

# IT'S OUR WORLD, TOO!

Community Service Projects for Young People to Make a Difference



## Introduction

Never doubt that a small  
group of thoughtful  
committed citizens can  
change the world; indeed,  
it's the only thing  
that ever has.

MARGARET MEAD  
*Anthropologist*

Middle school students are capable of extraordinary accomplishments. The “It’s Our World, Too!” curriculum provides numerous true stories of middle school students, occasionally high school students, and even elementary school students who have encountered problems which touched their hearts sufficiently to compel them to initiate service projects to attempt to rectify those problems. They’ve tackled problems in every imaginable area in which there is need: the environment, hunger, poverty, HIV/AIDS, cancer, discrimination, and issues related to helping everyone from babies and senior citizens. Some of their projects have benefited their local communities while others have helped children throughout the world.

With perseverance, resiliency, ingenuity, and compassion, they have formed organizations with their peers to tackle many of society’s most pressing problems. They’ve successfully lobbied city governments, raised millions of dollars for countless worthy causes, and consistently proven that young people can help change the world.

The “It’s Our World, Too” curriculum is unique in that it provides suggestions for service activities based upon projects successfully undertaken by youth. That is, the project ideas already have been proven to be worthy rather than simply sounding like “good things to do.”

“It’s Our World, Too!” is designed to provide middle school student council advisors with a rich repository of service activity ideas to inspire your student council to undertake a worthwhile service project. Democracy is a learned art, and your youth can begin practicing that art by participating in a meaningful fashion. By engaging your student council in service activities, you can provide them with the first-hand experiences necessary for a conscientious citizenry.

The major goal of this project is to help middle school student councils learn about some of the challenges to democracy in general, and specifically for people with disabilities as the group facing the most formidable challenges to fully participating in democracy. By sharing stories about what youth have accomplished and by providing a wide variety of resources and possible community service activities, our hope is to help your student council plan and initiate activities to make the world a better place.

Although this curriculum is designed for the middle school students, it can easily be adapted for use with elementary school or high school students, too. Service initiatives can be undertaken as entire school projects, a student council project, a classroom project, by a small group of students who are interested in a particular issue

or even by a single committed student.

The “It’s Our World, Too!” curriculum is divided into five chapters. Each chapter identifies one of the major challenges facing democracy today and frames that challenge into a question which is particularly relevant for middle school students. Each chapter also includes information on existing service projects that address that challenge.

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Each chapter includes a brief essay about the challenge and why it is relevant for middle school students. This is followed by a table of contents that lists the stories in the chapter. Some of the chapters also include additional relevant resources and other information. The stories within each chapter describe the problems identified by the youth, how they attempted to solve the problem, and, whenever available, links on the Internet to information about the organizations founded by the youth.

The hope is that your middle school student councils will be so inspired by their peers’ service endeavors and accomplishments that they too will undertake service projects. The stories will provide them with insights into what sparked their peers’ interest in solving societal problems and links to more extensive information about the organizations founded by those youth. Your students can participate in national and international projects already launched by their peers and/or they can identify problems in their own communities and work together to address them. By having your student councils undertake a service project, they will be assuming a responsible role as contributors to civic society. If democracy is a learned art that comes through practice, they will indeed be practicing and, if they’re anything like their peers, succeeding, too!

This project was funded, in part, by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities using federal funds provided under P.L. 106-402 through a grant authorized by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This project was developed pursuant to the State Plan on Developmental Disabilities. Grantees undertaking projects with Board sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions in this publication do not, therefore, necessarily represent the official position or policy of the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities.

### The challenges include:

1. **Inclusion:** How can we get middle school students to proactively work to insure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in all school and community activities?
2. **Participation:** How can we get middle school students to participate in democracy in a meaningful fashion?
3. **Responsibility:** How can we get middle school students to voluntarily assume the responsibilities involved in making a democracy flourish?
4. **Freedom:** How can we instill in middle school students the notion that none of us are free until all of us are free?
5. **Information:** How can we inspire middle school students with optimism about the future when so much of the daily news is negative?

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**The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities is interested in collecting stories from schools who have used this curriculum to help them launch service projects.**

There is a short form at the end of this curriculum that can be used to send information about your school’s project to the board. Please consider sending in the form so that your school’s project can be shared with others.



## Getting Started

By using the “It’s Our World, Too!” curriculum, students can learn about a wide range of service projects that other students have successfully undertaken. To help students get started with their own service projects, consider addressing the guidelines and pertinent questions listed below. These are adapted from *The Kid’s Guide to Service Projects* by Barbara A. Lewis.

### Seven Steps to Successful Service Projects

#### **1. Help students research their project.**

Help the students to choose an issue that concerns them. Once an issue has been identified, brainstorm with them possible service projects to address that issue. What issue touches their hearts so that they can use their passion to get others involved and convince them of the worthiness of their cause?

#### **2. Form a committed team.**

Get other students involved in the project who are committed to achieving the same goals. Who shares their interest in the project? Who are likely to remain involved for at least several months?

#### **3. Make a plan.**

Help students define their goals. What do they hope to achieve? How long will their project take? How much time will they devote each week to the project?

#### **4. Decide where students will perform their service**

Will students go to the people they plan to serve, will they come to your students’ school, or will your students provide a service for people far from their school? Can they find one contact person they can consistently communicate with who represents the cause they wish to serve?

#### **5. Have students get any permission they need to proceed.**

Whose permission (s) do your students need to initiate their project? Do they need to contact the school principal, community organizations, their parents, their neighbors, owners of any facilities they wish to use, or anyone else?

## **6. Advertise**

Let other people know about their project. Should they direct their advertising to specific people or organizations or make it more general? Should they advertise within their school, neighborhood, and/or community? For additional ideas, see the “Journalism and Mass Communication” section in the “Using the Arts to Change the World” supplement at the end of this curriculum.

## **7. Fundraise**

Do your students need startup money for their project? Is raising money for a good cause the primary goal of their project? The “It’s Our World, Too!” curriculum provides innumerable examples of youth who have successfully raised thousands and even millions of dollars for their projects.

## **A Letter to Students from the Authors**

Dear Students,

You can change the world. We know this is true because we have collected stories about students just like you who have done amazing things. Students have formed organizations and started projects to solve some of the most challenging problems facing America and the rest of the world. They have successfully changed laws, raised millions of dollars for good causes and consistently proven that young people can accomplish what they set out to accomplish.

Some students have focused on the worldwide problems like poverty, hunger, and the environment. Others have made significant changes in their schools and communities. All have made a difference. Your student council can, too.

The “It’s Our World, Too! Community Service Projects for Young People to Make a Difference” provides you with ideas for a wide variety of projects that have been successfully launched by your peers throughout the United States. Students have identified problems and taken impressive steps to solve them. Our hope is that you’ll follow their lead and work on solving the problems which you think need to be solved. We know you can do it.

Bob Kann and Caroline Hoffman

## Inclusion

### Inclusion: Giving Everyone Equal Access

Inclusion is being a part of what everyone else is, being welcomed and embraced as a member who belongs. Inclusion can occur in schools, churches, playgrounds, work and in recreation. Inclusion recognizes that all people need support and friendship from people of their own age. The dictionary defines inclusion as an attitude and approach that seeks to ensure that every person, regardless of ability or background, can meaningfully participate in all aspects of life.

### Inclusion: The Challenge

How can we get middle school students to proactively work to insure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in all school and community activities?

In a democracy, what is inclusion?

The United States prides itself on being the land of opportunity. We believe that everyone should have an equal opportunity to be included in society's activities. As our democracy has grown, so has our understanding of what inclusion means. In 1920, women gained the right to vote and therefore to be included in the political decisions that affected their lives. The Civil Rights Acts in the 1960's gave African Americans equal rights under the law. For people with disabilities, it was not until 1992 with the passage of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) that the law guaranteed them equal opportunity.

The ADA says that it is illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities in the workplace, at school, and in other public places. For example, a movie theater must make changes so that all people, even those who use wheelchairs, can go into the theater. Bus lifts, accessible bathrooms, and sign language interpreters are all examples of changes that can be made which allow people with disabilities to participate in activities that people without disabilities do.

But even if rights are protected by laws, that doesn't mean that people have equal access to school and community activities. It doesn't mean that students are welcoming to other students who are different from themselves. It doesn't mean that students who are different will be protected from bullying.

Bullying is the most common form of violence. Data shows that 3.7 million youth engage in it, and more than 3.2 million are victims of bullying annually. The U.S. Government "Stop Bullying Now!"

Let's open doors and minds.  
Let's throw a spotlight on the richness that people who are different bring to mainstream society. Let's talk about assets instead of liabilities.

HELEN HENDERSON

*Columnist*

Let's embrace acceptance,  
tolerance, inclusion, and  
understanding! Let's enjoy all  
of the fabulous foods and music  
and clothes and everything  
that separates us but can bring  
us closer together if we only  
accept and enjoy! The time has  
come, let us show our children a  
new nation, a new world even,  
where we embrace diversity and  
in doing so, embrace our world!

JULIE PARVIS  
*DiversityPromotions.com*



Campaign estimates that 15-25 percent of school children are bullied with some frequency. But among children with disabilities, that number is thought to be much higher. One study showed that 80 percent of children with learning disabilities were bullied at school. Disabilities that affect the appearance of a child are particularly likely to prompt name calling.

Direct, physical bullying increases in elementary school, peaks in middle school, and declines in high school. Verbal abuse, on the other hand, remains constant. The incidence of bullying decreases when students understand the similarities and differences between themselves and other students.

In an inclusive environment, all students learn from each other. If students can not verbalize their needs, other students learn how to communicate with them. If a student has limited mobility, other students learn how to adapt their activities so that all can participate.

If we believe that it benefits our democracy for students to learn to live in a pluralistic society, then students should go to schools that are as inclusive as possible.

In this chapter, middle school student council advisors are encouraged to promote the inclusive attitudes and activities that welcome all students

Specifically:

- What can your student council do to increase the opportunities for inclusion for students with disabilities and other minority groups so that they can more fully participate in the daily life of your school?
- How can your student council promote a welcoming atmosphere for all students?
- What can your student council do to promote understanding of diversity and to proactively stop bullying?
- This chapter provides stories and ideas to help your student council provide such opportunities and promote inclusion.



## Inclusion: List of Youth Campaigns

### 1. Your Student Council

- A. Student Council Membership

### 2. Your School

- A. School Inclusion Activities
- B. Stop Bullying Now
- C. Surveying Students about Bullying
- D. Helping Students Respond to Bullying
- E. Challenging the Social Boundaries at School:  
Mix It Up Day at Lunch
- F. Listening Sessions about Disabilities
- G. Promoting Friendships Between Students with Developmental  
Disabilities and Students without Disabilities:  
Best Buddies
- H. Mentoring Incoming Sixth Graders
- I. 8th Graders Teach 6th Graders about Tolerance
- J. Rolling Out the Welcome Mat: Helping Students New to Your  
School

### 3. Your Community

- A. Surveying the Accessibility of Buildings in Your Community
- B. All Kids Can
- C. Teaching Art to Adults with Disabilities
- D. Fighting Racial Prejudice: The “Friendship Knows No Color” Pen  
Pal Club

### Additional Resources

- A. Stop Using the R-Word Movement
- B. Name Calling and People First Language
- C. Inclusive Schools Week
- D. Natural Supports Project:  
[www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports)



## 1. Your Student Council

### A. Student Council Membership

One way to create a school environment that accepts diversity is by having the student council act as role models by demonstrating attitudes and behaviors that respect diversity. Not only can student council members represent diversity but they can insure that students with disabilities and other excluded groups have a voice by holding listening sessions (see “D” below).

Suggestion from California Association of Student Councils’ “Best Practices”:

Consider electing half of your student council and recruiting the other half from populations in your student body who typically are not adequately represented on your student council. Are there ways to give voice on your student council to students with disabilities and other excluded groups in your school who typically are not elected to the student council?

## 2. Your School

### A. School Inclusion Activities

The Prince Williams County Middle School in Manassas, Virginia has the following activities to promote inclusion

- Make inclusion the focus of one issue of the school newspaper. Interview students and school staff about ways your school can be a more welcoming place for everyone.
- Organize a school or district wide assembly to celebrate the diversity of the students include cultural and ability diversity.
- Ask all students and school staff to read a common book with an inclusive message and hold school wide discussions about the book.
- Research federal and state laws that protect human and civil rights. Include research on disability laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Students can write essays about how they apply to the local schools and community.

### B. Stop Bullying Now

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp?area=main>

Students who are different are at much greater risk of being bullied in school. Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares

another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Bullying has a terrible effect on the lives of people who are being bullied. Stop Bullying Now offers tips for individuals and schools to deal with bullying problems.

### C. Surveying Students about Bullying

Create a survey that asks students to anonymously describe their experiences with bullying and any suggestions that they have for combating bullying in their school. Use the survey to develop a plan to increase tolerance and decrease bullying.

A sample survey is at:

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/TM/WS\\_bully\\_survey.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/TM/WS_bully_survey.shtml)

Tolerance.org also has a student survey on bullying but make sure to add in disability as a category:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20031227175839/http://www.tolerance.org/teens/survey.jsp>

Tolerance.org suggests that students develop a bar graph depicting the following data:

- Whether the school climate is, generally speaking, a) welcoming or b) not welcoming.
- The number of students who have seen unwelcoming cliques in any of the following situations: after-school clubs, assemblies, buses, the cafeteria, classrooms, recreational activities, and/or at spectator events.
- The number of students who are aware of school cliques
- Whether it is a) very easy, b) kind of easy, c) kind of hard, or d) very hard for kids in the school to make friends with kids in different groups.
- The number of students who have felt unwelcome or rejected by a particular group
- The number of students who have ever been part of a group that rejected others
- The number of students who would be willing to do any of the following to encourage more intra-group interaction in school: introduce themselves to someone new, sit with someone different at lunch, help the school participate in Mix It Up at Lunch Day, choose someone they do not know for a pick-up team, dance with someone from another group, invite



“outsiders” to a party with their friends, or join a club of others who want to “Mix It Up.”

#### D. Helping Students Respond to Bullying

The Pacer Center’s Kids Against Bullying website gives ideas on what bullying is, why students do it, how to spot it and how to stop it. Students can look at their suggestions and develop new ideas for preventing bullying in their school.

<http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/?gclid=CLP25-qkpZYCFRKlxwods23E5Q>

#### E. Challenging the Social Boundaries at School:

##### Mix It Up Day at Lunch

<http://www.tolerance.org/teens/lunch.jsp>

A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance encourages schools to organize a way for students to eat lunch with students they don’t normally socialize with by having “Mix It Up Lunches”. Their website states that last year an estimated 4 million students in 10,000 schools participated in Mix It Up at Lunch Day.

- Interaction between different social groups can reduce prejudice and improve relationships between groups. When people interact with those who are different from themselves, biases and misperceptions can fall away.
- Informal surveys conducted by Mix It Up show that at least half of students describe their schools as “quick to put people into categories.” Forty percent admit they have rejected someone from another group, and 70% name the cafeteria as the school setting where social boundaries are drawn most clearly.

Make a move and organize Mix It Up at Lunch Day in your School!

**Organize.** Mix It Up at Lunch Day is a whole-school effort. Get students, teachers, counselors, staff, administrators and school clubs involved in planning the day.

- Pull together a group of students who also want to challenge the social boundaries at school and form a planning committee.
- Ask administrators to put Mix It Up at Lunch Day on the school calendar.
- Meet with the cafeteria staff to help organize the events.
- Be creative. Everyone takes a lunch period in school, even if it’s



not in the cafeteria. If you have an open campus, for example, encourage students to have lunch with a different group while off campus and report back on their experiences.

- Rewards and incentives work, so create a way to honor students who participate.

**Planning.** Set a meeting schedule and stick to it. Brainstorm ideas with the planning committee about how to make the Day work at your school. Consider these pointers:

- The web site includes a “Mix It Up Survey” to assess what social boundaries exist at the school.
- Involve students outside of the planning committee to help increase awareness about the day.
- Involve teachers and administrators! The web site includes tips for working with adults.
- Conduct activities before and after the event to drive the lessons home.

**Publicize.** Promoting the Mix It Up at Lunch Day allows students to prepare for the Day, understand its purpose, and volunteer to help or ask questions. The website includes fliers, stickers, web banners and much more! Take advantage of school media — newspapers and intercom announcements, for example. Visit classrooms to explain the event. Create your own promotional materials, too.

## **F. Listening Sessions about Differences**

Set up times for your student council to meet with small groups of students with disabilities and other excluded groups to talk with them about barriers to inclusion in school activities.

## **G. Promoting Friendships between Students with Developmental Disabilities and Students without Disabilities: Best Buddies**

[http://www.bestbuddies.org/site/c.ljJ0J8MNI5E/b.933795/k.9C3D/Middle\\_Schools.htm](http://www.bestbuddies.org/site/c.ljJ0J8MNI5E/b.933795/k.9C3D/Middle_Schools.htm)

Best Buddies Middle Schools is part of a growing movement of volunteers with and without disabilities, dedicated to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to have a friend. They say that “socialization is one of the simplest, but most often underestimated, solutions to the pattern of exclusion people with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, have faced for decades.”

## **Other Ideas:**

Organizers provided each student with a “Breaking News” sheet and encouraged students to sit at the tables where their topics appeared. Once seated, they found conversation starters pertaining to their news item.

**Before lunch,** organizers gave each student a letter in the phrase, “Mix It Up.” During lunch, students found other kids to spell out the whole phrase. Once the phrase was complete, the group sat down for lunch.

**Tried-and-true ideas** used by numerous schools include mixing up the lunchroom by birth month (i.e., students with January birthdays sit together), by color codes (i.e., students with a red swatch of paper sit at the table with red balloons) or by food item (i.e., students with an apple sit at the “apple table”).

**To spice things up,** invite local comics, radio DJs, musicians, and other members of the community to participate, too.

**Offer incentives!** Organizers often hold drawings for free movie tickets, gift certificates to student hotspots, wristbands, school t-shirts or other cool items to encourage participation in Mix It Up at Lunch Day.





It is designed to improve the school environment by promoting friendships between students with developmental disabilities (Buddies) and students without disabilities (Peer Buddies).

#### **H. Mentoring Incoming Sixth-Graders**

At the DeLong Middle School in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, 50 eighth graders receive leadership training and then serve as contact/mentors for entering sixth graders during the school year. They help the sixth graders "learn the ropes" and successfully adjust to life as middle school students.

#### **I. 8th Graders Teach 6th Graders about Tolerance**

Eighth grade students at Rapid Run Middle School in Cincinnati, OH, visited sixth grade classes to teach lessons about tolerance, bullying, respect, and responsibility in their Right Attitudes Make Success (RAMS) program. They also play games, watch movies, and brainstorm ways to make the school a better place.

#### **J. Rolling Out the Welcome Mat:**

##### **Helping Students New to Your School:**

Arrange for summer pizza gatherings between new students who have a disability and their classmates so that they have an opportunity to meet other students before the first day of school.



### 3. Your Community

#### A. Surveying the Accessibility of Buildings in Your Community

Conduct a systematic survey of the physical accessibility of your school building and other buildings in your community. Consider having someone who uses a wheelchair as part of the team which conducts the survey. Denise Jess Consulting has developed questions to measure accessibility.

<http://www.denisejessconsulting.com/home.shtml>

#### Surveying Accessibility

- How many building entrances are there? How many are wheelchair accessible? Where are the accessible entrances?
- Is there a building directory? How readable is the print? Are the directories also printed in Braille or raised letters?
- Are there information signs? How readable is the print? Are their picture cues to accompany the words? Are the signs also printed in Braille or raised letters?
- Are hallways easy to move through or wide enough for someone in a wheelchair or who is using walking canes to move through with ease?
- What are the acoustics like? Is sound echoing or muffled?
- Are there elevators to other floors? How easy is it to locate and use them? How aesthetically pleasing are they?
- Are adapted resources such as Braille or large print additions of maps or brochures or sign language interpreters, available upon request?
- Are tables, shelves and counters accessible? Are they at the right height to accommodate people in wheelchairs or people of varying heights? Are chairs easily removed? Can chair comfortably accommodate people of varying heights and sizes?
- Is it obvious where you could go for help or to seek information?
- Are floors safe for movement? Are they extremely slippery? Do variations in pattern make the floors seem uneven?
- Are stairs clearly marked? Are there marks at the edge of each stair to indicate where the stair drops off? Do the stairs have treads to prevent slipping?
- In general, how easy is it to find your way around?
- Do workers seem approachable if you had questions or concerns?
- Are wheelchairs available, if needed?
- Are there auditory distractions, such as phones ringing, multiple





conversations, construction noise, etc.?

- Are there visual distractions, such as overused signage or lack of natural light?
- How many restrooms are available in the building? How many are accessible? Where are they located?
- Once inside the accessible restroom, how is it arranged? Where is the toilet paper? Is it within reach? How easy is it to maneuver in the accessible stall? How easy is it to open and close the door?
- What other observations are you making about how accessible the spaces you visit over lunch might be to people with a variety of disabilities?

#### **B. All Kids Can!**

<http://www.allkidscan.com/>

All Kids Can! Respect diversity is a disabilities awareness program that helps students of all ages learn attitudes of acceptance, dignity and respect toward all people, especially those with disabilities. All Kids Can! was originally funded in 1999 by a Sixth Grade Talented and Gifted Class.

##### **Some project suggestions from All Kids Can**

- Create a display case in a school or town library that features well-written, factual, interesting books about people with disabilities
- Show a movie that focuses on disabilities awareness and hold a discussion afterwards (Consider inviting a panel of people with disabilities to offer their perspectives and answer audience questions)
- Talk to school clubs and youth programs about recruiting members with disabilities—stress the importance of inclusion—everyone having a chance to participate in activities—and use people with disabilities as a resource
- Take a day and “spot check” businesses in your community for accessibility
- Write letters to fund-raising programs encouraging them to keep up the good work and to consider using positive portrayals of people with disabilities in their promotional advertising and materials

#### **C. Teaching Art to Adults with Disabilities**

At Malcolm Shabazz High School in Madison, Wisconsin, with the

help of Edgewood College art students, students plan, develop, and teach art projects to adults with developmental disabilities.

#### **D. Fighting Racial Prejudice: Friendship Sees No Color**

Brian Harris was seven years old when he decided that the best way to fight racial prejudice was to do something before it could begin. Brian, who is mixed African-American and European-American, wanted other kids to have a chance to get to know kids from different ethnic backgrounds. He created a pen pal club called "Friendship Sees No Color." He wrote to news programs and talk shows until he was invited as a guest on a national TV program. Soon he had hundreds of kids sending him self-addressed stamped envelopes and a card with their name, age, sex, and race or ethnic background. Brian matched kids from different backgrounds and sent them information about each other. His club became very successful. Club members even bought t-shirts to help cover Brian's expenses for extra stamps and a post-office box.



### **Additional Resources:**

#### **A. Stop using the R-Word Movement**

<http://www.r-word.org/>

Our choice of language frames how we think about others. Special Olympics International is asking people to respect and value people with intellectual disabilities by stopping people from calling other people "retarded" or "retard".

#### **B. Name Calling and People First Language**

For more information on People First Language visit the Kids Together Inc website at <http://www.kidstogether.org/pep-1st.htm> or Disability is Natural at <http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/peoplefirstlanguage.htm>

Have you ever been called a name that you did not like? People with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities, have been called many hurtful names. Not long ago, they were called mentally retarded, but then the word retard began to be used in a hurtful manner. *Idiot, imbecile, stupid, and dummy* are all words that have been used to insult people who are slower learners.

The words we use are important. Words change the way we think about a person. Saying someone is confined to a wheelchair is very different from saying they use a wheelchair. If we say they use a





wheelchair, we are seeing the wheelchair as something a person uses to move around. If we say the person is confined to a wheelchair, we see that person as stuck, unable to move. These are two very different pictures of the same person.

People First Language means instead of calling someone by their disease or disability (such as “a disabled person”), we say *a person with* a disease or disability. This language tells what the person HAS, not what he person IS. People first language was developed by people with disabilities who said, “We are not our disabilities. The disability is only a small part of who we are—we are people first.”

### C. Inclusive Schools Week

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/week>

Inclusive Schools Week is an annual event sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) at Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), which is held each year during the first week in December. Since its inception in 2001, Inclusive Schools Week has celebrated the progress that schools have made in providing a supportive and quality education to an increasingly diverse student population, including students who are marginalized due to disability, gender, socio-economic status, cultural heritage, language preference and other factors. The Inclusive Schools Week also provides an important opportunity for educators, students and parents to discuss what else needs to be done in order to ensure that their schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate all children.

### D. Pathways to Independence Natural Supports Project

[www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports)

A satisfying job, a comfortable place to live, opportunities to have fun, involvement in the community, and close friendships—all are important pieces of living a good life. Yet, these important aspects of community living fail to materialize for numerous youth with disabilities. Instead, youth with disabilities often remain disconnected from meaningful school, work, and community activities that will equip them to transition successfully to life after high school. Facility-based employment, segregated programs, self-contained classrooms, limited support, and endless waiting lists characterize the in-school and post-school experiences of far too many youth with disabilities.

The goal of the Pathways to Independence Natural Supports project is to discover, support, and disseminate creative and promising approaches for supporting youth with disabilities to participate more fully and naturally in school, work, and community activities.



## Participation

**T**he ability to vote is the most prized of our Constitutional rights. The power of a democracy is vested in the people and exercised directly by them. Because it is our fundamental right as an American and the most basic means by which we have a voice in how our government works, we participate in a process that determines who will represent us, our family, and our country.

During the country's stay in Iraq, we worked towards helping their country achieve the same level of democracy that we have here. During their first national election, an estimated 70% of the Iraqi people voted. Regardless of the violence—from car bombings to manslaughter—the Iraqi people embraced a right that they had long been hoping for. It is depressing to know that in the 2004 election, only between 50 and 55% of all Americans actually voted. How can we honestly attempt imposing democracy in distant countries when we aren't taking advantage of it right here?

Run To Vote, Granville Central High School, North Carolina

### The Elephant and the Hummingbird

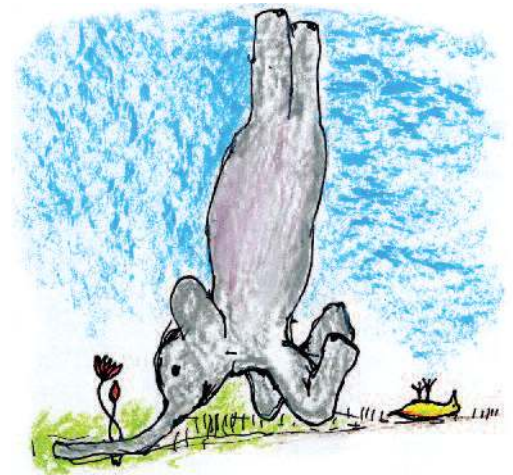
One day an elephant saw a hummingbird lying flat on its back on the ground. The bird's tiny feet were raised up into the air.

"What on earth are you doing, Hummingbird?" asked the elephant.

The hummingbird replied, "I have heard that the sky might fall today. If that should happen, I am ready to do my bit in holding it up."

The elephant laughed and mocked the tiny bird, "Do you think THOSE tiny feet could hold up the SKY?"

"Not alone," admitted the hummingbird, "but each must do what he or she can do, and this is what I can do."



Tell me and I'll forget  
Show me and I'll remember  
Involve me and I'll understand.

CHINESE PROVERB

## Participation: The Challenge

How do we get middle school students to participate in democracy in a meaningful fashion?

In a democracy, what is participation?

Democracy is not a spectator sport. It is a learned art. Learning comes through practice. The only way to guarantee that democracy will work is through participation. How do we make sure that all citizens have the opportunity and desire to participate in our democracy?

We are at a time in history rich with opportunities to participate in democracy. Voting is one piece of the puzzle. A citizen can vote once in an election, but has innumerable other ways to participate, too. The Internet has vastly increased the opportunities for participation by making it easier for citizens to get news about political issues, read the comments of bloggers from all political persuasions, make contributions, sign petitions, and write letters. "E-democracy" does not substitute for traditional forms of participation in democracy. It builds on them.

Despite the increase in opportunities to participate in democracy and ease of doing so, many adults, let alone youth, don't care about national politics or even local issues. If we can't get the adults involved, how can we get youth involved?

One way to get youth to participate in democracy is to show them that they can make a difference. Success breeds success, and a desire to experience more of the same. Given that your students are likely not to have experienced success in the political arena, the next best thing is to provide them with examples of their peers who have successfully participated in the political process. They'll know that youth can and have already made a difference. The "Successful Youth Lobbying Stories" in this chapter describe problems that somehow personally touched young people enough to compel them to lobby government agencies in their communities to solve those problems. If these youth can do it, so can students in your student councils and schools.

A companion component to instill in youth is a desire to participate is to find issues that touch their hearts. The youth in the stories in this chapter who engaged in successful lobbying campaigns consistently were inspired to participate by some local issue or problem that compelled them to try to rectify some wrong they'd identified. Work with your student council to identify problems in your community, and then work together to solve them.

Youth also can work with local agencies in a variety of ways to

assist in the electoral process. While voting is not the only way to participate in a democracy, it is an important way to participate and the most common way people participate. In Australia, voting is compulsory because it is believed that compulsory voting is the only way to have fair elections and get the general population involved in politics. In the United States, citizens can choose to vote or not to vote.

Elections have consequences far beyond simply who gets into office. Voting not only selects leaders, but it holds them accountable. The more we express our values and concerns through voting, the better our elected leaders will be able to represent us. Our leaders cannot know what's important to us if we don't vote.

Although middle school students are too young to vote, they can still make voting more desirable for voters and/or more accessible for voters. Or, as the hummingbird in the story "The Elephant and Hummingbird" advises, "each must do what he or she can do, and this is what I can do."

Specifically,

- What can your student council do to advocate for change that would benefit the students in your school or school district?
- What can your student council do to advocate for change that would benefit the citizens of your community?
- How can your student council help increase the number of Americans who participate in elections?
- How can your student council help eliminate barriers to voting?

This chapter provides stories and ideas to help your students participate in our democracy or to help them help others to participate in our democracy.



I am only one; but I am still one.  
I cannot do everything, but still  
can do something. I will not  
refuse to do something I can do.

HELEN KELLER

## Participation: List of Youth Campaigns

### 1. Youth Advocacy Campaigns

- A. Do Something Organization for Teens
- B. We The People: Project Citizen
- C. Advocating for a Neighborhood Park
- D. Advocating for Railroad Crossing Safety
- E. Advocating for Traffic Safety
- F. Advocating against Liquor Stores Near Schools
- G. Advocating against Alcohol Billboards Near Schools
- H. Lobbying for an Accessible Door in a High School
- I. Advocating for a Handicapped-Accessible Fishing Dock
- J. Advocating against Condominiums in a Wetland
- K. Children for a Safe Environment



### 2. Helping to Increase the Number of Adults Who Vote

- A. Run to Vote: A Nonpartisan Student Voter Registration Drive
- B. Helping Wisconsin's League of Women Voters
- C. Helping to Ensure That Polling Locations are Accessible to People with Disabilities: The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition

## 1. Youth Advocacy Campaigns

### A. DoSomething.org

<http://www.dosomething.org>

Dosomething.org is a web based organization that believes teens have the power to make a difference. They “aim to inspire, support and celebrate a generation of doers: people who see the need to do something, believe in their ability to get it done, and then take action.” They provide the tools and resources to convert ideas and energy into positive action.

*Five guidelines of DoSomething.org*

- Believe in teenagers. Teenagers can lead today. We don’t require adults.
- Trust teenagers. We provide reliable, easy to access information and activation strategies, but teens decide for themselves what to do.
- Celebrate teenagers. We think all measurable contributions from teens are valuable.
- Respect teenagers. We understand that teenagers have diverse abilities and constraints.
- Value teenagers. Our programs and products are free. We’re not after teens’ money; we want their passion, time and creativity

The dosomething.org website has a search engine for teens that lists many ideas for different causes they could get involved with. On the website they can choose:



What cause?	Who with?	Where?	How Long?
Animal Welfare	Alone	At Home	one minute
Disaster Response & Relief	Church	At School	one day
Discrimination	Club	In Your City	one week
Education	Family	In Your Neighborhood	one semester
Environment	School	Online	one summer
Health & Fitness	Sports Team		one year
HIV & Sexuality	With friends		
International Human Rights			
Poverty			
Violence & Bullying			
War, Peace & Politics			



You don't have to be a big  
dog to make a difference,  
just a persistent flea.

MARGARET MEAD

## **B. We The People: Project Citizen**

<http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=introduction>

We the People: Project Citizen is a program for middle, secondary, and post-secondary students, youth organizations, and adult groups that promote competent and responsible participation in local and state government. The program helps participants learn how to monitor and influence public policy. In the process, they develop support for democratic values and principles, tolerance, and feelings of political efficacy.

Entire classes of students or members of youth or adult organizations work cooperatively to identify a public policy problem in their community. They then research the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop their own solution in the form of a public policy, and create a political action plan to enlist local or state authorities to adopt their proposed policy. Participants develop a portfolio of their work and present their project in a public hearing showcase before a panel of civic-minded community members.

Project Citizen is funded by the U.S. Department of Education with assistance from the National Council of State Legislatures.

## **C. Advocating for a Neighborhood Park: James Ale Park**

**The Story** When he was nine, James Ale saw his friend get hit by a car when they were playing ball in a crowded street. The accident made him wonder, "Why should we have to play in the street when kids in the rich part of town have parks?" The more he thought about it, the angrier he got. Finally, James Ale took on town hall. He created a petition on his computer for kids to sign and made many calls to the Mayor's office. When the Mayor agreed to meet with him, he presented her with a plan. He had a map of the place where the park could be, and many names on his petition. The mayor and the town administrator were not very interested at first because they had just built new parks in another part of town. James decided to call a local newspaper. A reporter wrote a story about James and his neighborhood. James continued to call the Mayor's office. Finally he was invited to a city council meeting, where he learned that a new park was going to be built in his neighborhood. All of his hard work had paid off.

## **D. Advocating for Railroad Crossing Safety:**

### **Waupun Middle School**

**The Story** Waupun, Wisconsin Middle School students, with the help of Project Citizen, wanted to improve a railroad crossing near

the school that was not well marked. They interviewed residents in the area and all felt that the crossing needed clearer markings to warn drivers. They then wrote to the Wisconsin Commissioner of Railroads. The railroad eventually cleared brush and set up a series of warning signs

#### **E. Lobbying for Traffic Safety in West Allis**

**The Story** Sixth grade students at Heritage Christian School in West Allis worked with Project Citizen focusing on safety issues. Students looked around the nearby neighborhood and realized there was a dangerous intersection with a 2-way stop. Many accidents or near-accidents happened at this busy stop. So students worked to convince the city council to install stop-and-go lights. They investigated and presented their evidence at a town council meeting. Although the town council did not put up expensive traffic lights, they did make the intersection a 4-way stop. The city also put up lit warning signs that drivers could spot as they approached the intersection.

#### **F. Lobbying against Liquor Stores Near Schools**

**The Story** Seventh graders in Dallas, Texas documented the number of liquor stores in their neighborhood, especially near schools. They traveled to the state legislature to present their findings. Senator West, a strong supporter, declared “The children motivated me. I’m going to do all I can to help get the bill passed.” The state law was changed to allow the local zoning board to reduce the number of alcohol outlets.

#### **G. Lobbying against Alcohol Billboards Near Schools**

**The Story** A student in Pojoaque, New Mexico didn’t like beer billboards near her school. She contacted the state Office of Vital Statistics and other agencies to find out how many deaths in her county were alcohol-related, what percentage of those deaths involved underage drivers, and how much the town was spending on drug education. Then she argued that the \$11,000 spent for drug prevention was a waste and convinced the town to ban alcohol billboards near schools.





## **H. Lobbying for an Accessible Door in a High School**

**The Story** Marie Massert was a junior at Southern Door High School when she decided it was time to do something about a problem that had been bothering her for a while. Marie's high school was attached to an elementary school. The entire building had one accessible door that was located at the elementary school end of the building. Typically, high school students who used wheelchairs would be dropped off by their buses at the high school, they'd then have to roll down to the accessible entrance at the elementary school, and then roll back into the high school.

Marie was one such student who used a wheelchair, although with difficulty she was able to open one of the nonaccessible doors at the high school. Still, she thought it unfair that her friends who used wheelchairs had to go on such a roundabout journey to get into the high school and that it was unnecessarily difficult for her to get into the school. When she raised her concerns with the school's administration and suggested they needed an accessible door at the high school, they told her that the building was in compliance with ADA rules and no changes would be made.

Marie was not someone who gave up easily. She told other kids at her high school about the problem and soon they, too, wanted a new door installed. They began marshalling their arguments for the new door by considering who else would benefit by making the high school more accessible. They thought about grandparents who used walkers and perhaps their friends fighting in Iraq who might return injured and would need an easier way to enter the school. Marie and classmates spoke at public meetings and lobbied the school board regularly over a period of two years. Finally, the school board agreed to include funds for a new accessible door in their budget.

## **I. Lobbying for a Handicapped-Accessible Fishing Dock**

**The Story** Bryce Pfeiffer, 14, of Raton, N.M., led a project to purchase and install a handicapped-accessible fishing dock on a lake at a local state park. It all began on a fishing excursion with his grandfather. "Grandpa made it into the boat, but not before he was cut up and bruised," said Bryce. "His handicaps made a simple canoe boarding a 30-minute ordeal." Realizing that he might not be able to take many more fishing trips with his grandfather, and that other handicapped people must be having the same difficulty, Bryce decided a specialized dock was needed. He spent many hours researching regulations for handicapped accessibility, as well as

floating dock designs and manufacturers. Then he obtained approval from the state, made a promotional poster, and wrote newspaper articles about the project. Overcoming his fear of public speaking, Bryce made approximately 40 presentations to business groups and raised more than \$17,000. He ordered a new dock, recruited volunteers, organized work schedules, and oversaw the installation process.

#### **J. Advocating against Condominiums in a Wetland**

**The Story** Andrew Holleman, 12 years old from Chelmsford, MA successfully led a fight to protect 16 acres of wetland from development. A developer wanted to build 180 condominiums on the 16 acres near Andrew's town of 30,000. Andrew was concerned that the condos would pollute the area and affect animal habits and drinking water. He researched the issue, wrote a petition that was signed by 180 voters and then spoke at a public hearing. He sent the petition to all the town boards, the legislators and the press. As a result of his advocacy, the developer's application for a permit was denied. Andrew said, "Basically, if you see something worth fighting for, fight for it. You see me, you hear about me doing a project like this, and a lot of people think, oh, I could never do that but you can. I was just a 12-year-old kid from Chelmsford, Massachusetts, typical kid. But I realized something had to be done, and it doesn't just have to be the environment you protect, it can be anything. You can do something about drugs, you can do something about racism—it's all up to you. Something that's important to you, just fight for it. That's something that we all have to do, if we all fought for what we believed in the world would be a better place."

#### **K. Children for a Safe Environment**

<http://www.c4se.org/index.htm>

Nine-year-old, Kory Johnson formed an organization called, Children for a Safe Environment, which successfully advocated against building a hazardous Waste Incinerator and Dump.

**The Story** In 1989, Kory Johnson's older sister died at the age of sixteen. The cause of death was heart problems caused by contaminated well water her mother drank while pregnant. After attending a bereavement support group for children in her community, nine-year-old Johnson discovered that many families in her neighborhood had lost loved ones and that there were more





cases of cancer in the neighborhood than in others. Johnson decided that she needed to speak up against the environmental health hazards that children face, and so she formed a group called Children for a Safe Environment (CSE).

Against the advice of some of her teachers, who cautioned that her activism would harm her chances of getting into college, Johnson became a tireless advocate and organizer for environmental justice. With many victories behind them, CSE is now 359 members strong. Most of these youth live in underprivileged neighborhoods that are often targets for incinerators or industrial waste dumps.

CSE's first battle was against the enormous ENSCO hazardous waste incinerator and dump that was being planned for a poor Arizona community. In a contract with the state of Arizona, ENSCO intended to dispose of all hazardous waste produced by the state, as well as hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic materials from out of state. Through letter writing, public education, protests, demonstrations and children's art projects, Johnson and CSE teamed with Greenpeace Action and effectively fought the project. The youths' tenacity and savvy drew the attention of the media, and in 1991, the governor of Arizona canceled plans for the ENSCO hazardous waste incinerator as a result of the protests.

Since that time Johnson has traveled around the U.S. speaking on behalf of children in minority communities whose well-being has been compromised by polluting industries and waste sites. In 1991, students from the tri-state area of Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania pooled their money to purchase a plane ticket for Johnson, who met with their newly-formed children's environmental group and spoke out against the WTI incinerator being built in the heart of their community.

In 1996, she took part in a protest co-organized by CSE, Greenpeace and other environmental justice groups at a railroad spur in Mobile, Arizona to stop the arrival of a train that carried forty-five car loads of DDT-contaminated dirt from a California Superfund site. Johnson, who is of Native American and Mexican American descent, attended Arizona State University. She has recently worked with Native Americans and other groups in Ward Valley, California, where a government radioactive waste dump is planned.



## 2. Helping to Increase the Number of Adults Who Vote

### A. Run to Vote: A Nonpartisan Student Voter Registration Drive

<http://www.aokassociates.com/runtovote/>

Run to Vote is a project of Granville Central High School in Stem, North Carolina. The Run to Vote team of students and teachers traveled during the summer throughout the U.S. registering people to vote, having them pledge they will vote and giving out information about the fall elections. For every person they register one of their teachers or a member of the running team will run one lap on the school's track.

### B. Helping Wisconsin's League of Women Voters

<http://www.lwvwi.org/cms/>

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Students can work with the league to help expand the number of people who vote in Wisconsin.

Some examples of ways students can help the League of Women Voters:

1. Help pass out voter registration forms at fairs and farmer's markets
2. Students could help out on Election Day by being poll greeters and directing traffic.
3. Students could write and distribute their own information about why voting is important and how to register.
4. Students could share information about when one vote made a difference
5. Students could help assess whether polling places are accessible to voters with disabilities.

### C. Helping to ensure that polling locations are accessible to people with disabilities: The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition

<http://www.disabilityvote.org/resources.html#PollingPlaceAccessibility>

The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition helps to ensure the rights and the participation of people with disabilities in the electoral

## When One Vote Made a Difference

One vote *does* make a difference—whether in a national, state, or local elections. Many races and important decisions that affect us all have been made because of one vote:

**In 1776 ONE VOTE** gave America the English language instead of German.

**In 1800 ONE VOTE** in the Electoral College gave Thomas Jefferson the Presidency over Aaron Burr.

**In 1845 ONE VOTE** brought Texas into the Union.

**In 1876 ONE VOTE** gave Rutherford D. Hayes the Presidency of the United States.

**In 1920, ONE VOTE** enabled women to win the right to vote by the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. Tennessee, the last state needed to pass the amendment, ratified the amendment by one vote.

**In 1923 ONE VOTE** gave Adolph Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party.

**In 1980 ONE VOTE** gave Patty Cafferata a victory over Bob Kerns in the primary election for a Nevada Assembly. Her margin of victory may have been larger if at least three of her family members hadn't forgotten to vote!



process. It is estimated that people with disabilities are on average 10-20 percentage points less likely than those without disabilities to vote. Some of the barriers to voting by people with disabilities include:

- Lack of an accessible, clearly-marked path from the parking area to an accessible entrance that allows voters with disabilities to enter the polling place safely and independently.
- Unpaved parking lots or paths, especially gravel surfaces, pose hardships for many individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers and other mobility devices.
- People cannot get to the voting booth from the building's entrance (stairs, lack of elevators, obstructions in hallways for wheelchairs, etc)
- Inaccessible voting equipment: tables too high for filling out forms
- Voting accessibility issues for people who are blind, people who cannot read and need the ballot to be read to them
- Lack of privacy for voters with visual impairments to cast a secret ballot at the polling site

Students can help assess whether a polling place is fully accessible for people with disabilities by using a Voting Accessibility Check List like the one available from the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition. (<http://www.disabilityvote.org/files/Vdaychk1st.pdf>). If your student council conducts such a survey in your community and identifies accessibility problems, they can work with local government officials to rectify the problems and thereby be providing a tremendous service to the cause of participatory democracy in your community.

## Responsibility



### It's Up to Us

#### The Starfish

Once a man was walking along a beach. The sun was shining and it was a beautiful day. Off in the distance he could see a person going back and forth between the surf's edge and the beach. Back and forth this person went. As the man approached he could see that there were hundreds of starfish stranded on the sand as the result of the natural action of the tide.

As he approached, he saw this person absorbed in the task of picking up starfish one by one and throwing them into the surf. The man was stuck by the apparent futility of the task. There were far too many starfish. Many of them were sure to perish.

As he came up to the person he said, "You must be crazy. There are thousands of miles of beach covered with starfish. You can't possibly make a difference." The person looked at the man. He then stooped down and picked up one more starfish and threw it back into the ocean. He turned back to the man and said, "It sure made a difference to that one!"

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

ANNE FRANK



It's only a drop in the ocean  
—but the ocean wouldn't be  
the same without that drop.

MOTHER TERESA

The only danger to our  
democracy is that people will  
not carry their share of  
responsibility.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

## Responsibility: The Challenge

How do we get middle school students to voluntarily assume the responsibilities involved in making a democracy flourish?

In a democracy, what is responsibility?

Responsibility is a word which means different things to different people in different contexts. There are responsibilities which are defined for us, and in some cases, which we are compelled to fulfill, and responsibilities which we identify for ourselves. They can fit within 2 general categories:

Responsibility consists of things we do if we are told—duties.

Responsibility consists of things that we do without being asked—deeds.

Democratic citizens recognize that they not only have rights, they have responsibilities.

Ideally in a democracy, citizens participate without being asked because we believe it is our responsibility to help govern. We recognize that democracy requires an investment of time and hard work—a government of the people demands constant vigilance and support by the people.

Middle school students already do many things because they are told to do them like taking out the garbage, walking their dog, completing their homework, and arriving at their classes on time. How do we transform them from people who primarily respond to assigned personal responsibilities into citizens who voluntarily assume responsibilities for the community beyond themselves?

One way middle school student councils can accomplish this is by having students engage in activities in which students actively do things to improve the community. This community could be within their school, in their home town, in their state, country, and/or internationally.

How do our student councils accomplish this? As a starting point, consider having your student council formulate its own Bill of Responsibilities similar to the one created by sixth-grade students at Marathon Elementary School in Marathon, Wisconsin (see below). Perhaps this will provide them with a framework for engaging in subsequent service activities.

Your student council also can initiate a service project similar to those other students have already successfully undertaken. The stories that follow the Marathon Elementary School “Bill of Responsibilities” are examples of youth who have identified a problem and assumed responsibility to solve it. In this chapter, the

accomplishments of youth specifically in health and in environmental-related projects are presented. These youth exemplify the attitude that “It’s Our World, Too!” With compassion, perseverance, and ingenuity, they’ve succeeded in making our world a better place. Your student council can join in some of these on-going projects or they can use them as inspirations to initiate projects of their own design.

### **A Young People’s Bill of Responsibilities**

[http://nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/practices/index.php?ep\\_action=view&ep\\_id=844](http://nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/practices/index.php?ep_action=view&ep_id=844)

While studying citizenship, sixth-grade students at Marathon Elementary School in Marathon, Wisconsin, produced a Bill of Responsibilities—addressed to themselves, their parents and their country.

**The Story:** As part of a unit on citizenship, a sixth-grade classroom at Marathon Elementary School wrote their own Bill of Rights. Students were given mini-lessons on what it means to be a citizen, what freedom is and what is responsibility. Students worked in small groups to come up with their own “bill of responsibility.” The class then worked together to come to a consensus, which included much focused discussion on the meanings of words such as “honesty,” “respect,” and “listening.” Students’ role played scenarios such as sitting on local government and student councils and taking sides to an issue that was posed by their teacher. Students were given the chance to attend school board, village board, and county board meetings.

### **The Marathon School Bill of Responsibilities**

*(Shortened version)*

*To my country, my parents and myself—that I may:*

Be honest  
Take care of family members  
Take care of the elderly  
Follow the rules  
Do not fight  
Do not steal  
Be able to work in groups  
Listen  
Get my work done  
Do not cheat on tests  
Achieve all that I can  
Have fun, but don’t get carried away  
Respect others and their rights  
Respect my elders and my friends  
Do not destroy other people’s property  
Help those in need  
Treat others as I want to be treated  
Do not use toxic chemicals  
Spare animal life  
If I cut a tree, plant a seed  
Do not pollute



# Responsibility: List of Youth Campaigns

## Responsibility for Health Problems

### 1. Helping the Make-A-Wish Foundation/Making Wishes Come True

- A. Working to Fulfill the Wishes of Terminally Ill Children
- B. Starting a Make-a-Wish Club in School and Fundraising by Organizing Raffles, Collecting Sponsorships Door-to-Door, and Selling Awareness Bracelets
- C. Bowling for Wishes
- D. Kiss a Card for Make a Wish

### 2. Raising Money for Cancer Research and Helping People with Cancer

- A. Selling Lemonade to Raise Funds for Cancer Research: Alex's Lemonade Stand
- B. Eighth-Grader Inspired by Alex's Lemonade Stand Raises \$50,000 for Childhood Cancer Research
- C. Another Eighth-Grader Inspired by Alex's Lemonade Stands Recruits Hundreds of Volunteers to Run Lemonade Stands to Raise Funds for Pediatric Cancer Research
- D. Student Council Hosts Spaghetti Dinner and Auction to Raise Funds for Leukemia/Lymphoma Society
- E. Selling Luminaries and Writing Books to Raise Funds for Cancer Research
- F. Delivering Teddy Bears to Young Cancer Patients
- G. Hats for Cancer Patients: The Heavenly Hats Foundation

### 3. Helping People with HIV/AIDS

- A. Kids Caring 4 Kids: Selling T-Shirts to Raise Funds for AIDS Orphans in Africa
- B. "12 Hours for 12 K" Walk-a-Thon: Student Council Fundraising for Children with HIV/AIDS in Africa
- C. Student Council Sponsors AIDS Awareness Day Activities and Purchases Cows and Goats through Heifer Project International
- D. Hoops for Hope: The World's Largest Basketball Shoot-a-Thon, An Event Designed to Raise Money for Children Orphaned by AIDS in Africa
- E. "I Can Make a Difference, Even if I'm Just a Kid": Fifth-Graders Rally Classmates to Raise Money for AIDS Relief



#### **4. Helping Babies**

- A. Sewing Quilts for Babies in Hospitals
- B. Shaken Baby Syndrome
- C. Baby Food Drive for Food Bank

#### **5. Helping Senior Citizens**

- A. Hosting a Dance for Nursing Home Residents
- B. Teaching Computer Classes to Senior Citizens
- C. Rummage Sale Fundraiser for Senior Center
- D. Raking Leaves and Washing Windows for Senior Citizens

#### **6. Helping Foster Children**

- A. Children to Children: Providing Duffel Bags for Foster Children
- B. The ABCs of Foster Care: Producing Booklets to Educate a Community about Foster Care

#### **7. Miscellaneous Health-Related Service Projects**

- A. Producing a Video to Educate a Community about Burn Survivors
- B. Yo-Yo Trick Master Raises Money for Surgery for Children with Cleft Lips and Palates
- C. Tennis Tournament to Raise Funds for the American Red Cross
- D. Lemonade Stands and Diabetes-Awareness Flyers to Raise Funds to Purchase and Train Medical Service Dogs
- E. Health Through Humor: Supplying Joke Books for Hospitals and Assisted Living Facilities
- F. Make a Child Smile

### **Responsibility for Environmental Problems**

#### **1. Helping Animals**

- A. Protecting the Habitat of Scrub Jays
- B. Kids for Paws: Selling Animal-Related Merchandise to Raise Money for Animal Welfare

#### **2. Saving Energy**

- A. Replacing a School's Incandescent Bulbs with Fluorescent Bulbs
- B. Pump Em' Up: A Campaign to Keep Tires Inflated to Conserve Energy
- C. A School-Wide Campaign to Save Energy: Turning Off Lights

and Computers, Replacing CFL's with Fluorescent Bulbs,  
Installing Energy Timers on Soda/Juice Machines

### **3. Recycling and Waste Reduction**

- A. Creating Convenient Recycling Drop-Off Sites in a Rural Community
- B. Mentoring to Make a Difference: Helping Other Schools Improve Their Recycling Programs
- C. Teaching Preschoolers about Recycling
- D. Developing a Battery Recycling Program
- E. Educating a Community about Recycling and Waste Management
- F. Educating a Community about Composting
- G. Stenciling Storm Drains and Teaching Younger Children about Recycling

### **4. Planting and Saving Trees**

- A. Kids for a Clean Environment: Planting One Million Trees
- B. Project Oxygen: Involving the Community in Planting Trees
- C. Planting Trees, Developing a Nature Trail, and Advocating for a Recycling Center
- D. International Children's Rainforest: Protecting Rainforests around the World

### **Additional Resource for Environmental Projects**

Global Youth Service Day Projects-2008

<http://tools.ysa.org/map/gysdlist.shtml>

## Responsibility for Health-Related Problems

### 1. Helping the Make-A-Wish Foundation/Making Wishes Come True

#### A. Working to Fulfill the Wishes of Terminally Ill Children

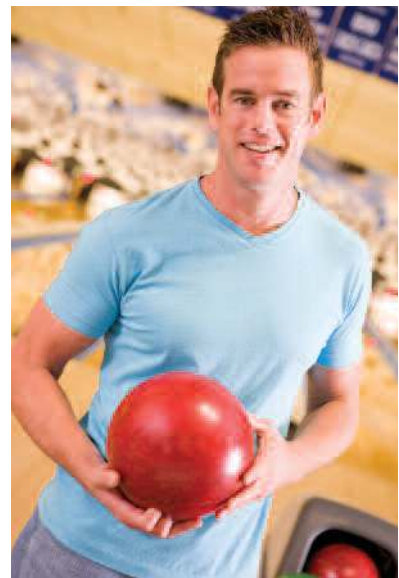
Student council members at Mason (OH) HS contact the nurses at the Pediatric Care Center who work with terminally ill children to obtain wish lists for the kids and their family members. They match each child with a first period class. Class members work together to fulfill the wish list. A student council member is assigned to each first period class to help coordinate the efforts and inspire teamwork.

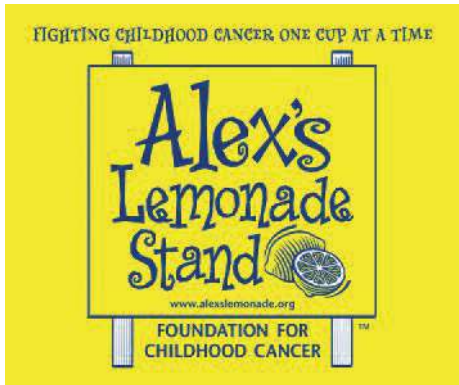
#### B. Starting a Make-a-Wish Club in School and Fundraising by Organizing Raffles, Collecting Sponsorships Door-to-Door, and Selling Awareness Bracelets

Alyssa Goya, 13, of Phoenix, Ariz., an eighth-grader at Mountain Trail Middle School in Scottsdale, has organized a variety of fundraising activities over the past five years that have collected more than \$30,000 to help the Make-A-Wish Foundation grant wishes to terminally ill children. Alyssa also started a Make-A-Wish club at her school and serves as vice chair of the foundation's "Kids for Wish Kids" program. Through planning events, organizing raffles, collecting sponsorships door-to-door, selling awareness bracelets and leading a team during the Walk for Wishes, she has raised thousands of dollars to help grant kids with life-threatening illnesses their ultimate wishes.

#### C. Bowling for Wishes

Breaking away from their normal tradition of having a spring service project that focused on campus or community beautification, the NHS chapter at Crestwood HS in Dearborn Heights, Mich., planned a fundraising project to help the Michigan Association of Honor Societies (MAHS) charity of the year, the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Members planned a bowling outing for all 115 chapter members. Each member who wanted to attend was asked to raise at least \$10 in pledges and pay a fee to go bowling. If they raised \$25 or more, members could attend the outing and not pay for bowling. The night of the event, 60 members attended the bowling outing and the chapter raised \$1974.





#### **D. Kiss a Card for Make a Wish**

Boys and girls at Pahrump Valley (NV) HS pay \$1 to kiss a card in a unique fundraiser organized by the student council. The cards are put on display and students pay 25 cents to vote on the best kiss. The boy and girl who get the most votes are crowned Mr. and Ms. Irresistible at the Valentine's dance. All proceeds go to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

## **2. Raising Money for Cancer Research and Helping People with Cancer**

#### **A. Selling Lemonade to Raise Funds for Cancer Research: Alex's Lemonade Stand**

[http://www.alexlemonade.org/lemonade\\_stand.php](http://www.alexlemonade.org/lemonade_stand.php)

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation is a unique foundation that has evolved from a young cancer patient's front yard lemonade stand to a nationwide fundraising movement for childhood cancer.

**The Story** In 2000, a 4 year old cancer patient named Alexandra "Alex" Scott announced a seemingly simple idea—she was holding a lemonade stand to raise money to help "her doctors" find a cure for kids with cancer. The idea was put into action by Alex and her older brother, Patrick, when they set up the first "Alex's Lemonade Stand for Childhood Cancer" on their front lawn in July of 2000.

For the next four years, despite her deteriorating health, Alex held an annual lemonade stand to raise money for childhood cancer research. Following her inspirational example, thousands of lemonade stands and other fundraising events have been held across the country by children, schools, businesses, and organizations, all to benefit Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation for childhood cancer. On August 1st, 2004, Alex died peacefully at the age of 8—she had raised over \$1 million for childhood cancer research in her short lifetime.

Alex's spirited determination to raise awareness and money for all childhood cancer while she bravely fought her own deadly battle with cancer has inspired thousands of people, from all walks of life to raise money and give to her cause. Alex's family and supporters are committed to continuing her inspiring legacy through Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a registered 501c3 charity. As of June 2007, Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation has raised over \$18 million for childhood cancer research. The result—Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation has given millions of dollars for childhood cancer research across the country!

## **B. Eighth-Grader Inspired by Alex's Lemonade Stand Raises \$50,000 for Childhood Cancer Research**

After eighth-grader Riley Miller's brother died of leukemia, she heard about Alex's Lemonade Stands and decided that she, too, wanted to provide funds for cancer research.

**The Story** Riley Miller, 14, of Bowling Green, Ky., an eighth-grader at Drakes Creek Middle School, has raised \$50,000 over a three year period for childhood cancer research by organizing a citywide day of lemonade sales. After Riley's little brother lost his battle with leukemia, she "realized how important it is to make a difference in the short time we have here," she said. While visiting her brother in the hospital, Riley had learned about another young cancer patient, Alex Scott, who founded Alex's Lemonade Stands to raise money for pediatric cancer research. "I wished I could do something like that," said Riley. "I really wanted to help these families and children." So Riley decided to host an Alex's Lemonade Stand and asked friends and business owners to help. She received so many offers that she was inspired to put up stands all over town and involve the whole community in her fund-raising project.

Riley set a date for her event, assigned stand locations to volunteers, contacted the news media, made signs and flyers, walked door-to-door to tell people about the sale, and secured supply donations. On Bowling Green's third annual Alex's Lemonade Stand Day last July, Riley managed 200 volunteers and 29 stands, and collected more than \$19,000, to bring her three-year total to \$50,000. "It was a great day," she said. "I have never felt such pride and sense of being as when I am working hard to help others."

## **C. Another Eighth-Grader Inspired by Alex's Lemonade Stands Recruits Hundreds of Volunteers to Run 24 Lemonade Stands to Raise Funds for Pediatric Cancer Research**

Eighth-grader Nicholas Mozer's brother survived neuroblastoma (a form of cancer that occurs in infants and young children). Nicholas decided to raise cancer-research funds to provide other kids with the same "opportunity to live" as his brother.

**The Story** Nicholas Mozer, 13, of Blue Springs, Mo., an eighth-grader at Moreland Ridge Middle School, helped his family raise more than \$175,000 for pediatric cancer research over the past four years by operating lemonade stands throughout the Kansas City area. Nicholas's brother, Jacob, was diagnosed with neuroblastoma as a baby. "Fortunately, he survived, but many other kids don't," said





Nicholas. "I want them to have the same opportunity to live as he did."

Nicholas's family began selling lemonade when they learned about Alex Scott, a young cancer patient who founded a nationwide network called Alex's Lemonade Stands. Each year, Nicholas not only sells and serves lemonade, but assists in recruiting hundreds of volunteers to run the family's 24 lemonade stands over a two-day period. In addition, he created a slide show presentation for the corporate sponsors, maintains a Website, helps publicize the event, and helps out in other ways to make sure everything runs smoothly. "I still remember to this day what it was like getting through my brother's cancer," said Nicholas. "No one should suffer, and that is why I am working to cure this horrible disease."

#### **D. Student Council Hosts Spaghetti Dinner and Auction to Raise Funds for Leukemia/Lymphoma Society**

In an effort to raise money for the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society and a young boy in their community afflicted with leukemia, the student council at Metropolitan Christian HS in Dallas, TX, organized a spaghetti dinner and auction of donated items. Council members contacted local businesses asking for items that could be auctioned off and received donations such as basketball tickets, gift certificates, and restaurant coupons. All items were auctioned at the spaghetti dinner and the proceeds from the evening were \$1,300. As gifts are purchased, they stay in the first period until pick-up day. On pick-up day, student council members wrap and tag all the presents and group them according to families. The last day before holiday break, nurses pick up the gifts for delivery. In January, the nurses bring a photo collage of some of the recipients with their gifts with a thank-you card.

#### **E. Selling Luminaries and Writing Books to Raise Funds for Cancer Research**

Thirteen-year old cancer survivor Gabrielle Thompson raised funds for cancer research by selling luminaries and wrote a book about coping with childhood cancer to give hope to other young cancer patients.

**The Story** Gabrielle Thompson, 13, of Buffalo, MN, a seventh-grader at Buffalo Community Middle School, raised \$5,000 for cancer research by selling luminaries at her school and has written a book about coping with childhood cancer. "How did I become involved?"



asked Gabrielle. "Cancer involved me." When she was 4 years old, doctors operated to remove a malignant tumor from her abdomen. After she recovered, she said, "I wanted to do all that I could to help raise awareness of cancer."

So she devised a plan to sell luminaries at her school to honor cancer patients, to raise money for research, and to draw attention to Buffalo's Relay for Life fund-raising event. She also began writing "The ABCs of Childhood Cancer," which takes readers through the alphabet to explain the various experiences a cancer patient can expect, such as "crying" for the letter C. "The most memorable part of this has been seeing the smiles and the glimmer in the eyes of cancer patients when they tell me I have given them hope to keep going, or the look on parents' faces when they say they have more hope that their child will make it."

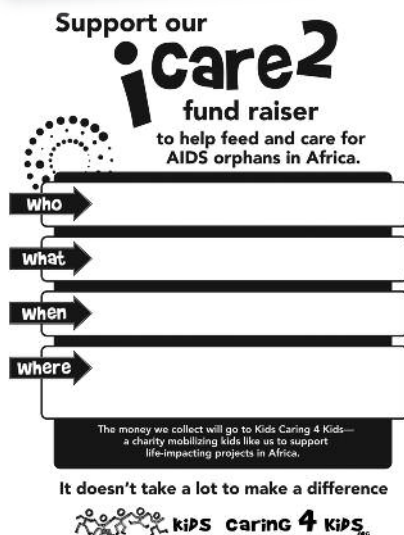
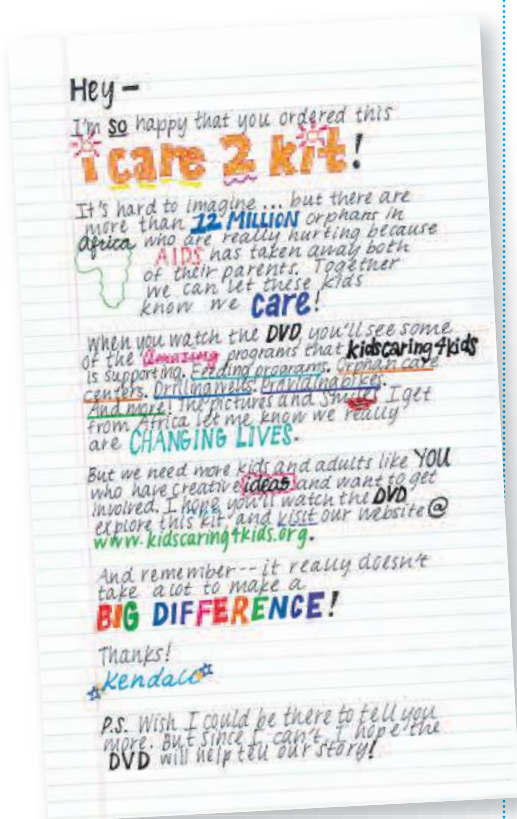
#### **F. Delivering Teddy Bears to Young Cancer Patients**

Thirteen-year old cancer survivor Bria Brown gives teddy bear to kids in the hospital to bring them "joy and hope."

**The Story** Bria Brown, 13, of Miami Gardens, Fla., an eighth-grader at North Dade Middle School and a five-year cancer survivor, gives other young cancer patients hope and encouragement by delivering teddy bears to them in the hospital and at their homes. Bria was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer when she was 6. After her disease went into remission, she wanted to honor the memories of 17 fellow cancer patients she had met in the hospital who did not survive. She began volunteering for the American Cancer Society as honorary chair of the local Relay for Life fund-raiser and as an advocate for cancer research. But she wanted to do more.

Recalling that many people had given her teddy bears while she was in the hospital, Bria began giving her bears to other children stricken with cancer. Then she recruited friends, classmates, and her Girl Scout troop to help her conduct a teddy bear drive in her community. Before she delivers her bears, she finds out a little about the recipients and then personalizes the bears for them. "The best part is that I get to spend time with each child after I deliver the bear," said Bria. "This project is important because I have the ability to bring joy and hope to kids with cancer. My involvement will continue until there is a cure or until I leave this earth."





### G. Hats for Cancer Patients: The Heavenly Hats Foundation

<http://www.heavenlyhats.com/>

The Heavenly Hats Foundation collects and distributes brand new hats of all kinds to those heroes of all ages who lose their hair due to the treatment of cancer or the many other medical conditions which may cause hair loss. The Heavenly Hats Foundation was founded by Anthony Leanna in 2001 when he was 10 years old. Heavenly Hats has distributed more than 302,000 brand-new hats to hundreds of hospitals and clinics around the United States. They also send hats to many other countries upon request. Their goal is to help every patient who is in need of headwear for warmth, comfort, courage and strength.

## 3. Helping People with HIV/AIDS

### A. Kids Caring 4 Kids: Selling T-Shirts to Raise Funds for AIDS Orphans in Africa

<http://www.kidscaring4kids.org/>

Kids Caring 4 Kids is a nonprofit organization founded by eighth-grader Kendall Ciesemier to benefit AIDS orphans in Africa.

**The Story** Kendall Ciesemier, 14, of Wheaton, Ill., an eighth-grader at Franklin Middle School, formed a nonprofit organization that has raised \$80,000 since 2004 to benefit AIDS orphans in Africa.

Kendall, who has faced her own struggles as she underwent two liver transplants, was inspired to volunteer by watching an Oprah Winfrey TV special about the African AIDS epidemic. What she saw stunned her. "Some of the children were living alone, taking care of younger siblings," she said. "Kids my age were taking the place of their parents because their parents had died of AIDS. I knew I needed to do something."

Initially, Kendall used her own money to "adopt" an AIDS orphan through World Vision, but then she started to think bigger. While recovering from one of her operations, she asked for cash donations for AIDS orphans in lieu of gifts or flowers. Soon after, she and her family established "Kids Caring 4 Kids," an ongoing effort to raise money for AIDS orphans in Africa through a variety of projects, including a website that accepts donations and the sale of T-shirts that Kendall helped design. Kendall's charity has provided food, medical care, and education to villages in Zambia and Kenya. She

also speaks frequently to community groups about the AIDS epidemic in Africa and reaches out to other young people to make them aware of the crisis. "I want people to see how small a contribution it takes to make a difference," said Kendall.

**B. "12 Hours for 12 K" Wake-A-Thon: Student Council Fundraising to Help Children with HIV/AIDS in Africa**

Students attending a secondary school in Ontario Canada get pledges and spend the night participating in a variety of activities to raise money to help children who are suffering from HIV/AIDS in Africa.

**The Story** The student body of Stephen Lewis Secondary School (Ontario) was on a mission to help children who are suffering from HIV/AIDS in Africa, through an event organized by Student Activity Council and our Athletic Association Council. Our staff and students planned to raise over \$12,000 for the Foundation by participating in a 12 hour event starting at 7 pm and ending 7 am the next morning. Students were expected to stay awake for 12 continuous hours and participate in a variety of activities through out the night such as basketball, dodgeball and volleyball all night, sang karaoke at 2 a.m., made ice cream sundaes at 3 a.m. played video games at 4 a.m., watched movies, created sculptures, played guitar and many others. Students collected a minimum of \$75 in order to participate in the activities. This is an annual event at our school and so far we have been able to raise over \$10,000 each time.

**C. Student Council Sponsors AIDS Awareness Day Activities and Purchases Cows and Goats through Heifer Project International**

[www.heifer.org/](http://www.heifer.org/)

Heifer International's mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth. Heifer does this by providing appropriate livestock, training and related services to small-scale farmers and communities worldwide.

**The Story** For World AIDS Awareness Day in December, the student council at Sunrise Middle School in Clackamas, OR, sponsored a project with many different aspects. Council members researched the AIDS epidemic, especially as it related to African countries, then created information packets and gave them to Language Arts teachers for distribution with their students. Council





Hoops for Hope's Austin and Samuel.

members asked the Language Arts teachers to have their students write letters to their representative in Congress to encourage them to support AIDS funding. Morning announcements also featured AIDS awareness information.

"Our goal was two-fold: to increase awareness of the situation and to raise money for African villages," says Jennifer Leonard, student council adviser. "We wanted to raise enough money to purchase one heifer through the Heifer Project International. We ended up purchasing two cows and four goats!"

A highlight of the project and the key fundraising element was a Fun Run in PE classes on World AIDS Awareness Day. Students were asked to bring in at least \$1. When students turned in their dollar, they received a raffle ticket (one for each dollar). This raffle ticket was then brought to lunch the following day and students were able to guess the weight of a real, live heifer that was tied to a tree outside the commons. Students with raffle tickets then guessed the weight, and the three closest won prizes: MOOOOvie tickets, Milk Duds, and MOOOOusic gift certificates. Ten random winners also won smaller prizes.

"This was a hit—we had kids who brought \$50 and \$100 donations of their own money! It was fun, and yet students became aware of a serious situation and we motivated them to help!" says Leonard.

#### **D. Hoops for Hope: The World's Largest Basketball Shoot-a-Thon, An Event Designed to Raise Money for Children Orphaned by AIDS in Africa**

*www.hoopsofhope.org*

Hoops of Hope is a nonprofit organization founded by ten-year-old Austin Gutwein to provide care and hope to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS by encouraging people of all ages to participate and raise funds through annual free throw shooting marathons. Hoops of Hope is the biggest basketball shoot-a-thon in the world, much like a walk-a-thon, but more fun!

**The Story** Austin Gutwein founded Hoops of Hope, an annual basketball shoot-a-thon in which kids around the world have raised over \$130,000 to help children in Africa orphaned by AIDS. Austin first learned of Africa's fifteen million AIDS orphans through his family's sponsorship of two Ugandan children. Determined to do his part to help, Austin spoke with the relief organization World Vision, and realized he could use his love of basketball to help address the

problem. He decided to shoot free throws and ask people to sponsor him with donations. That first year, at the age of 10, Austin shot 2,057 free throws to benefit the 2,057 children that would be orphaned by AIDS during his school day. Every shot that went up represented a child. Austin raised \$3,000 that day, and realized that by involving more kids, he could make an even bigger difference. He went out and recruited 1,000 kids to each shoot 1,000 free throws, and Hoops of Hope was born. With the help of World Vision, Austin created a web site to encourage even more kids to get involved. Every December 1, on World AIDS day, thousands of kids across the U.S., Europe, and Australia shoot free throws to help Austin's cause.

In 2007, Hoops of Hope participants raised over \$200,000. This went to build a medical testing lab and voluntary counseling center in Sinazongwe, Zambia. They were also able to provide the lab with 1,000 care giver kits.

"You don't have to wait to be an adult to make a difference," says Austin. "Just pick your passion and do something!"

#### **E. "I Can Make a Difference, Even if I'm Just a Kid":**

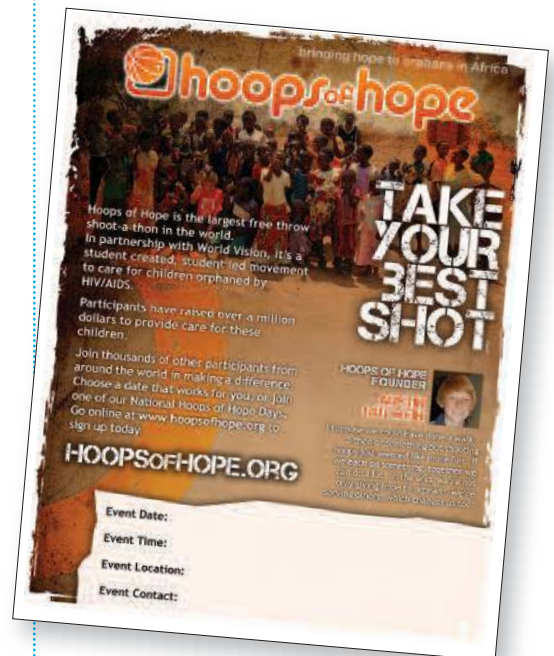
##### **Fifth-Graders Rally Classmates to Raise Money for AIDS Relief**

Carly Meisel may not know everything about AIDS, but the 11-year-old knows enough to want to do something about it. So Carly and her Memorial-Spaulding Elementary School (Newton, MA) classmates spent four hours in the school gym, shooting free throw after free throw. Each basket got them closer to their goal: raising \$2,057 to help pay for a new hospital in Zambia.

For Carly and three classmates, the fundraiser followed three months of letter writing, lobbying and lunchtime meetings with principal, Donette Wood-Wilson, who gave the go-ahead after the four students came to her last December with a PowerPoint presentation outlining their plan.

"I was very impressed with the work that they'd done," said Wood-Wilson. "They're very tenacious."

As soon as Carly read about Austin Gutwein's Hoops for Hope story, she was inspired. "I was like, 'Wait, I can make a difference, even if I'm just a kid,'" she said.







## 4. Helping Babies

### A. Sewing Quilts for Babies in Hospitals

Shelbi Weeks, 13, of Cambridge, Iowa, an eighth-grader at Ballard Junior High School and a member of the ISU Story County 4-H in Nevada, Iowa, personally made 23 quilts and donated them to the neonatal intensive care unit at Mercy Hospital in Des Moines to keep tiny newborns warm. To make an even bigger impact on the hospital's need for quilts, Shelbi also led quilting workshops for her 4-H club and local Girl Scout troops.

### B. Shaken Baby Syndrome—Seventh-Graders Educate Community about SBS

When seventh-graders from Portland, ME learned how little people in their community knew about Shaken Baby Syndrome, they launched an intensive education campaign to inform the public.

**The Story** During a Red Cross babysitting course, seventh-grade students in Portland, ME were upset that Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) was not addressed. So when their social studies class was going to engage in a service-learning project, the students decided to focus on educating people about SBS.

The students began by surveying peers to determine how much they already knew about SBS. They were shocked to find out that more than half of their peers knew nothing about SBS. The students then set out to learn everything they could about SBS so that they could educate others, especially potential babysitters. They spoke with local experts on SBS, pediatricians, and the local Red Cross. After researching into the causes and prevention of SBS, the students proposed a new public health policy requiring that SBS education be included in all babysitting courses. The students presented their policy to local decision-makers and the local Red Cross. The local Red Cross was impressed by the students' work and readily adapted its babysitting course to include SBS information.

Knowing there was more to be done to educate people about SBS, the students continued work on their project as eighth graders. With help from the local Red Cross and national SBS experts, the students created an informational brochure about SBS. After securing a grant to print their brochures, the students gave the brochures to local doctors' offices, school nurses' offices and the local Red Cross (so that it could distribute the brochures to potential babysitters and



expectant parents). The students also shared their brochure and SBS information at several state and national conferences.

### **C. Baby Food Drive for Food Bank**

National Honor Society members at West Valley HS in Spokane, WA organized a baby food collection effort to benefit a local food bank. Students signed up for blocks of time over a weekend to stand outside a grocery store and hand out fliers asking shoppers to buy jars of baby food to donate.

## **5. Helping Senior Citizens**

### **A. Hosting a Dance for Nursing Home Residents**

Student council members at Phoenix (NY) HS organize a yearly dress-up affair for senior citizens from nursing homes in their community that includes a buffet and dancing. The seniors are transported by bus to the school where they are greeted by student council members. A highlight of the event is group wheelchair dancing where everyone goes side by side and holds hands. Student council members enjoy the interaction and enjoy getting to learn “new” dances from the seniors.

“Every year our students are deeply touched by the connection made with these very special people,” said Stacey Cook, student council president. “The seniors are just as touched because they realize that these young adults are taking their time to reach out and go back to their time and enjoy their music with them. It’s a small thing that means a lot to both parties,” she said.

### **B. Teaching Computer Classes to Senior Citizens**

Members of Lion’s Quest, a community service group at Evergreen Park (IL) HS teamed up with senior citizens in their community for a six week course in how to use the computer. Each Wednesday the students teach their senior partner such things as how to use a word processor, how to surf the Internet and use e-mail, and even introduce them to playing games on the computer.





### **C. Rummage Sale Fundraiser for Senior Center**

The Charity Challenge at Cudahy (WI) HS made more than \$3,000 last year by collecting items from parents and community members from September through April and holding a huge rummage sale in the spring. Leftovers were donated to the Salvation Army, the local library, a senior citizen center, a local food pantry, and groups that make rugs for charity from old jeans.

### **D. Raking Leaves and Washing Windows for Senior Citizens**

Blackhawk Middle School students in Madison, WI have raked leaves for the elderly in their school neighborhood. Students in various communities have washed windows in senior housing facilities.

## **6. Helping Foster Children**

### **A. Children to Children: Duffel Bags for Foster Children**

<http://www.childrentochildren.org/>

Founded by eight-year-old Makenzie Snyder, Children to Children provides duffel bags and stuff animals for foster children.

**The Story** At the young age of 8, Makenzie Snyder was saddened to learn that most of the 530,000 foster care children living in the United States have only a trash bag for their belongings when they move from home to home. She decided to do something to help bring these children the self-respect and caring they deserved. She founded Children to Children, an all-volunteer program that provides foster children with duffel bags in which to carry their belongings with dignity. In every bag, she also includes a stuffed animal, luggage tag and personalized letter telling them she loves them and urging them never to give up hope.

Since its inception in 1998, Children to Children has donated more than 32,000 duffel bags and stuffed animals to U.S. foster children, and has collected more than \$820,000 in merchandise and cash donations. Snyder holds duffel bag and stuffed animal drives, personally packs and distributes bags, writes and gives motivational speeches, keeps record books, does interviews and meets with social workers - all in her spare time. Because of its success, Children to Children is in the process of branching out to Canada and Indonesia,

with other international locations to follow. Snyder has been featured in Newsweek and was chosen as “Person of the Week” by ABC News in December 2003.

## **B. “ABCs of Foster Care”:**

### **Seventh-Grader Educates Communities about Foster Care**

Seventh-grader Heather Wilder wrote and distributed a series of booklets to help foster children cope with their situations.

**The Story** Heather Wilder, 13, of Las Vegas, Nev., a seventh-grader at Ernest Becker Middle School, wrote a series of 10 booklets to help foster children understand and cope with their situations, based on her own experiences as a foster child. “I remember having lots of questions, fears, anxiety, and uncertainty in my life,” Heather said. “After being adopted, I thought it would be nice to try to ease some of those feelings for other kids who are in foster care.”

With help from her new mother and another former foster child, Heather brainstormed and organized her ideas. She then started writing about the “ABCs” of foster care, why foster children have to move, the roles of social workers and the courts, adoption, and other aspects of foster children’s lives. A grant from the City of Las Vegas helped pay for printing the booklets, and for supplies to make hundreds of cloth book pockets to hold the books and a variety of fun activity materials that Heather and her friend also produced. The booklets were distributed through the state orphanage, a counseling center for foster kids, a children’s mental health hospital, and the Department of Child and Family Services, and have been enthusiastically received. “I am so glad I am not in foster care anymore,” said Heather, “but I am mindful of what it means, and I am more than happy to help another foster child get to the point where they can experience what a childhood should really be like.”



## **7. Miscellaneous Health-Related Service Projects**

### **A. Producing a Video to Educate a Community about Burn Survivors**

Sixth-grader Dara O’Connor was inspired by a friend who had been burned to produce an educational video about burns and treatment for severe burns.

**The Story** Dara O'Connor, 12, of Prairie Village, Kan., a sixth-grader at Belinder Elementary School, helped produce a video to foster understanding about burn survivors, and assisted in setting up a mobile computer lab for kids in the burn unit of a local hospital. Dara was inspired to get involved by a friend who had been burned. "Carolyn and her family wanted to give back to the community that helped them so much after 90 percent of her leg was badly burned," said Dara. "No person deserves to be treated differently for something that isn't their fault."

Dara and two friends contacted officials at Children's Mercy Hospital to determine how they could help its burn unit. Their first project was a letter-writing campaign to raise money for an educational video that teaches students about burns and what burn survivors go through during treatment. Next, the group persuaded local business leaders to donate lap-top computers for the burn unit, so that young patients can keep up with their school work. "I've learned to feel grateful for what I have and what I don't," Dara said.



Daniel Dietz "yo-yo trick master" raises money for The Smile Train

## **B. Yo-Yo Trick Master Raises Money for Surgery for Children with Cleft Lips and Palates**

<http://www.smiletrain.org/site/PageServer>

The Smile Train provides free cleft surgery for millions of poor children in developing countries and free cleft-related training for doctors and medical professionals.

**The Story** Daniel Dietz, 14, of Florence, Mass., an eighth-grader at Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School in Haydenville, performs as a "yo-yo trick master" to raise more money so that poor children around the world can get free life-changing surgery to correct their cleft lips and palates. Daniel has performed his yo-yo tricks at colleges, concerts, street fairs, nursing homes, and other locations and donated all of his tips to The Smile Train, an international organization specializing in cleft surgery.

As of January 1, 2007, Daniel had raised more than \$10,000.00 for The Smile Train. He spends over 8 hours a week yo-yoing, calling places to ask if he can yo-yo, writing letters to ask for donations and writing thank you notes. His goal is to continue to raise more money because there are so many waiting children all over the world who need this surgery and cannot afford it.

<http://www.danyoyo4u.com/>

### C. Tennis Tournament to Raise Funds for the American Red Cross

To publicize their doubles tennis tournament to raise money for the American Red Cross, student council members at Wethersfield (CT) HS advertised at all of the tennis courts at schools and tennis centers in nearby towns. A \$10 entry fee was charged for each double entering the tournament. Registrations in advance were preferred but they also accepted competitors the day of the event.

### D. Lemonade Stands and Diabetes-Awareness Flyers to Raise Funds to Purchase and Train Medical Service Dogs

Seventh-grader Mark Rinkel sold lemonade and solicited Internet donations to purchase and train medical dogs for children who have Type 1 Diabetes.

**The Story** Mark Rinkel, 12, of Aurora, Colo., a seventh-grader at Challenge School in Denver, raised more than \$16,000 through lemonade sales and Internet solicitations to purchase and train medical service dogs for his little brother and other children who have Type 1 Diabetes. When Mark's brother, Jason, was diagnosed with diabetes, their mother applied for a "diabetic alert dog" from an organization that trains dogs to detect abnormal blood sugar levels in diabetics. "When Jason was approved for a service dog," said Mark, "I wanted to help him get the dog, and take the burden off my mom, by raising the \$6,000 toward the cost of training a dog."

Mark designed and built a unique lemonade stand, researched lemonade recipes, and recruited friends and community members to help him sell fresh-squeezed lemonade (along with a sugar-free option) and distribute diabetes-awareness flyers at community events last summer, often in 100-degree heat. Mark also spent many hours constructing a Website to spread the word about diabetes and solicit donations. He raised enough money not only to train Jason's dog, but to provide dogs for other young diabetics as well. "I've had hundreds of emails from people who are struggling with the devastating effects of diabetes, who now know that a diabetic alert dog could save their lives," said Mark. "I once felt very helpless. By volunteering, I stopped feeling helpless."





### **E. Health through Humor: Supplying Joke Books for Hospitals and Assisted Living Facilities**

Connor Dantzler, 14, of Damascus, Md., an eighth-grader at John T. Baker Middle School, has distributed 5,000 joke books to patients and their families and caregivers at hospitals and care centers throughout Maryland as part of his "Health Through Humor" program. "I thought that if I could bring a smile to a sick or injured person, even if for just a while, then that brief distraction from their condition could be helpful to their recovery," said Connor. "I've always enjoyed reading joke books, and thought that others might like them too."

Connor contacts the public relations staff at hospitals and assisted-living facilities to explain his program and schedule his visits. When his parents drive him on his excursions after school and on weekends, he not only delivers his joke books, but visits with patients to read the jokes and share some laughter. "I've shared a smile and a positive moment with a lot of people," said Connor. "I hope that these efforts have made a difference to those who really needed something to laugh about."

### **F. Make a Child Smile Organization**

[www.makeachildsmile.org](http://www.makeachildsmile.org)

The mission of Make a Child Smile is to provide emotional and financial support to families whose children suffer from chronic or life-threatening illnesses and also give those who visit the MACS website the opportunity to participate by sending mail to the children.

**The Story** Founded in May of 1998, by Alexandra Bakker, the Make A Child Smile Organization, also known as MACS, has been a source of support to children with chronic or life-threatening illnesses and their families. Emotional support is provided by creating the opportunity for people to visit the MACS website and learn about the children and their illnesses.

Each month, new children are featured. A picture and biography describing the child and information about their family is published on the website. Hundreds of net surfers, schools, service organizations, girls/boys scouts and church groups use the MACS website as a philanthropic project where they can send cards, letters and small gifts to the featured children and their siblings through postal mail.



# Responsibility for Environmental Problems

## 1. Helping Animals

### A. Protecting the Habitat of Scrub Jays

Pelican Island Elementary School students in Florida made dozens of presentations to the School Board, the Indian River County Commission, their U.S. Representative, and the Secretary of the U.S. Interior Department to protect the habitat of the scrub jay, an endangered species. Ultimately, the Eco-Troop received a matching grant of more than \$200,000 from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to purchase undeveloped lots from private landowners for this wildlife sanctuary.

### B. “Kids for Paws”: Eighth-Grader Leads Fundraising Effort for Animal-Welfare Group

Eighth-grader Erica Sloan founded an animal-welfare support group after learning about pets stranded after Hurricane Katrina struck.

**The Story** Erika Sloan, 13, of Simsbury, Conn., an eighth-grader at Henry James Memorial School, formed a youth volunteer organization that raised close to \$10,000 for a variety of animal-welfare groups by selling animal-related merchandise. Erika launched “Kids for Paws” with her sister in 2005 after seeing news reports of stranded pets on the Gulf Coast after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. “Images of animals stranded and people tearfully speaking of pets left behind tore at our hearts, and we knew we had to do something,” said Erika.

They designed a paw-print logo; ordered specially designed bracelets, shirts, magnets, car stickers, and other animal-themed merchandise; and recruited nearly 50 young people to help them sell the items to family and friends and throughout the community. The proceeds have been donated to organizations such as Noah’s Wish, the Connecticut Humane Society, and Animal Friends of Connecticut to pay for food and veterinary bills and to run rescue facilities. Erika’s group also has conducted towel and blanket drives to comfort shelter animals, and sent supplies such as paw protectors, cooling vests, and goggles to U.S. military war dogs serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. “I hope we have helped our community realize how much needs to be done to help our voiceless, less fortunate animal friends,” said Erika.





## 2. Saving Energy

### A. Replacing A School's Incandescent Bulbs with Fluorescent Bulbs

Students at West Branch Middle School in Iowa save the school nearly \$250 a month on electricity by using energy-saving T8 fluorescent light bulbs. Their effort to cut electrical usage in all schools was initially met with resistance by the local school board. The student proposal called for a low-interest loan to pay for more efficient bulbs and changing the light sockets. After four months of persistent lobbying by students, the cautious school board members approved the plan.

### B. Pump Em'Up:

#### A Campaign to Keep Tires Inflated to Conserve Energy

[www.pumpemup.org](http://www.pumpemup.org)

Second-grader Savannah Walters founded Pump 'em Up, a non-profit organization that encourages drivers to conserve gas by properly inflating their tires.

**The Story** Savannah Walters was inspired to start her Pump 'em Up program in the second grade after studying and falling in love with the Arctic and then learning of the push to drill for oil in the Arctic Refuge. She learned that Americans waste four million gallons of gas every day, more than drilling in the Refuge could ever produce just by driving on under-inflated tires. Wondering why people didn't just pump 'em up, Savannah decided to launch a campaign to help people save gas and save the planet.

She created a web site that includes environmental facts, tips on properly inflating tires, gas mileage worksheets, and information to help others host Pump 'em Up events in their communities. Over the past seven years, Savannah has sent more than 10,000 tire gauges to hundreds of school, Scout, and church groups interested in helping her spread her message. She has also lobbied in Washington, spoken to a crowd of 5,000 on the West Lawn of the Capitol, and met with Senators Clinton, Kerry, and McCain, among others. "I've learned that when you really care about something, telling people about it is easy," says Savannah. "Young people have to stand up for what they believe in."



### C. A School-Wide Campaign to Save Energy

Fourth and fifth graders at Hawthorne Elementary School in Madison, WI formed an Energy Club to help the planet and conserve energy.

**The Story** In 2005, 4th and 5th graders at Hawthorne Elementary School in Madison, WI formed an Energy Club to help the planet and save energy. They learned that the school spent more than \$2500 each month just for electricity. They decided their goal would be to save an average of \$200 per month.

The club conducted research in the school and then launched their initiative. They went into each classroom and gave presentations reminding students and teachers to turn off lights and computer screens off when not in use, and not to hold the outside doors open for long in winter since the school would be losing heat. They also went around the school with the custodian and replaced incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs. In addition, they put an energy efficient timer on the Pop/Juice machine so that it would shut off if no one had used it for 30 minutes until the next person used it.

By the end of the school year, they saved \$780 a month compared to the previous year on the school's electricity bill, including more than \$100 just from the one Pop/Juice machine. Kids and teachers got better and better throughout the year about adopting energy saving behaviors. Many parents replaced their compact fluorescent bulbs with fluorescent bulbs at home, too.

## 3. Recycling and Waste Reduction

### A. Creating Convenient Recycling Drop-Off Sites in a Rural Community

A 4-H Club in southwestern Minnesota used a ban on burning refuse and other items imposed because of a drought as an opportunity to start a recycling center.

**The Story** Most residents of Seward Township in southwestern Minnesota had never considered recycling because the closest recycling center was 25 miles away. Instead, they used to burn or bury all of their refuse. Thanks to the work of a local 4-H Club, however (an organization dedicated to community service and education), recycling in this rural part of Minnesota is now a way of





life. It all started in response to a severe drought, which led to a ban on burning. The approximately 60 members (ages 7 to 19) of the Seward Trailblazers 4-H Club had just completed a lesson on recycling taught by Wayne Smith, the Environmental Director for Nobles County. The group decided the ban was a perfect opportunity to use what they had learned to educate their community about recycling.

The Trailblazers started an annual education campaign including mailings and door-to-door visits to each resident of Seward Township. They also informed residents about the six new 96-gallon containers set up by the Trailblazers outside the township hall to serve as a convenient recycling drop-off site. Residents could use the containers, supplied by Nobles County Environmental Services (NCES) to drop off plastic, paper, glass, and corrugated cardboard. NCES would then pick up the recyclables and take them to the Nobles County Recycling Center, located in Worthington, Minnesota. Two additional 55-gallon containers were set up to collect aluminum cans. The Trailblazers planned to use the deposits from these cans to support their activities.

Although the ban was only in place for about 30 days, Seward Township residents immediately began recycling, and now recycle about 340 pounds every 10 days. To keep up with the amount of recyclables collected, the Trailblazers added two more containers and built a new recycling drop-off building with money from the aluminum can deposits. They also plan to offer residents 15-gallon recycling containers for a small fee. The project has been so successful that neighboring townships have expressed an interest in starting similar programs.

## **B. Mentoring To Make a Difference: Helping Other Schools to Improve their Recycling Programs**

After successfully starting their own recycling program, Stonington High School students in Pawcatuck, Connecticut, became mentors to help other schools around them improve their recycling programs.

**The Story** After successfully starting their own recycling program, Stonington High School students in Pawcatuck, Connecticut, became mentors to help other schools around them improve their recycling programs.

Students began by forming an after-school recycling committee to help improve the existing recycling program in their own school.

The committee took charge of recycling white paper and expanded the program to include cans, plastic bottles, colored paper, and light bulbs. The committee also persuaded school officials to start buying recycled paper. The improved recycling program won a state award, inspiring the students to use their program as a model for other schools.

To help other schools improve their recycling programs, students began a mentoring program, which involved making videos of their activities and conducting presentations about recycling and its benefits. Students filmed the tours they took of a recycling plant and a waste-to-energy plant and prepared a video series on special topics such as product life cycles. The students used the videos to develop a presentation about their recycling program, which they shared at school functions at district elementary and middle schools, at a meeting of state school superintendents, and with community officials to help raise recycling awareness.

### **C. Teaching Preschoolers about Recycling**

Fourth graders in Smyrna, Tennessee, work with other children and their parents to increase awareness of recycling and promote participation in the school's recycling program. Smyrna's current recycling program was inspired by a one-year pilot project in which fourth graders taught preschoolers about recycling, set up recycling bins in the preschool classroom, and helped the younger children collect, sort, and count materials. The older students planned lessons on recycling, designed a booklet on how to get others involved in recycling, and taught the preschool students how to make toys and games from recyclable materials.

Following the success of this project, the fourth-grade students started the a recycling program in the school, setting up more bins around the school and counting the total number of recyclables brought in every six weeks. To encourage other students to recycle, the fourth graders award prizes to the grade level that brought in the most recyclables, the top recycler in each class, and the top recycler school wide. By the end of the 2000-2001 school year, Smyrna students had recycled more than 65,000 pieces of trash.

### **D. Developing a Battery Recycling Program**

After learning about the environmental problems associated with household battery disposal, students at Burlington Township High







School in New Jersey developed a battery recycling program for their hometown.

**The Story** After learning about the environmental problems associated with household battery disposal, students at Burlington Township High School in New Jersey developed a battery recycling program for their hometown. Eleventh and twelfth-grade students in Shirley Pires' "Community Issues" class became particularly interested in household battery waste, including how long batteries take to break down and the subsequent chemicals released into the environment. They decided to start a battery recycling program in their school.

First, students collected soda and laundry bottles and converted them into battery collection containers by washing them out, cutting off the tops, and re-labeling them with computer-generated labels. Students distributed these containers, along with flyers explaining their project, to teachers and offices throughout the school. News of the program spread, and teachers from the four other schools within the district asked to become involved. Students also involved parents and community members by developing additional informational materials to send home and distribute in the district. Eventually, children began coming to school with batteries from home to be recycled. Students collected the recycling bins weekly from each school.

At the end of the school year, the local recycling center collected more than 500 pounds of batteries from all the schools combined. The program is continuing and is so popular that relatives and friends from other towns now drop off their batteries at Burlington Township schools. In fact, the recycling center must now pick up more than one load of batteries a year.

### **E. Educating A Community About Recycling and Waste Management**

At a time when few homes and businesses were recycling in Winston, Oregon, the eighth-grade class at Winston Middle School helped make a lasting impact on local businesses' waste management efforts. Students made numerous recycling presentations to the school board and city council to encourage the community to expand its efforts to reduce waste. In addition, they performed 20 waste audits in two years for interested companies, examining trash, weighing recyclable materials, and noting potential waste reduction opportunities. The students then presented their



findings—which included waste loss assessments as well as current and potential costs and savings—to the companies.

The project culminated in a town Earth Day event, complete with booths designed and staffed by students, teachers, and local government entities. Through the project, students formed community connections and taught solid waste concepts, while business owners and employees offered insights on environmental concerns in the corporate world. “Many of the students who excelled in performing waste audits were not strong academic students,” said Terri Peterson, project coordinator. “This project allowed students to recognize their individual talents outside the classroom, in a real-world atmosphere.”

Peterson subsequently helped approximately 50 schools of all age levels conduct internal waste audits to improve their own recycling programs.

#### **F. Educating Community about Composting**

Students in the Earthworks Junior Master Composting Program in Grapevine, Texas took it upon themselves to increase children’s awareness of the positive role they can play in waste reduction at home and at school by composting.

Through their service-learning program, fifth and sixth graders learn about composting and vermicomposting (using worms) in a four-hour course that teaches how to turn leaves, grass, and food scraps into “black gold,” or compost.

The youth participants learn about the history of garbage and landfills, the definition of organic material, and the principles of composting. Participating schools receive a compost bin, thermometer, manual, resource books, and worm bin. After attending the class, each student spends an additional four hours teaching parents and neighbors to compost yard trimmings or working with other students at school composting demonstration sites. To receive their Junior Master Composter certificate, students must commit to teaching at least two others about the fundamentals of composting.

#### **G. Stenciling Storm Drains and Teaching Younger Children about Recycling**

In conjunction with Roseville, MN Middle School’s Science Club and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program of St. Paul, students work



with the young and old in an ongoing project. The students decided to stencil storm drains with warnings to remind residents that dumping hazardous wastes poses a serious threat to wildlife and water quality. After obtaining permits, the students were assisted in the stenciling process by local seniors. In addition, the students created a game to teach younger children about recycling, which they presented to elementary schools and daycare centers.

## 4. Planting and Saving Trees

### A. Kids for a Clean Environment:

#### Planting One Million Trees

[www.kidsface.org](http://www.kidsface.org)

The impetus for the creation of Kids F.A.C.E. was driven by nine-year old Melissa Poe's correspondence to then-President Bush to help clean up the environment. Over 250 billboards with Melissa's letter to the president were placed across the United States in April, 1990. Melissa soon founded kids F.A.C.E. Among their many accomplishments since 1990, Kids F.A.C.E. members have distributed and planted over 1 million trees.

**The Story** Kids For a Clean Environment was started in 1989 in Nashville by Melissa Poe. The first club had six members. Impetus for the creation of Kids F.A.C.E. was driven by Melissa's correspondence to then - President Bush to help clean up the environment. Over 250 billboards with Melissa's letter to the president were placed across the United States in April, 1990.

The first chapter of the club was formed in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 1990 after Melissa's appearance on the TODAY show. After that appearance, the organization started to grow. Today there are more than 2,000 club chapters in fifteen countries and more than 300,000 individual members. The organization is the world's largest youth environmental organization. Membership is free to children and teachers.

Kids F.A.C.E. members have distributed and planted over 1 Million trees. Ongoing tree-planting projects include the creation of Kid's Yards—backyard wildlife habitats and currently Kids F.A.C.E. is involved in the exciting Earth Odyssey.

Kids F.A.C.E. also members created the world's largest environmental flag—measuring 100' x 200'—to symbolize the



concerns youth have about nature and the future world. The Flag was unveiled during the twenty-fifth celebration of Earth Day in Washington, D.C.

#### **B. Project Oxygen: Involving the Community in Planting Trees**

When twelve-year-old Joseph Ziskovsky read that the earth needed billions of trees, he decided to plant thousands in his town. He called his idea "Project Oxygen," and with the help of his Scout troop, he sent letters to all the children in his elementary school in Shoreview, Minnesota. Then they wrote to the adult service organizations in town and talked to the local nursery owner. Joe got more than 3,125 people to help him plant 3,474 trees in a twelve-square-mile area near his hometown. Joe proved that a kid with a lot of determination can accomplish what might at first seem impossible.

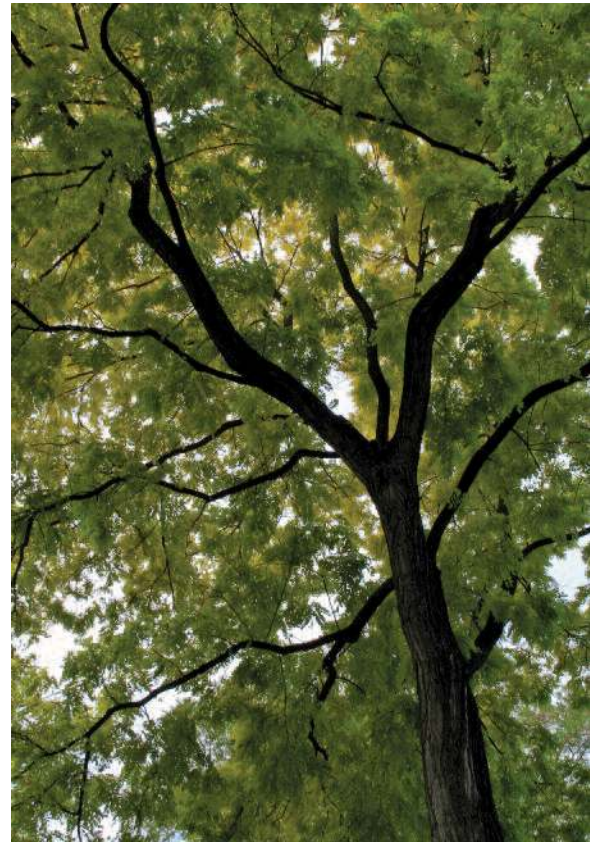
#### **C. Planting Trees, Developing a Nature Trail and Advocating for a Recycling Center**

This Learn and Serve America program involves all 375 middle-school students and their teachers from Booneville, MS Middle School in three environmentally-based service-learning activities each year. During the past seven years, students have developed a nature trail, created an outdoor classroom, and planted thousands of shrubs, flowers, and trees in the community. A classroom study of natural resources and recycling led students to ask why there was no city-sponsored program in Booneville. Student inquiries led to the initiation of a recycling program. Booneville students also played an important role in securing funding for a \$6 million earth systems study and training center that provides satellite access to environmental, weather, and seismic data. The center also offers teacher training in environmental education.

#### **D. International Children's Rainforest: Protecting Rainforests Around the World**

<http://www.tropical-forests.com/who-are-we/>

The Children's Rainforest is a Canadian charity whose mission is to help create bio-reserves in various tropical countries, through land purchases in ecologically rich areas. Funds raised by school-based environment clubs in Sweden, England, Germany, the U.S.A. and Canada, are used to purchase forests and set up educational programs.



**The Story** A forest saved by children... The dream began in 1987 at a small, primary school in rural Sweden. It was the study of tropical forests and the rapidity of their destruction that prompted a teacher and a nine-year-old student to want to do something about it. Soon the children, guided by their teacher, launched a campaign to raise money to purchase threatened rain forest adjacent to the Monteverde preserve in Costa Rica. Within two years their initial 6 hectare purchase grew to 7,258 hectares. As the spirit swept across other lands, more groups formed and individual contributions arrived from the far corners of the globe. Teachers and students from all over the world use the facilities on ecology trips.

In 1994, a second Children's Rainforest was established in Amazonian Ecuador. 'The Jatun Sacha Bioreserve' covers 3000 hectares, and has become an educational centre as well.

### **Additional Resources for Environmental Projects**

#### **Global Youth Service Day Projects- 2008**

<http://tools.ysa.org/gysd>

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is organized by Youth Service America with the Global Youth Action Network as its key partner and a consortium of international organizations and over 120 national coordinating committees in participating countries. GYSD is an annual global event that highlights and celebrates the contributions of youth to their communities through volunteer service. During Global Youth Service Day, youth around the world organize community service projects to address local needs. GYSD is held during a weekend every April.





## Freedom

### No One is Free Unless Everyone Is Free

#### Playing Dead for Freedom

A man kept a bird in a beautiful cage. He was going to visit the bird's homeland and asked, "Do you want me to bring you anything?" The bird replied, "If you see any of my relatives, please tell them that I live with you in a beautiful cage." While traveling, the man saw a bird like his own. "I was asked to tell you that one of your birds lives with me in a beautiful cage," he said. The bird fell on its back, legs in the air. It looked dead. "How sad," the man thought. Back home, he told his bird what had happened. Immediately, his bird fell on its back, legs in the air. "The news must have killed him." The man put the bird's body on the open window sill. At once, the bird flew off, crying, "I knew my relatives would find a way to help me free myself."

#### Freedom: The Challenge

How can we instill in middle school students the notion that none of us are free unless all of us are free?

What is freedom? What freedoms have socially active youth fought for?

Americans expect to have freedom around us just as we expect to have air to breathe.

Our democracy is based upon the protection of freedom. The Bill of Rights protects the freedoms of speech, press, and religion; the right to keep and bear arms; the freedom of assembly; the freedom to petition; and prohibits unreasonable search and seizure; cruel and unusual punishment; and compelled self-incrimination. The Bill of Rights also prohibits the Federal Government from depriving any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.

By law, we are guaranteed "freedom to" do things such as express our opinions and "freedom from" experiencing things such as unjust treatment from our government. The challenge to democracy is how to preserve freedom of choice and simultaneously agree on the limitations (i.e. rules and laws) necessary for a free society. The clash between freedom and limits is one of the persistent dilemmas of democracy.

Socially active youth have repeatedly taken up the cause of the fight for freedom. Time and time again they have worked around the world to ensure fundamental freedoms. Some of the campaigns



For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

NELSON MANDELA

Freedom is never more than  
one generation away from  
extinction. We didn't pass it  
to our children in the  
bloodstream. It must be fought  
for, protected, and handed on  
for them to do the same.

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

championed by youth include: freedom to receive an education, freedom to have clean water, freedom from abuse, freedom from slavery and freedom from hunger and poverty.

By enlisting your student council in a service project, they too can join their peers throughout the world in their commitment to guarantee that people everywhere have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The following stories of service projects presented in this chapter represent the admirable response of many of today's youth when they chanced upon some of "the faces of the poorest, most vulnerable human beings" whom Gandhi encouraged us all to assist.



## Freedom: List of Youth Campaigns

### 1. Freedom to Receive an Education

- A. Free the Children: Building Schools Around the World and Much More
- B. Hope Street Youth Development: Creating Safer Schools
- C. Girls Learn International: Providing Access to Education Around the World
- D. Girls Helping Girls: Providing Book, School Supplies and Scholarships to Support Girls' Education Overseas
- E. Chestnut Hill Middle School (Liverpool, NY): Collecting Books for the Courthouse
- F. Seventh-Graders in Omaha Nebraska: Donating Books to Homeless Shelters
- G. Malcolm Shabazz City High School in Madison, Wisconsin: Writing and Illustrating Books for Younger Children
- H. Odyssey Project: Creating Libraries in Chinese Orphanages
- I. Helping Orphans Pursue Education (HOPE): Bake Sales, Recycling Soda Cans, and More to Help Orphanages in Sudan and India
- J. Bicycling for a School Foundation
- K. Repeat After Us: Helping Second Language Learners with English Pronunciation:

### 2. Freedom to Have Clean Water

- A. Ryan's Well Foundation: Raising Funds to Provide Clean Water and Sanitation Services Around the World
- B. RandomKid: Selling Bottled Water to Provide Clean Water
- C. "A Drop in the Bucket": Raising Funds By Selling Woven Bracelets and Chances to Win Prizes to Build Dams in Kenya and Help Other Clean Water Projects

### 3. Freedom from Abuse

- A. Frightful Halloween Photo Fundraising for Women's and Children's Shelter
- B. Sewing Personal Care Bags for Women at Shelters
- C. Collecting Blankets and Toiletries for Domestic Abuse Shelter

### 4. Freedom from Slavery

- A. Rescuing Child Slaves in Ghana by Fundraising through Festivals, Business Dinners, Selling Cookies and T-Shirts, and More
- B. Benefit Concert to End Slavery

All the great things are simple,  
and many can be expressed in a  
single word: freedom, justice,  
honor, duty, mercy, hope.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

## **5. Freedom from Hunger and Poverty**

- A. Canned Food Sculpture Contest to Provide Food for Food Bank
- B. Stuff-a-Bus to Meet a Community's Emergency Supplies Needs
- C. Gardening to Aid a Food Pantry
- D. Walking for Warmth: Fundraiser for Fuel Bank
- E. Adopt a Family: Fundraising to Help Needy Families During the Holidays
- F. Camping in Boxes: Fundraising for a Homeless Shelter
- G. Building Bikes for Shelters
- H. Distributing Food, Blankets, and Clothing to the Homeless
- I. Sewing Clothing for Homeless Children
- J. Hannah's Socks: Providing Socks for the Homeless

### **Additional Resources: Organizations Helping Children Around the World**

- A. Childline: Toll-free Helpline for Street Children in Mumbai, India  
<http://www.childlineindia.org.in/>
- B. FreeRice.com: Online Game to Help the World Food Program  
[www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com)
- C. World Vision Canada: Gift Catalogue to Purchase Farm Animals for Families in Underdeveloped Countries  
<http://www2.worldvision.ca/gifts/app>
- D. Project Ideas for Global Youth Service Day from Youth Service America  
<http://ysa.org/GYSDUS/ProjectIdeas/tabid/182/Default.aspx>
- E. Free the Slaves: Organization that Works to Free Slaves around the World [www.freetheslaves.net](http://www.freetheslaves.net)
- F. Pennies for Peace: Providing Educational Opportunities to Children in Pakistan and Afghanistan  
<http://www.penniesforpeace.org/home.html>
- G. Central Asia Institute: Providing Community-based Education in Asia  
<http://www.ikat.org/>
- H. Room to Read: Establishing Libraries and Building Schools around the World  
[www.roomtoread.org/](http://www.roomtoread.org/)
- I. The Pajama Program: Providing Pajamas and Books to Children in Need  
[www.pajamaprogram.org](http://www.pajamaprogram.org)

## 1. Freedom To Receive an Education

### A. Free the Children:

#### **Building Schools Around the World and Much More**

*[www.freethechildren.org](http://www.freethechildren.org)*

Free the Children (FTC) is the world's largest network of children helping children through education, with more than one million youth involved in innovative education and development programs in 45 countries.

**The Story** "Many adults don't think of youth as having a role to play in issues of social justice, assuming that we have little to contribute. I have learned, however, that with determination, young people can make their voices heard. I see no reason why today's youth cannot be today's leaders." Craig Kielburger

In 1995, when he was 12 years old, Craig Kielburger was searching for the comics in the local paper, when a front-page article caught his attention. He read about a young boy his own age from Pakistan who was sold into bondage as a carpet weaver, escaped and was murdered for speaking out against child labor. He gathered a group of friends and founded the organization Free the Children (FTC). Using his family's den as his headquarters, Kielburger and his 50 friends started to work for the protection of children's rights by writing letters to political leaders and circulating petitions. Kielburger, now in his 20's, has traveled to more than 40 countries visiting street and working children and speaking out in defense of children's rights.

Through FTC, young people have raised funds for the construction of more than 400 primary schools in the rural areas of developing nations, providing education to over 35,000 children every day. In addition, young people have distributed more than 200,000 school and health kits, and in excess of \$8 million worth of medical supplies to needy children and their families. Most importantly, Kielburger and FTC have worked to empower hundreds of thousands of children and young people to become agents of positive social change in their schools and communities. In 1999, Kielburger co-founded Leaders Today ([www.leaderstoday.com](http://www.leaderstoday.com)), which empowers young people around the world to be active global citizens. He recently authored and published a book called *Me to We: Turning Self-Help On Its Head*.

Freedom is nothing else  
but a chance to be better.

ALBERT CAMUS, PHILOSOPHER

When asked how a person should know whether the next act s/he does is the right one or the wrong one, Mahatma Gandhi said, “Consider the face of the poorest, most vulnerable human being that you ever chanced upon and ask your self if the act you contemplate will be of benefit to that person. If it will be, then it’s the right thing to do. If not, rethink it.”

**B. Hope Street Youth Development:  
Creating Safer Schools**

<http://hopestreet.com/index.htm>

Across the country there is a growing movement being led by students who are working with adults from their communities and schools to contribute to school improvement by calling for social, economic, racial, and environmental justice in schools. Through a variety of campaigns, students with the Hope Street Youth Organizing program have worked to find alternatives to suspensions, end zero-tolerance policies, and implement Black history education. They have also worked with their local district to create a new teacher-training model and student satisfaction survey.

**C. Girls Learn International (GLI):  
Providing Access to Education Around the World**

[www.girlslearninternational.org](http://www.girlslearninternational.org)

Girls Learn International aids is an organization that promotes universal education for female children, involves American students, spreads awareness of human rights among middle and high school students, and develops stronger cross-cultural communication and understanding worldwide. To date, there are over forty GLI chapters throughout the U.S. which each support and correspond to one partner classroom in an area of the world where girls have been denied access to education in the past.

**The Story.** In eighth grade, Jordana Alter Confinio decided to do something about her passion for providing the opportunity of education to girls around the world. As a young girl herself, she was staggered to find that two-thirds of the world’s uneducated children were girls. In 2003, she responded by collaborating with her mother and sister to form Girls Learn International, Inc.

Jordana currently directs activities for the Westfield High School in Westfield, New Jersey which has raised \$3,000 to provide the Muktar Mai school in Meerwala, Pakistan with computer and internet access. In addition to her local GLI chapter, she chairs the Junior Board for the organization nationwide. She is an effective orator on the subject of difficult issues facing girls around the world, having inspired schools around the U.S. to join GLI by spreading awareness through magazine and newspaper articles as well as television spots including ABC and NBC Morning News, and personal speaking events including the annual GLI Chapter Summit.

**D. Girls Helping Girls: Providing Books, School Supplies and Scholarships to Support Girls' Education Overseas**

[www.empoweragirl.org/pages/page.php?pageid=1](http://www.empoweragirl.org/pages/page.php?pageid=1)

Girls Helping Girls provides books, school supplies and scholarships to support the education of girls in other countries. They are helping to build a library in India. It is a unique sister-school program for middle and high school girls that partners girls in the United States with girls in developing countries around the world to dialogue and act toward the achievement of four principles that reflect the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals: Eradicating Poverty, Increasing Access to Education, Improving Health, and Promoting Peace. Started in 2007, they have been providing help in 10 countries in Asia and Africa.

**E. Chestnut Hill Middle School:  
Collecting Books for the Courthouse**

[http://www.actsofkindness.org/people/whats\\_new/news\\_detail.asp?id=139](http://www.actsofkindness.org/people/whats_new/news_detail.asp?id=139)

The Chestnut Hill Middle School Council of Liverpool, New York and the students in their homerooms enthusiastically celebrated Random Acts of Kindness Week by collecting books for the local courthouse. The books are sent home with children who are seen at the local courthouse.

**F. Seventh-Graders in Omaha Nebraska:  
Donating Books to Homeless Shelters**

Seventh-graders in Omaha, Nebraska coordinated a book drive that resulted in many books being donated to homeless shelters and the local literacy council. They also organized a literacy-mentoring program at the local elementary school and developed a series of books on tape for distribution to elementary schools, a children's hospital, and homeless shelters

**The Story** Seventh-grade students in Omaha, Nebraska decided to work on the problem of illiteracy. First, students invited experts on reading to their classroom. A reporter from a local newspaper talked about the link between literacy and information. A state senator answered questions about how government was addressing literacy. As a result of their research, the students organized the book drive, literacy mentoring program and made books on tape.





#### **G. Malcolm Shabazz City High School:**

##### **Writing and Illustrating Books for Younger Children**

To encourage literacy among young children, English and Art students From Malcolm Shabazz City High School in Madison, WI collaborated to create individualized books for approximately 50 students in K-1 classes.

#### **H. Odyssey Project: Creating Libraries in Chinese Orphanages**

One eighth-grade student from Houston Texas raised more than \$22,000 to create libraries at four orphanages in the region of China where she was born. She called the project the Odyssey Project because she saw it as a journey that connected her to her past.

**The Story** Anna DeSanctis was adopted as a toddler from China. At age 13 and in middle school, Anna learned that most orphanages in China had no libraries for children. "I felt bad that the orphans in China didn't have books to tell them about the world," she said. Anna set out to raise \$2,000 for a library at one orphanage.

First, she asked for cash donations instead of birthday presents from friends and family. She then hosted a school dance, asked her grandparents to encourage friends to make donations, sold her computer and video games, and contributed her allowance for a year. In 18 months, Anna raised more than \$22,000, which she sent to two Chinese social welfare organizations to build and stock libraries at four orphanages. There was even enough left over to construct water wells in two remote villages. Anna traveled to China last year to dedicate two of the new libraries. "I realized that if I was still in China, I might not have gone to school nor had a family," she said. "People these days don't realize how fortunate they are, but now I do."

#### **I. Helping Orphans Pursue Education (HOPE): Bake Sales, Recycling Soda Cans, and More to Help Orphanages in Sudan and India**

<http://www.turnyourworldaround.org/>

Turn Your World Around is an organization dedicated to raising funds for orphanages in India and Sudan. Over \$20,000 has been raised through traditional bake sales and recycling soda cans. The money has gone to building a dormitory in an orphanage in Chennai, India, for uniforms for children at another orphanage and for other things to help the orphanages. Their website is called "Turn Your World Around," which is a social change hub for youth, where they



can take their passions and their ideas for how to make a difference and turn those passions into actions.

**The Story** When she was 13 years old, Tara Suri from Scarsdale, New York visited India. She is of Indian heritage and was shocked to see the poverty in India. She said, “It was kind of a shell shock. Suddenly you realize that there is all this poverty around you. I noticed there was some gender discrimination in India in terms of media perceptions and in terms of gender roles and stereotypes. I didn’t want to just do something to help girls, though, because I realized that would just be reverse gender discrimination. I wanted to help all children be able to succeed.” She came home and started an organization called H.O.P.E (Helping Orphans Pursue Education) to raise money for and awareness about orphanages in India and Sudan.

#### **J. Bicycling for a School Foundation**

One high school student decided to bike over 3,000 miles to raise money for his school’s foundation which provides funds to support creative and innovative projects to enhance the education of the school’s students.

**The Story** Luke Gibson sent this letter to his friends and family.

“PLEASE SUPPORT MY RIDE FOR JMM WITH A GENEROUS TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION. I am biking from the Atlantic to the Pacific —across the plains, over the Rockies, past the Grand Canyon and through the deserts—to earn money for Memorial’s Endowment Fund. 3,000+ miles, carrying all that I need, camping along the way – no sag wagon. EVERY PENNY OF YOUR DONATION GOES TO JMM’S ENDOWMENT AND IS MATCHED UP TO \$5,000 BY A CHALLENGE GRANT.

Thanks, Luke Gibson”

#### **K. Repeat After Us: Helping Second Language Learners with English Pronunciation**

[www.repeatafterus.com](http://www.repeatafterus.com)

Repeat After Us helps second language learners with English Pronunciation. The website was started by a high school student to help learn English. It is a global resource used throughout the world.

**The Story** During her sophomore year at Harvard-Westlake High School in Los Angeles, CA, Ellie Wen was moved by an experience she had while volunteering at Las Familias del Pueblo, a community center in downtown Los Angeles. Ellie observed individuals struggling

Freedom is not the right  
to do what we want,  
but what we ought.

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

with pronunciation in an English as a Second Language class. She thought if these people were having difficulty learning English, then surely others around the world must be having similar difficulties. Inspired to help English as a Second Language learners, she decided to build a Web site that would provide free texts and audio clips to assist students around the world with their language skills.

## 2. Freedom to Have Clean Water

### A. Ryan's Well Foundation: Raising Funds to Provide Clean Water and Sanitation Services around the World

<http://www.ryanswell.ca/>

Ryan's Well Foundation helps to raise funds to provide clean water and sanitation services around the world. It was founded by a first-grader.

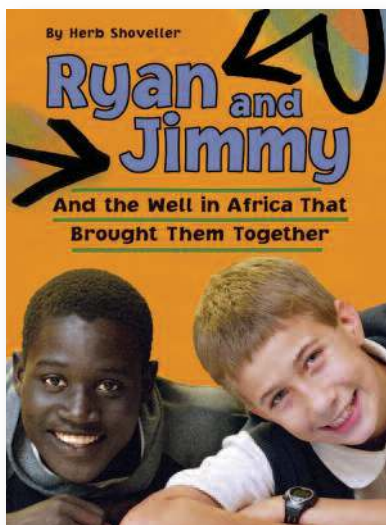
**The Story** In 1998 first-grader Ryan Hreljac learned from his teacher that people were dying because they didn't have clean water to drink. He decided that raising money for people who didn't have clean water would be a good thing. He did assorted chores for four months in order to earn his first \$70. Ryan's first well was built in 1999 at a school in a Ugandan village when he was seven-years old. The well continues to serve thousands of people. Ryan's determination grew from the \$70 collected by doing simple household chores into a Foundation that today has contributed a total of 394 wells in 15 countries bringing clean water and sanitation services to over 547,082 people. The Foundation has raised millions of dollars. As a teen, Ryan continues to raise awareness and funds to bring clean water throughout the world. He has been recognized by UNICEF as a Global Youth Leader.

Ryan said, "I found out where my puzzle piece fits in the world and that is with water. I just hope everyone else finds out where their puzzle piece fits too."

### B. RandomKid: Selling Bottled Water to Provide Clean Water

[www.randomkids.org](http://www.randomkids.org)

RandomKid seeks to educate and motivate young people around the world to work on a broad spectrum of pressing needs. Started in 2005, these are some of the projects that RandomKid has organized: selling key chains to help rebuild the Gulf Coast, raising money to build a school in Cambodia, finding homes for stray pets, and



collecting DVDs for soldiers overseas. The most recent project is to sell their own bottled-water products to help fund clean-water technologies in distressed areas of the world.

**The story** Talia Leman was 13 and a seventh-grader from Des Moines Iowa when she founded an organization called RandomKid. She began by encouraging kids in her area to trick-or-treat for coins instead of candy on Halloween and to donate the money to Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. After her cause was publicized by a Midwest grocery chain, Iowa's governor, and NBC's Today show, kids across the country reportedly raised millions of dollars for Katrina victims.

An adult advisor helped Talia establish a nonprofit organization and a website to solicit support from young people on a wide range of good works. She's also working on setting up a "mini-United Nations" made up of young delegates from around the world who will work together to address global children's issues. Talia said, "If we want a better world, we need to know that the world does belong to us and that we have the power to make it better."

### C. A Drop in the Bucket: Raising Funds by Selling Woven Bracelets and Chances to Win Prizes to Build Dams in Kenya and Help Other Clean Water Projects

*h2o4life.blogspot.com/*

Middle school students from New Brighton, Minnesota raised funds to build dams in Kenya. They are also working to fund a sustainable water collection system. Another project of H2O links schools in the US with schools in developing countries. The student leaders are encouraging the students to think big by participating in a World Water Day event in Washington DC.

**The Story** A committee of 15 eighth-graders led their classmates in a series of small fund-raisers with the goal of bringing in \$13,000 to build a sand dam for a village in Kenya. Their teacher, Patty Hall, had been in Kenya and saw that girls spent hours each day walking to collect water for their families instead of going to school. Their fundraising motto was, "A drop in the bucket." Students' fund-raising events included a progressive nickel-dime-quarter coin drive in which students bought chances to win prizes for forty cents a chance. They also sold woven bracelets for \$2 each, and solicited donations from friends and family.

A new campaign has raised about \$1,000 from sales of T-shirts and bracelets, and from a dunk tank at a local event. Students also





held a pancake breakfast and raised funds through a raffle for the right to dress teachers anyway the winner wanted. One school held a “Walk-for-Water” that brought in \$5,000. Eighth-grader Jesse Lund walked 6 miles carrying a five-gallon bucket of water to experience how people in Kenya live.

“It’s an important thing to do,” said Nate Loomis, 15, Irondale’s H2O for Life president. “It benefits others and kind of makes you realize everything we have here is not the same all over the world. We strive for equality.”

### 3. Freedom From Abuse

#### A. Frightful Halloween Photo Fundraising for Women’s and Children’s Shelter

The National Honor Society at Dominican HS in Detroit, MI, created a Halloween backdrop and offered students an opportunity to have their photos taken with friends for a fee. Money raised from the photos was donated to a battered women and children’s shelter.

#### B. Sewing Personal Care Bags for Women at Shelters

Sixth-grader Katie Pinkard wanted to put her new sewing skills to good use so she made personal care bags for women staying in local shelters.

**The Story** Katie Pinkard, 12, of Clinton, Miss., a sixth-grader at Lovett Elementary School and a member of the Girl Scout Council of Middle Mississippi in Jackson, made 132 personal-care bags for abused and homeless women staying at shelters in her area. Katie recently learned how to sew in Girl Scouts and wanted to put her new skill to good use. “I thought sewing the drawstring bags would allow me to help women make their lives a little better.”

Katie first made calls to four local shelters to determine if the bags were needed, and she received enthusiastic responses. She purchased fabric and sewed together 132 drawstring bags by herself. Katie then visited hotels and casinos in the Jackson and Vicksburg areas and asked for donations of soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, and other personal-care items. Finally, she filled the bags with the collected items and “encouragement pamphlets” and delivered them to the four shelters. “The women in

these shelters are usually at a low point in their lives,” said Katie. “I hope that this small gift will let them know that people do care about giving them some hope.”

### **C. Collecting Blankets and Toiletries for Domestic Abuse Shelter**

When seventh-grader Kimberly Turner learned about the victims of domestic abuse living in a shelter in her home town, she decided to help them by providing supplies for the shelter.

**The Story** Kimberly Turner, 13, of Alamogordo, N.M., a seventh-grader at Chaparral Middle School, started an annual school and community drive to collect donated blankets and toiletries for victims of domestic violence. Kimberly learned about these victims through the Center of Protective Environment (COPE), a shelter in Alamogordo. “They leave their homes with nothing, and they need everything to start a new life free from abuse,” Kimberly said.

To help address their needs, Kimberly conducted a “Blanket and Bath Blitz” at her school to collect bed sheets, blankets, towels, and bath supplies for women and children staying at COPE. The next year Kimberly expanded her “Blitz” to include two other middle schools and local businesses. She made posters, created a public service announcement for local radio stations, arranged for drop-off locations throughout the community, and then collected and delivered all of the donated items to COPE. Kimberly also conducted a fund-raiser at her school to help pay the veterinarian bills for a dog that was attacked by a group of students. “I would tell other people to get involved because you never know who you have helped or if one day you will be the person needing the help,” said Kimberly.



## **4. Freedom from Slavery**

### **A. Rescuing Child Slaves in Ghana by Fundraising through Festivals, Business Dinners, Selling Cookies and T-Shirts, and More**

When eighth-graders at Saint Joseph’s School in Kentucky heard about child slaves forced to work on fishing boats in Ghana, they decided to raise funds needed to help free the children.

**The Story** Led by an inspired teacher, a group of Kentucky 8th graders made it possible to rescue and rehabilitate dozens of child

slaves. It all started on a snow day when teacher Leslie Hughes watched the Oprah Winfrey show and heard about child slaves forced to do dangerous work on fishing boats in Ghana.

Each year Leslie's eighth-graders at Saint Joseph's School in Crescent Springs, Kentucky have a service project. She shared the story of child slaves with her class. They adopted the issue for their service project. IN A BIG WAY!

FTS (Free the Slaves: [www.freetheslaves.net](http://www.freetheslaves.net)) was contacted about their work in Ghana. At the time it took \$560 to rescue, rehabilitate, and reunite the children with their parents. The 50 eighth graders set a high goal—they wanted to rescue and rehabilitate 40 kids a half a world away.

Leslie gulped! Clearly, Leslie is a teacher who believes in her students but \$1000 was the most money any of her previous classes had raised. These 8th graders wanted to raise \$22,400. Josh, one of the students, summed it up for everyone, "Everybody wants to save a life. We kind of feel like we'll be saving 40 lives if we can raise enough money to rescue the kids."

They did it all: Web sites, presentations, lemonade, festivals, business dinners, chocolate chip cookies, t-shirts... The students learned how to write and put up a web site. They created brochures and slide shows on slavery to educate other students, business leaders and congregations. They donated baby-sitting money, their allowances, baked cookies, and sold lemonade in the pouring rain. They were heroes!

The 8th graders exploded past their ambitious goal of \$22,400. They raised over \$28,500 in just six weeks! That means children are free today who would still be enslaved if these kids had not heard their story. And acted! For the rest of their lives they will know that they were able to change a life. They will know, 'I am the change!'

## **B. Benefit Concert to End Slavery**

When sixteen-year old Hannah Frank decided she wanted to devote her summer vacation to changing the world, she realized that organizing a benefit concert to raising money to end slavery might help her do just that.

**The Story** On the first day of her summer vacation 16-year-old Hannah Frank asked herself a question, 'What can I do this summer to end slavery?' Clearly Hannah knows how to dream big, though she acts as though it's a no-brainer: "Of course one person can change the world, seriously!"



She made lists and lists of possibilities. Benefit concert kept popping up on those lists.

Hannah took it as a sign and went to work. Just about everyone around her in Cincinnati, Ohio joined her cause. Within a month Hannah and company had rounded up three bands, learned how to publicize the event and ask for donations, found a use for the new building just built by Hannah's church and even managed to set up a café for the concert.

Free the Slaves board member and former child slave Jean-Robert Cadet spoke at the concert. Hannah says concertgoers were moved to hear about slavery from a former slave.

Hannah's summer adventure raised \$500 to help free slaves around the world. She says, "It really just takes heart and hope for the world and that will change the world." Who says kids these days are cynical?

## 5. Freedom from Hunger and Poverty

### A. Canned Food Sculpture Contest to Provide Food for Food Bank

A student council in Oklahoma participated in a creative food drive initiative that was so successful that they've collected more than 80,000 pounds of food since the project began.

**The Story** After some disappointing canned food drives, the student council at Yukon (OK) HS decided to stimulate interest by participating in a local canned food sculpture contest. They select a shape to create and then build it at school with the food and funds provided by students. "The items we have built include a replica of our home town flour mill, the space shuttle, a tank, a roller coaster, Chinook helicopter, an American tribute with a wall of remembrance, Twin Towers, Pentagon, fire truck and police car, and last year a full size Hummer," says adviser Darryl Andrews.

After building it at school, council members then disassemble the sculpture and take it to a local mall where they rebuild it for the regional food bank's sculpture contest. "This project creates excitement and unity in a great community service project. The four-hour building time we have at the mall brings many students—not only student council members—out early for the contest" says Andrews. "This project has totally given a common food drive a new face of success. In the past eight years we have collected more than 80,000 pounds of food."

### **B. Stuff-a-Bus to Meet a Community's Emergency Supplies Needs**

A school in Texas coordinated a "stuff-a-bus" full of emergency supplies contest between seven schools to aid a community shelter.

**The Story** Ennis (TX) HS coordinated a competition between the seven schools in its district to see if they could stuff a bus full of materials for Helping Hands of Ennis. Helping Hands of Ennis was established to meet the emergency needs of the people in and around the Ennis community. Each school had the bus on its campus for four days and students were challenged to fill it with nonperishable food items, coats, and blankets. Student council members weighed the bus at the end of the four days. Coats, blankets, and money were counted based on a scale that provided equal poundage value: a dollar was worth eight pounds, a new coat 186 pounds, and a new blanket 136 pounds. The school that collected the most was recognized as the Champion Collector and received free drinks provided by Coca Cola.



### **C. Gardening to Aid a Food Pantry**

An Oak Creek, WI seventh-grade service club helped create a garden at their school to raise money for a local food pantry.

**The Story** Nchinda Nchinda, 12, of Oak Creek, WI, a seventh-grader at Oak Creek East Middle School, helped create a fruit and vegetable garden at his school along with an annual Harvest Celebration dinner that serves the garden's produce to raise money for a local food pantry. "My dad has always told me that I should be a 'fixer-man,'" said Nchinda, who started volunteering when he joined his school's service-learning club.

Nchinda and other club members used funds from a Learn and Serve grant and donations from a letter-writing campaign to purchase gardening supplies. Nchinda worked after school and during recess to prepare the soil, plant seeds, and spread fertilizer. "We turned it into a school project and assigned each classroom a section of the garden," Nchinda said. When fall arrived, he helped harvest the crops, which were then cooked and served at a fund-raising dinner that Nchinda and others coordinated. The proceeds were donated to the Second Harvest Food Pantry. "I feel good knowing that we helped a couple more people in the world rest easy," Nchinda said. "If everybody helped everybody else, the world would be a much better place."

#### **D. Walking for Warmth: Fundraiser for Fuel Bank**

To raise money for the local fuel bank that provides heat for homes in need, the National Honor Society at Windham (CT) Tech HS organizes a Walk for Warmth. Hundreds of students, teachers, parents, and community members obtain pledges from sponsors for the four-mile walk. Groups compete to raise the most money, with the winning group getting a donated DJ for its next dance.

#### **E. Adopt a Family:**

##### **Fundraising to Help Needy Families during the Holidays**

The student council at Staunton River HS in Moneta, VA, adopts a needy family from one of its feeder schools each year for the holidays. Each student who wishes to participate must raise at least \$50 to contribute to the project. The group typically raises between \$800 and \$1,000.

On the designated day, student council members sing carols at a local nursing home and visit with the patients. Afterwards, they go shopping for their adopted family and wrap the gifts. Someone then delivers the gifts to the family that day. "All this is done anonymously," says Margaret Petty, student council adviser. "The family may know our student council members are the donors, but our students never know the recipients."

#### **F. Camping in Boxes: Fundraising for a Homeless Shelter**

One crisp November night each year, the football field at Lake Hamilton HS in Percy, AR, takes on new shape and new meaning, as the students hunker down in cardboard boxes, protected from the chilly night air by a coat and a blanket. All of the Lake Hamilton clubs participate in this annual "Welcome to My Home" event, which raises awareness of the plight of the homeless. Prior to the evening, students collect boxes to sleep in during the event, which lasts from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. Students are allowed to bring only a coat and a blanket-nothing else-to the event. The only food the students are allowed to eat is a bowl of chicken soup at 6:00 a.m. When the event is over, the coats and blankets, as well as canned food and money, are donated to the local homeless shelter.

#### **G. Building Bikes for Shelters**

Justin Lebo, a 10-year-old from Paterson, New Jersey made bikes





from used parts and gave them away to homeless and sick children. Lebo, who at age 10 began using his allowance to buy and rebuild junker bicycles, and then give them away to needy children. During the next four years, Justin made between 150-200 bikes and gave them all away to women in a battered women's shelter, for kids in a home for children with AIDs, and to a homeless shelter (this story can be found in *It's Our World, Too! Stories of Young People Who are Making a Difference* by Phillip Hoose).

#### **H. Distributing Food, Blankets, and Clothing to the Homeless**

<http://trevorscampaign.org/index.php>

Founded by eleven-year old Trevor Ferrell, the mission of Trevor's Campaign for the Homeless is to help homeless families achieve independence by offering a home for the present and hope for the future through comprehensive programs for children and adults which empower them for success.

**The Story** On a cold December night in 1983, eleven-year-old Trevor Ferrell saw a TV newscast about people living on the streets. Those images stirred a compassion deep within Trevor and he pleaded with his parents to take him to downtown Philadelphia so he could give his blanket and pillow to the first homeless person he met. In ensuing weeks, with the help of family, classmates and neighbors, Trevor made nightly trips into Philadelphia to distribute food, clothing and blankets to the needy. Through hundreds of generous citizens and businesses, this little "campaign" soon grew into places to stay and an entire array of services.

The dream and compassion of one small boy has taken on a life of its own and become an integral part of the vital services offered to the estimated 24,000 homeless of Philadelphia. Since its humble beginnings, the Campaign has grown in its approach and sophistication to how best enable the homeless to regain self-sufficiency. A four-pronged approach has been developed to address the problem of homelessness: outreach, housing and services, redistribution and public education/advocacy.

#### **I. Sewing Clothing for Homeless Children**

<http://www.mssa.sailorsite.net/mpsew.html>

Kids Sew for Kids is a service-learning project that has been incorporated into an eighth grade Home Economics sewing class. Students work in pairs to make an outfit for a homeless child.

**The Story** A middle school home economics class in Maryland learned about homelessness and about giving back to their community through the “Kids Sew for Kids” service-learning project. Students worked in pairs and selected an outfit to make for a homeless child. Each partner sewed one piece of the color-coordinated outfits.

The students partnered with a local fabric store to obtain the materials. They also selected a homeless shelter to receive their donated creations.

#### J. Hannah’s Socks: Providing Socks for the Homeless

<http://www.hannahssocks.org/>

Hannah’s Socks is a non-profit organization focused on providing clothing necessities to the less fortunate in Toledo, Ohio; Cincinnati, Ohio; and their neighboring communities. Hannah’s Socks collects donated materials in the form of men’s, women’s and children’s socks and undergarments, then leverages partnerships with local shelters for distribution to both the homeless and to victims of domestic violence.

**The Story** On a chilly Thanksgiving Day in 2004, 4-year-old Hannah Turner was helping serve dinner to the needy at Toledo’s Cherry Street Mission. In the middle of the hustle and bustle of doing her part to fill plates, she tugged on her mother Doris’ sweater.

“Mommy, won’t his feet be cold?”

Hannah had focused on a man in line wearing shoes that had split open to reveal he had no socks on, and her small face reflected concern.

Doris tried to reassure her: “His shoes will keep his toes warm.” She didn’t know how they could help with all staff focused on the meal, and she didn’t want her daughter carrying a burden.

Hannah — too smart, too big of heart — was unconvinced.

“Mommy, he can have my socks,” she said.

That next day, Doris took Hannah to purchase and distribute socks to local shelters. The following two years, they were able to collect and donate over 100 pairs around Toledo. Within two years time, Hannah’s Socks became a full-fledged charity organization, distributing 1400 pairs of socks in NW Ohio, with plans to go nationwide.





## Additional Resources: Organizations Helping Children Around the World

### A. Childline: toll-free helpline for street children in Mumbai, India

<http://www.childlineindia.org.in/>

Childline is a toll-free helpline for street children in distress in Mumbai, India.

**The Story** In 1996, Mumbai launched CHILDLINE, the country's first toll-free tele-helpline for street children in distress. It has responded to over 11 million calls from children who live and work in Mumbai, and has grown into a national child protection service that operates in 81 cities. In 11 years, CHILDLINE has worked with over 3 million children in need of care and protection.



### B. FreeRice.com: Online Game to Help the World Food Program

[www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com)

FreeRice is an online game which attempts to help end world hunger by providing rice to hungry people for free.

**The Story** The United Nations says millions of online wordsmiths have translated their vocabulary prowess into more than one billion grains of rice—enough to feed 50,000 hungry people for one day. FreeRice.com, the brainchild of 50-year-old U.S. computer programmer John Breen, was launched on Oct. 7 and has produced a mountain of rice for the United Nations' World Food Programme in little more than a month.

On its inaugural day, the online game totaled 830 grains of donated rice. The Internet community quickly caught on and donated more than 77 million grains of rice on Nov. 8 alone—equivalent to more than seven million online clicks.

"Every grain of rice is essential in the fight against hunger," Josette Sheeran, WFP executive director said in a statement.

"FreeRice really hits home how the Web can be harnessed to raise awareness and funds for the world's number one emergency. The site is a viral marketing success story with more than one billion grains of rice donated in just one month to help tackle hunger worldwide."

**C. World Vision Canada: Gift Catalogue to Purchase Farm Animals for Families in Underdeveloped Countries**

<http://www2.worldvision.ca/gifts/app>

World Vision is a relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. World Vision Canada has a gift catalogue that allows you to purchase farm animals for families in—underdeveloped countries.

**The Story** Student service organizations have found the World Vision catalogue to be a great way to raise money for this worthy cause. Students don't want to just give cash, they want to know what their money is doing. Students at one school decided to purchase a dairy cow, because "we are a rural school in cow country. The cows cost \$600 each and our goal was to purchase one cow. We raised enough money to purchase two cows! It helped that one of our council members had access to a life-sized cow from her dad's work. We placed it in the principal's office along with lots of hay."

**D. Project Ideas for Global Youth Service Day from Youth Service America**

<http://ysa.org/GYSDUS/ProjectIdeas/tabid/182/Default.aspx>

Help for the Hungry/Homeless

- Help cook and/or serve a meal at a homeless shelter
- Gather clothing from your neighbors and donate it to a local shelter
- Make "I Care" kits with combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc. for homeless people
- Help with repairs at a local homeless shelter
- Make a care package with mittens, socks, t-shirts, long underwear, etc. for a child at a homeless shelter
- Collect grocery coupons to give a local food bank
- If your community doesn't have a food bank, work with local officials to start one
- Pack and hand out food at a food shelf
- Organize a neighborhood group to plant, tend and harvest a vegetable garden
- Donate the produce to a food shelf



#### **E. Free the Slaves:**

##### **Organization That Works to Free Slaves Around the World**

[www.freetheslaves.net](http://www.freetheslaves.net)

Free the Slaves liberates slaves around the world, helps them rebuild their lives and researches real world solutions to eradicate slavery forever.

#### **F. Pennies for Peace: Providing Educational Opportunities to Children in Pakistan and Afghanistan**

<http://www.penniesforpeace.org/home.html>

Pennies for Peace is a fundraising program designed to educate children about the world beyond their experience and show them that they can make a positive impact on a global scale, one penny at a time. The penny, 1% of a dollar, is symbolic of the "1% of Gross Domestic Product" goal set by the United Nations. The goal was for wealthy countries to give foreign aid to impoverished nations each year.

Pennies for Peace teaches children the rewards of sharing and working together to bring hope and educational opportunities to children in Pakistan and Afghanistan. A penny in the United States is virtually worthless, but in Pakistan and Afghanistan a penny buys a pencil and opens the door to literacy.

#### **G. Central Asia Institute:**

##### **Providing Community-Based Education in Asia**

<http://www.ikat.org/>

Central Asia institute is a non-profit organization with the mission to promote and support community-based education, especially for girls, in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was founded by Greg Mortensen, co-author of the best-selling book *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace, One School At A Time*.

#### **H. Room to Read:**

##### **Establishing Libraries and Building Schools around the World**

<http://www.roomtoread.org/>

Room to Read is an organization which partners with local communities throughout the developing world to provide quality educational opportunities by establishing libraries, creating local language children's literature, constructing schools, providing education to girls and establishing computer labs.



**The Story** John Wood, Founder and CEO, launched Room to Read after a trek through Nepal. He visited several local schools and was amazed by the warmth and enthusiasm of the students and teachers, but also saddened by the shocking lack of resources. Driven to help, John quit his senior executive position with Microsoft and built a global team to work with rural villages to build sustainable solutions to their educational challenges.

Founding Room to Read, John wove proven corporate business practices with his inspiring vision to provide educational access to 10 million children in the developing world.

Room to Read began working with rural communities in Nepal in 2000 to build schools and establish libraries. The organization's geographic reach expanded rapidly as significant needs and opportunities were identified in Vietnam (2001), Cambodia (2002) and India (2003). The Asian Tsunami in December 2004 provided a catalyst for entry into Sri Lanka followed shortly by Laos. In 2006, we expanded to our second continent by launching Room to Read in South Africa, and we began work in Zambia in 2007.

Programs.

Results to Date

Since our inception in 2000, Room to Read has impacted the lives of over 1.7 million children by:

- Constructing 442 schools
- Establishing over 5,160 libraries
- Publishing 226 new local language children's titles representing over 2 million books
- Donating over 2.2 million English language children's books
- Funding 4,036 long-term girls' scholarships
- Establishing 155 computer and language labs

## **I. The Pajama Program: Providing Pajamas and Books to Children in Need**

<http://www.pajamaprogram.org/>

The Pajama Program, a non-profit organization, provides new pajamas and books to children in need in the United States, and around the world, many of who are waiting and hoping to be adopted.

For information on the Wisconsin chapter in the Barron, WI area, contact Carrie Hundley at [carrie@pajamaprogram.org](mailto:carrie@pajamaprogram.org)







## Information



### Information: Providing Youth with Positive News

#### Interpreting Information: Transforming Bad News into Good News

Thomas Edison spent eight years and 10,000 unsuccessful attempts before getting his invention of the storage battery to work. When once interviewed about how it felt to fail at something 10,000 times, Edison replied, "Those were not failures. I just learned 10,000 different ways how not to make a storage battery."

#### Information: The Challenge

How can we inspire middle school students with optimism about the future when so much of the daily news is negative?

Government of the people, by the people, and for the people can't work unless the people are informed. Information must be

Information is the  
currency of democracy.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

**Your student council can share "good news" on your school's daily announcements, on bulletin boards, in blogs, on YouTube postings, through new websites, and even in the local media.**

Free and responsible government by popular consent can't exist without an informed public.

BILL MOYERS

timely, useful, and accurate. How do we survive the blizzard of data in the information age? Today, the mass media (daily newspapers, broadcast media and cable TV, radio) primarily appeal to the emotions and only secondarily contribute to the necessary deliberations of an informed populace.

The Carnegie Corporation conducted a youth challenge quiz of 15-24 year-olds and asked them "Why don't more young people vote or get involved?" Of the nearly two thousand respondents, the main answer was that they don't have enough information about issues and candidates.

Not only do youth lack enough information about issues, they feel a sense of helplessness and hopelessness in part because the news and information they do receive paints such a gloomy and pessimistic picture of the state of the world and the possibility for change.

How do we inspire youth to feel the desire and confidence to make the world a better place when they, like the rest of us, are primarily exposed to so much negative news? As a starting point, balance the scales by providing them with positive news. Your student council can share "good news" on your school's daily announcements, on bulletin boards, in the school newspaper, and even in the local media.

Where do you find such good news? In this chapter, there are descriptions of and links to organizations and websites whose intent is to "spread the wealth" of good deeds that are being practiced around the world. In addition, each chapter in the Wisconsin Democracy Project curriculum contains good news stories of youth whose commitment, perseverance, and creativity to do good works is a gold mine of positive stories to share in your school.

## Information: List of “Good News” Web Sites

### 1. Websites that List Potential Projects

- A. The MY HERO Project
- B. Random Acts of Kindness Foundation:
- C. Do One Nice Thing.Org
- D. The Do Good Guide

### 2. Good News Websites

- A. What Kids Can Do
- B. Happynews.com
- C. Good News Network

## 1. Websites that List Potential Projects

### A. The MY HERO Project

[www.myhero.com](http://www.myhero.com)

MY HERO is a not for profit educational web project that celebrates the best of humanity. Its mission is to enlighten and inspire people of all ages with an ever-growing internet archive of hero stories from around the world. The MY HERO web site hosts thousands of stories of remarkable individuals written by children and adults alike. These stories serve to remind us that we all have the potential to overcome great obstacles and achieve our dreams by following in the footsteps of our heroes.

MY HERO invites you, your family, school or organization to take part in this interactive web project. By publicly honoring your hero on this award-winning site, you reward those who have made a difference and bring new hope to this online community.

### B. Random Acts of Kindness Foundation

<http://www.actsofkindness.org/>

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation inspires people to practice kindness and to “pass it on” to others. They provide free educational and community ideas, guidance, and other resources to help promote random acts of kindness. Ideas for schools are at: [http://www.actsofkindness.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/208\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.actsofkindness.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/208_pdf.pdf)

### C. Do One Nice Thing.Org

<http://www.doonenicething.com/d1nt-about.php>

Do One Nice Thing warns that, “Doing one nice thing can be habit-forming. Proceed at your own risk!” Their newsletter tells you who are doing nice things and how to get involved. For example:

- One hundred forty thousand pounds (that’s 70 TONS) of school supplies have been sent to U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, who give them to local children so they can study.
- More than 4,000 blankets have been sent to U.S. soldiers in Iraq, who requested them for local people living without electricity or heat.
- More than 10,000 hand-made cards have cheered hospitalized children in Los Angeles, Oakland, Seattle, Memphis, Boston, St. Louis, Houston, New York, Miami, Detroit, Tucson, Richmond, Phoenix, Minneapolis, Jerusalem, KwaZulu Natal (South Africa),



Rwanda and Baghdad.

- Hundreds of toys, games and art kits have been given to families living in homeless shelters.

#### **D. Do Good Guide**

<http://www.do-goodguide.com/>

The Do Good Guide provides weekly tips on an action that people can take to help others.

## **2. Good News Websites**

#### **A. What Kids Can Do**

<http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/familylife/greatkids/>

What Kids Can Do (WKCD) started in 2001 in Providence, R.I.. It was started by a journalist and an educator to promote perceptions of young people as valued resources, not problems, and to advocate for learning that engages students as knowledge creators and not simply test takers. Just as urgent, they believed, was the need to bring youth voices to policy debates about school, society, and world affairs. WKCD talks about the power of what young people can accomplish when given the opportunities and supports they need and what they can contribute when we take their voices and ideas seriously. The youth who concern WKCD most are those marginalized by poverty, race, and language. The website provides daily stories about adolescents and the possibility of searching for stories by State.

#### **B. Happynews.com**

<http://www.happynews.com>

Happy News website says that it is “Real News, Compelling News, Always Positive:”

Happy News balances out the disproportionate amount of national negative news by publishing positive stories.

#### **C. Good News Network**

<http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/familylife/greatkids/>

The mission is to provide a “Daily Dose of News to Enthuse.” The Good News Network is a clearinghouse for the gathering and dissemination of positive news stories from around the globe.







## Using the Arts to Change the World

**T**wo stonecutters were engaged in a similar activity. Asked what they were doing, one answered, “I’m squaring up this block of stone.” The other replied, “I’m building a cathedral.”

The arts can be powerful tools to change the world. Youth can use the arts to spark new ideas, expand awareness, increase participation, inspire commitment, create visions, and raise funds. In this “Using the Arts to Change the World” supplement, we offer arts-related ideas to help youth take advantage of the rich opportunities the arts provide for advancing their causes. Many of the ideas in this section are drawn from stories in the “It’s Our World, Too!” curriculum that highlight ways in which youth already have used the arts effectively.

By using the “It’s Our World, Too!” curriculum, students can learn about a wide range of causes that other students have undertaken. After students become committed to a cause they have identified, the arts supplement can be used to generate ideas for ways to raise awareness about their cause and to raise funds for their cause. The activities listed below are meant to kick-off this process. Brainstorm with the students to expand upon these ideas to help them create a dynamic approach to achieve their goals.

### Hints for Creative Problem-Solving:

The arts promote and inspire creative thinking. This is part of the value of incorporating the arts into causes for social change. The following techniques are designed to provide you with tools to help students think creatively while both identifying a worthwhile cause to undertake and working to solve the problem which they’ve chosen to combat. Encourage them to think creatively as they attack the innumerable obstacles they will face. Often, the most outlandish ideas can lead to the most creative and effective solutions.

#### 1. Brainstorming: Go for Quantity and Quality

Think of brainstorming as two or more minds creating sparks with one another. Ideally, each idea sparks another idea and another and another. It is a building process which should develop momentum as the storm grows in intensity. Evaluating ideas while brainstorming usually interrupts the flow of ideas and thwarts the momentum which is developing. Discourage students from evaluating ideas while the brainstorming process is taking place. Encourage them to





generate as many ideas as possible as quickly as possible. Once this process is completed, then evaluate the ideas generated.

## 2. Change of Perspective: Think Big

Change the magnitude of the problem to make it a million times larger than initially conceptualized. During the first year of his campaign, Austin Gutwein (Example: Hoops for Hope, raising money for children orphaned by AIDS in Africa, Responsibility, 3D, page 38) initially asked people to sponsor him with donations to shoot throws. After his success effort, Austin realized that he should THINK BIG to be even more effective. So, during that second year he recruited 1,000 kids to shoot free throws, and Hoops for Hope was born.

## 3. The Fractionalization Technique: Think Little

Take a big problem, break off a small piece of the large problem, and approach it from this more limited viewpoint. Joseph Zikowsky (Example: Project Oxygen, involving the community in planting trees, Responsibility, 4B, page 52) learned that the world needed billions of trees to survive. He narrowed his focus to a local venue and recruited thousands of volunteers to plant trees in his hometown.

## 4. Random Stimulation: Think Outside of the Box

Randomly choose an object, word, or idea and have students apply it to solving the problem they've identified. For example, have them imagine using a video camera, a brush, a football, or an oak tree to solve the problem they're working on. By taking this unrelated idea or object and applying it to solving the problem, it will inherently stretch their understanding of the limitless possibilities for ways to approach solving that problem.

## A. The Visual Arts

### 1. Drawing and Painting

- Have students paint a backdrop for Halloween or another event/holiday that can be used for taking photos as part of a fundraiser. (Example: Raising money for a woman's and children's shelter, Freedom 3A, page 74).

- Have students design a T-shirt for sale to raise money for a chosen cause. (Example: Kids Caring 4 Kids, Responsibility 3A, page 42).
- Have students create an art show focused on an issue that is important to them. (Example: Children for a Safe Environment, Participation 1K, page 27).
- Have students design and paint a mural for their school or community building that illustrates their cause and what can be done to help.
- Have students paint clothing or bags and sell them as a fundraiser.
- Have students design and sell cloth bags to use instead of plastic bags.

## **2. Photography**

- Have students photograph environmental concerns for their community such as a lack of recycling bins and display the photos in a community location like the public library.
- Have students photograph students and other members of their community to demonstrate the diversity of the population. Display the photos in a prominent place in the school.

## **3. Film/Video**

- Have students produce an informational video on a topic that is important to them (Example: Educating people about burn survivors, Responsibility 7A, page 49).
- Have students make a video on disability awareness and/or cultural differences that can be used to spark discussion groups on tolerance and inclusion.
- Have students make a video about bullying in their school. Have them interview other students for ideas on how to stop bullies. Have the video shown at a school assembly. (Example: Helping Students Respond to Bullying, Inclusion 2D, page 12).

## **4. Sculpture and other Three Dimensional Arts**

- Initiate a contest between different schools to use canned food to build sculptures within a set period of time. Each school pays an entry fee and donates the canned food to local food pantries.

(Example: Canned Food Sculpture Contest to Provide Food for Food Bank, Freedom 5A, page 67).

- Have students collect items from their homes, neighborhood, and school and use the items to make 3 dimensional found art to raise awareness of the need to recycle and the overuse of landfills.
- Have students design elaborate hats to be auctioned for their cause.
- Have students make pottery bowls. At a soup fundraiser, allow the customer to keep the bowl in which their soup was served.
- Have students make sculptures out of typically discarded items and put it on display at the school (soda cans, bottle caps, plastic containers, plastic bags, etc.).

## **5. Architecture**

- Have students survey the physical accessibility of their school building and other buildings in the community. Consider having a student who uses a wheelchair as part of the team or have students who do not need a wheelchair explore accessibility by using one. (Example: Surveying the Accessibility of Building in Your Community, Inclusion 3A, page 15).
- Have students assess the accessibility of the school and community buildings for people who are blind or have limited vision.
- Have students use recycled items to build a model of their community.

## **6. Jewelry and Crafts**

- Have students design and knit/crochet hats for children who are losing their hair due to chemotherapy.
- Have students weave or bead awareness bracelets that can be used as a fundraiser for a cause the students picked. (Example: A Drop in the Bucket, Freedom, 2C, page 73).
- Have students make pillows, blankets, teddy bears, t-shirts, etc that they can either sell for a cause or give to a hospital or homeless shelter.
- Have students design and sew quilts for babies in the neonatal intensive care unit (Example: Sewing Quilts for Babies in Hospitals, Responsibility, 4A, Page 46).
- Have students make bags for children in foster care. The bags



could include a doll or stuffed animal made by the students (Example: Children to Children, Duffel bags for Foster Children, Responsibility, 6A, page 48).

- Have students work in pairs to sew an outfit for a child staying in a homeless shelter. (Example: Sewing Clothing for Homeless Children, Freedom 5I, page 80.)
- Have students each create a square as part of a quilt made from recycled cloth. Auction off the quilt as a fundraiser.

## **B. Performing Arts**

### **1. Music**

- Have students organize a performance of local student bands to perform at a fundraiser. Have speakers at the event speak about the cause being addressed. (Example: Benefit Concert to End Slavery, Freedom 4B, page 76).
- Have students write songs based on a theme they have chosen (ex. Stop bullying, helping homeless families, etc).
- Have students create musical instruments from recycled items and use the “new” instruments at a fundraising performance.

### **2. Theater**

- Have students choose a play to perform that brings awareness to a cause they are concerned about (for example, child abuse, child slavery, homelessness).
- Have a fundraising theater night at school with students writing and performing skits that last only one or five minutes.
- Have students write a script and perform a play for a school assembly program that celebrates the school’s diversity.
- Have students write and perform role playing vignettes which illustrate ways to stop bullying. (Example: Stop Bullying Now, Inclusion 2B, page 25).
- Have the students write and perform a puppet show for younger children on bullying.

### 3. Storytelling

Note: Although not usually included in an arts curriculum, the art of storytelling is essential in promoting understanding of the issues involved with any cause. The youth in almost every project in the “It’s Our World, Too!” curriculum used the spoken and/or written word to “tell their story”. Activities involving the written word are included below under Journalism/Mass Communication.

- Have students rehearse and speak at a public hearing about an issue they are concerned about.(Example: Lobbying against Liquor Stores Near Schools, Participation 1F, page 21).
- Have students practice with each other so that they can explain their issue in less than a minute. Ask a local radio station to broadcast these one minute descriptions of the students’ issue.
- Have students write and perform the stories of people who are affected by their issue.

### 4. Interdisciplinary

- Organize a talent show to raise funds for a cause chosen by the students.

## C. Language Arts

### 1. Prose and Poetry

- Have students write poems about a cause they have chosen and display the poems in public settings. Or, have them share their poetry at a “Spoken Word” or poetry slam event.
- Have students write poems about a cause they have chosen and display the poems in public settings.
- Have students read about The Freedom Writers to learn about a project which demonstrates how youth have effectively used the written word. (<http://www.freedomwritersfoundation.org>)
- Have students write short essays about themselves to exchange with students in another city or country.
- Have students write editorials for their local paper on issues important to them.
- Have students write a “Bill of Responsibilities” for their school. (Example: The Marathon School Bill of Responsibilities,

Responsibility Introduction, page 33).

- Have students write books for children to promote literacy for children who attend a local elementary school. (Example: Malcolm Shabazz City High School in Writing and Illustrating Books for Younger Children, Freedom, 1G, page 70).

#### **D. Journalism and Mass Communication**

Note: Excellent techniques for developing a media campaign can be found in Take Action! A Guide to Active Citizenship by Mark Kielburger and Craig Kielburger, Gage Learning Corporation, 2002.

- Have students develop a “media campaign” around a cause they believe in. The media campaign can include posters, letters to elected officials and to the news media, pamphlets, web site, radio ads, newspaper articles, short intercom announcements, etc.
- Devote an entire issue of the school newspaper to inclusion and acceptance in your school. Include articles on how to make the school welcoming for all students. (Example: School Inclusion Activities, Inclusion 2A, page 10).
- Have students design a billboard explaining their issue. Speak with local businesses to see if they would fund the billboard. (Example: Kids for a Clean Environment, Responsibility, 4A, page 60).
- Have students design and implement a letter writing campaign to attract the attention of the media to their issue (Example: Children for a Safe Environment, Participation, 1K, Page 27).
- Have the students create information packets on their issue to give to other students. (Example: Student Council Sponsors AIDS Awareness Day Activities and Purchases Cows and Goats through Heifer Project International, Responsibility, 3C, page 43).

#### **E. Culinary Arts**

- Have the students design and plant a garden. Serve food from the garden at a fund raiser for a local food pantry. (Example: Gardening to Aid Food Pantry, Freedom 5C, page 78).
- Have students design and cook a theme-based meal as a fundraiser.
- Organize a food fair at school to highlight the diverse cultures in your community.

## Sharing Your School's Project

*Please mail, email or fax this form to:*

Fil Clissa, *Deputy Director*

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

201 West Washington Avenue, Suite 110, Madison, WI 53703

Email: [fil.clissa@wisconsin.gov](mailto:fil.clissa@wisconsin.gov)

Fax: 608/267-3906

For more information, please call 608/266-5395

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number and Email Address of Contact Person:

\_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level (s) of Participating Students: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students Participating: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the Goal (s) of the Project: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the Activities of the Project: \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe the Outcome of the Project: \_\_\_\_\_

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Will Your Students Continue the Project in the Future? \_\_\_\_\_

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*It's Our World, Too! is funded by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities as a part of the "Arts Wide Open" initiative in partnership with Arts @ Large, Inc., using literary, performing, and visual arts to promote a climate of inclusion in Wisconsin schools.*





