made need something they can give.

While group service projects can be valuable, remember that one-to-one outreach is also important. In one early scene in the book, Phoebe discards a pretty package of soap and shampoo from a girl at school when the girl says, "It's from my mother, I don't care." A true gift, like the gifts Phoebe receives later in the story from Ruby, can only be given with a genuine heart.

I would like to see readers become less fearful of making these honest connections. People want to be treated respectfully, not as projects or special cases. An episode of a lost job or mental illness can suddenly cause people who think they are very secure to end up in trouble.

Phoebe's character demonstrates a strength that will enable her to survive. I imagine her going to art school and becoming a teacher. In the future, I would like to write more about Phoebe. I think she has a lot more to say.

For me, *Soul Moon Soup* is the most meaningful story I have ever written. I hope this is conveyed and that Phoebe's voice is passed along. Then I know I will have accomplished something worthwhile.

Marion Hess Pomeranc, author of *The Can-Do Thanksgiving*

How did I choose the topic of a canned food drive for my book? I was bringing a can of food into my synagogue's food drive when I thought to myself, "Where do these cans really go?" I realized that kids across the country collect cans of food, and they too want to know where the cans go.

My question turned into action. I began calling different food banks and ended up at a soup kitchen in my neighborhood. It was a cold day, with people lined up outside. When the doors opened, volunteers handed out coffee and breakfast, while men and women sat inside eating their meal. From bringing in a can of food and visiting this kitchen, my story grew.

I want kids to know that whatever you bring to the food banks and kitchens is really going to help. Knowing where the food goes does matter because we need to connect with the places where people get some assistance and with the people who are in need. This helps us remember that whatever we do can make a difference. In my story, Dee saved her own money to buy the can, and her can of peas made a difference.

I would like to see my book inspire canned food drives all year long, because urban children are faced with seeing people in need on the street all the time. When my son was young, he wanted to help the people who were asking for food and money on the streets of New York City. We gave out bagels. I wanted him to view all people, regardless of their need or situation, as part of our human family.

As you read the book, remember we are all like Dee and we are all like Tyler. We will sometimes be in the position to help others, and we will sometimes need help ourselves. The most important thing is to be there for each other.



Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices: Author Interviews

In the following interview, we find out the “story behind the story” from Jordan Sonnenblick (*Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*; *Notes from the Midnight Driver*; and *After Ever After*).

Jordan Sonnenblick, author of *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*; *Notes from the Midnight Driver*; and *After Ever After*

From the age of four, I bragged I was going to be a writer. Everyone from my mom’s side wrote nonfiction. My grandfather, my hero, wrote high school science textbooks. He was a teacher and a writer and I wanted to be like him. When I was in high school, Frank McCourt was the creative writing teacher. I requested this class for two years and never got in. Finally, as a senior, I blocked the doorway of his room and begged to be let in. He said in his Irish accent, “This is a full class—you would have to sit on the radiator!” I agreed. At graduation, when he gave me a creative writing award, I was stunned. You see, during class, whenever he read my work out loud, he said I was witty and amusing but added, “When will you head for the deep water?”

So I asked Mr. McCourt why he chose me if he didn’t like my work. He responded by writing in my yearbook, “You are a born writer, but there is something deeper waiting to come out.” This paralyzed me for fifteen years! Nine years after he retired from teaching, his book *Angela’s Ashes* was published to great acclaim. Then I thought I could be a teacher and writer like him.

I taught for Teach For America for three years in Houston (fifth grade), and then taught in Philipsburg, New Jersey, for eleven years. I wrote *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie* when my eighth-grade student Emily’s brother was diagnosed with cancer. I told Emily’s mom I would find a book for her daughter to read on the subject. I didn’t know of any, so I wrote one. I never thought anyone would read this book except for about ten people, including Emily and my mom. I was writing for this particular kid. Now, *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie* has been translated into eleven

languages. I never even had the idea to quit my day job, but I couldn’t be a teacher and a writer and a dad. I liked teaching, especially the kids. But the publicity requests with each book require time and travel, so the teaching ended.

When I met Emily, the moment had arrived to either put up or shut up. I heard two voices. The angel said, “Write the book.” The devil kept saying, “You’re too stupid to write a book.” Everyone has this voice of self-doubt that pipes up and says *you can’t*. There are times when the angel has to pipe up even louder and say, “You have to.”

I do seem to follow a writing process. I brainstorm. I do a lot of research. I outline pretty thoroughly. I refuse to write the first page until I know the last line. I typically write very fast. The longest any book has taken for the first draft was *Drums* and that took ten weeks. I write until I drop every day. Because I outline so heavily, I typically don’t have a lot of revisions at the end.

All three of my books have music running through them. As a kid, I played all the instruments I write about. I used to wish I could read a book that reflected the way it feels to be a drummer or guitar player. Whenever someone tries to write a “boy” book, it’s about sports. But then I realized the kids who read include band geeks like me. All the band kids love to come talk to me at school visits. I started out playing drums, and then, when I was fifteen I was sick and had to be in bed for a month and couldn’t play drums, so my dad gave me a bass guitar. I picked up the six-string in college.

The theme of kids doing service also plays a part in these books. What struck me about Emily’s family is that they live in a blue-collar town that came together for a spaghetti fundraiser and raised something like \$20,000 with one dinner. It was an amazing outpouring for this kid and his family. Emily lost her brother, which I still hate to talk about. Even so, for several years after in this town, kids talked about when they had worked on the car wash or sold candy bars for him. Working for someone they cared about affected how the kids saw service. Some of their most positive memories were of what they had done to raise money for Emily’s family. This changed the kids’ sense of themselves. The service changed who they were.



As a teenager I always tutored and worked as a camp counselor. These were paying jobs, but goody-goody helping jobs. One experience really stuck: one of the first kids I tutored when I was a sophomore was a year older and had a learning disability, and he had to write a five-paragraph test to pass the New York State Regents Exam so he could graduate. He hated the subject we were studying, and he really hated the tutoring because I was younger than him. There was so much resistance and struggle, but he passed. I learned to serve by helping a kid get through his struggle. This really taught me something.

Notes from the Midnight Driver had a different beginning. I had a bunch of eighth-grade students who were horrible to a substitute teacher. They had a huge paper ball fight and this sub refused to ever come back to the school. I made the kids write apology notes to their moms. They wrote weasely notes filled with weak excuses. I got madder and madder. Then I thought: what if a basically good kid did something really stupid and then refused to apologize? And then what if his growth comes through the letters he writes? I modeled the letters in my book on the letters written by my kids. Then around the same time, my grandpa Sol (my hero) was in the hospital with pneumonia. The man in the next bed was dying of emphysema and was angry. The character of Solomon Lewis in the book is the combination of these two.

The other impetus for the book was the notion that the stupid thing Alex did could have been anything. I made it about drunk driving because in the year leading up to this book, the town in which I taught had lost kids to this tragedy. I thought: if I can discourage one kid from drunk driving, this is what my book should be about.

Then I brought two characters from *Drums* into *Notes*. These kids, Steven and Annette, are good guys, yardsticks for Alex's growth. Initially, Alex is dismissive of them in everything except their musical ability. He is sickened by their desire to always want to help. For me, I was glad to visit Steven again without having to do anything terrible to him.

The latest in this trio of novels is *After Ever After*. A nurse in upstate New York who runs a therapy group for teen cancer survivors asked me to write a book

about them, and I said no. I thought: I can't go back into the cancer world, it's too painful. Then it became clear: this is the story I should write.

In *Drums*, Steven's little brother has cancer. In *After Ever After*, we re-meet Jeffrey when he is in eighth grade. He rides in a cancer fundraiser bike ride, because you have to keep putting your next foot forward. Jeffrey also has a friend who had cancer, and they make a pact to help each other with their resulting disabilities. Jeffrey has trouble with math and needs to pass a state test to enter high school. His friend is in a wheelchair and wants to walk at their middle school graduation. One is tutored and the other is helped to walk. The whole reason I wrote the book is so kids with cancer can see themselves in a book. I wanted to humanize their story. The book does not have a happy ending. You can't write a book about cancer without the truth that there are sometimes relapses. Sometimes a book comes to you bittersweet.

As you can tell, I wrote the books without expectations, and now several things have happened that blow me away. Several schools have done fundraisers and given money to a great organization called SuperSibs that supports kids whose sibling has cancer, or to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Kids have emailed me and told me, "I am being nicer to my sibling," or "I want to be a doctor," or "I will volunteer at a nursing home"—all because of the book. The thought that something I typed in my kitchen could influence the behavior of someone . . . I can't wrap my head around that one.

My pipe dream is that people would be kinder to others because they read my work. If you have an idea to serve someone, don't let anyone tell you the idea is stupid. When I was writing my first novel, a good friend made a discouraging comment when she heard the book combined humor and cancer. What if I had listened? What I know is this: If the work will serve someone, *do it*. And when you do a good deed, don't do it for the cookie at the end. The good deed is the end in itself.

The words of Albert Schweitzer ring true: "One thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."



Immigrants: Author Interviews

In the following interviews, we find out the “story behind the story” from Francisco Jiménez (*The Circuit*, *Breaking Through*, *Reaching Out*, and *La Mariposa*) and from Tony Johnston (*Any Small Goodness*, *Uncle Rain Cloud*, and *Bone by Bone by Bone*).

In *The Circuit*, *Breaking Through*, and then *Reaching Out*, Francisco Jiménez created vivid, honest descriptions of life as a migrant farm worker and hope found through love of family and education. He graciously agreed to an interview but needed to postpone it for a week, since he was going to Washington, D.C., to receive an award for these books. Fortunately, I was also going to be in D.C., so I attended his award ceremony, where I met his brother and sister-in-law, both of whom are important figures in his stories. I first found Tony Johnston through her compelling book *Any Small Goodness*, an authentic portrayal of a close-knit Mexican-American family living in East Los Angeles. As part of a program I developed, over 40,000 Los Angeles Unified School District students read and completely enjoyed this great story. As a resident of Los Angeles, I was amazed by Tony Johnston’s rich, accurate descriptions of my city and the wonderful people who live here. I found the characters and their words authentic and the message of caring about others deep and moving. In a phone call with Tony Johnston, I realized she means every word of this helpful, hopeful book about generosity and goodness.

Francisco Jiménez, author of *The Circuit*, *Breaking Through*, *La Mariposa*, and *Reaching Out*

The inspiration for my writing comes from the community of my childhood and my teachers. The migrant families that I grew up with worked hard and showed courage, tenacity, and hope amidst adversity. These values have been a constant to me in my personal and professional life.

It is important for children and young adults to appreciate farm work. The laborers’ work picking fruits and vegetables makes it possible for us to enjoy our meals. I want readers to have a better insight into the

hard life that farm workers experience and to appreciate their labor, which is noble—all work is noble.

Another reason for writing these books is to document the experiences of many migrant families from the past and the present. For the most part, this sector of society has been ignored. This experience, as painful as it might be, is part of the American experience. To understand the essence of our country, we must learn about the experiences and contributions of all the different groups that make up our diverse society. The economic and cultural contributions of each group have enriched our nation. The Mexican-American farm work experience is an important and integral part of the American experience. Farm workers sustain our agricultural economy.

I wrote *The Circuit* and *Breaking Through* to pay tribute to my teachers. In *The Circuit*, Mr. Lema, my sixth-grade teacher, encouraged me to learn English though I was having difficulty learning it because we moved from place to place following seasonal crops. And I missed a lot of school. He valued my Mexican cultural background. He created a unit on California geography and asked me to read aloud the names of the towns and cities on the map because, as he said, “I know you will pronounce them correctly.” My native language was being valued. That one small effort on his part made a world of difference in developing my self-esteem.

In *Breaking Through*, I mention my sophomore English teacher, Mrs. Bell, who had the class write short essays describing childhood experiences. It was there I began writing about my migrant experiences. When she found out about my background, she had me read *The Grapes of Wrath*. For the first time I was able to see the importance of literature in making a connection with one’s life. I learned about the power of literature to move hearts and minds. Later, as I thought of writing my own books, I reflected on the importance of children being able to see themselves reflected in literature. When growing up, there was hardly any material in school I could relate to regarding my cultural background. In my writing, I hope to contribute to a body of American literature that many children can relate to, especially those from backgrounds similar to mine.



In writing the children's book *La Mariposa*, I retold the story "Inside Out" found in *The Circuit*. I realized that not knowing a word of English and the frustration and alienation I felt might be common to many children who enter our school system. The responses I receive from teachers and children indicate I was right.

If you compare the two versions, you will see one significant difference. In *La Mariposa*, the child is prohibited from speaking Spanish. When the teacher has Francisco open the jar and the butterfly emerges, Francisco says, "Qué hermosa," in a low voice because he doesn't want the teacher to hear him speak Spanish. However, the teacher hears him and translates, saying, "How beautiful." I used my imagination and had the teacher react positively to what Francisco said in Spanish. So, at that moment, the teacher values the child's language and helps him to "break through." Using the metaphor of the butterfly, both are transformed: The child becomes the teacher and the teacher becomes the student.

Reaching Out is my latest work in which I relate my experiences as a college student from an immigrant Mexican family of migrant workers. From the perspective of the young adult I was then, I describe the challenges I faced in my efforts to continue my education, such as coping with poverty, feeling torn between my responsibilities as a student and my sense of duty to my family, having self-doubt about being capable of succeeding academically, and trying to adjust to an environment that was different from the community in which I was raised.

I wrote *Reaching Out* in part to describe the experiences of many students who are the first in their immigrant families to attend college and to pay tribute to teachers who reach out and make a difference in the lives of their students by assisting them to be knowledgeable of self, educated in mind, compassionate in heart, and generous and responsive to social and civic obligations in an ever-changing world.

One of the greatest rewards is hearing how my books affect young people. Letters from teachers point out that after reading the memoirs, students who normally were quiet begin to open up and talk about their experiences. This is one of my intents.

A North Carolina teacher describes using *The Circuit* so students will learn about migrant workers and their difficulties. The teacher had the class connect with a community of migrant workers in their state. The class decided to bring in clothing, food, and books to give to people in the migrant camps. They also made a quilt with squares based on each of the stories in my book and contributed this to the migrant community. The teacher uses the book to help students become more compassionate toward other children who don't have the same socioeconomic background. These actions are meaningful. We must be aware that it is one thing to extend a hand and try to be helpful, to give to others in need. Another is to feel solidarity with them. There is a difference.

My use of Spanish in the books has helped students form a stronger community. Some teachers say that when English-only students come across the Spanish words, they ask the Spanish-speaking students to explain the meaning. This is usually an exchange that has not taken place before and gives value to having a second language.

Overall, these books demonstrate the value of obtaining an education, an important means by which we can improve our lives. Children or young adults are usually told that, "With education you will get a better job." This is true, but equally important is how education enriches our lives in other ways. We enjoy the things that surround us when we have learned about biology or music or art. We can appreciate all that life gives us and makes available to us.

I also want to impart the importance of hard work, respect, and faith in your own talents, and of developing these with the help of parents, teachers, and community. People say, "You were able to break through without bilingual education." I respond by saying, "Any success attributed to me is really the success of many people who helped along the way. I made it thanks to many teachers and my family, and I will do everything within my power to help others make it as well." In our society we have an overemphasis on individualism that can be a drawback to a commitment to helping others help themselves. In coming from a culture that emphasizes community over individualism, this is what I find more helpful in building a better society.



On a personal level, writing autobiography is a catharsis; we learn more about ourselves. There is self-discovery as I reflect on my childhood from an adult point of view. I have gained a deeper sense of purpose for the things I do now as a teacher.

Tony Johnston, author of *Any Small Goodness*, *Uncle Rain Cloud*, and *Bone by Bone by Bone*

I wrote *Any Small Goodness* on Post-it Notes. I walk a lot so I carry the notes with me and, time to time, write down an idea or a few lines. Finally I had notes all over the place, so I checked into a motel for a week and spread the notes over the floor. I asked the woman who cleaned the room not to vacuum. From those Post-its, I wrote this book. My following novel, *The Mummy's Mother*, was written the same way.

Any Small Goodness comes from my Los Angeles roots. I am an Angelena. This is my hometown. All my life I've heard about how bad L.A. is. On the back of the book jacket it says, "Los Angeles is a place of movie stars and fast cars and people who are too rich and people who are too poor. An area of freeway chases and drive-bys and death. That's what some people will quickly point out." I hear these things even from strangers: "How come you have all this smog?" and "Why are L.A. people so zany?" I finally got fed up and decided to write a book about Los Angeles that is positive.

Since sixth grade, I've kept what I call "vanilla folders" (manila folders, really) about things that interest me, especially the people I call "small heroes": Everyday people I read about in the *Los Angeles Times*. People who do something for somebody else. People nobody notices. When I started writing *Any Small Goodness*, I went to my folder and picked a few small heroes. The chapter "The Piano" is based on one such person, a horn player who could have done anything with his talent and chose to teach music.

Some of the chapters are based on people I know or my life experiences. "The River" is about my mother-in-law, a "professional volunteer." She heard of a school library near where she lived that was going to close because they had no money for a librarian. With no

experience in the field, Mom went to the school and said, "I'll be the librarian." For ten years she and the children of that elementary school taught each other how to create a wonderful library.

If you are curious where the corn fungus chapter came from, corn fungus (*huitlacoche*) is my favorite food. I lived in Mexico for fifteen years and "met" it there. Somewhere between corn fungus and the Rodriguez family's black cat, an invented character, Leo Love, showed up in the story. I don't know how this works; I just have to trust it and grab ideas (and characters) when they pop into my brain. You'll find a lot of love imagery surrounding Leo. You'll also see that I weave Spanish into this book as much as I can; I want to show the beautiful rhythmic sounds of that language.

In the chapter called "The Lunch Box," Officer Paster is modeled on a friend. I don't usually do this, but my friend seemed just right to be turned into an honorable "police." The whole lunch-box idea came from the *Los Angeles Times* (and the vanilla folders) again. I'd read that a little girl was killed in a drive-by shooting. The police gave money to buy her headstone. You may have figured out that I love basketball. "The Coach" is based on basketball great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who, unbeknownst to most, spent time on the White Mountain Apache Reservation once, coaching kids.

Sometimes the author steps into the story. I am Arturo. Most of what comes out of his mouth is my ideas and thoughts, starting with the first chapter. "American Names" is about a pet peeve of mine. I resent people who take away part of somebody else by changing his or her name to suit them. It happens everywhere. A boss may call an employee by a new name, a name that's easier for the boss to say; the worker doesn't dare complain for fear of losing the job. It's totally unacceptable. Talk about robbing somebody! Your name is part of who you are; you are connected to it.

Arturo's family is, you guessed it, my family. That's pretty much how we talk and act. I keep a journal of family "nuttinesses" and re-read it to beef up this book. Once on a family trip, Jenny wore ski goggles to chop onions. When Jenny (who's short) was checking



out a midget Christmas tree, she declared, “I cannot respect a tree that is shorter than I am.” Ashley, our reader, who soon will be a librarian, reads even when she cooks. Then she holds her place with whatever’s handy, like a tomato. Samantha worried about moving to the “nighted states.” She thought it was dark. In grammar school, my husband swallowed a shark eye on a bet. For a miserable twenty-five cents. When a book is happening, all sorts of things come jumbling out that matter to me. If I can, I stick them in.

What can you write about? Find a subject that really grabs you. An idea that means something to you, like a pet or a personal experience. The closer the subject is to you, the more you can throw yourself into it. Even if it’s tough for you to say, you need to take a leap of courage, a risk, and put your self out there. Put your feelings, your hopes, your sadness on the paper for better or worse. If you do, people will connect with you; if you don’t, it’s a cheat. My recent novel, *Bone by Bone*, is the hardest book I ever had to write because it goes back to my childhood and to a dark place I had to relive.

If you write something goofy, that’s okay. There’s nothing like heartfelt goofiness. And care about your words, the vocabulary. Try to use the word that fits the situation just right. Clench it. Don’t make it easy for the reader by using a flimsy word. That’s another cheat. I’ve been collecting vocab since grammar school. I stick in words from my long LONG list wherever they fit.

The heart of *Any Small Goodness* is about caring, loving people. Some of the book starts with kernels of stories I read in the *Los Angeles Times*. Most is invented, like “The Green Needle Gang.” I’d love for some kids to do what they did. Arturo figures out that everybody has something he or she can do. He realizes that even when a terrible thing happens, responding in anger to get even isn’t the answer. That, as Papi said, “any small goodness is of value.” Sharing yourself with others—that’s the key. In writing and in life.



Literacy: Author and Illustrator Interviews

Author James Howe suggested I read the young adult novels by Janet Tashjian, *The Gospel According to Larry* and *Vote for Larry*. I was hooked. I connected with Janet's voice, her unconventional writing style, and her message. We met in Los Angeles and I heard about a new collaboration with her son, Jake, resulting in the forthcoming *My Life as a Book*—a smart, laugh out loud story of a dynamic kid named Derek. Here are interviews with both mother and son, as well as an interview with Ann Whitehead Nagda (*Dear Whiskers*).

Janet Tashjian, author of *The Gospel According to Larry*, *Vote for Larry*, and *My Life as a Book*

When writing *My Life as a Book*, I wanted to have a storyline that appealed to reluctant readers, which is pretty much every boy I know. I wanted to write a funny page-turner that was still a literary novel dealing with an issue important to many kids—the struggle to read.

My Life as a Book originated with the fact that I have mixed feelings about summer reading lists. My other books (*The Gospel According to Larry* and *Vote for Larry*) are often on them. On the other hand, I am the mother of a boy who needs to be chased down the street to get him to do assigned reading in the summer. As much as Jake and his friends hated to be told what to read, they also all gravitated toward books and stories. Most of all they wanted the *experience* of a story, even though the reading was hard. I spend a lot of time in schools talking about books with kids and see many of them struggle. I wanted to write about how difficult it can be for kids to read sometimes, and I wanted to do it in a page-turning, fun way.

Does the story resemble my real life? There are definitely things boys do, and Jake did, like sliding under the gate like James Bond. We also have a boy-and-his-dog relationship in the family, and certainly the struggle to read is true for Jake. One of the tricks we came up with was for him to draw his vocabulary words; he's been doing that since fourth grade. His illustrations are amazing! That was the real inspiration

behind *My Life as a Book*—Jake's visual approach to reading. We've had so many reading tutors and specialists. I wanted to put all the things we learned into this novel. The book is full of reading tips based on Jake's struggle with reading.

I write every day. I write from the minute Jake goes to school until he comes home. I write first in long hand—I am a real paper and pen person. I then go through the draft (still paper and pen). My editor is helpful certainly in terms of repetition and clarity and things like that. In my first draft, she thought Derek was a bit obnoxious, so I toned him down a little. Her feedback and the rewriting process helped me render Derek in a way that was funny, real, and likeable.

I wrote my first draft fast, in about two to three months. I spent a month or two on rewrites. Then Jake sat down and made 200 illustrations. Watching him work was inspirational. He was so methodological and didn't need any direction. I would make a suggestion and he would put his hand up to stop me; he knew what he wanted to do. I was floored by his professionalism.

The scene at Lambert Cove at the end when Derek is thinking about what he learned and realizing how hard this adventure has been on his mother, and the scene where she holds back her anger at Susan's mother—those are the scenes, for me, that make *My Life as a Book* bittersweet, tender, and emotional. These are all the things you try to accomplish when you sit down to start a book.

The last chapter is not just about Derek telling his teacher that he didn't do all of the assignment, but that he made it work for him. And that he *made a connection to story and learned something in the process*. And then right afterwards the girl next to him kicks his butt by blowing the class away with her project. There's always someone better and faster. Here I am at the top of the mountain—but ohhh, here are three people in front of me. Those kind of childhood feelings are very real to me.

I hope that kids who haven't thought about making the connection between drawing and reading might try it after reading this book. Has it worked for my son? Yes. The important thing is that even if reading is difficult, you can't walk away from story. We



come from generations of people sitting around the fire telling stories. Reading about Derek and seeing Jake's drawings could help kids to know that they're not the only ones who struggle. For service ideas, a kid tutoring someone might get the inside scoop from the mind of a reluctant reader and find ways to make real connections. This would be a great book for tutor and student to read together.

I wanted to write about reading and give kids who have a hard time an easy entry point. Short chapters, illustrations, humor—all are entry points. I had a lot of fun writing this book; I hope kids have just as much fun reading it.

Jake Tashjian, illustrator of *My Life as a Book*

I started drawing vocabulary words in fourth grade. Actually my teacher got me started. My teacher came up with the words and I drew them. Some of my favorite drawings are for the words *embarrassed*, *disregard*, and *rabies*.

Reading is sometimes hard for me. The hard part is words I don't know. I do read and have read many books. Sometimes I have summer reading. This summer I read *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. I also like the *Captain Underpants*, *Hank Zipper* and the *Joey Pigza* books.

Working with my mother as my partner was good. She gave me words and I drew them. By reading our book, kids can learn about doing drawings, and then they will learn that words don't have to be so hard.

Ann Whitehead Nagda, author of *Dear Whiskers*

My daughter Asha's fifth-grade teacher paired her class with second graders for a letter-writing exchange. Asha had to write letters to her second-grade penpal, pretending to be a mouse named Whiskers. This idea and some of the actual correspondence that occurred formed the original centerpiece of *Dear Whiskers*. I wrote a first draft of the book, but it did not have the multicultural aspect yet. My agent thought the book was not different enough to succeed in this highly competitive book market, which led me to look for ideas to enrich the story line.

My husband is from India and my heritage is Irish and Welsh, so we are a true multicultural family. The idea of multiculturalism became the missing piece I was looking for. Then I met a young girl from Saudi Arabia named Aroa, who was struggling in elementary school, and she became the model for my character of Sameera. When I observed in her classroom, I noticed that Aroa did not speak much English and she was very feisty. That first morning the children were doing a leaf printing project. Several boys were not cooperating and Aroa was yelling at them. Another child in the class who knew Arabic ran up to the teacher exclaiming that Aroa was using bad words, like poop! Aroa was so willful that when she became bored, she would sneak out of class and wander the halls.

I began to work one-on-one with Aroa, helping her make a dictionary with English words and pictures from magazines. That didn't interest her at all. One day in desperation, I brought ingredients for a giant cookie and a book that went with it, and Aroa finally became involved. That led to a fictionalized cookie idea in my book, an example of how a story line can stem from real life. While *Dear Whiskers* is totally fictionalized, I do use details from people I know or have observed to create fictional characters. I had to smile when reviewers commented that I had captured the emotions and natural dialogue of schoolchildren so well, because the story is based on the voices and actions of real children and their teachers.

How do I make it so real? I like to sit in the back of classrooms and observe what kids do. I look for small details. One boy had trouble sitting still in a third-grade class. He would stand over his desk and sort of dance over his work. When children are sitting on a rug and listening to a story, I watch who is poking whom. They may not know I am there but even if they do, they don't seem to care. When my own kids were young, if they said something particularly funny, I wrote it on my engagement calendar, which always stood open near the stove. One time my son said something funny and then he turned to me saying, "Did you get that, Mom?" I think it's good practice for a writer to eavesdrop on conversations, writing everything down, to get the cadence of the language as well as the humor.



Author Ralph Feltcher (*What a Writer Needs*, Heinemann, 1993) talks about the importance of dialogue, description, action, and gesture in writing. A gesture like chewing on a pencil can show an emotion or a state of mind. One of my teacher friends uses the first two pages of *Dear Whiskers* to show her students how to create characters using these four elements.

What do I hope evolves as a result of this book? I want children to see that going out of their way for people who are struggling or who are different can enrich their lives, that being kind to other people is really important. Sometimes it's a pain to get involved. Jenny is so frustrated she asks for another pen pal who isn't so much trouble! After her teacher provides encouragement, Jenny makes a breakthrough with Sameera that helps her feel better about herself and her abilities.

Jenny's teacher is an amalgam of some of the really wonderful teachers my two children have had over the years. Teachers can make a difference with the problems children face at school. A parent may notice that their child is upset or crabby, but a teacher can have greater insight into school conflicts and offer the needed care and support.

I did not originally intend to become a writer. For twenty years, I was a computer programmer. My dad encouraged me to study math in college, which was a far cry from my dreams of being an artist or a librarian. So for many years I sold my soul for money. Now that I am writing full time, I am living the life I dreamed about, traveling, photographing, doing research, and sharing my adventures with school children. When my own children were little, I read huge stacks of picture books to them, and I thought, "I could write these books! They're so short." Now I know that picture books are one of the hardest genres to write. Every word counts, so you have to choose carefully. With a novel you have a little more space to say what you want to say. Over the years I have written nonfiction books about animals and their habitats, including rainforests and bamboo forests. I have also combined my math knowledge with my children's books (*Tiger Math*, Holt, 2000) to help kids succeed in math and enjoy the process of learning.

That literature can inspire students to be involved in their communities adds a meaningful dimension to my work. I have heard that a high school in Ohio had every ninth grader read *Dear Whiskers* as their first class text. That's quite astonishing to me, but it made perfect sense to them. Every new high school student could succeed as a reader, since *Dear Whiskers* is written at an elementary level. In addition, my book helped prepare all the ninth graders to be tutors and mentors to elementary children in a grade-wide service learning project and sensitized them to many issues. I'm thrilled that the book has a much bigger audience than I expected. When you write a story, you never know who might be moved or changed by it.

Ultimately this book is about the essence of kindness. When my father died several years ago and I sat down to write about him for his memorial service, what I remembered most clearly was his kindness—not only to his family, but to strangers as well. One time—I must have been thirteen or fourteen—we were driving back home from a day at the Jersey shore. My father stopped to help an older couple whose car had broken down on a lonely stretch of road. It took nearly an hour for my father to fix their clogged fuel line. Later, when I was a junior in college, I too showed kindness to a stranger. I was getting ready to come home for summer vacation and had stopped by the mailroom. A Korean girl I barely knew was standing by the mailboxes crying. I approached her and asked, "What's wrong?" She told me she had nowhere to go for the summer. I immediately told her, "Come home with me!" My friends were astonished that I would make this offer without checking with my parents, but I assured them that my family would not object in the least. My father's kindness touched us all, and we pass it on.



Safe and Strong Communities: Author Interviews

In the following interviews, we find out the “story behind the story” from Sharleen Collicott (*Toestomper and the Caterpillars*), Phillip Hoose (*Hey, Little Ant; We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History; Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice; The Race to Save the Lord God Bird*; and *It’s Our World, Too! Young People Who Are Making a Difference: How They Do It—How You Can Too*), James Howe (*The Misfits, Totally Joe*, and *Pinky and Rex and the Bully*), and Jerry Spinelli (*Stargirl, Wringer, Maniac Magee*, and *The Library Card*).

I had the pleasure of meeting two of these authors. I attended a concert in Los Angeles where Phillip Hoose and his then nine-year-old daughter sang their song “Hey, Little Ant” for the first time in public. I met James Howe at a bookstore and immediately found we shared an interest in stopping bullying and intolerance in schools (and elsewhere). We have now co-lead workshops for teachers and students on the theme “Words That Hurt, Words That Heal, Words That Lead to Social Action.”

Sharleen Collicott, author of *Toestomper and the Caterpillars*

I have a wild imagination. I have many ideas, but putting them down and organizing them is difficult. For me, an idea is more important than being able to draw or write. Develop your idea, that’s the main step. If you have one little tiny idea, you can go the next step and think of another. Now, if a child says, “I don’t have an idea,” I don’t believe it! Even a stiff, corny idea is a fine beginning. I would ask, “What’s your first idea?” If the child answered, “A butterfly walking across the room,” I would ask for the next idea. “The butterfly sits in a chair.” I would say, “Fine, and what’s next?” And the child would say, “The butterfly flies to the moon!” One idea just leads to the next.

My desire to put my ideas on paper led to my being an author, and I worked hard at my art to accomplish my dream. The first books I wrote were crude; still, my editors liked my art so much they helped. Then I taught myself to write. I draw the pictures first, though

not to the point where they are finished. I go over and over the words. I try to let the pictures tell everything, since I do not think of myself as a “writer.” I like to write, but I am always learning. I keep in mind that the secret to a good book is the plot.

I create stories, including *Toestomper and the Caterpillars*, for my own pleasure and hope others enjoy the books as well. How did *Toestomper and the Caterpillars* develop? I had about eight different story lines I could follow with my initial drawings of *Toestomper* and the little caterpillars. He is a bit of a tough guy. I tried to think of a name that was mean but not too mean. In this story, *Toestomper* changes. First he is mean and hanging with the wrong guys. He changes because of the caterpillars. He becomes a “daddy” or a helper. He gets a little bit better. He also makes the caterpillars a little like him as you can see in the last drawing.

The story will continue with *Toestomper and the Bad Butterflies*. Naturally, the caterpillars turn into butterflies, and of course they are not really that bad. They just overstep their bounds.

I am surprised and pleased that *Toestomper and the Caterpillars* can be used as a teaching tool. I like the fact that this book can help someone learn about bullying and friendship and be used for elementary through high school students. It shows that *Toestomper* truly has a good side underneath his rough exterior.

Phillip Hoose, coauthor of *Hey, Little Ant* and author of *Claudette Colvin; The Race to Save the Lord God Bird; We Were There, Too!; and It’s Our World, Too!*

Hey, Little Ant began as a children’s song that I wrote with my daughter Hannah, then nine years old. When it occurred to us that the song would make a worthwhile children’s book, I thought we would easily find a publisher. Wrong! Even with my track record as an author, finding a publisher for *Hey, Little Ant* took five years. When editors bothered to respond about why they rejected the book, they usually informed us that children could not accept a book that ended with a question. They said, “Children need resolution.” I said, “What about *The Cat in the Hat?*” “Well,” they said, “You’re not Dr. Seuss!”



How did I find a publisher? I asked teachers and performers who use this song to write letters explaining how the story and dialogue worked in their classrooms and onstage. Many people wrote me wonderful, helpful descriptions, so I began sending out large packages to publishing houses and included these letters with the manuscript. I finally received a letter from Tricycle Press saying that our submission had raised quite a debate around their office. But, alas, they still weren't going to buy it. I wrote right back saying they should do themselves and children everywhere a favor and take a chance on this book. To my astonishment it worked! I received a call saying that a consultant had agreed that the open ending was actually a strength. We negotiated a contract, and the publisher found a superb illustrator in Debbie Tilley. Since then, *Hey, Little Ant* has sold over one million copies and is available in ten different languages: Hebrew, Dutch, Korean, Italian, French, German, Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese, and English.

How did the story evolve? Basically, one summer day, my daughter Ruby, then two or three, was out in the driveway tromping ants. Hannah, then nine, and I were watching from the porch. Ruby didn't look angry, just bored. I went to her and said, "How would you like to be one of those ants?" "I wouldn't care," she replied. Then I walked away. But Ruby quit stomping. My question and the idea it contained seemed to get to her, and she quit.

Hannah and I were writing songs pretty furiously that summer. Thinking about what had just happened in the driveway, Hannah and I began to script this negotiating session between a child and an ant. As we were wrapping up the song, we said, "How do you want to end it?" We agreed quickly that we did not want to resolve the story at all. The end question: "What do you think that kid should do?" was too big for the author to answer. It had to be up to the reader. To say how it turns out would weaken the story. The power is in the reader's ability to decide for herself or himself. The story offers a chance for very young people to focus on alternatives to violence at perhaps the first moment when they realize they have the power to kill or not to kill: when they're squishing bugs. Asked, "How do you raise a Buddha baby?" the Dalai Lama supposedly

replied, "Teach them to respect insects." I remember deciding as a very young person my lifelong policy—I won't squish a bug deliberately, but if I do it accidentally I won't let myself feel bad. I believe there is real power in the dialogue between the child and the ant.

In performance, I would crouch down on stage as the ant and Hannah would loom over me with her foot up. Often kids in the audience would ask questions like: "Yeah, but what if it's a mosquito?" "Or a bee?" "Or a fire ant?" "What if a hundred ants are on your kitchen counter, what would you do?" We would reflect the questions back: "What would *you* do?"

Hey, Little Ant has achieved a reputation as a tool for exploring tolerance, nonviolence, seeing the common worth of all living creatures. The song/book has been turned into plays, operas, and videos around the world to encourage children to reflect on these very serious questions in ways that are easy for them to think about.

In this story I see two creatures who, despite their obvious differences in size and physical power, have a lot in common. I think it is important to look for the common basis in all living creatures while we respect and appreciate the differences.

Three other books I have authored on my own are all nonfiction, and all connect back to *Hey, Little Ant*. *We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History* took six years to research and write. Its origin came from a comment a middle school student made to me: "There is nobody my age in my history book," she said. I responded, "That can't be true." "Go see for yourself," she replied. So I looked in a middle school history book—it was an immense, dreary thing, and must have weighed fifteen pounds. The only teens were Sacagawea and Pocahontas, Native American girls who guided white explorers. Since the explorers kept journals, these two young women persisted in history. I called the student back and said, "You're right. How does that make you feel?" And she said, "It makes me feel that I don't exist—not until I turn age twenty or so will I have the mass and molecular structure to be represented in time!"

This really got to me. So I set out to write a book about and for young people, to show them that this country would be very different were it not for their



contributions. There are sixty-six stories of young Americans—from teens who sailed with Columbus, to young people active in the Underground Railroad or trapped inside the Alamo, to young Chinese workers building railroads, up to the present day. It was a mammoth and extremely satisfying undertaking.

Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice sprang from *We Were There, Too!* There is no episode in U.S. history in which young people figured so centrally than the civil rights movement. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The blanket of fear was lifted by Negro youth.” *Brown vs. the Board of Education* was all about young people, since it ruled that racially segregated schools were unconstitutional. Hence, thousands of young heroes and heroines walked into hostile situations in their schools every day; unfortunately, most of their stories remain unrecorded.

During my research about young people involved in the civil rights movement, I kept hearing about one girl: Claudette Colvin. At age fifteen, Claudette did what Rosa Parks did a year earlier on the same city bus system, but she was scorned by people in her community instead of honored as Parks was. Still, she courageously put her name on a lawsuit with three other women and ended discrimination on public buses. I thought wow, I would love to talk with her and write her story! How powerful it would be to write a book for young readers, informed by interviews with a person who not only made mammoth contributions to U.S. history, but who could also tell readers what it felt like to be a teenager at that time. I found out Claudette lived in New York City with an unlisted number. I contacted a journalist who had quoted her in a newspaper article and asked if he was still in touch with her. He was, and he agreed to relay a message to Ms. Colvin that I would like to write a book about her youth. Her response came back: “Maybe when I retire.” I sent this message to her through the reporter twice every year for four years, and the same sentence came back every time.

Then one night in the fall of 2007, I came home and had a phone message from the reporter: “Claudette said she will talk to you. Here’s her number. Good luck.” I didn’t sleep; I was up all night writing down questions. I called her the next day and we spoke for

about an hour. She said I could visit her in New York, and a few weeks later we sat together in a diner across from her place. We spent most of the day talking. At the end we agreed to work on this project together. I spent many hours during the next year interviewing Claudette. I went to Montgomery and met her people. And now that the book is out, we have been on the road together, making appearances about once a month. We have been in Birmingham, Montgomery, New York City, and Portland, Maine. We also have a curriculum created in collaboration with King Middle School in Portland. The kids did a unit called “Understanding Courage.” They drew posters based on the book chapters that were displayed on public buses in their community. They wrote essays about what courage meant to them, realizing that there is injustice in everyone’s life, everyone has a story.

The Race to Save the Lord God Bird came from my having spent thirty-two years on staff of the Nature Conservancy, now working three days a week. I have always cared about extinction—it is worth everyone’s attention. A horrible crisis occurs when a life form vanishes. The great naturalist William Beebe wrote, “When the last individual of a race of living things breathes no more, another heaven and another earth must pass before such a one can be again.” That was the sensibility behind *Hey, Little Ant* as well. So I thought I would try and write a book about a really charismatic animal that we have lost, and about the humans whose decisions made the situation worse, as well as those who tried to save it. I started researching the ivory-billed woodpecker. I went to Cuba, Louisiana, Cornell, and all over the place. Several months after the book was out, there was a claim the bird had been rediscovered in Arkansas! I hope this is true. As many species are now plummeting toward extinction, we have important decisions to make and I want my writing to help inform them.

What’s my end game as an author? First, I want young people to have good, fun, exciting literature in their lives. Nonfiction writers have a special advantage when it comes to writing gripping stories. They’re true! They actually happened! A good true story really hooks the reader. Secondly, I want to encourage the view that all living things are precious, all deserve respect and



care, and all are equally important. That's why Hannah and I wrote *Hey, Little Ant*, asking the reader the same question I asked Ruby in the driveway long ago: "How would you like to be one of those ants?" Basically, all the rest of my books have been *Hey, Little Ant* for older readers. They all have the point of view that everyone deserves respect and good treatment.

Claudette Colvin grew up in a time and place filled with terror and intimidation. Jim Crow encouraged her to see herself as an ant. Her mother taught her never to touch a white person, or to look one in the eye. That Claudette had the guts to fight back is amazing to me. I want people to care about her. The same is true with the ivory-billed woodpecker—I hope people will read *The Race to Save the Lord God Bird* and come to love the ivory-bill and lament its passing so profoundly that when they have the chance to help save another species, they will. Likewise *We Were There, Too!* is about children and teens—all but ignored in history. I want to correct that.

Basically, young people who will cause constructive social change will need three assets: First, they need role models, which I have tried to offer them through stories. Next, they'll need tactics, which I presented as a handbook in *It's Our World, Too! Young People Who Are Making a Difference*. I interviewed many young activists, asking what they've tried, what worked and what didn't, and what they would do differently. Finally, they need a sense of themselves in history. All of my books encourage readers to look at life and history from the bottom up and the inside out.

James Howe, author of *The Misfits*, *Totally Joe*, and *Pinky and Rex and the Bully*

Writing *The Misfits* had several starting points, with two at the forefront. My daughter had a hard time socially in seventh grade with all the name-calling and ostracism. It brought back my experience during those years and how hard it was for me feeling different from my peers.

The other compelling motivation was that I had recently come out as a gay man after many years in the closet. I wanted to write something that would help young people today not have to go through the

experiences of my past. I wanted to write a young gay character who was okay with who he was and could start life on a different foot. While I do think things are changing, we have a long way to go. When I was growing up, being gay was considered an illness or something you did not want to be. Now I realize how much I had lived in fear of what people would think of me or say to me if they knew who I was. "Coming out" made me see what a waste of energy it had been my whole life not to be myself. I have developed an impatience with the ways in which we all waste energy and our lives by living in fear, so often of such small things. I wanted to tell this story like it is, as best as I could, to convey the message that we can be part of change. It's possible. The actual writing of *The Misfits* started with an unfinished short story on the theme of chocolate. I had a setting of a small town and a department store with Bobby selling ties. When I began writing this novel, I thought of Bobby's character and his strong voice that I loved and connected with. From the short story evolved this group of friends. They wrote the book.

Part of my intent in writing, especially for children, is to empower them, to open their minds to think about things in a different way. With *The Misfits*, I was writing a story with characters who, deep in their bones, understand about courage, taking a stand, and telling it like it is. Accepting differences and embracing difference in oneself as a good thing has been central to many of my books, from picture books like *I Wish I Were a Butterfly*, to beginning readers like *Pinky and Rex and the Bully*, to novels such as *The Misfits* and *Totally Joe*. The idea of difference as something we shy away from is a notion that boggles my mind.

That *The Misfits* is told with humor is only natural; humor is part of who I am and also where I come from. My father, a minister and social activist, frequently would wind humor into his sermons, even on serious topics, just as I do in my writing. I want the reader to care! Certainly I do not want readers to feel they are being told what to think. As a reader or audience member, I treasure the times I am laughing one minute and crying the next. Humor and sadness are so connected in life.



The characters in this book grow in their ability to see a larger world. Often, when one is the subject of injustice, it is easier to see there is a larger world. I imagine this book being used to open the reader, the class, the school—whoever is using the book as a community—to build a bridge to the bigger world. This book can open dialogue and suggest creative ways to deal with whatever problems exist. By being direct, and putting yourself out there, you are helping others to do the same.

While I have received very positive responses from kids regarding the book, some say they had a hard time accepting the ending: that two gay characters, Joe and Colin, could express their feelings to each other at the age of twelve and also that a really popular “in kid” would date a less popular kid. Some kids like this sort of “fairy-tale ending.” I want the reader to ask, “Why do you think this is unrealistic? Why should it be otherwise?” I was prompted by responses to the book and my own questions to write *Totally Joe*, which I hope will help readers have a better idea of who that boy is who gets called “faggot” or is pushed up against his locker because he’s effeminate or gay. As important—if not more so—I want the boys (and girls) who can identify with a character like Joe to know that they’re not only okay, they’re terrific.

After the book was published, I thought that nothing would make me happier than if this book were a catalyst for political action in schools. I hadn’t planned on the book being so political. But the seed was planted with Addie when she refuses to say the pledge of allegiance and continued through the creation of the No Name Party and the Gang of Five’s campaign for student council. You can imagine how thrilled I was when *The Misfits* became the inspiration for National No Name-Calling week. This national initiative has become a popular and successful annual event in thousands of elementary and middle schools.

I hope *The Misfits* and No Name-Calling Week open the minds and hearts of young people and help enable them to think for themselves—to really consider what it would be like to be in someone else’s shoes, how they would feel if they were the object of name-calling. That’s a lot right there. I don’t think you arbitrarily stop name-calling. I think you develop

compassion and an understanding that the other person is a human being.

Jerry Spinelli, author of *Stargirl*, *Wringer*, *Maniac Magee*, and *The Library Card*

When the first jacket copy for *Stargirl* came out, I realized that this book was being presented as a hymn to nonconformity. I suppose it is, but as I was writing the book, I wasn’t thinking of it as such. I was equally thinking of *Stargirl* as being about kindness, like the bumper sticker that describes how we should all do random acts of kindness. *Stargirl* may be a nonconformist, but she does not intend to be nonconformist. She does not wake up and say, “How is everybody else going to be? I will be the other way.” She doesn’t even wake up thinking, “I will be me.” She simply is. When she wakes up in the morning, *Stargirl* thinks about other people, and it is this that drives her, a concern and an awareness of others. That’s why she makes a scrapbook of her neighbor’s life to give to him years later; he’s not aware the scrapbook is being made. She celebrates birthdays of kids at school, she attends a post-funeral gathering because she feels connected to everybody. She rewrites the pledge of allegiance so that it does not offend any group of people; it is her conscious or unconscious or humorous way of declaring that her allegiance is, even more than to her country, to her species and her planet. She is a citizen of the world.

What influences and shapes my stories? My family must have been an influence; I am sure this is in part where I developed an awareness of the situations and the feelings of others. Certainly I was influenced by my wife, Eileen Spinelli, who resembles *Stargirl* more than anyone I know. I transplanted episodes out of Eileen’s life into the story. The ukulele that *Stargirl* plays is strictly from me, however. Inspired by Arthur Godfrey, an entertainer I watched on television when I was young, it was the first instrument I ever played.

Other moments find their way into words on the page. Some connections might surprise you. What does Sonny Liston, a former heavyweight champion of the world, have to do with *Stargirl*? One of the most moving essays I ever read is an account by a sportswriter about Sonny Liston, who, widely reviled as an illiterate thug, became heavyweight champion of the



world. The writer found himself on a plane sitting next to Sonny just after he won the title. The plane was heading to Sonny's hometown. Sonny was telling the sportswriter (and not at all sounding like an illiterate thug) that he was really looking forward to this homecoming as a world champion, to being celebrated upon arrival. He believed this championship would transform the oppression he experienced of people disliking him. Sonny would become the object of positive treatment, the "marshal" of his own parade. This obviously meant a great deal to him. When they landed, the sportswriter followed Liston off the plane and no one was there. Imagine the disappointment. This situation moved me so much. It became one of many stories I put away; writers do this—we store stories like squirrels. And years later Sonny seemed to fit into *Stargirl's* story. I cooked up a comparable situation: *Stargirl* has a similar moment after winning the state oratorical contest. This little known story about Sonny Liston is the source.

Wringer also began with a real-life situation. For years, on the Tuesday after Labor Day, I read the same story in our newspaper about a pigeon shoot. It seemed to become more and more notorious with state police, television cameras, animal rights activists, and protestors—a real circus. This got my attention. I kept thinking about it and taking notes, considering this for a possible story. After a number of years, I began to see how I could tell the story through the eyes of one of the "wringers," or trapper boys, whose job it was to dispatch the wounded pigeons. I figured, okay, that can be the main character. Then came the question: What would happen if one kid in this town, where all the boys are expected to become wringers, doesn't want to? This question launched the book. *Wringer* is about sensitivity and peer pressure. The pigeon shoot was ultimately discontinued because of the burdensome legal fees that continually arose in holding this event with the growing opposition from so many animal rights groups.

I don't look for stories in the people I meet, but then again, sometimes, the stories just seem to walk up and greet me. I was in New York talking to kids in a library. Afterwards, a teacher stopped by the podium wanting me to meet one of his sixth-grade girls. "She loves books," he said, but then he described how, while she was at school, her books were ripped and damaged by her siblings and pets. "Now," he continued, "she packs her home library in a big suitcase and carries it to school every day so her beloved books will never be more than an arm's length away." I knew this would be story material. I met the girl, gave her my address, and looking her in the eye, made her promise to write to me. This must have been about fifteen years ago. I never heard from her. I have no idea if she realizes she became Amanda Beale, the girl in *Maniac Magee*.

Authors transpose real life into fiction. I suspect any writer could give you many examples. That's not the whole secret of writing, but an example of where story stuff comes from.

I am delighted that *Stargirl* has captured a broad audience. The book is now in twenty-five languages, a best seller in Japan, and has received honors in Italy. *Stargirl* can be read on several levels, including as a primer, a guidebook on how to behave, and live in this world with others. My best recommendation with *Stargirl*? Emulate her!



Social Change: Author Interviews

In the following interviews, we find out the “story behind the story” from Deborah Ellis (*I Am a Taxi*, *Sacred Leaf*, and *Jakeman*, among other titles), Sonia Levitin (*Dream Freedom*), and Diana Cohn (*¡Sí, Se Puede!/Yes, We Can! Janitor Strike in L.A.*).

Deborah Ellis, author of *I Am a Taxi*, *Sacred Leaf*, and *Jakeman*

I have wanted to write since I was a child. Growing up in a small town in Canada, reading and writing kept me company. I worked at writing for many years before being published.

When selecting topics, I write about what interests me—how we deal with the world, how we find dignity in a world that can rob us of this dignity, and how we find ways to build relationships that matter. I travel wherever the book is taking place or the issue is prominent. Once there, I get to meet the most amazing people. I meet people with kids and find out about their lives. I most often speak with kids and they tell me what they think about what has happened to them, and what they think about the world. Telling these stories helps us remember that the decision made by people in power has a lot of impact on people in many parts of the world. Through my books, their stories can be told.

I Am a Taxi and its sequel *Sacred Leaf* began through my contact with a Canadian-based group Street Kids International that works with children all around the world. One of the biggest exploiters of children is the illegal drug trade. I began to look at what I could do and the situation in Bolivia seemed to be a place I could investigate so I went there and spoke with kids who worked the drug trade. I didn’t expect to find that children live in prison with their parents. One of those things we haven’t figured out how to do is take care of the children separated from parents when they are incarcerated. So in some cases, as in Bolivia, they move into prisons with their parents. In Bolivia, these folks, especially in the women’s prison, work really hard to take care of the children and the prisoners protect them. I was able to go inside the prisons and even into some of the cells and see these little cubbyholes

where people are supposed to live their lives. A charity that takes children out during the day so they get play time, meals, and showers arranged for me to have permission to go inside for a bit of time. When I travel, as I did in Bolivia, I hire local translators. These are adults who sometimes change what the kids are telling me so I’m given the impression the adult wants. I would prefer an accurate translation.

The book *Jakeman* grew out of the time I spent in Bolivian prisons and thinking about how we deal with families separated by prison in North America. I heard about long bus rides taken by kids from New York City to an upstate prison to see their mom or dad. And when they are not able to take this trip, they lose that contact with their parent. Kids who have parents in prison are seventy percent more likely to end up in prison themselves. It’s like we deliberately are creating this ongoing cycle of prisoners. This book took a long process of rewriting—a long time for me to find out who was telling the story as the narrator. I knew this book would capture this long bus journey and result in the kids gaining a sense of feeling powerful again.

My background in nonviolence carries the tenet of seeing the value in every human being. This holds true for every person, even with a person who seems most difficult, there is something that is really valuable. I like that Jake’s character is braver than he thinks he is. All kids are really strong and smart and have things to say and do. It’s in our best interest to have access to their brains and to make certain children have what they need to develop their minds along with their bodies and that they function properly. I hope people will read *Jakeman* and think about kids whose parents are in prison and make sure they don’t fall through the cracks. I hope that kids who read this book remember Jake when they become decision makers, and that some people put children away, almost discard them, and we need to look after these kids.

My books are most often about complex situations that do not have simple solutions. Sometimes a politician tries to sell us a simple solution. We have to be informed. We must keep in mind what our priorities are and who our priorities are and do what we believe will bring out the best in ourselves and others.



Sonia Levitin, author of *Dream Freedom*

My story begins in February of 1999. I had finished writing *The Cure*, a demanding work because it dealt with the persecution of Jews in the Middle Ages, when they were accused of poisoning the wells. This situation was parallel to what occurred during the Holocaust. If Hitler had read about these persecutions, he would have found a blueprint for his actions. After each book, I take several weeks off to revitalize myself. During this time, I received a notice from the Simon Wiesenthal Center about a symposium on issues of present-day slavery. Normally, I don't have time to attend such events. This day, however, made a significant impact on my life and work. I was overwhelmed with what I heard. The abolitionists who spoke described the genocide that is going on right now in the Sudan. I saw pictures of Sudanese people being brutalized. I met former slaves. I listened to activists dedicated to stopping this horror. I even learned of school children in Colorado who raised funds to free some of the slaves.

I came home depressed. I was crying all night in my sleep. There seemed to be nothing I could do. In the morning I told my husband what I had learned, and of course he agreed that this situation is horrible. On my morning walk, still caught up in the tragedy and frustration, I suddenly realized, of course there is something I can do. I began walking faster, thinking: I have to write about this subject.

First, I made a phone call to my contact at the Wiesenthal Center to let them know of my intentions. Next, I called my editor and gave her a thumbnail sketch of what I had learned about the Sudan and my idea for a book. I emphasized that this must be published right away, no delay! She agreed. Of course, I hadn't written one word yet.

Initially, I was going to write a nonfiction book using prior experience with investigative writing for newspapers. Instead, I decided to write a novel, to use my strength in creating fictional characters out of all I have heard and what I would continue to learn. I wove in the story of the elementary class in Colorado. I included an American child, Marcus, a fifth grader, who is not wealthy and has problems of his own, and had him reach out across the world to a situation more

profound and tragic. This was not to compare these sets of problems. We each live with our own concerns. When my family immigrated to this country from Europe, we were desperately poor. Still, my mother was shipping boxes to families in need in her home country. All of us, even those who are seen as underprivileged, have something to give.

Every book presents a great difficulty for the writer, and for me this is the structure of the book. For this novel, I wanted to create a feeling of truth and reality for the reader. I did not want to tell a linear story of one enslaved child. I wanted to show that slavery affects everybody, so there are many points of view. I intended to tie the stories together by repeating characters in a subtle way. One of my favorite chapters tells of a boy who goes to work with his father for the first time, his initiation to follow in his father's footsteps. He discovers that his father is a slaveholder and trades in human flesh. We know at the chapter's end that this boy will never inflict pain. He doesn't want to ride with his father. This boy begins a shift. I believe that each person can make a change, starting with him or herself.

I did not travel to the Sudan; however, I learned about this rich culture through films, slides, and books and by meeting people who greatly influenced my work and my life. I went to Washington, D.C., to meet Dr. Francis Mading Dang, an author and scholar with the Brookings Institute. At one time he was the Sudanese ambassador to Scandinavia. The son of a great chief, he has studied all over the world and has written eight books on Sudan's politics and society, and I have read them all.

When traveling to Switzerland, I met John Eibner, Director of Advocacy for the Christian Solidarity International. He goes to the Sudan two or three times annually to bring currency to free slaves at great hazard to himself. The way I described him in the chapter called "Mercy" shows him as he truly is, a most humble person.

Of course I contacted the Colorado teacher, Barbara Vogel, and flew to Denver to meet her class. I also accompanied her fourth- and fifth-grade class to Washington, D.C. The students spoke to members of Congress to ask them to act. On another trip



to D.C., the students spoke to the Foreign Relations Committee and read a passage of *Dream Freedom* into the Congressional Record. This is the first time ever that children in our country have lobbied on behalf of children in Africa.

A writer has the opportunity to be a bridge, to reach the reader on an emotional level. Our stories can show how people are the same, with the same needs, the same content inside, the same soul. Our words can fascinate by the differences revealed, including cultural differences. Through fiction, I want to sensitize the reader and show them much more than they would see with a cursory glance. I want to open the reader to understanding other people and caring about them. What they do with that caring is up to them.

In classrooms, the teacher can be the vehicle for the experience: to be sure the story is told, and to have children express their thoughts and feelings and put themselves in someone else's place. Then the action will come from them. Adults can present the possibility that we can do something. When we plant the seed and keep encouraging, children can find what they care about, whether it is the Sudanese slavery issue, local hunger, or abandoned animals. While it is easy to address a problem in a superficial way, we can learn and make the idea of change part of who we are. We can only change ourselves, yet this creates the possibility for others to change as well. Our lives are so much richer when we are involved.

**Diana Cohn, author of *¡Sí, Se Puede!*/
Yes, We Can!**

When I entered the teaching profession, the whole language movement was coming into force along with the push for using multicultural literature across the classroom curriculum. Working within the whole language framework proved to me that students had their own stories to tell and were interested in stories that opened up numerous diverse subjects for discussion. We all know the power that a book has to expand children's horizons, and how a book can be a springboard for probing conversations about complex issues. I worked hard to obtain books that dealt with cultural diversity and social justice issues while working as a teacher. Later, as a former classroom teacher and as an

emerging writer, I wanted to contribute to this growing body of literature.

My first book, *Dream Carver*, about an Oaxacan boy who carves his dreams into life, was inspired by the renaissance of woodcarving in southern Mexico. My second book, *¡Sí, Se Puede!* was written after reading about the April 2000 janitor strike in Los Angeles. When I read about the strike, I knew it was a story I wanted to tell. It passed "the goose bump test"; it was a story that got under my skin.

For any subject I want to write about, I always start with research. It is the foundation that inspires the actual unfolding of the story. I learned all I could about the janitors' strike, including newspaper articles, exploring the Internet, and interviewing several organizers and some of the janitors who were the leaders of the strike. As I delved into the reality of the story, the characters—Carlitos, his mama, and his teacher—began to come to life. All of the characters in this story are a synthesis from interviews and stories I read about the strike. Then I worked on finding a conflict in the story that a child could relate to and once this became clear to me, the story found its form.

In the story, Carlitos is challenged to find a way to help his mama during the three-week strike. He does this by organizing his classmates to make signs, with help from his grandmother and teacher. The janitor strike was led by many strong women, so I wanted Carlitos's mother to be a strong female character. I wanted her able to explain her problem and her decision to strike for a living wage job and benefits so she could take care of her family in the way she wanted to, in a way that a young child could understand. I also wanted to show a classroom where a teacher was responding to the realities of her students' lives. So when Carlitos brings in the photos from the newspaper showing the striking workers, his teacher opens a discussion with her students about the strike and about the importance of people working together as a strong team. She helps her students understand the situation and supports their interest in getting involved. For all people, their way into social justice work is different. For Carlitos, it was simply to make a beautiful sign that said, "I love my mama, she's a janitor!" to bring to a march. A sign painted in his colors and with his words.



It is important to note that I worked with an extraordinary publisher for this book, Cinco Puntos Press. They put an enormous amount of time into the bilingual translation and assigned Francisco Delgado, a talented artist born in Mexico and currently from El Paso, Texas, to do the illustrations. His images resonated deeply with the workers who read the book.

Students need to see themselves reflected in the stories and books they read. I have done readings where kids say with great pride after hearing the story, “My father is a janitor!” We need voices and expressions of the diversity of life in books surrounding young people as they grow up. They need to see themselves and others mirrored in the world. Since the book was published we have received a lot of feedback.

In Boston, when the Boston janitors were on strike, a child who was present at a reading said he had not “done anything” to help the strike, “I just held up a banner.” A few weeks later I saw a photo of a rally in Boston in a magazine and there was this child, Raul, holding up the banner! I always tell young people, “Everything you do to help others matters. Showing up matters.”

At a reading in Washington, D.C., some workers came up to me and Francisco, the artist, and said, “Thank you for writing this book. Our families don’t always understand why the organizing work we do takes us away from them. *¡Sí, Se Puede!* helped explain to them why we do what we do.”

Another person sent me an email from Portland, Washington, writing, “A janitor from our high school died and your book was read at the memorial service. Your words have wings.”

This book can be used to teach about the labor movement and about worker justice issues. It can open conversations about the invisible work that is done: the cafeteria workers who arrive early at school to prepare food, the farmworkers who pick the fruit in the fields, and the many others who do so much of the necessary work that we don’t always recognize. This book is being used in elementary through high school classes as well as in union locals for their literacy classes.

All writers know when they find a story. Something inside says “yes,” and then you know that you need to start creating. When I was a classroom teacher I spent a lot of time reading picture books to children. In picture books, the challenge for the writer is to distill the story down to the most essential elements. Kids won’t stand for anything else. I have written in other forms, including poetry and a young adult novel, but the picture book form is the one closest to my heart. I love the interplay between the text and the art and that working in this genre can be such a collaborative process.

I believe that all children have strong dreams that live inside them. I hope my books and my future books will help young people bring their dreams to life in the context of building just communities. At the conclusion of *¡Sí, Se Puede!*, the mother knows it is her responsibility to be there for others struggling for justice so she joins a march with hotel workers fighting for a living wage just as she did. Carlitos joins his mama thereby taking his place in the movement. *¡Sí, Se Puede!* is ultimately a story about solidarity. We need to be there for each other, whether it is in the classroom, in the community, or across borders.



Special Needs and Disabilities: Author Interviews

In the following interview, we find out the “story behind the story” from Ellen Senisi (*Just Kids: Visiting a Class for Children with Special Needs* and *All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!*) and Cynthia Lord (*Rules*).

When I interviewed Ellen, I got more from the conversation than I expected. Of course, I heard how she had photographed the students in *Just Kids: Visiting a Class for Children with Special Needs*, how she had studied disabilities, and how the book had evolved. But I also learned of *All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!*, which is the story of a special boy with special needs who has so many friends he can’t decide which one to describe in a school assignment. I dream of this being the case for every child. My sister, Betty, has a son who is autistic and also runs a program for kids with autism. One day she called me and said, “You must read *Rules*.” I did. Betty agrees this story captures important relationships in respectful ways and contains great memorable characters. Interviewing Cynthia Lord reminded me of how writers draw from the people and events in their lives, and how grateful I am when they share these stories with us.

Ellen Senisi, author of *Just Kids* and *All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!*

As a young person, I was drawn to writing. I received training as a teacher and then found photography. I went back to graduate school and studied educational media and technology. Through my books, I bring many aspects of my life together: my experiences as a teacher and a parent, articulating ideas as a writer, and capturing the visual image with my camera. I conceptually design my books using all these elements.

I grew up as the eldest in a family with seven children. My youngest sibling has Down syndrome. People who don’t know someone with special needs, especially children, tend to tense up; they don’t know how to act or what to do. Through my books, I want to communicate that people with special needs are people just like us. This is a message I particularly want to relate to kids.

I was asked to help special needs students to make books about themselves at Yates School in Schenectady, New York. As I photographed the kids, I really liked how sensitive and helpful they were to each other. The relationships between the kids, and their relationship with their teacher, were special and particularly affectionate. The emotional dynamics were alive in a way that is often missing in a traditional classroom.

I wanted to capture this classroom in a book and had to decide how to approach the story. Should it be fiction or nonfiction? Then the teacher related something that had happened a year earlier, when a girl made a derogatory remark to a special needs child. When I first visited, the girl who had provoked the incident was a volunteer helper in the class twice a week. My editor approved an approach using this scenario. After getting approvals from my publisher, parents of the students, and the school district, I returned to the classroom and began official work on *Just Kids*.

For about seven months, I spent nearly every morning, four to five days a week, in the classroom. I wanted to take time to get to know the kids so I could catch subtle behaviors and interactions. I spent the afternoons reading about autism, learning abilities, Down syndrome, and epilepsy and, in general, gaining an understanding of the basics of neurological impairments. And, of course, I wrote.

The research enriched the time spent with the kids and helped me to notice little things I would have otherwise missed. I learned it was natural for the autistic boy in the class to stare into the distance or not make eye contact, when before I had thought he was just tired, shy, or not paying attention. As a photographer, I learned to be more alert.

In *Just Kids*, special education students are shown in their own classroom, with plenty of interaction with children in traditional classrooms. Many schools now place children with special needs in regular classrooms all day. This is called inclusion, and I show that kind of classroom in *All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!* Zoller School in Schenectady is the setting for this book because the school does an excellent job with inclusion. The particular class photographed for this book, a first-grade class of twenty children, includes a teacher,



a half-time special education teacher, and three full-time paraprofessionals. (However, I know of other schools where special needs students are plopped into regular classes and teachers are not given the necessary training or staff support they need to make the inclusion approach effective for all kids.)

The story photographed at Zoller School follows Moses, a child with spina bifida and sacral agenesis, who is thinking about the friends in his life as he works on a writing assignment about friendship. This book was written to help children ages four to seven to begin to understand special needs, so it shows children with easily identifiable disabilities. I wrote *All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!* in part because once I met Moses, I knew he was exactly the right person for the story I had in mind. Sadly, Moses passed away before he saw this book in print. Still, his story is here for others to learn from.

I hope my books encourage kids to get involved with the kids with special needs who are somewhere in their school. It seems that more inclusion classes and contact between children with and without special needs can be found at the elementary level than at higher levels. In middle and high schools, kids need to be in contact with each other to prevent harmful dynamics, such as the incident I showed at the beginning of the *Just Kids* book. When kids who have special needs are only seen in the hallways of middle and high schools, and they appear “different” from other students, thoughtful interaction is highly unlikely. Yet when kids with and without special needs interact with each other on a regular basis in their environment, whether a special class or an inclusion class, they come to know and understand each naturally.

Here is an example. In Moses’s classroom, a girl with cerebral palsy couldn’t hold her hand up for very long when she wanted to answer a question. I noticed how the children sitting next to her would often help her keep her hand up until she was called on. Because the children in that classroom were in daily contact, they knew what to do to help each other; and in the process, they built positive relationships. That’s what all schools should be trying to bring about. Schools are a natural place to learn about people who are both similar to and different from us. If we can get kids

connected during the school years, wouldn’t there be a greater likelihood of this occurring afterwards? The world might then become more inclusive!

Cynthia Lord, author of *Rules*

I have two children, a nineteen-year-old daughter and sixteen-year-old son. My son has autism. My novel, *Rules*, was inspired by both of them. My daughter grew up straddling two different worlds. As her brother’s sister, her life had to revolve around therapist visits. But she also just wanted to have friends over and have life be about her. Her experience, more than my son’s, led me to write this book.

Where do the actual characters and events come from? Many of David’s behaviors and rules are based on what my son really did. People with autism have great logic even though their behaviors can appear random to the outside world. I thought by taking some of my son’s behaviors and what happened, I would bring that logic to the book’s character and he would feel very real.

My daughter was a big help when I wrote *Rules*. She was fourteen and liked to talk to me about her feelings about her brother. She would describe the complications. I have never met a sibling who didn’t love his or her brother or sister with autism; still, there are challenges that come along with having a sibling with this special need. She would read my drafts and offer ideas; I took her up on the suggestions. She would point out when I sounded like a mom and tell me, “This sounds like something a ‘mom’ would say, not a sister!” She was fantastic, a big help. And she was right: the experience of a mom and a sister are extremely different.

My son had all the clinic appointments that David had in *Rules*. In other books about kids with special needs, I never found a story that included the relationships that the families have with each other. Usually, if there is a disabled character there is only one, and this person is often disconnected from the rest of the disability world. I wanted to show the community what our families have with each other. One day, I was in a clinic and a boy about fifteen came in with a communication book and he and his mom were having this big fight. He wanted something and they were arguing and he was slapping those cards. I was surprised



you could have a fight with a communication book and wondered what words he would like to express, what words he would like in his communication book that might be missing. That's where the idea came for Catherine meeting this particular boy.

How do I go about writing novels? I write every day. I have a set period of time, a schedule, like a person who goes to a job. As a mom, it's easy to put what is yours last, but I make sure I have time to write. When I started *Rules* I didn't have much time. My son was five, and he kept me busy. I started to get up about three or four in the morning to write every day. For me, this seemed the only available time, and I needed either to stop wanting to write the novel or get up early. Then it became a habit. The rest of my family doesn't want to get up then, so I still do wake up early to write and then write again in the afternoon. The dreaming part of writing is very important. During my years as a teacher, I saw that we don't plan this open-ended think-plan-dream time into the schedule. We expect the empty page will be filled immediately. Professional writers know better.

For me, Catherine has more in common with Jason than with Kristi. However, sometimes we aim for a friendship with a person that is based on an idea more than the reality. Sometimes people ask me if Catherine and Kristi will become friends. This shines a light on why we pick the friends we do, and is a reminder that we can't be friends with people unless we are honest with them.

Kids ask if the characters are real and what's made up. They often know I have a son with autism. They want these characters to be real. If my daughter comes with me to an event they ask if she is Catherine. They hope that it's true. They liked that character. They ask specifically about Frog and Toad's quotes and if my son dropped toys in the fish tank (he did). They want to know where the names came from—the story behind the story. I hope that kids will experience this book first and foremost as a story they can lose themselves in, that the message won't overshadow the pure pleasure of reading.

Surprisingly many different children respond to Catherine. I get a lot of mail from children with cancer or have concerns about their siblings' health. I get letters from children whose parents are going through divorce or who are in other situations where they believe people see them as "different." I love it when the book becomes the voice of a child having a hard time expressing their whole feelings, and they can see themselves in the story and find a connection. Catherine helps get that conversation started.

Schools and kids have done amazing projects as a result of reading *Rules*. They have created opportunities for typical kids (kids without an identified special need) to connect and spend time in classrooms with their disabled peers and with special-needs-related organizations in their communities as a follow-up. In one community the entire school read the book. When they finished, they held a dance because the story ends with a dance, and gave the money to Special Olympics. I hear of many connections with autism groups, like a class that read *Rules* and put on an Easter egg hunt for a school for kids with autism. Another class read the book and held a panel where people from their community who have disabilities spoke—a person who is blind, a teacher brought his wife who has multiple sclerosis, a mom of a child with autism, and a librarian whose dad was a paraplegic. I appreciate hearing how the book comes to life in the community, because the kids will see people every day, on the street, in the grocery store, and we don't always know about these disabilities. Having times to hear from each other makes us all more aware. These may look like little things but they are really big.

I will definitely write about autism in the future, because I live with autism as part of my family every day. This is a spectrum disorder from an upper end with kids who would have to tell you they have autism, down to kids who struggle to learn basic self care and everything in between. The spectrum is so wide. David is right around the middle. The two ends of this spectrum have a long distance between so there is much to learn.

Voices from the Field

(Note: Brief excerpts of these essays are included in the book.)

Building the Sustainable Service Learning Partnership
by Susan A. Abravanel

Creating a Culture of Service Through Collaboration
by Roser Batlle

Creating and Supporting a Culture of Service Through Professional Development
by Anne Thidemann French

District-Wide Implementation: Character and Service
by Dr. Ada Grabowski

Getting Started in the Process of Creating a Culture of Service: Developing Service Learning in a Texas School District
by Mike Hurewitz

A Local Service Learning Association
by Cathryn Berger Kaye and Donna Ritter

The Legacy Project: From Student Voice Comes a Transformative Model
by Ron Perry

Mission and Coordination: An Independent School Perspective
by Nan Peterson

Youth Empowerment to Create a District-Wide Culture of Service
by Evelyn Robinson

Urban Service learning
by Jon Schmidt



Building the Sustainable Service Learning Partnership

by Susan A. Abravanel, Vice President of Education
Youth Service America
Washington, D.C.

The successful service learning partnership seeks to enhance both the quality of education and the quality of life in a community. Students learn through addressing real community issues, while the partner meets essential public needs with the help of student service. The best partnerships are reciprocal; both school and community partner see the collaboration as a better way to achieve outcomes that each seeks individually, ultimately addressing identified needs through plans they develop together.

The key to success lies in understanding that the culture of the school and that of the community partner differ in significant ways. Schools focus on the *process of learning*, and embrace service learning as an effective strategy to engage and educate; community partners focus on the *product of service*, viewing service learning as an opportunity to involve youth in meeting current and future community needs. This fundamental difference impacts the way each views elements of the service learning experience, including planning, leadership, and scheduling, as well as the measurement of outputs and outcomes.

Schools can build successful partnerships with frequent and clear communication throughout the process. Here are some tips for doing that:

- Present to the partner a clear and easy-to-understand definition of service learning. How is it different from community service?
- Share your learning objectives with the partner, introducing proposed academic content and standards in jargon-free terminology. What expertise does the partner have that can benefit student learning?
- Learn about the mission of the organization or agency, and how the proposed plans will support that mission. What does the community partner expect from the student service?
- Introduce the concept of *youth voice*, explaining its importance to student engagement. How will the partner accommodate youth leadership within the student service experience?
- Think “win-win.” What assessment measures will be used to demonstrate how both learning objectives and community needs are met?

For additional information, see “Building Community Through Service Learning: The Role of the Community Partner” by Susan A. Abravanel (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 2003).



Creating a Culture of Service Through Collaboration

by Roser Batlle

Centre Promotor Aprenentatge Servei (Service Learning Center of Catalonia)
Barcelona, Spain

The true success of the educational system consists of forming citizens that can improve society, not just their own résumés. To improve society, schools (at primary, secondary, and university levels) must actively collaborate with the social agents in the community, including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), town and city councils, public social and educational organizations, and private foundations. Rather than work in isolation, schools should instead partner with community groups to support education and service objectives. Service learning affords schools opportunities for doing this.

Service learning is not just an educational methodology. It is also a tool for community development for the cohesion of the community. A service learning project is both educational and social, and it requires the collaboration of all the actors involved. However, one challenge that must often be overcome is a school's lack of experience networking with community partners. To some educators, involving students in service seems easier and more productive when conducted solely by the school. But service learning projects, particularly those focusing directly on community needs, require at least some degree of partnership with social organizations and public institutions. Planning a service project for a local park, for example, will be most successful when it involves local officials who are responsible for overseeing this public amenity. Similarly, implementing a project in support of senior citizens living in a nursing home must occur with the permission and support of the facility's management.

In collaborative service projects, schools and community partners each have a role to play:

- *schools* design the learning experience and establish educational objectives (with less focus on the service)
- *community partners* heavily concentrate on the service's intended benefit to the area (and less on students' learning goals)

Collaborative service projects between schools and community partners require a great deal of cooperation. It's important to realize that cooperating is not the same as coordinating. We might say that coordinating is an *act of intelligence* while cooperating is an *act of love*. Apart from intelligence, it also requires affection and generosity.

A teacher who encourages students to participate in the service project of a neighborhood organization, or even adjusts the school syllabus to allow young people to explain their experience, is "coordinating" with the social organization.

Cooperating is about going a step further. It involves having area schools and social organizations working together with a shared vision on collaborative projects, even as each partner completes an individual role. While this approach to service is more complex, there are important reasons for building strong school/community bonds:

- partnerships foster awareness of community services available in the area, enabling schools to make the most of those resources
- collaboration with community partners can help schools overcome challenges and provide learning opportunities they might not be able to offer on their own
- students often become more motivated and committed when they work with positive adult models from the community providing vital social services
- partnerships with community organizations can help improve the image and visibility of schools within the neighborhood (often important in economically depressed or underserved areas)
- community partnerships can improve the positive social impact of the school through the spread of the educational culture, values, and principles of the teaching staff

For each of these reasons, close cooperation between schools and community organizations is vital to service learning partnerships. What can education and social groups do to build strong partnerships that result in learning objectives being met and effective service? Here are some recommendations:



1. Take time to get to know each other—and to know what each partner’s needs and priorities are
2. Make sure staff are able to effectively coordinate with outside agencies (full cooperation can be hindered by miscommunication)
3. Identify key people in community organizations who understand how the education objectives and service needs are connected
4. Start with small and very specific service learning projects, leaving more ambitious projects for when partnerships are more well established
5. Commit agreements to writing, particularly in regard to organizational roles and economic responsibilities
6. Maintain clear communication with community partners during service projects, particularly when it comes to working through any unexpected challenges
7. Document collaborative service learning efforts with images in order to evaluate and share them with others
8. Evaluate academic outcomes and a project’s benefits to the community jointly
9. Repeat effective service learning projects to build on success and further strengthen relationships with community partners
10. Share information about successful service learning projects with school staff, politicians, and the public to help strengthen its role in the community culture

Project Examples from the Service Learning Center of Catalonia

Get Closer to the Parks

This project, promoted by the Barcelona City Council through its Department of Parks and Gardens, involves students ages eight to twelve in service at local parks. First, municipal workers help children get to know

nearby parks better. Students learn not just about the flora and fauna, but also parks’ civic uses, energy costs, and budgeting issues. Children gain awareness of the ecological and civic value of parks and, motivated by their discovery, design and develop a service project. Past projects have included efforts to help maintain parks and share information with the public about their proper use.

To Know Is to Love

This joint project between a high school and special education school involves students ages fifteen to sixteen in service. These high school students first learn about and then prepare activities and psychomotor games to help children affected by severe motor and interpersonal communication deficits.

Blood Donation Campaign

Each year, the Blood and Tissue Bank of Catalonia sponsors a service learning project for students from primary schools, high schools, and nonformal education centers. In the project, boys and girls learn about blood, circulation, transfusions, and hospital needs. Students then participate in a project in which they share what they learn with the public and organize a neighborhood campaign to recruit blood donors.

Let’s Take Care of Our Grandparents

This project involves young people from a vocational training school who are enrolled in an Auxiliary Nursing Assistant course. Students collaborate with a local social organization to present a workshop called “Looking After the Elderly.” The presentation helps many people (those being aided by the social organization) to find work in Spain as home-helpers for elders.

The Right to the Law

This service learning project through the University of Barcelona Law School involves college students in connecting underprivileged groups with legal resources. Students also work with social organizations to empower people to achieve greater independence by knowing, claiming, exercising, and improving their rights as citizens.



Creating and Supporting a Culture of Service Through Professional Development

by Anne Thidemann French,
Learning Program Director
North Adams Public Schools
North Adams, Massachusetts

Tips from North Adams Public Schools for Creating a Culture of Service

- Echo back to faculty the good work (often an ignored strategy!)
 - Host recognition and celebratory events to honor teachers on a regular basis
 - Empower others to be spokespeople for service learning
 - Encourage many types of service learning—from “dabbling” to extensive projects
 - Empower students and teachers to perform projects that are “responsive” to immediate needs (for example, emergency services or healthcare needs)
 - Establish a service learning advisory board with teacher leaders representing each school
 - Nominate students, teachers, and administrators for service learning awards
 - Promote projects via the press, Internet, radio, television, and public events
 - Capitalize on opportunities to present awards and recognize work
 - Document all the projects
 - Keep a program history including publications, awards, and presentations
 - Host open houses, project unveilings, learning fairs, premieres, and other public events
 - Invite important decision-makers (government officials, business leaders, and education policy makers) as well as the general public to culminating events celebrating service
- Maintain archives of project portfolios, displays, and other products
 - Use archives and documentation as evidence in school accreditation reviews, department of education reviews, and other settings
 - Submit project examples for publication
 - Create and maintain service learning traditions—such as an annual senior/senior prom, hunger banquet, water quality testing, and end-of-year celebrations
 - Articulate service learning connections within district initiatives, improvement plans, and other school objectives
 - Support city and community initiatives by researching grants and other funding sources
 - Include service learning connection within course descriptions
 - Provide resources to teachers participating in service learning projects, including transportation, sample curriculum, forms, coaching, technical assistance, and supplies
 - Provide mini-grants or funds to support projects
 - Provide a variety of professional development opportunities, including workshops, faculty meetings, graduate courses, and conferences

Professional Development to Support a Culture of Service

In North Adams, we have found our school-based graduate courses to be highly effective in training teachers, deepening the quality of practice, and fostering staff energy and enthusiasm.

Multiple variations of the graduate courses have been taught since 1995, each having three core elements: service learning methodology; service learning experience as teacher or student; and a course component on important service learning trends.

The methodology portion of the course covers service learning basics, including definitions, models of exemplary projects, a history of the movement, standards for high quality practice, the service learning



process, and project planning. In courses offered during the school year (typically second semester), teachers are required to implement service learning projects in their classrooms and to document them with an extensive portfolio. This semester-long course leads to exemplary work as it gives teachers time to wrestle with ideas and dig deeper. The course also allows for ongoing coaching and valuable networking and peer support. In the weeklong summer institute, teachers learn about service learning through the development and implementation of a project.

Participants in the institute have performed service with local soup kitchens, sustainable farming developments, and transitional living facilities for the homeless. Many teachers have described this experience as transformative. In addition, participants in the summer institute plan future service learning projects for their classrooms. Special themes from past institutes have included social justice, civic education, engaging at-risk students, and social/emotional learning.

School-Based Graduate Courses: Basic Information

- Created and taught by experienced K–12 service learning practitioners
- Offered in collaboration with local public college with undergraduate and graduate education programs
- Teacher-friendly—held in the school building, after-school, once per week (or weeklong summer institute) with snacks and other incentives provided
- Cost of instructor paid by grants or local funds with participants paying minimal fee to college (\$165 for three credits in 2009)
- Offered to both in and out of district teachers

Incentives for Teachers

- Graduate credits for increment credit on salary schedule
- Professional development points for re-licensure
- Low cost
- Mini-grants provided to fund required service learning project
- Collegiality

Incentives to Schools for Supporting School-Based Graduate Courses

- Strengthens the academic integrity of service learning
- Creates common standards for quality practice
- Supports district initiatives (such as literacy, violence prevention, and engaging at-risk learners)
- Provides an efficient and economical method of professional development
- Piques district as a leader in the region



District-Wide Implementation: Character and Service

by Dr. Ada Grabowski, Superintendent
Albion Central School District
Albion, New York

In the era of school accountability focused almost entirely on test scores, how does a school district know if it is meeting its mission of educating the whole child? The mission of the Albion Central School District is “Achievement, Character, Success for Life . . . ACS.” It is the belief of those in the Albion community, many of whom were involved in crafting our mission, that the development of the character of our young people is equally as important as helping them reach their potential academically. This pervasive belief is the foundation of our character education program, which consists of awareness activities, recognition programs, character-sensitive curricula, and specialized instructional methods. The instructional methodology that provides the most integrated, comprehensive, and public demonstration of character development is service learning. Through fruitful collaborative service learning partnerships, our students become budding citizens in their address of real problems in the community. Frequently, students bring a variety of skills to community needs that otherwise would not have been available to partnering agencies (for example, statistical analysis of survey results).

All students who take Advanced Placement courses in our school are required to get involved in the community through a service learning project. These projects allow them to utilize skills from their respective courses. For example, AP Spanish students might translate documents used in the court system for use by nonnative speakers. Students have been publicly recognized for their skills, and they have become more in demand when community needs arise. We are at the stage in our development of a comprehensive service learning program that community agencies seek out school assistance. Also, our alternative school is housed in a nursing home. As part of the curriculum there, students provide residents with much needed company and services. Service learning opportunities connected to the curriculum abound at all grade levels.

Consistency of our mission is achieved by being “boorishly redundant.” We have few initiatives in the district, but the ones that we have are planned carefully, supported by data, and sustained by quality staff development. New teachers are immersed in our culture for eight days of summer in-service followed by three years of closely monitored staff development. At the end of the three years of probationary appointment, each teacher is required to demonstrate that they have engaged students in meaningful service learning. In addition, all teachers in the district are required to complete three additional days of staff development (chosen from a menu of opportunities) each summer. Since service learning has been so successful in the district, many of the opportunities revolve around expanding teachers’ capacity to provide quality service learning to students. Some of the teachers who have done service learning for many years have become teacher-leaders in providing formal and informal staff development to colleagues. All teachers are further supported by a staff member whose primary assignment is to champion service learning. This person’s network in the community, knowledge of agencies’ needs, and expertise in service learning assists teachers tremendously.

Aside from making the curriculum come alive for students, service learning has boosted the community’s perception of our school district. Community members know we aim to educate our students to be global citizens, and they see proof through our well-documented examples of student success.

What does service learning look like in our schools? All service learning is done integrating the K–12 service learning standards and following the five stages.

Elementary students have made a video to welcome new students to the district. They have utilized diverse skills (such as scriptwriting) to create and produce this charming video.

Middle school students help promote peace in the district by leading service learning projects of their own creation. (Projects are accompanied by their studies in literature.) Most recently students worked with a local photographer to capture peaceful images from our community. Students then integrated poetry with these images and organized a public exhibit. This



exhibition will now be documented in book form and serve as a lasting example of community pride.

High school health students have also taken their learning beyond the classroom in an effort to effect community improvement. These students, after learning about serious health conditions in their studies, have shown support of those affected by major health challenges. Students have knitted caps for people undergoing cancer treatment, raised funds through a walkathon, created a special cookbook, and so much more.

Drive through Albion and you will see evidence of what our students have accomplished. Kiosks set up in front of the town hall and at the cemetery feature student-created brochures that detail information about the community. Planters and American flags along Main Street, the result of service learning efforts, illustrate community pride. Projects have also led to the creation of monuments to veterans and African-American settlers, which confirm our students' desire to connect their past and present. And they continue to exceed our expectations.

Literature is always a key component of service learning efforts to support a district emphasis on building strong literacy skills. This is just one way in which we integrate academic standards into community projects. Efforts are always documented, and we keep the public updated on student projects and accomplishments.

We believe that, in the final analysis, it is not our students' test scores that will make a difference in the world; it will be their character and the citizens they become. Service learning has been the vehicle that has helped us to reach our mission.



Getting Started in the Process of Creating a Culture of Service: Developing Service Learning in a Texas School District

by Mike Hurewitz, LCSW,
Service Learning Coordinator
Round Rock Independent School District
Round Rock, Texas

Round Rock ISD is a fast-growing Texas school district of 40,000 students, just north of Austin. In recent years, with grant support and strategic planning, service learning has begun to take hold and grow in the district. Getting started—as the saying goes—can be the hardest part. Here are a few of the strategies developed and lessons learned along the way as we have developed service learning in our K–12 public schools.

Defining and marketing service learning

Although service learning has gained a good deal of credibility and common use in the education community, it is still often poorly understood. “Service learning . . . I’ve heard of it, but what is it exactly?” is not an uncommon response to the term. Therefore, it is very important to define service learning. Develop your service learning elevator speech and practice it, so that in case you run into your superintendent, you can quickly and easily define service learning and provide an example. Be sure that your definition emphasizes the *learning* in addition to the service. If you want teachers and administrators on board, they have to see service learning as a learning strategy, not just a service activity.

Examining for logical entry points

Teachers need to know that service learning does not mean reinventing the wheel, but instead can be an outgrowth of what they do every day. Many staff members are already doing things in the classroom that lend themselves to service learning. For example, if teachers already have students write letters during language

arts, suggest that students write letters addressing environmental issues. Help teachers find the entry points! Let them take small steps in the right direction.

Integrating with district goals

Even though service learning makes a lot of sense to those of us who care about education, school administrators, boards, and superintendents have their own important agendas. If service learning does not fit the district goals, it is much less likely to gain support. In our district, we increased interest from key decision-makers by linking service learning to the current dropout prevention initiative. How does service learning help your district meet its goals?

Support for teachers

To make quality service learning happen in the public schools, teachers must have the tools they need to make it happen. Offer trainings during staff development time, and be dynamic! Find ways to assist teachers by providing them with the time and support they need to plan a service learning project. Service learning coordinators, master teachers, curriculum coordinators, or other staff can play a helpful support role.

Celebrating results

It is important for all parties included to celebrate the results when students engage in service learning and make a difference in the community. Host campus celebrations that allow students to demonstrate their learning, or bring all the schools together for a district-wide service learning celebration, and allow students to set up displays to show off their projects. Remember, the need for service learning has never been greater. When students, teachers, and community partners join together to learn and serve, there is much to celebrate indeed.



A Local Service Learning Association

by Cathryn Berger Kaye and Donna Ritter
The Association for Service Learning Education
Los Angeles, California

What do teachers need to advance service learning? Time to meet together. Time for collective education about service learning, collegial stories, support, ideas, and resources to build effective and lasting school integration. The Association for Service Learning Education (TASLE), originally the Elementary Community Service Association, was founded by a consortium of administrators, teachers, and parent activists who deeply agree that service learning advances youth development and academic success. They also recognized that through association, concepts can be taught, ideas exchanged, motivation inspired, and improvements made.

Now, over sixteen years have passed, and the evidence is in: This original cadre has made a lasting impact. What is TASLE now and what does it plan to accomplish?

Three times each year, TASLE, a membership non-profit organization completely operated by volunteers, hosts meetings for educators, administrators, and parents about service learning. A planning committee (which all are welcome to join) sets the agenda. The formula is simple. Provide:

- a centrally located meeting place with easy access and parking (meetings are often held at one of the member schools)
- food and beverages to create a welcoming atmosphere
- attendee copies of a meeting agenda, complete with events information, resources, and an upcoming calendar (this is a “takeaway” item—rather than read in the meeting)
- expert information, often in the form of a presentation on a relevant theme (examples of past themes include “Reciprocity,” “Global Experiences Brought into the Classroom,” “Linking Literature to Service Learning,” “Energizing Your Service Learning Programs,”

Empowering Students to Meet Special Needs,” and “Meeting the new Standards”)

- table discussion and planned activities in which participants see relevance content can have in their own schools (including a “New to Service Learning” table)
- books—fiction and nonfiction—for sale to promote high quality service learning
- email updates with information about a wide range of programs, grants and funding sources, upcoming conferences, and resources
- contact information of someone who can answer questions, offer guidance, and make peer and expert connections to help members enrich their programs

In addition to these meetings, we also plan special events designed to give participants skills and knowledge they can use to improve service learning programming. We have had authors speak on social justice themes (including Maria Shriver discussing *Raising Responsible Children*), a workshop on Graphic Recording and the World Café Process, community fairs where educators can connect with nonprofits, and a tour of the Museum of Tolerance. We have also worked on collaborative projects, including “In Our Global Village—Los Angeles,” a book of writing, drawing, and photography from local schoolchildren in grades K–8. This year we are creating a collaborative calendar called “Our Healthy Planet,” which documents ways youth can help sustain planet resources. TASLE has also sponsored annual themes, including Public/Private School Partnerships, Sustainability, the Environment, and Reflection.

And still we grow. Our newest ambition is to replicate a lesson from the organization Campus Compact. We are seeking “commitments” from principals and other school administrators to create a compact in support of advanced service learning programming in their schools. Having visible administrative support is essential for school engagement. We are also planning ways to continually introduce new teachers to the process of high-level service learning, including through workshops offered by experienced TASLE members.



At present our primary audience is K–8 teachers and about a dozen community organizations. This year we are growing to include K–12 teachers and pre-service teachers from surrounding colleges and universities. We also hope to spread this model to other communities as a way to build and encourage depth of practice and efficacy for every school involved.

Who would have imagined that sixteen years after a few dedicated administrators, teachers, and parents gathered to discuss how to promote service learning that this vision would still be so vital? Our roster grows. The interest remains higher than ever. And we are always seeking ways to motivate and support our teachers so they in turn can empower their students to truly make a difference.



The Legacy Project: From Student Voice Comes a Transformative Model

by Ron Perry, Facilitator, Seeking Solutions EAST Lab
Eureka High School
Eureka, CA

As a middle school student, Holly LaCount witnessed her grandmother's losing battle with cancer. Not one to idly sit by, Holly sought to make a difference for others facing cancer. When registering for classes at Eureka High School (EHS), she found a class that would give her a chance to take action. Holly selected the service learning elective called "Seeking Solutions" EAST Lab. In this class, Holly would combine a passion for horses with her desire to help others with cancer.

Holly's concept was ambitious. She wanted to duplicate the highly successful "Relay for Life" on horseback to raise money for the American Cancer Society. The logistical and organizational challenges associated with creating a community-wide event of this magnitude were enormous. She had to find a location, secure insurance, build a team of community partners, recruit teams, and organize the event. By May, Holly had everything in place; the first "Ride for Life" generated \$12,000 for the American Cancer Society. In organizing this event, Holly brought the dedicated equestrian community together for a day of service. She established something new and exciting for the horse community and expanded the base of support for the American Cancer Society.

In each subsequent year, Holly's project grew. In her senior year, Holly recruited over ninety riders and collectively raised more than \$27,000. After four years, Ride for Life had become a traditional event for the horse community. All involved realized this was too good of a project to let fade away with Holly's departure to college. So a new group of "Seeking Solutions" and 4-H students, with Holly as a long distance mentor, have picked up the mantle of Ride for Life. Though Holly is no longer a student at our high school, her project remains and the service learning continues.

The impact of Holly's vision continues to live on and grow. Two other communities have adopted her model and are hosting their own events in 2009. Holly created a legacy.

Everyone would like to leave behind something lasting and important after we are gone. High school students are no different. This example inspires students to create their own legacy project. Over the years students at Eureka High School's Seeking Solutions EAST Lab have created several "Legacy Projects." The "EHS Blood Drive," the "Youth Relay for Life," and the "Take Another Look" Historical Calendar Project are excellent examples.

All Legacy Projects, once just ideas emerging from a student's determination to address real-life issues, are now traditions that the school and community have come to count on. Legacy Projects have fostered positive peer-pressure as they inspire each successive class to outperform the past. Whether students are attempting to collect more blood in the blood drive or create a more beautiful calendar, they are motivated to work to their potential.

Students face a choice between the path of least resistance and the path where the rewards are equal to their effort. Clearly, there are rewards in working on a legacy project. There are intrinsic rewards that include community benefits, the exhilaration of taking on a significant challenge, and service learning experience that can be included on college applications. Students engaged in challenging efforts that extend beyond the classroom are more motivated and achieve at higher levels.

The examples of powerful learning and service taking place in Seeking Solutions led to the creation of learning pathways at EHS. Now Seeking Solutions serves as the capstone class for students seeking to demonstrate excellence within their pathway through their senior project. Though there are now twenty-four pathways at EHS, the Service Learning pathway is by far the most popular.

EHS students who complete two-hundred service hours and direct a service learning project are deemed "Service Learning Merit Scholars." At graduation they receive a distinctive cord, special mention in the program, and transcripts note the completion of the service pathway. Since this model was adopted the number of service hours and projects completed has risen dramatically, healthy community partnerships have been established, and new traditions mark the



school year. More importantly, the mindset of students has changed. They have been empowered and embraced action. Legacy Projects completed in the Seeking Solutions service learning elective stand at the center of this transformation.

To find out more about the Seeking Solutions program at Eureka High School visit www.ecseast.org/ehseast or contact Ron Perry at perryr@eureka-cityschools.org.



Mission and Coordination: An Independent School Perspective

by Nan Peterson, Service Learning Director
The Blake School
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Blake School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a college preparatory, non-sectarian, day school for 1,385 preK–12 students. The school values academics, athletics, the arts, pluralism, and service. Following are some reflections on creating a culture of service as considered by The Blake School.

The two most important steps to deepening a culture of service include developing a service mission statement and the leadership of a service coordinator.

1. Create a school service mission statement. As an example, The Blake School Service Learning mission statement follows:

Through service learning at The Blake School, students gain a better understanding of themselves, the world in which they live, and the opportunity and responsibility they have to improve both. Service learning experiences at Blake often grow out of student interests and remain strongly tethered both to curriculum and to many communities. Reflection deepens the understanding students gain through these experiences. As a result of engagement in service learning while at Blake, students develop lifelong habits of heart, mind, and action that lead to lives as responsible world citizens. Fostering student development in this area is central to the mission of the school.

2. Designate a service coordinator to help coordinate and plan activities, secure service to curriculum, connect with community partners, and lead students and staff. This person is knowledgeable about service best practice and is a service cheerleader for students and staff. This coordinator oversees activities that follow.
3. Educate and encourage staff on service learning best practices; offer workshops to staff and

administrators. Include national standards that include link to curriculum, partnerships, meaningful service, youth voice/leadership, diversity, progress monitoring, duration and intensity, and reflection. Consider preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration.

4. Invite local, national, and international agency leaders to talk with students and staff about the good and important work they do. This raises awareness of real community need.
5. Invite service learning consultants to give workshops on service learning best practices and to encourage service work in the school.
6. Build and sustain community partnerships.
7. Build a collection of books with service themes.
8. Expose students and staff to service themes that include hunger, homelessness, literacy, elders, the environment, immigration, animals, disabilities, community safety, health, and peace. Encourage students and staff to explore and develop passion in these areas.
9. Organize monthly all-staff service projects. Model with action the importance of service.
10. Offer family service events after school or on weekends.
11. Have monthly staff meetings that discuss chapters in *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*.
12. Have an all-school annual, semester, or monthly service focus on one service theme.
13. Develop class, all-school, and after-school service activities. Include local and global projects.
14. Educate parents about the service work being done to encourage their interest and support.
15. Highlight school service activities in school publications and on the school Web site. Contact local newspapers about school service news.
16. Establish a bulletin board that highlights service activities.



17. Display student art and written work in high-visibility areas around the school.
18. Encourage and financially support student and staff involvement in and attendance at the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) National Service Learning Conference.
19. Listen to the ideas of the students! They have wonderful ideas and leadership ability.



Youth Empowerment to Create a District-Wide Culture of Service

by Evelyn Robinson,
Service Learning Program Specialist
Lake School District
Tavares, Florida

The Lake County School District started service learning in the early 1990s at one high school. Over the past seven years, 25,000 students have participated in service learning projects in over thirty Lake County District schools. Youth empowerment has been critical to this expansion. At first, only a few students attended the “youth empowerment training” that served as preparation for service learning involvement. Today, participation in this program has not only dramatically increased, but students also conduct much of the training. Following are recommendations for empowering youth through service learning based on our district’s experience.

1. Create a catalyst for motivating students

If your students are motivated and passionate, they will lead the way to creating a culture of service. At the beginning of each semester, youth empowerment training is conducted by students who have been in the program for at least one year and/or have met the criteria to become a student empowerment trainer. The leadership training “sessions” are written by students and include the following components:

- Needs assessment brainstorming tool
- Project work plan design that includes activities within each stage of service learning, a literacy component, and academic content standards
- Integration of motivational/leadership pictures and quotes—poems, songs, and movie clips, can also be incorporated
- Fun, interactive activities tied to the leadership concepts
- Integration of a 21st century skill
- Integration of a positive character trait

- Reflection questions that ask participants to consider how the picture/quote, activity, skill, or trait is connected to leadership, life, or service
- Conclusion that “ties everything together”

Key district and community members are invited to attend the youth empowerment training.

2. Start with one to three projects and offer teachers mini-grants as incentives

Lake School District’s model, South Lake High School, started by allowing students to design projects based on the service learning methodology and the needs of the school and community. The students designed their project work plans at the beginning of the year at a district-wide youth empowerment training. Utilizing the project work plans, students then asked teachers of their choice to allow students to get involved in these projects. As the number of projects and teachers increased, more service learning students were needed to accommodate the needs of the teachers. Eventually, an elective was offered that created a service learning Youth Council class at the high school. Youth Council students learned leadership skills while assisting teachers involved in service learning. The curriculum was designed to develop and evaluate leadership and includes 21st century skills and character trait awareness and development. The Youth Council now oversees a mini-grant process that encourages ongoing teacher and student participation.

3. Allow students to facilitate all aspects of all service learning projects within their school and community

The major responsibilities of Lake School District service learning Youth Council members include:

- Identifying the needs of their school and community
- Designing service learning project work plans to address the identified needs
- Matching the project idea to related academic classes



- Recruiting teachers of their choice from the identified related academic classes to serve as project teachers and setting guidelines for teacher participation
- Collaborating with community organizations, businesses, and feeder schools as project partners
- Tracking 21st century skill and character trait development
- Project management and facilitation

Approximately seventy percent of the Lake School District's service learning projects involve older students teaching younger students within feeder schools to address school and community issues.

4. Once a "model" is established, replicate it at other schools within different areas of the district

South Lake High School was selected as one of the original National Service Learning Leadership schools. The model has been replicated in three Lake School District high schools and three middle schools. What began as one class has expanded to twelve classes directly responsible for either facilitating or funding projects in at least thirty schools and conducting youth empowerment training locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally.

5. Require staff development

Lake County has a full-time service learning program specialist, six school-based service learning site coordinators, and district-wide leadership teams that consist of community members, teachers, and students.



Urban Service Learning

by Jon Schmidt, Service Learning Manager
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago, Illinois

At a recent student leadership meeting in Chicago, the discussion turned to the current state of the economy. The facilitator asked: “Are you seeing the impact of the economy on anyone in your community?” One student nodded her head vigorously. “I have seen so many houses foreclosed and boarded up in the last couple of months. I know a lot of people who have lost their homes.” In Chicago, eighty-five percent of public school students qualify for free or reduced lunch; families were living at the margins of society even before the serious downturn in the community. So the question about the economy should really have been stated differently: “Has the economy further exacerbated the situation for anyone that you know?” The social issues that students in urban areas across the country address through service learning have direct and immediate impact on their lives and the lives of people they know personally.

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, students from a west side high school spent the day working with children at a family shelter housing almost a hundred men, women, and children. Half a dozen of the guests at the shelter were students at that west side high school. On Chicago’s northwest side, students gathered at a community organization to be briefed and trained on a neighborhood canvassing project to push for an affordable housing ordinance that would create more housing opportunities for their families and friends. On Chicago’s southwest side, students are mobilizing for a financial literacy service learning project. They will be educating residents about resources and support available for individuals and families who are at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure. Those individuals and families happen to be people who live on the same block, attend the same school, and worship at the same congregation.

Students in our cities who engage in service learning are facing and addressing issues that have immediate impact on themselves and their neighbors. The reality of authentic and quality service learning in an urban

area is that it enables students to work toward important change in their own communities. American society does a pretty good job of individualizing problems. If a family’s home is foreclosed upon, they are reviled for not being wise enough to live within their means. If a family goes hungry, they are accused of being lazy. A good service learning project helps students understand that there is an immediate and pressing need that should be addressed. It also reveals that there are larger forces at work that lead to hunger and homelessness. Many families have fallen victim to predatory lending schemes. Many families and individuals suffer from hunger because of social policies that lead to an inequitable distribution of resources.

It is critical students who are practicing service learning in our cities encounter the hidden, and that the hidden be revealed through the service learning project. What is hidden? Often young people don’t know about the organizations and resources in their own communities. Often young people accept the victim philosophy that permeates society. Often young people don’t know how to engage in direct and indirect service opportunities. How does service learning help to reveal the hidden? A good service learning project will partner with a community organization that is immersed 24/7 in a social problem, working assiduously toward solutions. A good service learning project helps students understand that social policies and processes often lead to problems that hundreds and thousands of individuals encounter. It is very empowering to emerge from a culture of victimization toward a culture that demands a new social contract. A good service learning project provides students with the tools and skills to do service and impact the lives of others. In Chicago, it is not unusual to hear a young person say, “I had no idea I could have a positive impact on someone else’s life.”

Students in a freshman English class gathered in small groups to discuss problems in their communities. Students contemplated education funding, inequity, gang violence, immigration, and teen pregnancy. Each group would be challenged to research the issue and then present an action project proposal to their peers. The students would then together decide which issue to address as a class. Each issue had a direct



impact on students at the school. Any action taken by the students would have a positive impact on the community, their school, and, interestingly, the students themselves. That is urban service learning: tackling issues that impact those who deliver service as well as those who receive service. In the process, students encounter the hidden. The revelatory experience puts students squarely in the middle of their community, as empowered citizens.

Eleven years ago, Chicago Public Schools introduced service learning at the high school level. Against all odds—high stakes testing, logistical challenges, competing district priorities—hundreds of teachers are using service learning as a pedagogical tool and seeing positive academic, social/emotional, and civic outcomes. There is something powerful about service learning that engages teachers who in turn engage their students in dynamic ways. So often teachers see students emerge as leaders in a service learning project in unexpected ways. The service learning experience enables this to happen. Still, teachers need support and resources to generate high quality projects. These include:

- Professional development in service learning pedagogy
- Access to community partners
- Opportunities to meet to discuss, plan, and assess service learning projects
- Multiple pathways and entry points for teachers to develop service learning projects
- Recognition of outstanding teachers and leaders
- Linking service learning to existing organizational and curricular strategies

Urban high school districts continue to wrestle with the problems of high dropout rates, attendance, relevance, and engagement. Chicago Public Schools high school teachers find that when their students develop an attachment, they are much more likely to stay the course. Service learning is providing that attachment for many students.

Additional Bookshelf Titles

This PDF has annotations not included in the book, organized by theme. Some titles appeared in the previous edition of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*, and some titles are new listings.

(Note: These lists include Recommendations from the Field.)

The AIDS Education and Awareness Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Animal Protection and Care Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Elders Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Environment Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Gardening Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Immigrants Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Literacy Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Safe and Strong Communities Bookshelf:
Additional Titles

The Social Change Bookshelf: Additional Titles

The Special Needs and Disabilities Bookshelf:
Additional Titles



The AIDS Education and Awareness Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: AIDS Education and Awareness

AIDS

by Lori Shein (Lucent Books, 1998). This overview of AIDS from the late 1970s to the late 1990s includes information about its discovery, methods of prevention, testing for HIV infection, the global epidemic, and what the future holds. Includes a glossary and resources. 112pp., young adult

AIDS: Can This Epidemic Be Stopped?

by Karen Manning (Henry Holt, 1995). This book provides a history and medical overview of the epidemic. While many advances have been made since publication, the information remains useful for a solid background. Includes resource information and a glossary. 64pp., grades 5–7

Be a Friend: Children Who Live with HIV Speak

by Dr. Lori S. Wiener, Aprille Best, and Dr. Phillip A. Pizzo (Albert Whitman, 1994). A moving collection of art and writings by children who are HIV positive or have siblings with AIDS. Each letter uncovers the emotion and courage of young people who just want to be normal and have friends who will stay friends. All proceeds are donated to the Pediatric AIDS Foundation. 40pp., all ages

People with AIDS

by Gail B. Stewart (Lucent Books, 1996). Following an introduction with facts and a brief overview are four profiles, three of adults and one of an eight-year-old. The candid stories remind us of the people who often get lost with the label. Darrel collects masks and is a popular speaker about AIDS. Cindy unknowingly passed the AIDS virus to her son, who died. Jessica has outlived her mother. Stephen lives “day by day” with support from friends. 96pp., grades 6–12

A Small, Good Thing: Stories of Children with HIV and Those Who Care for Them

by Anne Hunsacker Hawkins (W.W. Norton, 2000). Children born with HIV are an often-overlooked group. These six portraits, developed through extensive interviews and observations, present both the overwhelming obstacles and the community support provided for these young people. The book is a vivid, life-affirming depiction of the effects of this disease and the caretakers. Out of print, but still worth finding. 286pp., grades 10–12

Picture Books: AIDS Education and Awareness

Alex, the Kid with AIDS

by Linda Walvoord Girard (Albert Whitman, 1991). Michael tells of his growing friendship with Alex, a new kid in fourth grade with AIDS. Alex turns out to be a funny, friendly guy, who learns pretty quickly that their teacher requires proper behavior from everyone in the class.

A Name on the Quilt: A Story of Remembrance

by Jeannine Atkins (Aladdin, 2003). This picture book uses the NAMES quilt project to show a family coming together to contribute a quilt panel in memory of a son/brother/uncle/friend.

Fiction: AIDS Education and Awareness

Earthshine

by Theresa Nelson (Orchard, 1994). Twelve-year-old “Slim” has to attend a support group for kids whose parents are living with AIDS. Her adoration for her father, a charismatic actor, is well deserved. Even as he is dying from AIDS, his charm, humor, and love keep her spirits high at the most fragile of times. Now, Isaiah, a kid in this group, has an idea to head to the mountains for a “cure.” Everyone goes for an adventure of a lifetime, and finds “magic.” 192pp., young adult



The Animal Protection and Care Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Animal Protection and Care

Can We Save Them?

by David Dobson (Charlesbridge, 1997). Twelve species of endangered animals are featured, from the Florida panther to the Puerto Rican parrot to the cui-ui fish of Truckee River, Nevada. Learn about the present dangers and ways to restore natural environments. Filled with ideas for action. 30pp., grades K–6

The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours

by Jane Goodall (Scholastic, 2001). Jane Goodall's personal narrative describes her many years of coming to know chimpanzees. Photographs show the chimpanzees living within their communities, relationships between mothers and babies, and a glimpse at how chimpanzees think. Strategies presented for taking action include learning about conservation and "showing care and concern: (1) for animals . . . ; (2) for the human community; (3) for the environment we all share." 80pp., all ages

Come Back, Salmon: How a Group of Dedicated Kids Adopted Pigeon Creek and Brought It Back to Life

by Molly Cone (Sierra Club Books, 1992). With teacher guidance, elementary students clean a stream, stock it with salmon, and preserve it as an unpolluted place where salmon can return to spawn. 48pp., grades 4–8

Healers of the Wild

by Shannon K. Jacobs (Johnson Books, 2003). In this comprehensive guide for young people, their families, schools and communities, we learn about the valuable work of wildlife rehabilitators. As legal caregivers for wild animals, they heal hundreds of sick, orphaned, and injured animals every year, and release them back to the wild. Learn more about rascally raccoons, Buddy the bald eagle, and the endangered ridley sea turtle. Find out what young people are doing across the country to assist in rehabilitation. A glossary and reproducible pages included. 212pp., all ages

In Good Hands: Behind the Scenes at a Center for Orphaned and Injured Birds

by Stephen R. Swinburne (Sierra Club, 1998). Hannah, a sixteen-year-old volunteer, cares for injured owls, hawks, eagles, and other birds of prey, as they are nursed back to health and eventually released. 32pp., grades 3–8

Intimate Nature: The Bond Between Women and Animals edited

by Linda Hogan, Deena Metzger and Brenda Peterson (Fawcett Columbine, 1998). In this collection of stories, poetry, and essays, women scientists and writers speak out about their kinship with animals. The readings are simultaneously a wake-up call and celebration of this "ancient . . . dialogue between species." The seventy contributors include Barbara Kingsolver, Jane Goodall, Diane Fossey, and Marge Piercy. 455pp., young adult

Kishina: A True Story of Gorilla Survival

by Maxine Rock (Peachtree, 1996). Meet Kishina, a gorilla who lived a significant part of her life in captivity. She taught her human caregivers what it means to be a happy, thriving gorilla. Follow Kishina from her lonely childhood through her pregnancy and daily life. Learn how gorillas organize and survive, and what goes into creating an environment where animals can live comfortably in captivity. 87pp., grades 3–7

Once a Wolf: How Wildlife Biologists Fought to Bring Back the Gray Wolf

by Stephen R. Swinburne (Houghton Mifflin, 1999). With rare and powerful photographs, the reader follows the tracking and study that has led to appreciation of this magnificent gray wolf and its reintroduction into Yellowstone National Park. 48pp., grades K–3

On the Brink of Extinction: The California Condor

by Caroline Arnold (Harcourt, 1993). Follow the California Condor Recovery Team as they attempt to restore the North American condor population by breeding these birds in captivity. An easy-to-read story of survival; includes photographs. 48pp., grades 4–8

Travels with Tarra

by Carol Buckley (Tilbury House, 2002). Follow one elephant's migration from Asia to a tire store in California to her adoption by the author. The two traveled the country doing shows and commercials until Carol Buckley got the idea to set up her elephant sanctuary—a place where elephants live together in a free-roaming community. 40pp., grades 3–7

Picture Books: Animal Protection and Care

Bear Dance

by Jan Wahl (Creative Editions, 2008). This bear loves to dance his way through life—until he gets caught by people who make him dance for food.

***Ducks Disappearing***

by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (Atheneum, 1997). Young Willie solves the mystery of disappearing ducks. Most importantly, he explains to the adults how ducks “belong to everyone.” A lovely story of a child who pays attention and cares to make a difference.

Hey! Get Off Our Train

by John Birmingham (Crown, 1989). At bedtime, a young boy takes a trip on his toy train and rescues endangered animals, returning just in time for school. Did the trip really happen? If this was a dream, then why is there a seal in the bathtub?

Recommendation from the Field

Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey (Viking, 1941). Beautiful brown and white drawings illustrate this lovely story of Mr. and Mrs. Mallard looking for a safe place to raise their ducklings. They are met with appreciation, respect, and delight by the citizens of Boston in the Public Garden.

Children can explore service learning themes of respect for nature, park appreciation, animal rights or animal protection, and environmental issues. Students can investigate the needs of the community and wildlife that lives in or migrates through the area. Activities may include:

- Visiting a wildlife center or park, where the need might be to pick up trash, plant annual flowers, dig out invasive plants such as buckthorn or loosestrife, or write a walking guide for the park or center of animals that live in the area.
- Forming a partnership with an animal humane society and collecting needed items like newspapers, leashes, collars, towels, and small rugs.
- Making simple bird feeders or bird baths to give to a senior center or your school.

One Day at Wood Green Animal Shelter

by Patricia Casey (Candlewick Press, 2001). Follow the author through a busy day at this shelter where volunteers of all ages care for dogs, cats, a curious fox, a gecko, a horse, and a baby pigeon named Roast Potato. The visuals are a mix of art and photo collage—a unique blend to inspire the creative author/illustrator in us all. 29pp., grades K–6

Pipaluk and the Whales

by John Himmelman (National Geographic Society, 2002). Never before had Pipaluk and her father seen thousands of

whales trapped in a narrow opening of ice. “The whales have helped keep our people alive for many centuries. We owe them too much to slaughter them while they are helpless,” he explains. The villagers keep the whales alive, even using their own food supplies. But when the icebreaker ship makes a passage for the whales, they do not move. Pipaluk follows the song in her heart to set the whales free. Based on an event that took place off Russia’s Chukchi Peninsula in 1984.

Washing the Willow Tree Loon

by Jacqueline B Martin (Simon & Schuster, 1995). When a barge hits a bridge and a thick rush of oil coats the birds of Turtle Bay, people from all walks of life stop their work as bakers, doctors, house painters, and artists to help.

When Agnes Caws

by Candace Fleming (Aladdin, 1999). Eight-year-old Agnes has an extraordinary talent for bird calling, and is sent to locate the elusive pink-headed duck. Little would she suspect that a dastardly bird collector would attempt to use her skill to capture and stuff this precious rare bird. Can Agnes save the duck and herself?

Fiction: Animal Protection and Care***The Animal Rescue Club***

by John Himmelman (HarperCollins, 1998). Who can help a squirrel trapped in mud or a baby opossum caught in a drain? The Animal Rescue Club: dedicated kids who work with a wildlife rehabilitator to help the wild animals in their neighborhood. An author’s note provides thoughtful advice and safety information. 48pp., grades 2–5

Backyard Rescue

by Hope Ryden (Tambourine, 1994). Two ten-year-old friends, Lindsey and Greta, set up a backyard wildlife hospital for wounded animals. They hatch snapping turtle eggs and find a safe home for an injured raccoon. When faced with closure due to Fish and Game laws, they find local resources to protect the animals in their care. 128pp., grades 3–6

A Bear Named Trouble

by Marion Dane Bauer (Clarion, 2005). A young boy and bear cub, both far from their mothers and feeling lonely, meet one night outside the boy’s house. Jonathan takes a liking to the particularly friendly bear, but when he takes the creature to the zoo, the bear hurts the boy’s favorite animal. Jonathan struggles to forgive the bear and take responsibility for his own complicity in the tragedy that threatens to get worse. This short chapter book, based on real events, is narrated through the fictional perspectives of both the boy and the bear. 120pp., grades 3–5

***A Dog's Life: The Autobiography of a Stray***

by Ann M. Martin (Scholastic, 2005). Written from a dog's perspective and narration, follow her story of losing a caring family and having to learn how to make her way in an unfamiliar world. The book includes an author interview and information for helping stray dogs. 182pp., grades 4–7

Dolphin Song

by Lauren St. John (Dial Books, 2007). Martine dreads the upcoming ten-day class trip off the South African coast. The trip becomes more of an adventure than anyone bargained for when Martine and six other students are washed off deck during a storm and forced to learn how to respect one another, the animals, and the environment in order to survive. 246pp., grades 5–8

Face to Face with Polar Bears

by Norbert Rosin with Elizabeth Carney (National Geographic, 2007). Full of photographs and facts about polar bears, learn how they live, play, eat, and what humans can do to help them thrive. 32pp., grades 4–7

The Four Ugly Cats in Apartment 3D

by Marilyn Sachs (Atheneum, 2002). Lily, a ten-year-old latchkey kid, lives near grouchy Mr. Freeman and his four yowling cats. A single gesture of kindness from this crotchety man changes Lily's disposition toward him. When he dies, Lily steps in, determined to "do the right thing" and accomplish the impossible: find the perfect home for the cats that nobody wants. 67pp., grades 3–5

Hoot

by Carl Hiaasen (Knopf, 2004). As new kid Roy Eberhardt stares out the bus window, he sees a barefoot teen running in the opposite direction from school. His curiosity lands him in the middle of a plot to help save tiny hoot owls from another pancake house being built in the neighborhood. 304pp., grades 5–8

Interrupted Journey: Saving Endangered Sea Turtles

by Kathryn Lasky (Candlewick Press, 2001). Comprehensive text and photographs depict the dedicated work of volunteers and professionals protecting endangered sea turtles, particularly Kemp's ridley turtles. From ten-year-old Max and his mother, who patrol Cape Cod's beaches, to veterinarians, to a hotel owner who turned his pool into an aquarium, we see people who make a difference in a variety of ways. 48pp., all ages

Northern Exposures

by Eric Walters (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2008). Kevin is definitely not a photographer. In fact, at fifteen, he is becoming increasingly withdrawn from all extracurricular activities, to the chagrin of his parents. So everyone is surprised when a photograph he took wins him a trip to Churchill, Manitoba, to photograph polar bears! This life-altering visit to the Canadian outback teaches him about human and physical nature, polar bears, and primarily about himself. 298pp., grades 5–8

Saving Birds

by Pete Salmansohn and Stephen W. Kress (Audubon, 2003). This beautifully photographed book chronicles six heroic, creative projects that saved local bird species in areas from California to New Zealand. 39pp., grades 4–8

Saving Lilly

by Peg Kehret (Simon & Schuster, 2001). After learning about animal abuse, Erin and her friend David create an uproar by refusing to go on the class field trip to the Glitter Tent Circus. Their next challenge is saving Lilly, a mistreated elephant, from being sold to a hunting park. Will sixth graders succeed in standing up to the circus owner's greed and make a difference? 149pp., grades 3–6

Taking Wing

by Nancy Price Graff (Houghton Mifflin, 2005). Thirteen-year-old Gus moves to his grandparent's rural farm in Vermont during World War II. His father is an army pilot; his mother is seriously ill. Gus learns about poverty, friendship, prejudice, and responsibility as he learns to shoot a rifle, works in a victory garden, and befriends a poor neighbor and a family of ducks. 211pp., grades 6–9

The White Giraffe

by Lauren St. John (Puffin Books, 2006). When Martine awakens from a vicious dream surrounded by flames, she realizes her nightmare has only begun. After losing both of her parents in the fire, Martine is sent to live in South Africa on a wildlife reserve with a grandmother she never knew existed. Soon, she unravels the secret that kept her family away from their roots. She's pulled into a wilderness that she eventually learns to love and defend. 186pp., grades 5–8

White Wolf

by Henrietta Branford (Candlewick Press, 2007). This short chapter book tells the story of a wolf trapped in the human world and his struggle to return to the wild. 96pp., grades 3–7



The Elders Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Elders

Grandparents Around the World

by Patricia Lakin (Blackbirch Press, 1999). Text and photographs provide a snapshot of the role that older people, especially grandparents, play in families in various countries, including Canada, Italy, Swaziland, Ecuador, Iraq, and Israel, as well as Native Americans in the United States. 32pp., grades 2–5

Growing Older

by George Ancona (Duttons, 1978). In this collection of oral histories, you will meet, among others, an antique dealer from Texas, a woman who travels and gardens, a grandmother from the Yucatán, a Sauk and Fox Indian from Oklahoma, an immigrant from Lithuania, and residents of Nicodemus, Kansas, which began as a settlement of freed slaves. The author recommends, “Ask your grandparents for their stories. If you don’t have grandparents nearby, borrow or adopt some, as certain Indian tribes do.” Out of print but well worth finding. 48pp., grades 5–12

Mosaic Moon: Caregiving Through Poetry

by Frances H. Kakugawa (Watermark Publishing, 2002). For one year, caregivers of people with Alzheimer’s disease met each month. This book chronicles their work together and the resulting personal stories and poetry. Suggestions for “how-to” make this a worthwhile resource. 218pp., young adult

Picture Books: Elders

Butterfly Boy

by Virginia Kroll (Boyd’s Mills Press, 1997). Emilio wheels his *abuelo*—his grandfather—outside each sunny afternoon to watch butterflies flutter around the white garage wall. With limited mobility and no speech, Abuelo brightens up watching the red admirals, a species of butterflies attracted to the color white. As the seasons change, Emilio and his grandfather await the return of the butterflies. But will they return when Papa paints the garage blue?

Dancing with Dziadziu

by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (Harcourt, 1997). A young girl shares her ballet dancing and an early Easter celebration with her ill grandmother while the grandmother reminisces about her husband and her immigration from Poland.

Hurry Granny Annie

by Arlene Alda (Tricycle Press, 1999). Granny Annie runs so fast the children have to run their hardest to keep up. But they all want to find out what the “something great” is that Annie is determined to catch. Is it a fish, a butterfly, or a baseball? Annie’s joy for what is most beautiful is ultimately contagious.

Joe’s Wish

by James Proimos (Harcourt, 1998). Elderly Joe Capri wishes on a star: “Please, I want to be young again.” The Something or Other arrives, promising that “tomorrow I will grant your wish.” But after a day of play with his grandson, Joe finds that the idea of being young again pales in comparison to the joy of his relationship with his grandson just the way it is.

Sachiko Means Happiness

by Kimiko Sakai (Children’s Book Press, 1990). Sachiko is upset when her grandmother, who has Alzheimer’s disease, no longer recognizes her. Slowly she grows to understand how patience and love help maintain a caring relationship.

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge

by Mem Fox (Kane/Miller, 1985). A young boy tries to discover the meaning of “memory” so he can help an elder friend.

A Window of Time

by Audrey O. Leighton (NADJA, 1995). Grandpa’s time machine is “on the fritz.” Sometimes he confuses the present with the past—imagining himself riding horses on his farm rather than remembering his current life in the city. His grandson, Shawn, recognizes that Grandpa may forget what he did earlier today but remembers an event from sixty-five years ago. A sensitive account of the effects of Alzheimer’s disease.

**Fiction: Elders****Recommendation from the Field**

The Bonesetter's Daughter by Amy Tan (Ballantine Books, 2001). Ruth Luyi Young is a busy writer and stepmom, and she tries to be a good daughter by visiting regularly with her mother, LuLing. Lately, LuLing seems more confused and disoriented. Ruth cannot tell if her mother is sick or if they just cannot communicate because Ruth has become Americanized, losing her ability to speak Chinese. As LuLing recalls many vivid details of her childhood in China, Ruth begins to know her mother in a new way even as she accepts that her mother has early-stage Alzheimer's disease.

Students can use the story to discuss how families feel about elder parents or how all elder immigrants might relive the disorientation of coming to America as they age. They can discuss helpful ways to visit with elders. Written against the backdrop of Amy Tan's struggle with her own mother's illness, we see that Alzheimer's disease and dementia are frightening for the elders, their families, and other people who care for them. Still, these elders often have important—and accurate—stories to share with us. Writing those stories can be an important service to the families and the elder person. 403pp., young adult

The Cay

by Theodore Taylor (Avon, 1969). Phillip, separated from his mother when their ship was torpedoed in 1942, is stranded on a remote cay with an old black man who worked on the ship's deck. Blinded by a blow to his head, Phillip becomes reliant on his elder companion and must confront the racist beliefs he learned from his parents. A story of survival, friendship, and trust. 144pp., grades 4–8

Recommendation from the Field

The Hundred Penny Box by Shannon Bell Mathis (Viking, 1986). One-hundred-year-old Aunt Dew has come to live with her nephew John, his wife Ruth, and their young son Michael. John feels responsible for Aunt Dew, since she raised him after his parents drowned when he was a young boy. Ruth, who feels the older lady does not like her, treats Aunt Dew as though she were a child. Michael loves Aunt Dew and promises that even though his mother has burned Aunt Dew's belongings in the furnace, he will keep her hundred penny box safe. This may be a well-used box with a broken lid, but to Aunt Dew it is her life. When she was thirty years old, her husband gave her thirty pennies, each one dated for a year of her life. The tradition of collecting a dated penny continued. For each penny, Aunt Dew remembers important events. Michael and Aunt Dew open the box and talk about the times of life.

Several threads can be discussed after the class reads this book. Students can look at their own families to identify traditions and how they were started. Will those traditions be carried on by their generation? Are they old or new traditions? Also, a discussion of the importance of intergenerational relationships and the care of older people would be appropriate. Although John and Michael love Aunt Dew, Ruth has the role of caregiver. The book can lead students to gather oral histories from elders in their community; the historians could include the topic of family traditions. 47pp., grades 1–4

Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright

by Ron Koertge (Orchard, 1994). In a modern-day western setting, Jesse takes the role of protector of his elder grandfather, Pappy, who loves to ride in the desert and play poker. Pappy's Alzheimer's disease has Jesse's mom looking into a nursing home. Jesse follows a path of deceit to keep his mom from knowing a secret: Pappy sees tiger tracks in the California hills! 179pp., young adult



Recommendation from the Field

Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985). After drinking water from the spring of eternal life, the Tuck family wanders from place to place living as inconspicuously as possible. Winnie Foster, a young girl, learns of their secret. The Tucks attempt to explain to her the importance of living life naturally and of regarding age as a gift to be valued. At the same time, though, Winnie is being followed by a man who yearns to sell her this special water!

Tuck Everlasting could be used as an introduction to service learning related to elders. It clearly shows the importance of living life day by day and valuing each stage. It can also be used to emphasize the importance of learning from older people and appreciating their knowledge. For a project, students could collaborate on making a book, telling about people of every age from one to a hundred. Each student could find someone of a certain age and write about that person or could write about what he or she knows about that age and what is special about it. Another variation is creating a “decades” book that includes historical information and personal memories about a series of decades. 139pp., grades 5–8

The War with Grandpa

by Robert Kimmel Smith (Dell, 1984). Peter likes the idea of Grandpa moving in but he is furious about having to give up his room to relocate to the stuffy third floor. Peter declares war! As a consequence, Grandpa teaches Peter lessons about war, friendship, and family relationships. 140pp., grades 3–6



The Environment Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: The Environment

A Cool Drink of Water

by Barbara Kerley (National Geographic Society, 2002). “We live by the grace of water.” This photo essay takes us on a global journey to see water stored in clay pots and a burlap bag. We see people drink from a river, a well, and a thin tin cup. We travel from Thailand to Rome to Canada. A note on water conservation gives statistics and strategies for protecting our planet’s precious supply of water. 32pp., all ages

Crashed, Smashed, and Mashed: A Trip to Junkyard Heaven

by Joyce Slayton Mitchell (Tricycle Press, 2001). Have you ever wondered what happens to the cars headed for the junkyard? Through photographs with text, see an engine that is pulled apart and cars that are shredded. Includes information about recycling. 32pp., grades 1–4

Investigating Climate Change

by Rebecca L. Johnson (Twenty-First Century Books, 2008). This book describes the history of the discovery of climate change, explores the effects climate change is having on ecosystems throughout the world, and maps out our options for alleviating the harm of this rapidly progressing threat. 112pp., young adult

Issues in the Environment

by Patricia D. Netzley (Lucent Books, 1998). Ready for a book that tackles controversies regarding the environment? Here it is. Controversies discussed include the ozone layer, garbage, endangered species, wilderness protection, and the cost of environmentalism. 94pp., grades 6–12

I Want to Be an Environmentalist

by Stephanie Maze (Harcourt, 2000). Meet dedicated people who work hard to protect many different aspects of our environment—botanists, economists, organic farmers, biologists, scuba divers, and more. Includes the history of environmentalism and ways young people are involved. 48pp., all ages

Life in the Boreal Forest

by Brenda Z. Guiberson (Groundwood Books, 2009). Take a long look at this endangered forest that covers one third of the world’s total forest area and is home to innumerable birds. Known as “North America’s bird nursery,” this important area is home to many feathered creatures, beavers, trees, and others species that must be protected for our planet’s well-being. 40pp., grades 1–5

One Good Apple: Growing Our Food for the Sake of the Earth

by Catherine Paladino (Houghton Mifflin, 1999). Apples, strawberries, peaches, corn—foods we love. Yet these foods, and many others, are being sprayed with chemicals that affect living things, from the tiniest organisms to the humans who grow and eat the produce. Through sustainable agriculture, the balance of nature can be maintained, and we can nourish ourselves and the soil we rely on. 48pp., grades 5–12

One Less Fish

by Kim Michelle Toft and Allan Sheather. (Charlesbridge, 1998). The informative narrative in this counting book tells how something is wrong in Australia’s Great Barrier Reef. As the fish disappear one by one, we learn of the potential hazards of offshore drilling, trash in the ocean, over fishing, and more. Each tropical fish is identified, and a glossary is included. 32pp., grades K–6

Our Poisoned Waters

by Edward Dolan (Cobblehill, 1997). Industry and farming waste choke our rivers. Sewage and oil spills damage our coastal waters. Rapidly growing populations deplete our fresh water supply. In this balanced presentation of water use and supply, key questions are raised: How has this occurred? What is the role of governments and private organizations? What can we do as individuals? 128pp., young adult

Ten Things I Can Do to Help My World:

Fun and Easy Eco-Tips

by Melanie Walsh (Candlewick, 2008). This unique guide shows how everyone—big, medium, and small—can be eco-aware! Young children will want to look at these pages and see how the recycling “fits” in the cans. Older teens may be inspired to creative book writing. 40pp., grades preK–3

Tree of Life: The Incredible Biodiversity of Life on Earth

by Rochelle Strauss (Kids Can Press, 2004). To be environmentalists requires a solid understanding of the environment. This book has a hefty foundation for kids with rich information, illustrations that provide close-ups of fungi, Latin names for plants, and a section on “Becoming Guardians of the Tree of Life.” 40pp., grades 3–6

Wildlife Refuge

by Lorraine Ward (Charlesbridge, 1993). Join a classroom of children on a visit to a wildlife refuge, where animals hunt for food, build homes, and defend their territories. 32pp., grades preK–3



***You Are the Earth: Know the Planet
So You Can Make It Better***

by David Suzuki and Kathy Vanderlinden (Greystone Books, 2001). This book is about what we need to stay alive—clean air, water, soil, ecosystems, and the sun’s energy. Information is plentiful in this blend of facts, Native American stories, colorful illustrations, and cartoons. The author also talks about the interdependence of people and animals, plus tells of actions taken by young people to change the world, now! 24pp., ages 9–12

Picture Books: The Environment

Dear Children of the Earth

by Schim Schimmel (NorthWord Press, 1994). Mother Earth sends a letter to her children telling of the need to protect the planet and her many wondrous creatures.

The Empty Lot

by Dale Fife (Sierra Club Books, 1991). Harry sets out to sell his “empty” lot. “What good is an empty lot?” he wonders while driving to put up a “For Sale” sign. While eating lunch on the lot, he hears a woodpecker tapping and sees baby sparrows in a nest, dragonflies hovering over a stream, and children playing. Harry has a change of heart.

Fernando’s Gift/El Regalo de Fernando

by Douglas Keister (Sierra Club, 1995). Friends Fernando and Carmina, who live in the rain forest of Costa Rica, discover Carmina’s climbing tree has been cut down. What can stop the devastation of the rain forest? Teaching people and planting trees! A bilingual book with photographs.

The Gift of the Tree

by Alvin Tresselt (HarperCollins, 1992). By following a tree’s life cycle, we find out about animals that depend on it for shelter and food.

The Great Kapok Tree

by Lynne Cherry (Harcourt, 1990). Many different animals living in a great Brazilian kapok tree convince a man with an ax of the importance of the rain forest.

The Great Trash Bash

by Loreen Leedy (Holiday House, 1991). When Mayor Hippo has a feeling that “something is wrong in Beaston,” he discovers trash on the highway, a polluted swimming hole, and an overloaded landfill. The resident animals decide to make less trash and clean up their town now and for the future.

Isabel’s House of Butterflies

by Tony Johnston (Sierra Club Books, 2003). Author Tony Johnston’s book shares the reality of people living in deep

poverty who sometimes have little choice but to cut trees for wood to sell. Tree cutting, in turn, threatens butterfly migration patterns across the world. In this book, an eight-year-old girl offers a solution to save her tree, which is also home to butterflies.

***The People Who Hugged the Trees:
An Environmental Folktale***

by Deborah Lee Rose (Robert Rinehart, 1990). This folktale from India tells of Amtra Devi, who inspired her community to protect the trees because the trees protect the community from the winds.

Recycle Every Day!

by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace (Marshall Cavendish, 2006). A young bunny named Minna ponders the best way to make a poster about recycling, hoping her art will be selected for a Community Recycling Calendar. Her rabbit family spends the week doing various kinds of recycling as Minna considers many options for her poster. The student calendar is designed to teach lessons about recycling throughout the entire community. Great ideas for service learning!

A River Ran Wild

by Lynne Cherry (Harcourt, 1991). The Nashua River, which once provided food to the indigenous people in New England, is polluted by industry and cities. Can a determined local citizen restore the river?

The Shape of Betts Meadow: A Wetlands Story

by Meghan Nuttall Sayres (Millbrook Press, 2002). Follow Gunnar Holmquist, a medical doctor who became a “wetland doctor.” His efforts restore Betts Meadow, a 140-acre dry pasture, to its original state: a wetland bursting with wildflowers, elk, and tree frogs. Includes a glossary of wetland terms and resources.

Someday a Tree

by Eve Bunting (Clarion, 1993). A special oak tree grows near Alice’s home—a perfect setting for picnics and gazing through the leaves at the clouds. When the surrounding grass turns yellow, a tree doctor determines that someone has dumped chemicals by the roots. The community unites in trying to save the tree.

The Table Where Rich People Sit

by Byrd Baylor (Aladdin, 1998). Young Mountain Girl knows her family doesn’t have enough money. Why don’t her parents get real “indoor” jobs? As her family sits around their scratched kitchen table, her mother and father say they are “rich.” As they determine the value of all they have—being able to see the sky all day, sleeping under stars, viewing



the majestic mountains—the girl begins to understand they may be rich after all.

This House Is Made of Mud/Esta casa está hecha de lodo

by Ken Buchanan (Northland, 1991). A family's life is interwoven with the natural environment in the Sonoran Desert. Watercolors of azure skies, mountains, giant cacti, and howling coyotes capture the harmony possible when the earth is treasured.

The Tree Farmer

by Chuck Leavell and Nicholas Cravotta (VSP Books, 2005). This book is beautifully illustrated with silk paintings inspired by the actual tree farm in Georgia where grandfather and grandson meet to learn about the role of trees in the world. The boy learns that trees are a vital part of the natural environment, and that if we farm them responsibly, they can also enrich human lives by giving us the comfort of homes, the sweetness of music, and the paper that allows us to share our knowledge, hopes, and ideas.

What Planet Are You From, Clarice Bean?

by Lauren Child (Candlewick Press, 2001). Clarice is wild about her environmental studies at school but not enthusiastic about a project on snails she has to do with her neighbor, Robert. When her brother, granddad, and parents camp beside (and in) a tree scheduled to be chopped down, Clarice and her friends set out to "Free the Tree!"

Fiction: The Environment

Everglades Forever: Restoring America's Great Wetland

by Trish Marx (Lee & Low, 2008). "In the whole world, there is only one Everglades," Ms. Stone told her fifth-grade class at Avacado Elementary School in Homestead, Florida. So begins this book and the lessons, questions, and field trip to understand this endangered habitat. Photos and resources. 40pp., grades 3–6

Flush

by Carl Hiaasen (Knopf, 2007). Noah's father was so sure the floating casino was dumping sewage into the open water that he sank the boat and landed in jail. Now, if Noah and his younger sister can prove this dumping is still going on, his dad will be vindicated and the casino will be put out of business. Hazardous waste, a mystery man, and food coloring all add up to a raucous adventure. 272pp., grades 5–8

Funny Weather: Everything You Didn't Want to Know About Climate Change but Probably Should Find Out

by Kate Evans (Myriad Editions, 2006). A fact-filled, graphic/comic format that tells about climate change from three perspectives: an idealistic adolescent, a mad scientist, and a businessman

of questionable morals. Packed with information that will amaze and propel the reader to action. 96pp., young adult

Judy Moody Saves the World

by Megan McDonald (Candlewick Press, 2002). When her teacher informs the class about the destruction of the rain forest, endangered species, and recycling, Judy is determined to save the world single-handed. Only after she gets her third-grade class involved does Judy realize that "she no longer had to do it by herself," and the results take root. 145pp., grades 3–6

The Missing 'Gator of Gumbo Limbo

by Jean Craighead George (HarperTrophy, 1992). Liza and her mother live in one of the last natural ecosystems, the Florida Everglades. There, with a small community of "woods people" who live on the land, Liza searches for Dajun, the glorious alligator that protects this fragile environment. When a state official arrives to kill Dajun, Liza discovers that the danger extends far beyond the threat to the alligator. Called an "eco mystery," this book provides a wealth of information about the animal and plant world of the Everglades. 144pp., grades 4–6

Saving the Planet

by Gail Gauthier (Putnam, 2003). After losing his summer job, sixteen-year-old Michael ends up living and working in Vermont on an environmentalist magazine with Walt and Nora, his grandparents' elder friends. While Michael is trying to become accustomed to vegetarian cuisine, a room filled with recycled Styrofoam, paper and plastic bags, and bicycling to work, he stumbles upon an ecological intrigue and a surprising romance. What a summer! 232pp., grades 6–10

Spud Goes Green

by Giles Thaxton (Egmont, 2006). A kid named Spud makes going green his New Year's resolution and begins keeping a diary on January 1. With the help of his buddy Adi, they explore many ideas: planting a garden, making paper, taking solar showers, and using eco-friendly house cleaners. Activities and recipes fill the pages along with a British sense of humor! 144pp., grades 4–6

There's an Owl in the Shower

by Jean Craighead George (HarperTrophy, 1995). Spotted owls have cost Borden's father, Leon, his job as a logger in the old growth forest of northern California. Intending to kill a spotted owl for revenge, Borden finds an owlet and brings it home. Surprisingly, Leon cares for and about this growing owl. As he learns about the ecological impact of "the ravaging of old growth forests," Leon and his family change their views. 134pp., grades 4–6



The Gardening Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Gardening

Compost! Growing Gardens from Your Garbage

by Linda Glaser (Millbrook Press, 1996). A simple story about composting, from adding garbage to using the soil in a garden. 36pp., grades 1–2

Compost Critters

by Bianca Lavies (Dutton, 1993). Text and close-up photography give an inside picture of a compost heap and how creatures, from bacteria and mites to millipedes and earthworms, aid in turning compost into humus. 32pp., grades K–8

Down to Earth: Garden Secrets!

Garden Stories! Garden Projects You Can Do!

by Michael J Rosen (Harcourt, 1998). “A garden plot is more than just a piece of land. It’s a story.” So begins this extraordinary compilation of poetry, stories, artwork, and recipes for successful and creative gardens. Forty-one children’s book authors and illustrators contributed their work, with proceeds supporting Share Our Strength, an anti-hunger organization. Out of print but worth finding. 64pp., all ages

A Harvest of Color: Growing a Vegetable Garden

by Melanie Eclare (Ragged Bears, 2002). Six young children celebrate the experience of growing five different vegetables. We learn how they measure the plot, thin the seedlings, and come to appreciate worms. Along with the brilliant photographs is a recipe for a vegetable salad. 32pp., grades K–3

Native American Gardening: Stories, Projects and Recipes for Families

by Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac (Fulcrum, 1996). Combining gardening and storytelling, the authors provide information needed to pursue “Three Sisters” gardening: growing the traditional Native garden of corn, beans, and squash. Includes information about the relationships between people and the gardens of Earth, seed preservation, Native diets and meals, natural pest control, and the importance of the Circle of Life. 176pp., all grades

Picture Books: Gardening

Bud

by Kevin O’Malley (Walker and Co., 2000). Bud Sweet-William, a young rhinoceros, has a passion for gardening that mystifies his parents. To their surprise, his grandfather also likes to garden. Soon, all are knee deep in dirt and celebration.

The Garden of Happiness

by Erika Tamar (Harcourt, 1996). Marisol, a young girl, and her diverse neighbors turn a vacant New York City lot into a lush, multicultural garden with a sunflower mural.

The Green Truck Garden Giveaway: A Neighborhood Story and Almanac

by Jacqueline B. Martin (Simon & Schuster, 1997). When two people pass out seeds and gardening supplies, neighbors who claim to have no interest in gardening or their community are transformed. Along with the engaging story, the author offers historical information about plants, recipes, and advice for up-and-coming gardeners. Out of print but worth finding.

Jack’s Garden

by Henry Cole (Greenwillow, 1995). Text and illustrations show what happens to Jack’s garden after he plants his seeds.

My First Garden

by Tomek Bogacki (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000). When a young boy hears that a garden used to grow in a courtyard, he sets out to do all the work to make the garden bloom anew. The illustrations in impressionistic pastels return us to the author’s small town in Poland and show incisive details of his work and his community.

The Ugly Vegetables

by Grace Lin (Charlesbridge, 1999). A young girl notices the differences between her mother’s garden and the ones planted by her neighbor. The neighbor’s flowers are “beautiful” while her mother’s Chinese vegetables are “ugly.” At harvest, the aroma of the “ugly vegetable soup” attracts everyone to join in the feast. Recipe included.

Fiction: Gardening

Butterflies and Lizards, Beryl and Me

by Ruth Lercher Bornstein (Marshall Cavendish, 2002). During the Great Depression in 1936, Charley moves with her mom to a rural town. While her mother works in “the smell cannery,” eleven-year-old Charley is drawn to Beryl, an optimistic elder woman, called “crazy” by other children. Together, Charley and Beryl plant a garden. Beryl provides the friendship and encouragement Charley desperately needs. Within this caring relationship, Charley grows like the plants she cherishes. In spite of conflict with her mother, a near tragedy, and a deep loss, Charley finds her heart, her home, and a way to give. 144pp., grades 5–9

***The Chalk Box Kid***

by Clyde Robert Bulla (Random House, 1987). A new neighborhood, a new school, and an unhappy birthday make life hard for nine-year-old Gregory. After he discovers an abandoned chalk factory behind his house, his school assignment of planting a garden develops in a most unusual and creative way. 59pp., grades 2–4

Rodzina

by Karen Cushman (Clarion, 2003). The year is 1881, and Rodzina Clara Jadwiga Anastazyja Brodski would rather be anywhere than on an orphan train heading west to an unknown future. Since she is a big girl and already twelve, she is placed in charge of the little children, which only makes her yearn more for her deceased family. What family would want a scruffy orphan from the streets of Chicago? And as each child finds a new home, Rodzina's future seems truly unknown. 215pp., grades 4–7



The Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: The Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices Bookshelf

Recommendation from the Field

Eating Animals by Jonathan Safran Foer (Little, Brown, 2009). This provocative and extremely well documented book details the author's exploration of the meat-producing industry primarily (but not exclusively) in the United States. A blend of science, history, and economics informs about a practice many of us ignore: factory farming. Foer questions who defines what is "nutritional" for the U.S. government. He illuminates the connection between flu viruses and birds confined within factory farms. This book gives an urgent new meaning to the question, "What's for dinner?"

Most of us view environmentalism in terms of using energy-efficient light bulbs and cars and turning off the tap while brushing our teeth. Foer shifts our view to the food on our table and the choices we make, with factory farming being the greatest contributor to global warming. "Animal agriculture makes a 40 percent greater contribution to global warming than all transportation in the world combined; it is the number one cause of climate change."

Reading this book can lead students toward varied service learning ideas, such as producing "food facts" as part of a public media campaign. Students can research food source options in their locale and support family farms that maintain healthy practices. They can also create cookbooks that promote using vegetables and fruits. 341pp., grades 11–12

Recommendation from the Field

The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat (Young Readers Edition) by Michael Pollan (Dial, 2009). A critical part of making healthy food choices is understanding our food sources. From fast food to organic farming, author Michael Pollan puts the choices in front of the reader while providing facts, visuals, and compelling information.

With the growing concern about childhood obesity and health care, how we care for our health may begin with what we ingest. Reading this book with a class of students can lead to investigating access to food within their own community. Do consumers have options to only buy from the "industrial food chain," or can they buy local? Are nearby restaurants all fast-food chains? Pollan also suggests in the afterword to "vote with your fork at school" and describes how students and parents are working together to improve food service, including serving real food made from scratch and teaching classes on growing and cooking food. Being a proponent of "eating education" could lead to service learning experiences on a school campus or opportunities for teaching the broader community about satisfying hunger pangs with healthy food choices. Includes "Tips for Eating" and a Q&A with the author. Consider this book for a school-wide read for high school. 352pp., young adult

Picture Books: Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices

Dr. White

by Jane Goodall (North-South Books, 1999). The pediatric ward of a hospital has a remarkable doctor—Dr. White, a fluffy white dog whose warmth and love work magic on critically ill children. This story is based on actual events at a London hospital. The author's note refers to research supporting the idea that the "love and companionship of animals can contribute to sick people's recovery and rehabilitation."

Rosie: A Visiting Dog's Story

by Stephanie Calmenson (Houghton Mifflin, 1994). Rosie is a dog who makes a difference. After the necessary training, Rosie visits hospitalized children and elder people living in nursing homes. Her manners and friendliness make her well loved.

**Fiction: Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices****Recommendation from the Field**

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr (Puffin, 2004). Sadako lives in Hiroshima. She was an infant when her community was bombed. At age eleven, she developed leukemia and attempted to make 1,000 paper cranes, because legend says that if you make 1,000 cranes, you receive a wish of good health. However, Sadako was unable to finish the cranes before she died, and so she left the task to others to finish.

Reading about Sadako's journey shows children that a single person or a small group of people can initiate widespread knowledge about an important issue. Readers can then consider, "Is there a cause in our community that we want to promote, especially concerning health?" With many pressing current childhood issues, i.e., lack of exercise and obesity, who better than children themselves to initiate a health campaign? Just as Sadako had a symbol, kids can construct a visual representation to symbolize their good health and spread the word. 80pp., grades 4-7



The Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty

Changing Places: A Kid's View of Shelter Living

by Margie Chalofsky, Glen Finland, and Judy Wallace (Gryphon House, 1992). Eight children arrive at a shelter, each with a different story. The first-person narratives help the reader understand the complex situations that arise in families and affect these young people. A preface and an afterword provide a helpful context and include ways to assist at local shelters. 61pp., grades 4–8

Home Is Where We Live: Life at a Shelter through a Young Girl's Eyes

by Bonnie Lee Groth (Cornerstone Press, 1995). “We moved to a shelter this year—Mamma, me, William, and our baby sister, LaTasha.” So begins this photo essay about how a young girl acclimates to shelter life and comes to accept the people who help her. 30pp., grades 4–8

Homeless Children

by Eleanor H. Ayer (Lucent Books, 1997). What is being done for children who are homeless? Topics include resources provided by agencies and youth-led programs, educational issues, health concerns, and various aspects of daily life. Includes a glossary of terms. 95pp., grades 4–8

Homelessness

by Sara Dixon Criswell (Lucent, 1998). Homelessness, a national problem, requires attention from all sectors. This useful book discusses the role of government, charities, nonprofit organizations, and everyday citizens, including young people. In the chapter “Life on the Streets,” the subculture of homelessness is described, along with issues of mobility, health care, and self-identity. Education, service providers, and the struggle to turn lives around are candidly presented. 112pp., grades 7–12

Homelessness: Can We Solve the Problem?

by Laurie Rozakis (Henry Holt, 1995). The complex issue of homelessness is presented in a straightforward manner, with chapters on “The Face of Homelessness,” “How Do People Become Homeless?” “What Problems Do the Homeless Face?” and “What Can Be Done?” Stereotypes are refuted, and issues such as mental illness, the effects on children, and failures in the social services systems are explored. 64pp., grades 4–6

Homelessness: Whose Problem Is It?

by Ted Gottfried (Millbrook Press, 1999). Beginning with the history of homelessness in the United States, the author presents a broad and balanced range of issues. Policies, welfare reform, illness, substance abuse, and education, among other topics, are examined. Readers are invited to formulate their own opinions. Organizational resources are included. 128pp., young adult

The Lost Boys of Natinga: A School for Sudan's Young Refugees

by Judy Walgren (Houghton Mifflin, 1998). This photo essay takes the reader inside a refugee camp and school for boys established in 1993 in southern Sudan. Because of the country's civil war, the boys have been forced from their homes. Many came to the camp when they were orphaned or otherwise separated from their families. “Every day these boys struggle to get food, to stay healthy, and to go to school.” 44pp., grades 5–8

Recommendation from the Field

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America by Barbara Ehrenreich (Metropolitan Books, 2001). *Nickel and Dimed* is an easy and enjoyable yet somewhat painful read about what it takes to survive in modern America on poverty-level wages. In the style of an undercover reporter, Ehrenreich provides an inside view of what it's really like to wait tables, work at Wal-Mart, serve meals in a nursing home, and work at least two jobs simultaneously to survive. Welfare reform, a livable wage, and affordable housing are a few of the societal issues that come to life for the reader.

By reading *Nickel and Dimed*, students can develop empathy and knowledge from this up close look at what the people they meet might be experiencing. Their perception of low-wage workers will change as they gain a new respect for and understanding of the working poor. This book could prompt significant classroom discussion. It will be powerful when combined with a service learning experience that addresses some of the issues that the working poor must struggle with every day. 221pp., young adult

The Other America: Homeless Teens

by Gail B. Stewart (Lucent Books, 1998). “This ruins everything.” “We're a close-knit street family.” “Sometimes you just feel you're wasting your whole life.” “I don't think too



many people care.” Words from young people, the stories of their plight, and the people who reach out to help turn their lives around are presented. 112pp., young adult

Picture Books: Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty

Fly Away Home

by Eve Bunting (Clarion, 1991). A boy lives in an airport terminal with his father, who continually tries to earn enough money to rent an apartment. The boy wonders when his life will change and gains hope when he watches a bird trapped inside the building find an open window to freedom.

The Greatest Table: A Banquet to Fight Against Hunger

edited by Michael J. Rosen (Harcourt, 1994). This is a twelve-foot-long accordion book with artwork contributed by sixteen illustrators. At this great table, there is room for all people who come and plenty of food to share. Out of print but well worth finding.

Potato: A Tale from the Great Depression

by Kate Lied (National Geographic Society, 1997). “This is a story about my grandfather and my grandmother. It is also a story about the Great Depression and how hard things were.” A family that has lost jobs and its home turns to farm work. The family members pick potatoes—many, many potatoes—which they eat and also use to barter for other goods, “even a pig.” The author wrote this book at age eight to pass on a true family story and to explain why she likes potatoes.

Saily’s Journey

by Ralph da Costa Nunez (White Tiger Press, 2002). When Saily the Snail loses his shell in a storm, he goes on a journey to find a new home. Along the way, he experiences a range of emotions, including despair, fear, and hope, until he finds the generosity of others that help him find a home once again.

Sam and the Lucky Money

by Karen Chinn (Lee & Low Books, 1995). For Chinese New Year, Sam receives lucky money in traditional *leisees*—decorated red envelopes. Sam can buy either sweets or a toy. Near the open market, before the festival lion dances through the street, Sam sees a man who is homeless and barefoot. On this wintry day, Sam considers the best use for his money.

Fiction: Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty

Asphalt Angels

by Ineke Holtwijk (Front Street, 1995). In Rio de Janeiro, Alex lives among street kids, alone and scared. Thrown out of his house by his stepfather, Alex lives by his wits among “the Asphalt Angels.” Although he intends to avoid crime, Alex reluctantly falls into a life of theft and panhandling for survival. 184pp., grades 10–12 (mature themes)

Darnell Rock Reporting

by Walter Dean Myers (Delacorte, 1994). Darnell fails his middle school classes and spends too much time in the principal’s office for behavior problems. His last opportunity to get his act together is the school newspaper. Encouraged by the librarian and his sudden interest in Sweeby Jones, a veteran who is homeless, Darnell demonstrates initiative and an understanding that everyone needs a second chance. 135pp., grades 4–7

Drop Dead Inn

by James Howe (Simon & Schuster, 2000). When Sebastian Barth and his friends decide to sneak into an abandoned inn, the last thing they expect to find is a dead body. The mystery spills over into the new homeless shelter at the church, as evidence suggests a person using the facility might be the murderer. Against this backdrop, the challenges and turmoil of being homeless are revealed, along with the thoughtful response of a caring community. 156pp., grades 4–7

The King of Dragons

by Carol Fenner (McElderry, 1998). Eleven-year-old Ian and his father, a Vietnam veteran, live in a deserted courthouse. Homeless for several years, Ian knows how to stay out of sight and manage on few resources. When his dad does not return to the courthouse and renovations begin to transform the musty halls into a kite museum, Ian finds a unique role as a kite expert to handle his precarious situation. 216pp., grades 4–8



Recommendation from the Field

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck (Penguin, 1939/1992). Service learning can make this classic American novel come alive, particularly in the areas of immigration and hunger and homelessness. After reading about the Joad family's arrival in California and the "Welcome Committee" at the government camp, students can create a "Newcomer's Welcome Guide and Orientation" for families new to this country. Preparing written materials, such as guides, public service announcements, and role-play scenarios, gives students an opportunity to apply writing skills in a variety of formats. Students can explore immigration issues by researching local trends in new student arrivals. At the same time, they can gain an understanding of and respect for different cultures and experiences. A newcomer orientation project can also welcome students new to the school community and may be especially effective for groups of students transitioning from elementary to middle school or middle to high school. This project also offers a context in which to explore issues of teasing and bullying.

Steinbeck poignantly describes how unpicked fruit rotted and livestock was destroyed while the Oklahoma immigrants starved. After assessing the community's needs, students can research and identify opportunities for "salvaging" food from local restaurants and grocery stores and giving it to food banks or meal assistance programs. Using lessons in persuasive essay- and letter-writing skills and oral presentations, students can work with local grocers, restaurateurs, and human service providers to make unused resources (for example, bread, canned foods, fruits, vegetables, excess meals) available to their neighbors in need. 619pp., young adult

Recommendation from the Field

The Road by Cormac McCarthy (Knopf, 2006). In *The Road*, the main characters are in a postapocalyptic state of constant starvation. Their only nutrition comes from canned food they find. Despite the desperate conditions, the love between a boy and his father stays strong.

For a class to read this book and then experience helping others makes an authentic connection. In my case, my advanced composition class spent a day at a food bank. We sorted cans and packed pallets, and even though the jobs were tedious, we witnessed the process of distributing the tons of donated cans, boxes, and bottles to local food pantries.

By helping this agency, my class and I discovered the real value of our class lectures came from the doing, not the hearing. Personal experience makes all the difference. Teachers lecture about the value of service. It starts in grade school, and continues through high school and, increasingly, in many colleges. From personal experience, I always believed that lectures went in one ear and out the other. Luckily for me, I discovered that was false. 256pp., grades 10–12

Slake's Limbo

by Felice Holman (Aladdin, 1986). In this classic novel of urban survival, Aremis Slake, in an attempt to get away from the boys who are harassing him, retreats to the underground subway system of New York City for 121 days, scratching out an existence with the help of a few key people. 126pp., young adult



The Immigrants Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Immigrants

Harvest

by George Ancona (Marshall Cavendish, 2001). Photographs, text, and interviews depict the lives of *campesinos*, migrant farm workers who come to the United States from Mexico in search of a better life. In the back-breaking fields, working twelve-hour days, six days a week, they labor under the hot sun, inhaling dust and pesticides. A vivid description of lives that are based on hard work and hope for a better future for their children. 48pp., grades 4–7

Immigration: How Should It Be Controlled?

by Meish Goldish (Henry Holt, 1997). This informative survey of issues looks at immigration, primarily into the United States. Stories of people entering legally and illegally and coming as refugees are all included. 64pp., grades 4–6

To Seek a Better World: The Haitian Minority in America

by Brent Ashabranner (Cobblehill, 1997). Half a million people from Haiti live in the United States. Where do they live? What do they do? What are their contributions to America? What is happening to those who arrive illegally? Learn about Haiti's troubled history and how it has affected the immigrants. Out of print but worth finding. 96pp., grades 5–10

Picture Books: Immigrants

América Is Her Name

by Luis J. Rodríguez (Curbstone Press, 1997). América, a Mixteca Indian girl from Oaxaca, Mexico, suffers because of people who insult her background and her life of poverty in a Chicago ghetto. Her love of writing keeps her spirit alive and gives her family hope.

A Day's Work

by Eve Bunting (Clarion, 1994). Young Francisco acts as translator for his abuelo (grandfather), who recently arrived from Mexico and wants to find a job. Eager to help, Francisco lies to an employer and says that his grandfather, a carpenter by trade, is an able gardener. After ruining the gardening project and learning of Francisco's dishonesty, Abuelo teaches his grandson about integrity and earns the respect of the employer.

Happy Birthday Mr. Kang

by Susan L. Roth (National Geographic Society, 2001). Mr. Kang paints poems, reads the *New York Times*, and cares for his hua mei bird as his grandfather did in China. On Sunday, Mr. Kang carries his bird in a bamboo cage to Sara Delano Roosevelt Park in Manhattan, joining other Chinese immigrants with their birds. When his seven-year-old grandson questions whether “a free man should keep a caged bird,” Mr. Kang opens the bamboo door. Will the hua mei fly away?

Oranges on Golden Mountain

by Elizabeth Partridge (Puffin, 2001). During the California gold rush, many Chinese sailed across the Pacific to work and live. When hard times hit Jo Lee's family, he too is sent to stay with his uncle in this foreign land called “Gold Mountain.” He saves every coin earned by hard work—fishing and growing orange trees—in hopes that his mother and young sister will soon join him.

A Place to Grow

by Soyung Pak (Scholastic, 2002). A family, like a seed, needs a safe place to grow. A father uses a blooming garden to tell his young daughter why he immigrated to a safe place to raise a family. The story has depth and can provoke discussion of the many reasons that people immigrate.

Stella: On the Edge of Popularity

by Lauren Lee (Polychrome Publishing, 1994). Seeking acceptance in a seventh-grade clique, Stella follows the direction of the “popular girls” despite their biased attitudes. Her Korean grandmother nags Stella to follow her own cultural traditions, causing her embarrassment. Stella's confusion is intensified when her father is one of a group of Korean men victimized in a racial incident. Will she learn a lesson from her old-fashioned grandmother: Be who you are? 178pp., grades 4–8

A Very Important Day

by Maggie Rugg Herold (Morrow, 1995). All over New York City, families from many countries prepare for the memorable day when they will become citizens. The Patel family members from India share breakfast with their neighbors, the Stousos members close their Greek restaurant, and Yujin Zeng's friend gives him a special gift. The event in the courthouse brings all the families together.

**Fiction: Immigrants*****Behind the Mountains***

by Edwidge Danticat (Scholastic, 2002). Young Celiene records her life in Haiti in a “sweet little book” given to her by her teacher. We follow her through the fall of 2000, when bombing during the Haitian elections nearly kills her and her mother. Celiene writes of leaving her treasured home in the mountains to join her father in the harsh streets of Brooklyn. This first-person story is marked by love of family and proverbs from the Haitian tradition. Out of print but well worth finding. 153pp., grades 6–10

Born Confused

by Tanuk Desai Hidier (Scholastic, 2002). The art of balancing two cultures is carefully dissected by Dimple Lala, deep in the throes of adolescent self-discovery. While she has great respect for her immigrant parents, Dimple is challenged by how to integrate her language and culture from India with the New York hip scene. After meeting Karsh, a son of Indian friends, Dimple’s idea of who is a “suitable” match unravels, and complications arise. 500pp., grades 9–12

Children of the River

by Linda Crew (Dell, 1989). Sundara escaped the Khmer Rouge army in Cambodia with her aunt’s family and lives in Oregon. Now in high school, she finds that her Cambodian traditions clash with being an American teenager. How will she live up to family expectations if she is drawn to Jonathan, the blonde high school football player? And what of the memories that continue to haunt her? 213pp., young adult

A Different Kind of Hero

by Ann R. Blakleslee (Cavendish, 1997). Twelve-year-old Renny is not tough enough to please his Irish father, Lon. When Renny befriends and promises to protect a Chinese boy attending school—most unusual in the 1880s—his dad is infuriated. Lon and others are enraged by the presence of Chinese people in this Colorado mining town; they fear that more Chinese families will follow and work for less pay. Renny holds to his commitment to keep his friendship and demonstrates courage even his father comes to admire. 143pp., grades 4–7

Recommendation from the Field

Dragonwings by Lawrence Yep (HarperTrophy, 1975). *Dragonwings* is written from the perspective of a young boy named Moon Shadow, who, in the early 1900s, grows up on a farm in China with his mother and grandmother. At age seven, he journeys across the Pacific to meet his father. Windrider, along with many other Chinese men, had immigrated to the United States to earn money for their families in China. In the course of the novel, we learn about Chinese culture, the Wright brothers’ first flight, the San Francisco earthquake, and the prejudice faced by the Chinese in their new country.

There are many curricular connections to be made: comparing Chinese picture writing with the English alphabet; reading and writing poetry; honoring ancestors; comparing lunar and solar calendars; learning the use of an abacus; finding out about the stereopticon, an early 3-D slide projector; learning about aeronautics; and studying earthquakes. Any of these can lead to service activities. For example, after studying earthquakes, students could make safety posters or preparedness brochures and assemble earthquake kits for low-income families. 336pp., grades 5–9

Journey of the Sparrows

by Fran Leeper Buss and Daisy Cubias (Lodestar, 1991). Maria, a sixteen-year-old Salvadoran refugee, cares for her siblings during their difficult journey to Chicago. Together, they start a new life with help from their community. 165pp., young adult

Lupita Mañana

by Patricia Beatty (Beech Tree, 1981). When her father dies, thirteen-year-old Lupita and her brother leave their Mexican village and head to the United States to earn money. Her struggle is eased by the help of others. 186pp., young adult

Miss Happiness and Miss Flower

by Rumer Godden (HarperTrophy, 1960). Eight-year-old Nona longs for her home in sunny India, but instead she lives in a cold English village with her aunt, uncle, and three very British cousins, including Belinda, who hates her. When two delicate Japanese dolls arrive as gifts, Nona longs to build them a proper Japanese house. Over time, and with help from her cousins and new friends, Nona creates a home for the dolls and herself. Includes plans for building a Japanese dollhouse. 199pp., grades 3–6



Recommendation from the Field

The Skirt by Gary Soto (Delacorte Press, 1992). On Friday afternoon, Miata leaves her mother's skirt on the bus. She needs that skirt. Her troupe is to dance the *folklorico* on Sunday. If she is the only girl without a costume, her parents, Mexican immigrants living in central California, will "wear sunglasses out of embarrassment." Miata and her friend Ana work together to recover the skirt before her parents discover its absence. The effort leads them to break rules and cooperate with their nemesis—and may end up being unnecessary.

This charming tale raises challenging questions that can lead to service extensions for young readers, especially regarding immigration and conflict resolution. Through discussion, students can generate ideas.

Immigration: Miata and her family are relatively new to central California. Are there ways to help new students at school or new families in your neighborhood? What services in our community help immigrant families? Are there ways you can help these agencies? What services are there for children your age? What do you think is needed?

Conflict Resolution/Peer Counseling: Miata and Ana have trouble on the bus. Ana also seems uncomfortable with their adventure, but goes along. Miata makes choices that would be unacceptable to her parents in order to please her parents. Does your school have or need a conflict resolution program to facilitate problem solving and effective decision making? Where can students go for help with disputes? What activities could students develop to encourage peer interaction or provide ideas to improve parent-child communication?
74pp., grades 4–5



The Literacy Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Literacy

Illiteracy

by Sean M. Grady (Lucent Books, 1994). “Literacy is a skill, a technique of using patterns of letters to preserve ideas.” Literacy is highly valued in most societies, but the challenge of learning to read can seem almost insurmountable. Illiteracy in the United States and other nations is profiled in this comprehensive overview, which also discusses how literacy extends beyond “reading and writing.” A valuable resource for literacy and tutoring programs. 96pp., grades 6–12

Learning Disabilities

by Christina M. Girod (Lucent Books, 2001). This book provides a substantial overview of learning disabilities that is useful for a young person engaged in tutoring or other service learning activities with youth or adults with learning disabilities. Topics include the history and types of learning disabilities, coping with learning disabilities, and current controversies. 96pp., young adult

Recommendation from the Field

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass (Oxford University Press, 1999/1845). Like most slaves, Frederick Douglass suffered malnourishment, exhaustion, and whippings without expectation of anything but more misery, until the day the naive Mrs. Auld began to teach him the alphabet. The moment Mr. Auld heard of her forbidden act—teaching a slave to read—Frederick Douglass’ life changed forever. As Mr. Auld chastised his wife for “spoiling” a slave because a slave “should know nothing but to obey his master,” Douglass finally comprehended “the white man’s power to enslave the black man.” He realized that the pathway from slavery to freedom was learning to read. From that moment on, Douglass took every opportunity to teach himself to read and write. In the end, this ability gave Douglass the chance to escape slavery and eventually to become one of the most influential speakers of his time. Frederick Douglass embodies the power of the word *freedom*.

Students can discuss the themes of literacy, independence, knowledge, and power. Was physical or mental deprivation the key to keeping slaves in servitude? Can one change the world by force alone? Is literacy still the pathway to freedom? Can we have a democracy without it? What is the danger of taking your education for granted? 96pp., young adult

Picture Books: Literacy

Across a Dark and Wild Sea

by Don Brown (Millbrook Press, 2002). Columcille lived in a remote part of Ireland in the year 521. As this mixture of legend and history begins to unfold, Columcille develops a love for writing. (Did he really eat a cake filled with alphabet letters?) As a monk and scribe, his fervor grows until he is caught in a dispute over a manuscript he has copied. The resulting battle and loss of life cause him to move abroad. In Scotland, Columcille leaves a legacy that illuminates a corner of the Dark Ages. Includes the uncial alphabet of his time.

Dear Mr. Rosenwald

by Carole Boston Weatherford (Scholastic, 2006). Back in the early 1920s, a friendship between Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck, led to millions of dollars contributed to building schools for African American children. What is most remarkable is the story of how each rural community raised and contributed money. A true collaboration.

Once Upon a Time

by Niki Daly (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2003). Sarie struggles to read aloud in her South African school. Letters run together and “trip on her tongue,” bringing giggles from her classmates. Auntie Anna, Sarie’s elder friend, reads Cinderella over and over to the young girl, unlocking the mystery of reading during imaginary trips in a wheel-less car, until the words “pour out [of Sarie] as clear as spring water.”

Stella Louella’s Runaway Book

by Lisa Campbell Ernst (Simon & Schuster, 1998). Oh no! Stella cannot find her library book, and it is due at five o’clock today! In her search, she finds that her book has been read and enjoyed by everyone: her brother, the postal carrier, Officer Tim, Sal who mends chairs, and more. Each person has a different favorite part of the story. Soon the entire town is following Stella to the library to talk to the librarian. A surprising and pleasing ending.

Fiction: Literacy

The Bookstore Mouse

by Peggy Christian (Harcourt, 1995). He lives in a bookstore behind a wall of words. He snacks on letters from cookbooks. He throws sharp words at his enemy. And then one day, this bookstore mouse literally lands right inside one of the books, headed for a great adventure with an unprepared knight as they set out to confront a dragon and free the storytellers. 134pp., grades 4–7

**Dear Whiskers**

by Ann Whitehead Nagda (Holiday House, 2000). During a cross-age school project, fourth-grader Jenny is discouraged because her second-grade pen pal Sameera, a new student from Saudi Arabia, does not speak English. Despite her initial frustrations, Jenny sees the challenges Sameera faces and becomes determined to break the silence. 76pp., grades 2–4

Recommendation from the Field

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury (Simon & Schuster, 1953/1993). Guy Montag was a fireman—not a fireman who put out fires but one who started them. Guy and the other firemen were paid to burn books. He never questioned this occupation until one day he met Clarisse, a girl who changed his outlook. The questioning attitude he adopted wasn't favored by his peers, however. One day he saved a book from the fires, hoping to find answers within the book. Instead, he was taken on a journey of self-discovery.

Students can debate whether books are necessary to preserve information now that we have the technology to store everything electronically. Issues of social and political control are also prevalent in the novel, and students can discuss the fairness and effectiveness of the political systems of the world. Finally, they can decide for themselves what would happen if there were no more challenges in the world.

In terms of service, students can select their favorite books from middle or elementary school. They can then arrange for classroom visits to discuss the value of reading in general and these books specifically with the appropriate students. In honor of *Fahrenheit 451*, students could memorize a passage and create a performance piece to encourage appreciation of literature. 190pp., young adult

Just Call Me Stupid

by Tom Birdseye (Puffin, 1993). When fifth grader Patrick tries to read, he remembers his dad calling him stupid, and he freezes. Even his time in the resource room makes him feel as if he is suffocating. Only drawing and medieval fantasies nurture his creative talents. When Celina moves next door, Patrick, for the first time, has a reason to read. 181pp., grades 4–7

Recommendation from the Field

The Library Card by Jerry Spinelli (Scholastic, 1996). Join the four teenagers featured in this action-packed short story collection of serious, humorous, and exciting adolescent adventures. All the teens are profoundly changed by discoveries found in library books. These adventures feature many themes—literacy, love of learning, poverty, homelessness, parent loss, teenage crime, media addiction, and friendship. Many of the themes can lead to worthwhile activities. Students can investigate issues of hunger and homelessness and the income needed to meet basic needs and pay for transportation, medical costs, and childcare. (The book *Nickel and Dimed* can add to this research.) They can study the impact of media on children or teens and promote a “Trade Your TV for a Book” week.

Since *The Library Card* explores, among its themes, the riches found within books, students can consider these questions and add their own: Why do some people not learn to read? Why do some people not enjoy reading? What is the value of reading? What is the value of education? This can lead to a “pay it forward” approach (as described in the book *Pay It Forward* on the Social Change Bookshelf—digital content) to instill the love of reading in others. Students can encourage a younger student by reading with the younger child and co-authoring a book that meets that child's particular need. In collaboration with a program for English as a second language, students can read with recent immigrants on a regular basis. Also, many shelters, hospitals, and community centers may appreciate the donation of used books. 148pp., grades 5–8

Prairie School

by Avi (Harper, 2001). In 1880, Noah likes working the family farm and roaming the Colorado prairie. He certainly doesn't want to learn to read from his Aunt Dora. What use does he have for reading? Nine-year-old Noah doesn't expect his feisty aunt to have him push her wheelchair so she can explore the prairie and reveal the wealth of book knowledge available for a young boy who can “learn to read and you'll read the prairie.” 48pp., grades 2–4

***Sahara Special***

by Esmé Raji Codell (Hyperion, 2003). Sahara intends to be a writer. At home she is a prolific reader, yet at school she never seems to raise her hand to answer a question. And doing homework? Never! Is Sahara's obstinacy a reaction to her father leaving, or does she have a learning problem? When Sahara repeats fifth grade, her new teacher Miss Pointy, uses unusual methods and quiet support to unlock the joy of learning. 175pp., grades 4–7

A School for Pompey Walker

by Michael J. Rosen (Harcourt Brace, 1995). "Who would have thought anybody'd applaud a man who spent much of his life a slave, and so much more of it a criminal—at least to some eyes." Pompey Walker stands before children at a school named in his honor, which was on the site of the Sweet Freedom School he had established earlier for black children. Pompey tells of brutalities of slave life and his friendship with Jeremiah Walker, a white abolitionist. Pompey and Jeremiah devised a dangerous plan to gain money needed to build the school from slave owners. As described in the author's note, the incidents are based on recollections of elder freed slaves. 42pp., grades 4–6



The Safe and Strong Communities Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Safe and Strong Communities

50 Ways to a Safer World

by Patricia Occhiuzzo Giggans and Barrie Levy (Seal Press, 1997). This compilation of facts, ideas, and resources includes ideas to prevent violence and create a safer community. Among the ideas are tips on raising safety-smart and media-savvy kids, conducting school safety audits, and keeping guns away from children. 144pp., grades 7–12

Alloy Peace Book

by Tucker Shaw (HarperTrophy, 2002). Written in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, this book examines peace and what it means to young people around the world. A timeline of peace in the twentieth century is outlined; Nobel Peace Prize winners are featured; and young people speak, describing where they were when the September 11 attacks occurred, telling how they responded through social action, and sharing their fears and dreams. Out of print but worth finding. 144pp., young adult

Cootie Shots: Theatrical Inoculations

Against Bigotry for Kids, Parents, and Teachers

by Norma Bowles with Mark E. Rosenthal (Fringe Benefits, 2001). This unique collection of plays, songs, and poems designed for young audiences promotes tolerance and celebrates diversity. 144pp., grades 3–12

Increase the Peace: The ABCs of Tolerance

by Devora Kaye (ABCD Books, 2002). Written by a high school sophomore, this alphabetical exploration of tolerance includes practical ideas for social activism. The book will inspire students to action and may also inspire them to create their own books. *A percentage of all sales is contributed to a nonprofit organization that supports educational programs for nonviolence.* 29pp., all grades

Left for Dead: A Young Man's Search for Justice for the USS Indianapolis

by Pete Nelson (Delacorte Press, 2002). What if history were wrong? Hunter Scott saw a reference to the sinking of the USS Indianapolis while watching the movie *Jaws* and curiosity led him to an amazing discovery: the U.S. Navy unfairly court-martialed a captain to avoid the blame. What began as a twelve-year-old's history fair project ended with the restoration of honor for a captain and the men who served with him. 201pp., grades 5–12

Making It Home: Real-Life Stories from Children Forced to Flee

by Beverley Naidoo (Dial Books, 2004). This is a compilation of eight stories written by kids who have been exiled from their homes. With an introduction and map of each region, the stories remind us that conflicts don't happen just to nations, they deeply and irrevocably affect people's everyday lives, including twenty million children in just the few years before this book was written. 144pp., grades 5–8

The Safe Zone: A Kid's Guide to Personal Safety

by Donna Chalet and Francine Russell (Morrow, 1998). This book helps children consider ways to protect themselves without fighting by developing personal awareness, using body language, developing self-esteem, and communicating effectively. The book is filled with activities and ideas and offers plenty of scenarios for classroom discussion and problem solving, including situations that occur in public, at home, and even on the Internet. This book is out of print but still worth finding. 160pp., grades 3–8

Six Million Paper Clips:

The Making of a Children's Holocaust Memorial,

by Peter Schroeder and Dagmar Schroeder-Hildebrand (Kar-ben Publishing, 2004). In the small town of Whitwell, Tennessee, a teacher and former student wanted to do something to make their students aware of what diversity means and how powerful and dangerous prejudices can be. The community was tight-knit, but homogeneous: white, Protestant, and Anglo-Saxon. So they decide to start a project to raise awareness and understanding about the genocide of six million Jews during World War II. Their project, which started small, became huge: they built a traveling Children's Holocaust Memorial. Their creativity has not only spread to other schools across the country, it has allowed them to reflect on their own community and has given them important tools to help them think about tragic current events as they unfold. 64pp., grades 4–8

We Can Work It Out: Conflict Resolution for Children

by Barbara K. Polland (Tricycle Press, 2000). This book includes photographs and questions about conflicts that arise frequently in the lives of young children, along with an introduction for parents and teachers. The book provides a vehicle for discussing a range of topics that can help children become more successful in resolving conflicts. 64pp., grades K–2

***What Does Peace Feel Like?***

by V. Radunsky (Atheneum Books, 2003). How do children from all over the world imagine peace? Find out through their expressive descriptions that include all the senses. 24pp., grades K–2

Picture Books: Safe and Strong Communities***Boxes for Katje***

by Candace Fleming (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2003). After World War II, Europe stood in ruins. In the United States, through the Children's Aid Society, many people made charitable contributions of soap, sugar, coats, and other necessary and valued items and sent them overseas. In May 1945, Katje's family in Holland received such a box and began corresponding with the young girl and family who sent it. As Katje's letters described her family's needs, the American family and their community collected and shipped the goods. One day a box arrived in return—tulips from Holland! Based on a true story of a box sent to Holland by the author's mother.

The Cello of Mr. O

by Jane Cutler (Puffin Books, 1999). In a besieged city that has become the rubble of war, every Wednesday at four p.m., those citizens that have decided not to leave their homes wait in line for their rations from a truck that passes through. When the truck is bombed one day, it is not replaced and the people are forced to travel great distances to find food. In this disheartening gap, one man, whom the neighborhood kids have always distrusted, begins to emerge with his cello to bring a different—but no less sustaining—kind of nourishment to the community.

Chicken Sunday

by Patricia Polacco (Philomel, 1992). Three friends plan to surprise Gramma Eula with a special holiday hat. As they approach old Mr. Kodinski at the hat shop, they are mistaken for teens who have vandalized his store. They prove their innocence and make a new friend in the process.

The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate

by Janice Cohn (Albert Whitman, 1995). Young Isaac saw a rock shatter his bedroom window and hit his Hanukkah menorah. When this hate crime occurred in Billings, Montana, during the holiday season of 1993, town residents of many races, religions, and backgrounds stood together.

DeShawn Days

by Tony Medina (Lee & Low, 2001). Welcome to DeShawn's world. Age ten, DeShawn uses poetry to introduce us to

“who I live with—who I love.” Mother, uncle, cousin, grandmother, and friends matter to DeShawn. Life in the hood is a mixture of spray paint, magicians, and rap. DeShawn's community extends to people fighting across the globe and “mothers and kids crying,” so he asks his teacher if the class can write to children in war-torn countries. The book's afterword shares the author's passion for imagination, reading, and writing and his hope that DeShawn's experiences “will inspire you to write poems, paint pictures, sing songs, and help others, too!”

Enemy Pie

by Derek Munson (Chronicle Books, 2000). A boy learns from his dad that the best way to deal with enemies is to “bake” them into pies! This book is a tasty treat about making friends.

Erika's Story

by Ruth Vander Zee (Creative Editions, 2003). This beautiful book tells the tale of one woman's Holocaust survival story and how she came to discover her roots after all her roots had been cut away.

Feathers and Fools

by Mem Fox (Voyager Books, 1989). Can peacocks and swans settle their perceived differences peacefully? Or will it take a new generation to learn peaceful coexistence and friendship? A parable for all ages.

Gleam and Glow

by Eve Bunting (Harcourt, 2001). As war moves closer to their village, Victor, his little sister, and their mother must escape. Along with the other refugees, they carry their belongings, hoping to find a safe haven. Victor's treasures—his home, books, and two fish—are left behind. And what is much worse, his father is off fighting with the liberation army. How will Papa find them now? This story is inspired by real events.

How Humans Make Friends

by Loreen Leedy (Holiday House, 1996). When Dr. Zork Tripork returns to his planet from his expedition to planet Earth, he explains to his fellow aliens just how humans make friends and work out their problems so they can stay friends.

I Miss Franklin P. Shuckles

by Ulana Snihura (Annick Press, 1998). To stay popular at school, Molly decides to end her friendship with Franklin because “he has skinny legs and wears funny glasses.” She soon misses this genuine friendship and learns the importance of kindness.



It Doesn't Have to Be This Way: A Barrio Story/No tiene que ser así: Una historia del barrio

by Luis J. Rodríguez (Children's Book Press/Libros Para Niños, 1999). Reluctantly, a young boy becomes involved in neighborhood gang activity. Then a tragic event forces him to make a choice about the course of his life. In English and Spanish.

It's Still a Dog's New York: A Book of Healing

by Susan Roth (National Geographic, 2001). In this poignant sequel to *It's a Dog's New York*, Pepper and Rover roam through New York City in the wake of the events of September 11. As they visit each landmark, they consider the tragedy that has occurred and express their sadness and confusion. By sharing their thoughts and feelings, helping others, appreciating the bravery of the rescue workers, and caring for each other, they can begin to heal.

A Key to the Heart: A Collection of Afghan Folk Tales

by Laura Simms and translated by Mariam Massarat-Foudeh and Abdul Halim Shayek (Chocolate Sauce, 2003). These six stories adapted from Afghan folk tales open with the quote: "to create trust . . . we begin with the hearts of children." Each folk tale, illustrated by American and Afghan children, is presented in English and Dari. The book includes a postcard for readers to send to a child in Afghanistan.

Love, Lizzie: Letters to a Military Mom

by Lisa Tucker McElroy (Albert Whitman & Company, 2005). Lizzie's mom is serving overseas. Read her touching letters and drawings sent to a mother that is dearly missed. The book includes a forward by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Mr. Lincoln's Way

by Patricia Polacco (Philomel, 2001). Eugene, a tough kid, always seems angry and picks on his classmates. School principal Mr. Lincoln sees him as a boy in trouble and is determined to reach him. Soon, Mr. Lincoln notices Eugene's interest in birds and a bird sanctuary project. But the trouble is still there. With insightfulness and caring, Mr. Lincoln guides Eugene to be more tolerant of others.

Nobody Knew What to Do: A Story About Bullying

by Becky Ray McCain (Albert Whitman, 2001). When Ray is mistreated by his peers, the other children are confused about how to make the bullying behaviors stop. Finally, one child steps forward to enlist the help of a teacher. With adult support, the children learn that they can stand up for fair play and kindness toward all students.

Say Something

by Peggy Moss (Tilbury House, 2004). This is the story of a girl who pays attention. She notices who gets picked on in school and how that makes them feel . . . but she remains silent. When the tables are turned and the girl understands firsthand the meaning of bullying, she reaches out to one child who she has watched being bullied in the past and is pleasantly surprised by her discovery.

Show Way

by Jaqueline Woodson (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2005). *Show Way* is a tale of the continuity of family lineage despite violent separations and loss during the slave period in the United States. Told in verse, it tells about women and the traditions they nurture that carry the family through.

The Sissy Duckling

by Harvey Fierstein (Simon & Schuster, 2002). Elmer the duck is teased because he is "different." Bolstered by his mama's belief in his abilities, along with a wealth of creativity and ingenuity, Elmer demonstrates his courage by saving papa duck. What does Elmer ultimately learn? That he's not so different but will always be special!

Smoky Nights

by Eve Bunting (Harcourt, 1994). Daniel, his mother, and their neighbors experience civil unrest in Los Angeles—violence, fires, and the loss of homes and businesses. When acts of kindness replace racial prejudice with friendship, new lessons are learned by people both young and old, and by cats, too.

Stars in the Darkness

by Barbara Joose (Chronicle, 2002). A boy imagines street sirens to be howling wolves and shots fired by gangs to be stars cracking the darkness. When the brother he loves becomes a "banger," he comes up with a plan to save his brother, unite the neighborhood, and stand for peace. Based on a true story; includes resources for gang prevention.

Summer Wheels

by Eve Bunting (Harcourt, 1992). The Bicycle Man offers friendship and the use of fixed-up bikes to neighborhood kids, even to a boy who doesn't return the bike. Two other boys set out to get the bike back and resolve this problem.

Toestomper and the Caterpillars

by Sharleen Collicott (Houghton Mifflin, 1999). Toestomper and his group of Rowdy Ruffians are mean, and they like it that way. However, once Toestomper begins to care for a family of fuzzy caterpillars, he becomes caring and kind. A humorous story with a message about bullying and friendship.

**Wings**

by Christopher Myers (Scholastic, 2000). Ikarus Jackson is different: He has wings and he can fly. But at school, his wings attract too much attention, and kids think he is “showing off.” One girl realizes he must be lonely and resolves to step in and stop the hurtful words coming his way. A challenge to embrace differences and celebrate individuality.

The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark

by Carmen Agra Deedy (Peachtree, 2000). A compassionate king is determined to protect all of his people during the Nazi occupation of Denmark. The author poses a question to the reader: “What if we could follow that example today against violators of human rights?”

Your Move

by Eve Bunting (Harcourt, 1998). When James wants to prove he can be part of a gang, he places himself and his younger brother at risk. But being strong can mean having the courage to say “no.”

Fiction: Safe and Strong Communities**After the Dancing Days**

by Margaret I. Rostkowski (HarperTrophy, 1988). At the end of World War I, Annie feels great relief at her father’s return to their Kansas City home after months away treating wounded soldiers in New York City. But life cannot return to normal. Uncle Paul died during the war in France and now father is a doctor at a local hospital, again treating the wounded. Against her mother’s wishes, Annie visits the veterans, befriending an angry, young, disfigured soldier, and helping them all to value the power of friendship and courage. 217pp., young adult

Buddha Boy

by Kathe Koja (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003). At Rucher High, the new kid, Jinsen, is called “Buddha Boy” and considered a freak. He dresses in tie-dye shirts, shaves his head, and begs for lunch money in the cafeteria. So when Justin, the book’s narrator, has to work with Jinsen on a class project, he hopes to get this over fast. But the discovery of Jinsen’s artistic talent leads to a friendship that changes both boys forever. 117pp., young adult

Charlie Wilcox

by Sharon E. McKay (Stoddart Kids, 2000). Despite being born with a club foot, Charlie Wilcox, almost fourteen, is determined to work at sea like his father. Following a

corrective surgery operation, he defies his parents’ plan for his education and future at a university and stows away on a ship, but the wrong ship at that: This ship is headed to World War I! Charlie finds a medical team also from Newfoundland and learns a special courage as he volunteers tending the wounded and dying. 221pp., grades 5–9

Cowboy Boy

by James Poimos (Scholastic, 2003). Ricky Smootz is terrified of sixth grade, especially since his friend has warned him of Keanu Dungston’s gang of bullies and the wedgies sure to greet him on his first day of school. After two days of wedgies and being framed for throwing spitballs, Ricky feigns sickness to avoid the whole mess and find solace with his grandmother. Her stories of a distant cowboy cousin, courageous Crazy Enzo, gives Ricky a new perspective. Soon he dons a hat, vest, and fuzzy pants and his alter ego—Cowboy Boy—and brings a halt to the bullying varmints at school. 87pp., grades 4–6

Drive-By

by Lynne Ewing (HarperTrophy, 1996). When his family is torn apart by a drive-by shooting, Tito wonders if his dead brother Jimmy was in a gang. Will Tito be forced into a gang to save his mother and sister? 85pp., grades 5–7

Eyes of the Emperor

by Graham Salisbury (Wendy Lamb Books, 2005). In 1941, a Hawaiian teenager of Japanese ancestry fakes his age to enlist in the army. Soon after, when the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, he faces prejudices and suspicions because of his heritage. Based on interviews with real soldiers, this novel follows sixteen-year-old Eddy Okubo who, along with twenty-five Japanese-American GIs, is placed in an experimental U.S. government program to train guard dogs to smell and attack Japanese people. While Eddy recognizes this as a racist idea, he and other Japanese-American soldiers must prove themselves to their corps and then, perhaps, be given the opportunity to defend their country. 240pp., grades 8–12

Geography Club

by Brent Hartinger (HarperCollins, 2003). Russell Middlebrook is convinced he is the only gay student at his high school until he stumbles across a small group of other gay students. United by their secret, they form a club intended to appear so boring that nobody in their right mind would ever join: The Geography Club. The treacherous terrain of high school dynamics and the pull to be popular undermine even their best intentions and threaten every relationship. 226pp., young adult

**Girl of Kosovo**

by Alice Mead (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001). Eleven-year-old Zana appreciates village life in Kosovo with her close-knit Albanian family. She is aware of the growing strife between the Croats, Bosnians, and Serbs and realizes that danger is coming closer daily. When a resistance leader is murdered, Zana's village is attacked. Zana experiences not only a brutal injury but the loss of loved ones. To survive, she remembers her father's words: "Zana, don't let them fill your heart with hate. Whatever happens." This story is based on the experience of a boy from the Kosovo region. 115pp., grades 5–8

Recommendation from the Field

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J. K. Rowling (Scholastic, 1998). Harry Potter was born a wizard but isn't aware of his birthright until he is sent an invitation to attend Hogwarts School of Wizardry. Harry experiences the wonder of friendship, the joy of discovery, the pain of disappointment, and the courage to face challenges and the unknown. Over the course of the series, Harry learns the skills of wizardry, comes to understand how history shapes his life, and builds a sense of confidence in his own skills.

Students can explore the many feelings and relationships Harry experiences (fear of his extended family, honor from the wizards, jealousy on the part of some of his classmates, and trust from his friends) and identify similarities in their lives. Harry is aided by mentors, people who "show him the way" and help him to understand the complexities of school and life. Similarly, students can become mentors and guides to new students, using the story of Harry to find various themes facing "the new kid." 309pp., grades 4–12

Recommendation from the Field

Holes by Louis Sachar (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998). In this humorous yet poignant story, young Stanley Yelnats, falsely arrested for stealing a pair of sneakers, is sentenced to serve time at a juvenile detention facility in the middle of a Texas desert. Having never attended a summer camp, Stanley naively looks on this as a wonderful new opportunity. However, soon he is faced with a group of unhappy campers—inmates—and an evil warden who uses the boys to dig holes in search of buried treasure.

Stanley makes some startling discoveries about himself, the meaning of friendship, and an "ancient curse" that has haunted his family for several generations. In a related story about his great-great grandfather, the mystery of the curse is revealed. In his efforts to help a friend, Stanley now finds himself in control of his own destiny and the fate of his unlucky family.

Connections to service can come through a number of curriculum areas, particularly through social studies, as students discuss issues of juvenile crime and such questions as, "Why is homelessness a major social problem?" Students can provide meaningful service, for example, by working with local organizations to develop materials informing the community as to how these agencies work to combat juvenile crime and help people who are homeless. 233pp., young adult

King of the Kooties

by Debbie Dadey (Walker & Company, 1999). Fourth-grader Nate is amazed that his new friend Donald has never heard of "kooties." At first Donald doesn't realize he is being insulted when called the "King of the Kooties" by the class bully, Louisa. Nate decides to teach Donald to defend himself—not with his fists but with his wits. 84pp., grades 3–6

Making Up Megabot

by Virginia Walker (Delacorte Press, 1998). What provoked thirteen-year-old Robbie Jones to shoot an old man in the neighborhood store? He isn't talking, but through the voices of people who know Robbie, we may gain insight into this tragic event. 63pp., grades 5–12

**Maniac Magee**

by Jerry Spinelli (Little Brown, 1990). When Jeffery Magee's parents die in a horrible car accident, he goes to live with his Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan who are stuck in a marriage that neither can stand. Eventually they stop talking entirely. Jeffrey, unable to cope with two tragedies in such a short period of time, takes off . . . literally. He runs from place to place, meeting, helping, saving and, when need be, evading people in a series of adventurous encounters. He keeps moving on until he meets Amanda at Two Mills. Though he has no home—and maybe because of it—he tries to bridge the people on the East End and the West End—people divided (this time) along racial lines. Though he is unable to change things in a big way, he never compromises his loyalty to the people he befriends, and he manages to find a sense of place in the fray. 180pp., grades 4–7

Notes for a War Story

by Gipi (First Second, 2004). Giuliano narrates the time spent as part of a trio of “thugs” for hire in a setting reminiscent of war-torn Bosnia. The war is not seen, yet it's the backdrop of survival that fills the pages and expresses the hopelessness and despair of the characters, their willingness to give up all aspects of caring for others. Each of these young men represents a different way society fails our young people, and the medium of the graphic novel is ideal for such a story. 125pp., grades 9–12, mature language and themes

On the Fringe

by Donald R. Gallo (Penguin Putnam, 2001). Jeannie is called a boy by her peers because of her short-cropped hair and masculine clothes. Lacey knows that standing up for the school “freak” threatens her popularity. Gene brings a loaded rifle to school, fed up with the persistent harassment. These eleven short stories place the outsiders at the center, revealing struggles concerning popularity, nonconformity, hate, and self-acceptance. 221pp., young adult

Pinky and Rex and the Bully

by James Howe (Aladdin, 1996). Pinky has a dilemma: his favorite color is pink, his best friend is a girl, and Kevin calls him a sissy. Will he have to give up all his favorite things and his best friend to stop the bullying? 40pp., grades 1–3

The Revealers

by Doug Wilhelm (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003). At Parkland Middle School, three students have had enough of the bullying that plagues their daily lives. By starting an unofficial email forum at school, their collective statements inspire words from others who also are fed-up with these

harmful acts. Just when the tide seems to be turning for the better, an act of revenge by a few students threatens the underground rebellion that has the whole school talking. 207pp., grades 5–8

Recommendation from the Field

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 1999/1595). Romeo and Juliet, two teens whose families are sworn enemies, fall in love. Juliet is supposed to marry Paris but weds Romeo in secret, aided by the Friar. Soon after, while attempting to stop a street fight, Romeo kills Juliet's cousin, which causes his banishment from Verona. The Friar devises a plan to bring the lovers together, but the plan fails. Romeo, believing Juliet is dead, kills himself. Juliet, seeing her dead lover, puts a dagger to her heart. The play ends in tragedy.

To generate ideas for meaningful service, ask students, “What issues from the play are relevant to teens today?” The topic of “families as enemies” can lead to a discussion of friendships, gangs, ethnic strife, or global relations. Another theme is that of teen suicide and love and how tragedy can lead a person to commit suicide. The Friar takes the side of the young people and helps them in deception. Who advocates for teens today, and how far should their role go?

Student service can take several forms. Ideally, students will come up with ideas and strategies. Teens might modernize scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* showing gang problems and perform and discuss the scenes with middle school students. A high school class could organize a community education night for parents and teens about common causes of suicide. Students, in partnership with local agencies, could also create public service announcements or brochures to distribute on related and relevant themes. 224pp., young adult

Shadow of the Dragon

by Sherry Garland (Harcourt, 1993). At sixteen, Danny Vo feels trapped between his American friends and his family's traditions. The drama intensifies when Danny's cousin, a recent emigrant, falls in with a Vietnamese gang. As hate crimes and violence threaten multiple families, their lives change forever. 314pp., young adult



Recommendation from the Field

Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse (Bantam, 1982/1992). Siddhartha leaves his father and a life of privilege to live on his own and determine who he is. During his journey, he meets people who test his virtues and compassion. He gains wealth and experiences passion yet ultimately seeks a life of helping others. He also comes to respect what is found in nature—the beauty of the world. Siddhartha demonstrates the ability to learn from one's experiences and inner struggles as well as from others.

After reading *Siddhartha*, high school students can prepare a guide to help middle school students find their “true selves” in this chaotic and confusing world, including suggestions for resisting peer pressure and resolving peer conflicts. This guide can include original stories with open-ended questions that stimulate thought and discussion and help the younger students approach challenging situations in their lives within a broader context. For the high school student authors, this project requires the application of many skills. They will create meaningful text and demonstrate an understanding of philosophy, and they might also lead mutually beneficial discussions with younger students. 152pp., young adult

Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie

by David Lubar (Dutton Books, 2005). Everything is happening at once for Scott Hudson: he is beginning life as a high school freshman (which means incessant harassment from upperclassmen), his mother is pregnant (so embarrassing!), and the girl of his dreams is out of reach (no matter what he tries). Written in first person, this teenage boy finds his voice as a writer in the tumultuous year of ninth grade. English lessons are incorporated into the narrative. 279pp., grades 7–10

Stargirl

by Jerry Spinelli (Knopf, 2000). Who would guess that Stargirl's arrival at Mica High would make such dramatic changes. With her nonconformist flare, Stargirl sings and strums her ukulele into the minds and hearts of students—especially Leo Borlock. Then the unexpected happens: the students shun her for everything that makes her different, and regardless of her attempts to be “normal,” Stargirl's individuality shines through. 186pp., grades 6–10

Recommendation from the Field

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien (McClelland & Stewart, 1990). Through a series of related stories, O'Brien recounts both the surreal landscape of the Vietnam War and his own impressionistic memories of his youth. The blurring of present and past, fact and fiction, innocence and guilt, and even courage and cowardice, strike powerful chords of what it means to be both a civilian and a soldier. But more importantly, his stories capture life's ambiguity and what it means to be human.

While students haven't been in war per se, they easily relate to the topics of fear, love, loss, and the need to belong. Discussions might include these “things they carry” and move outward to consider what their family, friends, neighbors, or even strangers may carry.

For service learning, students can interview veterans in their family, neighborhood, or community to create a written and/or visual history of their story, incorporating research of that particular war's era with artifacts (letters, postcards, photographs, receipts, maps, ticket stubs), drawings, sketches, and other original artwork. These projects, along with an audio or video interview, may then be presented to school and community members.

For a broader approach, students can interview an elder in their community to unearth a story they carry, a story that needs to be told as a means to preserve a sense of identity, place, or era. Students could then decide how best to use these collective stories as a means to serve others, perhaps by creating murals, virtual museums, or traveling exhibitions for other schools. 273pp, young adult

Touching Spirit Bear

by Ben Mikaelson (Harper Trophy, 2001). Cole Matthews is in trouble and he really does not care. He is sitting among his community after having mercilessly beaten a high school classmate. He has one decision left: enter the juvenile justice system or opt for a Native American ritual of spending a year alone on an island to experience “self-discovery.” Always one to think he can beat the system, Cole opts for the island. In this riveting story, a young man finds remorse, kindness, and hope. 320pp., grades 7–12



When Christmas Comes Again:

The World War I Diary of Simone Spencer

by Beth Seidel Levine (Scholastic, 2002). Simone grew up in New York City high society and never expected that World War I would completely alter her life. After her brother volunteers for military service, Simone searches for a meaningful way to join and becomes a “Hello girl,” a volunteer switchboard operator for the Army Signal Corps in France. In addition to revealing class issues during this time period, the story describes ways women participated in the war effort. Includes historical notes and photographs. 172pp., grades 5–7

Wringer

by Jerry Spinelli (HarperCollins, 1997). In Palmer’s hometown, turning ten marks the biggest event of a boy’s life: he can be a “wringer” at the annual Pigeon Day, a family festival. But Palmer dreads this day and his new role, which will involve actually killing pigeons with his bare hands. An unexpected winged visitor on his windowsill further confirms his opposition to this violent activity and leads him to take a stand for his beliefs. 299pp., grades 4–7



The Social Change Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Social Change

America Through the Lens:

Photographers Who Changed the Nation

by Martin W. Sandler (Henry Holt and Company, 2005). This is a collection of the work of twelve photographers along with accompanying text that explains the significance of their photos and how they shaped the country we live in today. 192pp., grades 6–12

Art Against the Odds:

From Slave Quilts to Prison Paintings

by Susan Goldman Rubin (Crown Publishers, 2004). Art chronicles our lives, from everyday occurrences to extreme situations and struggles for social justice. From the messages woven into quilts by female slaves to the contemporary expressions of prison inmates, this book documents and explores art's ability to heal and effect change for people marginalized from society for various reasons and under various conditions. Out of print but worth finding. 64pp., young adult

Birmingham, 1963

by Carle Boston Weatherford (Wordsong, 2007). Narrated from the perspective of a ten-year-old girl and member of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, this is an emotional telling of the infamous bombing of the church in 1963. The book includes documentary photography of the event as well as lyrics to hymns sung at the church services. 40pp., grades 5–12

Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference

by Joanne Oppenheim (Scholastic, 2006). This tapestry of historical texts surrounds the internment of over 120,000 Japanese Americans. The collection revolves around the story of a San Diego, California, librarian who wrote and sent books and blessings to the children of her community who were forced from their homes. The narrative includes letters these children wrote to the librarian, testimonies from legal hearings, oral histories, contemporary popular culture materials, photographs, and quotes from the dialogues and speeches of the time. The result is a rich rendering of an atrocious act of prejudice in U.S. history and a touching example of friendship and defiance in the face of such injustice. 288pp., grades 7–12

Election Connection: The Official Nick Guide to Electing the President

by Susan Ring (Chronicle Books, 2004). Favorite Nickelodeon characters give a thorough overview of the elements of the American voting system, including what to look out for during a campaign, how the electoral system works, what role the media plays, and how young people can get involved. 79pp., grades 2–5

A Faith Like Mine: A Celebration of the World's Religions Through the Eyes of Children

by Laura Buller (DK, 2005). This is an exploration of six of the world's major religions through the eyes of its youngest practitioners. Created in collaboration with UNICEF, these photographs, statistics, and informative narratives serve to make the world seem a little smaller. 80pp., grades 5–12

Free the Children: A Young Man's Personal Crusade Against Child Labor

by Craig Kielburger (HarperCollins, 1998). In 1995, at the age of twelve, Craig read a newspaper article about a Pakistani four-year-old who was sold into slavery. Outraged by this child's account of degradation and forced labor, Craig and his friends sought information and later founded Free the Children, a human rights organization. This book chronicles Craig's trips to South Asia to save children forced into labor. 316pp., grades 7–12

Generation Fix: Young Ideas for a Better World

by Elizabeth Rusch (Beyond Words Publishing, 2002). As Sol Kelley-Jones, age fourteen, says, "Youth are totally on the front lines of every single movement in history." The stories of twenty young activists who have committed themselves to social action give credibility to this statement. The author provides an informative introduction to each of the book's seven themes, including peace, hunger, and health concerns. A comprehensive list of organizations is included. 176pp., grades 4–12

Genocide

by Jane Springer (Groundwork Books, 2006). Part of the Groundwork Guides series, this book explores genocide. The reader is introduced to the defining features of and theories surrounding systematic political murder, and learns a brief history and helpful suggestions for working to prevent its recurrence. 144pp., young adult

Issues in Racism

by Mary E. Williams (Lucent Books, 2000). Beginning with the torture and murder of James Byrd Jr. in June 1998, this book examines the dynamics of racism. How serious a problem is racism? How does society respond to racial diversity?



Is there hope for race relations? This survey presents information that can stimulate debate and inspire social action. 112pp., young adult

It's Our World, Too! Young People Who Are Making a Difference: How They Do It—How You Can Too

by Phillip Hoose (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993). A collection of stories about young people who have made significant contributions, some with the help of a school or organization. Includes "A Handbook for Young Activists." 166pp., grades 4–9

The Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose—and Turn Creative Thinking into Positive Action

by Barbara Lewis (Free Spirit Publishing, 1998). What began as a way to help sixth graders address a toxic waste problem became a resource guide for students and teachers to learn social action skills and solve problems on a local, state, and national level. Loaded with ideas and reproducible documents. 224pp., grades 4–12

A Life Like Mine: How Children Live Around the World

(DK Publishing and UNICEF, 2002). In this book filled with vivid photographs, we meet eighteen children from around the globe and visit 180 countries. Are the basic needs of water, food, and somewhere to live being met for children? Do children have the right to be safe from war? Does every child deserve the right to play and to know his or her rights? by examining the themes of survival, development, protection, and participation, we see how children pursue a good life for themselves and their communities often amidst seemingly insurmountable challenges. 127pp., grades 4–12

Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone: The Brown v. Board of Education Decision

by Joyce Carol Thomas (Hyperion, 2003). The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision affected the life of every child in the United States and provoked a range of reactions. This book includes personal reflections from ten accomplished authors of children and young adult literature. Their essays, stories, and poems capture the many viewpoints from 1954 and encourage us to consider the impact of social change resulting from this historic event. Contributors include Jerry Spinelli, Katherine Paterson, and Leona Nicholas Welch. Out of print but worth finding. 114pp., grades 5–9

Listen to Us: The World's Working Children

by Jane Springer (Groundwood Books, 1997). "Who says childhood is golden?" The photographs, profiles, and statistics presented in this comprehensive survey of child labor practices expose horrors experienced by young people

around the world. Includes "Kids Helping Kids," resources, and glossary. 96pp., grades 5–12

One World, One Day

by Barbara Kerley (National Geographic, 2009). A photo essay shows our common needs realized in unique ways across the globe, while confirming our common humanity. The author, a former Peace Corps member, writes, "This book represents one day, from sunrise to sunset, around the world—a day we share together." At the end of the book, details are provided about each photograph. 42pp., all ages

Our Time Is Now: Young People Changing the World

by Sheila Kinkade and Christina Macy (Pearson Foundation, 2005). Profiles of more than thirty young adults, ages eighteen to twenty-five, show how they are bettering our world by addressing serious issues, and enacting their ideas by organizing, teaching, or creating. These activists describe their work and offer advice for others determined to make a significant contribution. With a foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and introductions by various influential activists, these stories inspire through an impressive array of endeavors, including providing education for young women in Afghanistan, healing through music, and reaching out to child victims of a nuclear disaster. Includes an article explaining social entrepreneurship. 176pp., grades 8–12

Peace One Day: The Making of World Peace Day

by Jeremy Gilley (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2005). Jeremy knew it was a long shot, but he thought his idea for a day of world peace was worth working for. He traveled around the world meeting with leaders and citizens—often impoverished or war-struck—whom these politicians served. Though an emotionally wrought experience, he saw how people live all over the globe and learned that if you work hard enough, and sometimes if you simply ask, you can make change happen. 46pp., grades 4–12

Rabble Rousers: 20 Women Who Made a Difference

by Cheryl Harness (Dutton, 2003). Twenty women dared to defy the status quo and pursue their vision of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." To others of their time, they appeared "unladylike, dangerous, crazy, and radical," yet they understood that the United States is truly founded on the power that lies in three words: "We the people." 64pp., grades 3–6

Sisters in Strength: American Women Who Made a Difference

by Yona Zeldis McDonough (Henry Holt, 2000). Learn about eleven women who shaped history as they triumphed over adversity, made huge sacrifices, and held fast to their beliefs. 48pp., grades 4–8

***Stand Up for Your Rights***

by Peace Child International (World Books, 1998). This book about human rights, written by and for the young people of the world, presents a global vision of needs and activism. It includes a review of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and poses the question, "What are we doing about it?" Packed with information, resources, and ideas. 96pp., grades 4–8

Teen Power Politics: Make Yourself Heard

by Sara Jane Boyers (Millbrook Press, 2000). Wait until adulthood to become involved in politics and make a difference? Not with this book in hand! From the initial list of government decisions that affect youth, through a history of voting rights, to examples of and strategies for youth activism, the ideas and resources are inspiring and motivating. "It's your world. There is no longer any excuse not to be in it." 120pp., young adult

Through My Eyes

by Ruby Bridges (Scholastic, 1999). An act of courage by her family led Ruby Bridges to be the first black child to attend an all-white school in New Orleans in the early days of social activism for school integration. Through the eyes of a six-year-old, return to this critical time in American history. 64pp., grades 4–12

Vhersed: A Celebration of Outstanding Women

by Patrick Lewis (Creative Editions, 2005). This soulfully illustrated book celebrates some of the most accomplished and change-making women of the past two centuries in beautifully written verse. 32pp., grades 4–7

Vote!

by Eileen Christelow (Clarion, 2003). It's time for a mayoral election, but what does it mean to vote? Does voting matter? How does a person register to vote or campaign for a candidate? What happens if the results are too close to announce a winner? In this mixture of cartoon-style art and text, questions about voting are answered. Also included is a historical timeline of voting rights and a list of resources for additional information. 48pp., grades 1–4

We Are the Many: A Picture Book of American Indians

by Doreen Rappaport (HarperCollins, 2002). For thousands of years before Europeans arrived, groups of people now called Indians lived in what is now the United States. "In 1492 more than five hundred languages were spoken." Sixteen men and women, selected from the many American Indians who have made exemplary contributions and achievements, are profiled here, including Tusquantum,

Sacajawea, and Maria Tallchief. Each story re-creates a significant moment in the person's life. Includes a pronunciation guide and additional resources. 32pp., grades K–4

Picture Books: Social Change***Beatrice's Goat***

by Page McBrier (Atheneum, 2001). Beatrice dreams of attending school in her small African village, but this seems impossible. Only children who can afford a uniform and school supplies can attend, and her family is too poor. Then a gift arrives: a goat! The goat milk made her family healthier, plus it could be sold. This led to Beatrice's uniform and supplies and school! This story based on a real nine-year-old Ugandan girl tells how Heifer Project International provides resources for community building (www.heiferinternational.com).

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

by Doreen Cronin (Simon & Schuster, 2000). When Farmer Brown's cows find a typewriter in the barn, they start making demands and go "on strike" when the farmer refuses to give them what they want. As the other animals join in, what will the farmer do?

A Good Night for Freedom

by Barbara Olenyik Morrow (Holiday House, 2004). This skillfully written narrative captures the encounter between a young girl, Hallie, and a Quaker family on the Underground Railroad in 1836. Employing various dialects one might have heard at the time, including the "funny Quaker talk" of the family, the story follows Hallie as she delivers homemade goods and inadvertently stumbles onto two slave girls in the Quakers' home. The collage-style illustrations echo the book's chaotic moral dilemma and highlight the difference individuals can make.

Jemma's Journey

by Trevor Romain (Boyd's Mills Press, 2002). Grandma kept telling about the "old days" in Ocoee. Ocoee was a town where "peaceful black folk . . . jawed about the lives of people who lived there." Then, on November 2, 1920, two black men tried to vote on election day; riots followed, resulting in many deaths and one lynching. When Jemma hears how the lynching tree was cut down, this young girl sets out to honor her grandmother's memory and reminds us to "always remember to never forget."



Recommendation from the Field

Knitting Nell by Julie Jerslid Roth (Houghton Mifflin, 2006). After being teased by Danny Tucker for having a “voice like a cricket with a pillow over its head,” Nell doesn’t have much to say. Instead, she listens and knits. And not just to pass the time; Nell knits for service. She makes blankets, scarves, mittens, and caps for babies, family members, and soldiers—all before she knits for herself. The town mayor notices her generosity and awards her a medal at the county fair. Nell ultimately uses her skill to model her credo, “service above self,” and find her true voice. Then, in a fun twist, she teaches her friends, and even Danny Tucker, to knit with a purpose.

This book is rich with extension possibilities. First, have students research the origins of knitting as a craft. In many cases, this age-old art form has skipped a generation so have students interview members of their extended family and/or neighbors to see how many of them know how to knit. When did they learn and who taught them?

Teach students a basic knit stitch, and help them make bookmarks they could deliver to a local retirement facility. Have students investigate where simple knitted goods are needed in their community. Small squares can be sewn together into a baby blanket for a family in need. Knitted scarves can warm a person at a homeless shelter. And children have knit caps for babies in developing countries (See “Knit One, Save One” on page 147 in this book). Or, following Nell’s example, knit socks or helmet hats for soldiers. Teachers comment that knitting improves fine motor skills, concentration, and the ability to follow directions. Students can also start a community yarn collection requesting donations of remnants, and transform “scraps” into treasures!

Recommendation from the Field

The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper (Grosset and Dunlap, 1930/1978). This is a delightful picture story about a train laden with toys and food for children who live on the other side of a mountain. When the train engine breaks down, the toys, dolls, and clowns become sad because they know how disappointed all the children will be in the morning.

Three times, the toys, dolls, and clowns plead with strong engines that come by to pull their train over the mountain, but the engines are too proud or selfish to waste their time. When hope has almost gone, a small blue engine stops and listens sympathetically to their pleas. Although the blue engine has never gone over the mountain and does not know if it has enough power, it agrees to try. Slowly the little blue engine makes its way up the mountain, saying to itself, “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can” until it reaches the crest and says, “I thought I could, I thought I could, I thought I could.”

This simple story offers much for reflection. Why do powerful engines in this story and in life refuse to help others in need? What helped the little blue engine get to the top of the mountain? When you are trying to do things that are difficult, does it make a difference if you say to yourself “I think I can” rather than “I know I can’t”? Can people get extra energy when they are doing something to help others?

To identify service possibilities, discuss the following with students: Is there an unmet need in our school or community where we could be like the little blue engine and try to help—even if we are not sure that we can do what is needed?

Pink and Say

by Patricia Polacco (Philomel, 1994). The author’s great-grandfather Sheldon “Say” Curtis meets Pinkus “Pink” Aylee during the Civil War. Pink, a black Union soldier, brings Say, a wounded white Union soldier, to his mother. Once Say is healed, the boys must return to their units, only to be confronted by Confederate troops. A tribute to telling stories about the people we meet who touch our lives.

**Remember: The Journey to School Integration**

by Toni Morrison (Houghton Mifflin, 2004). Written in the imagined voices from archival photographs that depict the desegregation process, Toni Morrison touchingly renders the harsh history by remembering the love, hate, courage, and conformity of those involved. The intimate voices she conjures awaken the reader to the idea that “remembering is the mind’s first step toward understanding.”

Something Beautiful

by Sharon Dennis Wyeth (Doubleday, 1998). When a little girl searches in her neighborhood for “something beautiful,” she finds that through her actions and sense of community, “something beautiful” can happen.

This Land Is My Land

by George Littlechild (Children’s Book Press, 1993). Through paintings and words, the author shares the history and experiences of native peoples of the Americas to promote cultural understanding.

A Woman for President: The Story of Victoria Woodhull

by Kathleen Krull (Walker & Co., 2004). Almost fifty years before women gained the right to vote in the United States, Victoria Woodhull ran for the Presidency. This picture book tells the extraordinary tale of a woman’s journey from her birth into abject poverty in Homer, Ohio, and across the country to New York, where she was the personal psychic of Cornelius Vanderbilt. When she became quite wealthy (he shared the earnings he made from one of her stock tips), she dedicated her money to promoting causes of women. She co-founded the first female-owned stock company, began the first woman-owned newspaper in New York City, and founded the Equal Rights Party, becoming their nominee for President in 1872, running against Ulysses Grant.

You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer!

by Shana Corey (Scholastic, 2000). Amelia Bloomer was never one to keep quiet about wrongdoing. No surprise she stood up for women’s rights and popularized the wearing of a new style of women’s wear—bloomers!

Fiction: Social Change**Recommendation from the Field**

Animal Farm by George Orwell (Prentice Hall, 1946). *Animal Farm* tells of the animals’ rebelling on Manor Farm and chasing off Farmer Jones and his men. Subsequently, the animals rule themselves, led by the pigs. Eventually, all the revolution’s lofty goals are subverted, as espoused in the “Seven Commandments.” This classic allegory, usually tied to the Russian Revolution and the rise of the Communist totalitarian state, contains universal themes that can prompt meaningful discussions about power and privilege, propaganda and journalistic integrity, the class system, and real education/learning.

Students involved in service learning ideas that relate to poverty, education, or citizenship—as well as other themes—will find a variety of issues to grapple with after reading this short, powerful book. Here are two examples:

The Seven Commandments are modified over time and eventually boiled down to: “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” Students can consider this statement in reference to social concerns or needs in their community. High school students might learn about the need for childcare for low-income working parents. They could initiate or assist in after-school programs, providing help with homework, activities, and sports.

Where does the propaganda come from in today’s world? Are our newspapers and television news free of propaganda? Do some kinds of propaganda affect the achievement of a better world? In an election year, students can become knowledgeable about a local issue and provide a forum for voters providing balanced information about the issue. Students may partner with the League of Women Voters to provide such a forum. 140pp., young adult

Bat 6

by Virginia Euwer Wolff (Scholastic, 1998). The sixth-grade girls of Barlow and Bear Creek Ridge eagerly await their chance to play in the annual softball game, Bat 6. Something is different this year, 1949. World War II is over. Aki and her family return after living in Japanese internment camps.



Shazaam, whose father was killed at Pearl Harbor, lives here now. Twenty-one girls tell this story of two communities facing prejudice. 230pp., grades 5–9

Before We Were Free

by Julia Alvarez (Knopf, 2003). Anita de la Torre, the book's narrator, never expected her life to be completely turned upside down by the politics in the Dominican Republic. But by her twelfth birthday, most of her relatives had immigrated to the United States, her uncle is in hiding, her father receives mysterious phone calls, and the secret police regularly search her house. Under the dictatorship of General Trujillo no one is safe. 167pp., young adult

Dateline: Troy

by Paul Fleischman (Candlewick Press, 2006). This retelling of one of the world's most ancient stories models reconciling history with the present. The author aligns text recounting the story of Troy with provocative modern news clippings on right-side pages. For example, a visit to the Oracle at Delphi matches with an article describing former First Lady Nancy Reagan consulting psychics. And the question of instituting the military draft for the Trojan War is placed alongside an article listing birthdays and draft numbers during the Vietnam War era. History connects with the present, and ideas for action abound. 80pp., grades 7–12

Dream Freedom

by Sonia Levitan (Harcourt, 2000). Marcus and his fifth-grade classmates learn of tens of thousands of men, women, and children captured and forced into slavery. Even with his own family problems, Marcus joins in raising money to redeem the slaves. Alternate chapters tell the story of the slaves, the people who enslave them, and the people working for their freedom. Based on a true story and contemporary events. Includes historical background, a bibliography, and ways to help. 178pp., young adult

Duty Free

by Hazel Edwards (Lothian Books, 2002). Sam, age fourteen, has a dilemma of international proportions. Should she help her mother smuggle papers out of China that show proof of atomic testing in Tibet? When in pursuit of world peace, where does an activist draw the line? 96pp., grades 5–8

Eagle Song

by Joseph Bruchac (Dial, 1997). Danny Bigtree's family moves from the Mohawk reservation to New York City, and Danny cannot fit in. He refuses to sacrifice his cultural identity to make friends. His father provides a lesson in courage for Danny and helps Danny's classmates to feel pride about themselves and take a step toward peace. 80pp., grades 4–7

The Genie Scheme

by Kimberly K. Jones (McElderry Books, 2009). When Janna generously assists a “bag lady,” she is shocked to later find her in her bedroom—a genie! Janna imagines she has unlimited wishes and starts accumulating all the material things that she envies. However, when new clothes and iPods don't seem to bring her the happiness she expected, Janna learns to be careful what she wishes for, as it really does matter. 179pp., grades 4–6

Hope Was Here

by Joan Bauer (Puffin, 2000). When sixteen-year-old Hope moves with her aunt from Brooklyn to Mulrone, Wisconsin, to work in a diner, she finds more cooking than expected. To the community's surprise, diner owner G.T. announces his candidacy to oust the corrupt mayor in the upcoming election. Hope and other young people rally together, adding the vital ingredient of youth action to the campaign. Recommended for “City Reads” programs. 186pp., young adult

Recommendation from the Field

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros (Vintage Books, 1991). Using a series of short vignettes, Cisneros tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, her family, her neighborhood, and her aspirations. While they do not follow a linear plot, the novel's vignettes present a compelling narrative that raises important themes of gender, race, and poverty.

As a prompt for reflection on service learning, students could read the entire book or selected vignettes. The chapter “Those Who Don't” describes the fear felt by strangers who stumble into Esperanza's neighborhood, as well as Esperanza's own anxiety about crossing neighborhood boundaries into areas where she is no longer surrounded by people of her own race. This vignette can be used to help students examine assumptions and anxieties about working with people who are different from themselves.

In connection with service learning, students who are working with people who are homeless should read the chapters “Bums in the Attic” and “A House of My Own,” which use social criticism and lyrical prose to examine class stratification and images of a “dream” home. 110pp., young adult

***If You Come Softly***

by Jacqueline Woodson (Putnam, 1998). Teenagers Jeremiah and Ellie, an interracial couple, confront prejudice from family, strangers, and society. In chapters that alternate between first and third person, we get to know these smart and sensitive characters and experience the shocking conclusion. 198pp., young adult

Recommendation from the Field

In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez (Plume Books, 1994). Inspired by a true story, Alvarez blends fact and fiction to tell the story of three Mirabal sisters, known as “the butterflies,” who became involved in an underground resistance movement to overthrow Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic. As a consequence of their work against tyranny, they were murdered in 1960 by government security forces. Dede, the fourth and surviving sister, had refused to join her sisters’ efforts for fear of losing her husband and her life. The others, headstrong Minerva, religious Patria, and sensitive Maria Teresa, suffered hardship and torture to fight for justice and human rights.

The novel raises provocative questions about the sacrifice required for justice. Service learning suggestions, such as petitioning and letter-writing campaigns to support human rights defenders and victims of human rights abuses, can be found through Amnesty International. Check out information about the Urgent Action program and starting a student group. 325pp., grades 9–12

Iqbal

by Francesco D’Adamo (Aladdin, 2005). At age thirteen Iqbal Masih was assassinated in his Pakistani village for traveling internationally and speaking about his six years as a “bonded child” in the Lahore carpet factories. Through a fictionalized child narrator, we learn about the horrendous plight of these children and the bravery of this boy who lost his life in order to protect others. Based on a true story. 123pp., grades 5–7

The Loud Silence of Frances Green

by Karen Cushman (Clarion Books, 2006). The year is 1949 and Francine is doing very well staying below the radar at Catholic school, with all this talk about Communism and McCarthyism in the news. Then Sophie arrives with her big ideas and opinions. When Sophie is expelled for standing up to authority and Francine’s playwriting father falls under “suspicion,” Francine realizes she has been silent long enough. 225pp., grades 5–9

My Name Is María Isabel

by Alma Flor Ada (Atheneum, 1993). Third grader María Isabel starts a new school two months after the year begins. All is going well until her teacher begins to call her by the name “Mary.” María Isabel’s pride in her name and heritage teaches the teacher and the class a lesson about fitting in and respect. Available in English and Spanish. 57pp., grades 3–6

Out of Bounds: Seven Stories of Conflict and Hope

by Beverly Naidoo (HarperCollins, 2003). These seven stories, set in South Africa, span the years of apartheid, from 1948 to 2000. Each chronicles the lives of young people as they face restrictions and political upheaval, and the struggle for justice. A time line provides a social and political context. 175pp., grades 6–10

Pay It Forward

by Catherine Ryan Hyde (Simon & Schuster, 1999). Twelve-year-old Trevor takes his social studies assignment to heart: change the world. His inspiring “pay it forward” scheme has far-reaching impact even though his personal attempts seem to fail. Can this young person heal his broken family and create a contagious spirit of community and caring? 311pp., young adult

Slap Your Sides

by M. E. Kerr (HarperCollins, 2001). Jubal Shoemaker, fourteen, knows that his family is no longer liked in his town. As friends shun him and sales are cut in half at his father’s store, Jubal wonders if he too will follow his brother’s choice to be a conscientious objector in World War II. Will the messages of hate painted on the store walls cause him to give up his Quaker beliefs or befriend the teenage perpetrator? 198pp., young adult

**Spitting Image**

by Shutta Crum (Clarion, 2003). As part of President Johnson's War on Poverty in the late 1960s, a Vista volunteer arrives in Beulah County, Kentucky. Twelve-year-old Jessie sees this as an opportunity to help her best friend get the new eyeglasses he desperately needs. But during this turbulent summer, Jessie's problems keep piling up, caused in part by her temper, her desire to find out how her daddy is, and her money-earning plan that completely backfires. 218pp., grades 5–8

Recommendation from the Field

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (Warner, 1961/1988). Narrated by a six-year-old girl named Scout, Lee's novel portrays small town Southern life in the 1930s, revealing all its prejudices, especially those based on race. Central to the novel's action is the decision by Scout's father, Atticus, to defend an African-American man, Tom Robinson, wrongfully accused of a crime. Knowing the case is hopeless, Atticus defends Robinson because his conscience allows him no alternative.

In conjunction with reading the book, students could design service learning initiatives to combat racism and stereotypes. These could include surveying the racial climate of their community or school, serving with an organization like the NAACP or local human rights council, or promoting greater racial understanding through discussions and cultural programs that educate a diverse audience. 288pp., young adult

Vote for Larry

by Janet Tashjian (Henry Holt and Co., 2004). In the sequel to *The Gospel According to Larry*, Josh takes his alter ego from the virtual stage to the public stage when he runs for President. He knows as an eighteen-year-old there is no legal possibility for him to enter office, but he sees the campaign as giving voice to the dissenting opinions that had inspired so many people on his blog. In this adventure of friendship and civic action, Josh proves that sometimes you need to fight for what you believe in, even if it's a losing battle. A compelling treatise on the necessity of youth political expression. 224pp., young adult

White Lilacs

by Carolyn Meyer (Harcourt, 1993). In 1921, Freedom was a bustling community of black residents surrounded by the white folks in Dillon, Texas. Young Rose Lee expects life to just go on as usual when she overhears a plan to forcibly relocate Freedom's residents to build a park. Can the white community, through city government and intimidation, make this happen? The presence of the Ku Klux Klan and the tarring and feathering of Rose Lee's brother ring all too true. Based on true events in Denton, Texas. 242pp., young adult



The Special Needs and Disabilities Bookshelf: Additional Titles

Nonfiction: Special Needs and Disabilities

The Acorn People

by Ron Jones (Dell, 1976). In this true account of counselors at a summer camp for handicapped and dying youth, everyone is transformed—the counselors learn who the kids are on the inside, and the young people experience joy in their newfound freedom of expression and experience. 79pp., young adult

Just Kids: Visiting a Class for Children with Special Needs

by Ellen B. Senisi (Dutton, 1998). Second-grader Cindy is assigned to spend time in a class for children with special needs. Over two weeks, she gains valuable information about autism, Down syndrome, ADHD, learning disabilities, and epilepsy and recognizes how each child learns. She also realizes that they are all “just kids.” A resource for teachers and students. 40pp., all ages. Out of print but worth finding.

Seeing Things My Way

by Alden Carter (Albert Whitman, 1998). Second-grader Amanda, who is visually impaired, describes how she learns using different equipment. She also shows how she enjoys sports, sleepovers with friends, and dancing. 32pp., grades K–4

Picture Books: Special Needs and Disabilities

Be Good to Eddie Lee

by Virginia Fleming (Philomel, 1993). Christy has no interest in being friends with Eddie Lee, a neighbor who has Down syndrome. Eddie follows her to a pond and reminds her not to take tadpoles from their natural environment. In teaching Christy about friendship, Eddie Lee shows that “It’s what’s on the inside that counts.”

Be Quiet, Marina!

by Kirsten DeBear (Star Bright Books, 2001). Marina is four years old, likes to dress up and play on the seesaw, and screams a lot. Marina has cerebral palsy. Moira is also four; she likes to dance, seesaw, and play quietly. She has Down syndrome. At first, the girls cannot play together because of their differences. Now they are best friends. Follow this photo essay of two girls on the journey to friendship.

Friends at School

by Rochelle Burnett (Bright Books, 1995). Enter a school where children of all abilities play together. Through photographs, we watch the children in a variety of activities—making snacks, reading books, feeding pets, and interacting with older students who are classroom helpers.

Ian’s Walk: A Story About Autism

by Laurie Lears (Albert Whitman, 1998). Julie wants to take a walk with her older sister, but her autistic brother Ian insists on coming along. His behaviors irritate and embarrass Julie, until he wanders off on his own and the two girls cannot find him. Once the brother and sisters are reunited, Julie realizes how much she cares for her brother. The book includes a note that addresses siblings’ often mixed emotions toward their autistic brothers and sisters.

My Brother Sammy

by Becky Edwards (Millbrook Press, 1999). A boy describes some of his many feelings toward his autistic brother, Sammy.

Rainbow Joe and Me

by Maria Diaz Strom (Lee & Low, 1999). Eloise loves everything about colors. She describes her paintings to her blind neighbor Joe, who has his own way of expressing colors—through music

Rugby and Rosie

by Nan Parson Rossiter (Dutton, 1997). Rugby the dog and his boy are joined by Rosie, a puppy being bred as a guide dog. The threesome become inseparable for a year, until Rosie’s departure. Includes information about breeding and training guide dogs.

Sosu’s Call

by Meshack Asare (Kane/Miller, 2002). Sosu must stay in his parents’ house all the time; the villagers think it is “bad luck” to have a boy who cannot walk in the village. So Sosu tends to household chores the best he can and learns to read and write from his siblings who attend school. When a great storm threatens the village, it is Sosu and his dog who risk their own lives to save many.

The Storm

by Marc Harshman (Cobblehill, 1995). Ever since the car hit his bicycle, leaving Jonathan in a wheelchair, he has hated feeling different. When a storm threatens his life and his horses, Jonathan proves his abilities and hopes others will now see him more clearly.

**Trudi & Pia**

by Ursula Hegi (Antheneum, 2003). *Trudi, a girl with dwarfism*, yearns to know someone “shaped like her, someone whose legs would be short, whose arms could not reach the coat hooks in her classroom.” When she visits the circus, to her astonishment, Trudi meets Pia, a woman who is an animal tamer and has dwarfism. Trudi’s visit reveals a secret: Feeling you belong begins with loving yourself.

We Can Do It!

by Laura Dwight (Star Bright Books, 1997). This book profiles a multiracial group of boys and girls with different conditions: Down syndrome, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, and blindness. These children, all around age five, are shown in color photographs as they play with friends, interact with therapists, and describe how they can “do lots of things.” An informative book to help all children learn about similarities and differences.

Fiction: Special Needs and Disabilities**Crazy Lady**

by Jane Leslie Conly (HarperCollins, 1993). Vernon is suffering because of his mother’s death and feels lost in junior high. Then he befriends the “crazy lady,” an alcoholic woman in his neighborhood, and comes to know her mentally disabled son, Ronald. Vernon grows to understand the love between these two people. Along the way, he gains self-respect and a purpose: to raise money for Ronald to attend the Special Olympics. 180pp., grades 5–8

Freak the Mighty

by Rodman Philbrick (Scholastic, 1993). An unlikely friendship between Kevin, a brilliant twelve-year-old whose birth defect prevents growth, and Max, a gigantic boy with learning disabilities, leads to adventure, risk, and ultimately, shared wisdom. 169pp., grades 4–8

Looking for X

by Deborah Ellis (Groundwood Books, 1999). Khyber—whose real name, she insists, is not to be uttered—is smart, with a sense of humor and a fierce stance on what is right. When her single mother announces that her two younger brothers who have special needs will be sent to a home with special care, Khyber is furious and scared. Soon, problems start to arise in school and in the park adjacent to her house. Khyber’s adventures to salvage her family’s integrity and her own honor lead to encounters with interesting people and moments of irresistible wit. 132pp., grades 6–8

Recommendation from the Field

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck (Penguin, 1937/1994). This is a story about two men who are completely different but best friends. They travel together planning to work hard, make money, and then buy some land so they can finally be independent. They need each other to make this happen. George, the smart one, tries to protect his friend, makes their plans, and knows how to get away when they get in trouble. Lenny, a very big man who can do hard work, tries to follow his friend’s directions but has the mind of a child. He is very loyal to George and has a caring heart. Unfortunately, George cannot save Lenny from tragic events.

Middle and high school students can use this book as a vehicle for understanding friendships between two people with many differences. The students will relate to the characters because they are timeless. Use this story to discuss these questions:

- How can differences in people become assets?
- Do you have friends who are different from you? What do you look for in friends?
- Imagine you have a friend with a disability. What would you gain? What would be enjoyable? What would be difficult?
- Could you defend a person that others were ridiculing or teasing?
- How much responsibility do we have to protect others who cannot protect themselves?

For service learning, students can partner with students with special needs on campus or in outside programs. First, the students learn about each other. Then they plan ongoing activities that they would both enjoy, such as swimming, weight lifting, attending sporting events, or acting in plays together. Students can then reflect back to the book and the main characters. What have they learned, gained, and shared? 137pp., young adult