

# *Voices of Hope* Service-Learning Guide

Engaging students as  
active, caring citizens



A framework and  
coaching tools from  
The Giraffe Heroes Project



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as active, caring citizens

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For use as a stand-alone guide  
or as a companion book to  
*Voices of Hope: Heroes' Stories for Challenging Times*

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Voices of Hope Service-Learning Guide, Second Edition

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# Acknowledgments

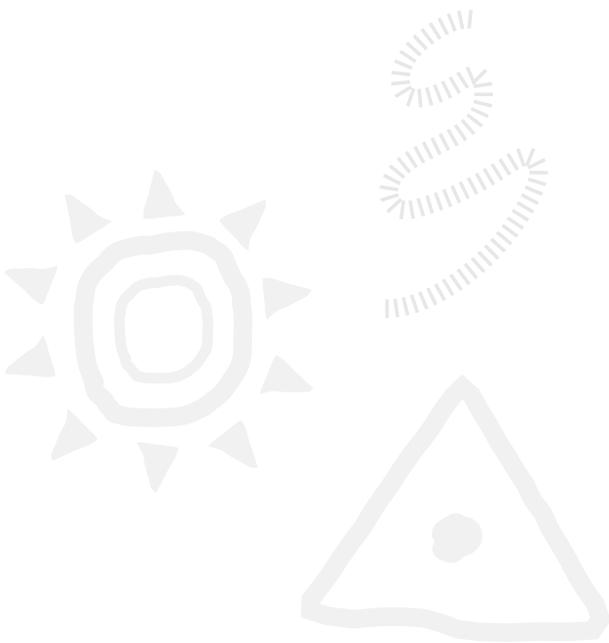
***Voices of Hope*** has been a collaborative effort whose roots go back to 1991. The stories of Giraffes in the ***Voices of Hope*** anthology were written by a variety of Giraffe Heroes Project staff members, most prominently Ann Medlock and Keith Mack.

Dr. Martin Laster, Superintendent of South Whidbey Schools in Washington State, helped pick the stories for inclusion in the anthology. He gave us ideas for the reflection, comprehension and vocabulary questions that were written by Ann Medlock. He wrote the guiding letter to teachers you'll find in the Resources section of this *Guide*.

Giraffe Heroes Project President John Graham managed the project and edited this *Service-Learning Guide*, drawing from materials the Giraffe Heroes Project has been developing since 1991 as part of its K-12 Giraffe Heroes Program.

Patty Toombs, our Education Director, oversees the national distribution of *Voices of Hope*.

Finally, of course, there would be no *Voices of Hope* without the voices of hope—the Giraffes whose inspiring stories we tell. It has been our privilege at the Giraffe Heroes Project to find and honor these remarkable people for over twenty years. They are heroes and role models. Without people like them sticking their necks out for the common good, our nation and our lives would be much the poorer.





# Welcome to *Voices of Hope*

**Your heroic task.** As a teacher, your job may sometimes feel like “mission impossible.” You want your kids to succeed academically and socially—in colleges, jobs, relationships and careers. You want to inspire them to develop habits of life-long learning. You want them to lead meaningful lives.

For some kids, you know that you’ll have to make up for much of what they may not be getting at home or in the community.

In addition, you must deal with the expectations of the federal government, whose No Child Left Behind Act mandates the high-stakes testing environment now imposed by states. In our opinion, the NCLB framework suggests that any learning not tied to raising 3R test scores is at best a frill and, at worst, that any lessons outside these content areas detract from mass-producing workers who can better contribute to the GNP.

Of course you want your kids to do well in academic subjects but if you’re picking up this book, you probably agree that there is more to your profession than teaching kids to read and write and do math. The goal of education can’t be just to produce a competent workforce. Thomas Jefferson knew this. John Dewey knew this. We all, in our minds and hearts, know this.

Public education, supported by public money, should have as its first aim to produce a public good. And that public good is an enlightened and effective citizenry—

people who pay attention to public affairs, understand the issues, vote wisely, consider the greater good beyond personal gain, and are willing to act to help solve public problems in our communities, our nation and the world.

Are we producing the motivated, creative, caring, courageous, disciplined, and responsible people we need—both the people who will lead and those who will support them?

Parents have a critical role in instilling these traits and values. So do religious and other cultural institutions. But increasingly the responsibility for these crucial aspects of learning is falling on schools. Like it or not, you’re a key player. And this role is added to everything else the district, state and federal government require you to do. It can seem “over the top.”

**Giraffes can help!** There are ways to make the job of creating courageous and caring citizens easier and more effective. The Giraffe Heroes Project has been developing strategies and materials for the past fifteen years to help you achieve this goal.

We are a nonprofit organization whose mission is to inspire people to stick their necks out for the common good, and to give them tools to succeed. Since 1982, the Project has been finding people who stick their necks out for the common good, not letting obstacles stand

in their way. These “Giraffes” are young and old, male and female, and from every ethnic and economic background. They’re working on problems from environmental cleanups to safe schools, from women’s rights to poverty, from homelessness to providing positive alternatives to gangs. We’ve found and honored over 1,000 Giraffes to date. They’re people like:

- Carol and Hurt Porter Jr. of Houston, who spend countless hours and much of their modest income feeding other people’s kids. Their operation, “Kid-Care,” was the first children’s “Meals On Wheels” program in the nation.
- Tom Billecci, who blew the whistle on a Unocal refinery’s safety violations and illegal toxic dumping into San Francisco and San Pablo Bays. He won a \$4.2 million judgment that helped restore the waters.
- Mimi Silbert, who created and devotes her life to “Delancey Street,” a program that takes in former prison inmates and turns out hardworking, responsible citizens who do not return to jail.

The Giraffe Heroes Project tells the stories of Giraffes like these in our publications, on our website, in schools, and at public events. The purpose is to move other people to stick their necks out too.

It works. People see or hear about Giraffes and are inspired to take on the challenges *they* see, from cleaning up a wetland to helping end hunger and homelessness.

You can learn more about the Giraffe Heroes Project on page 96 and on our website at [www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org).

**Giraffes for kids.** In the 1990s, teachers began telling us they were bringing Giraffe stories into their classrooms—

and urged us to create a full program designed just for kids. They wanted a program in which kids would not just hear about values and good character, but would actually *live* those values by making a positive impact on their world.

The Giraffe Heroes Project took on this challenge, looking for ways to teach character and active citizenship that were attractive and credible to kids, acceptable to teachers and parents—and compelling enough to counterbalance the negative influences in kids’ lives. The result was the Giraffe Heroes Program—a K-12 curriculum that instills courage, caring and a sense of personal ability and responsibility in kids, and helps them build lifelong commitments to service as active citizens. That program has reached over 250,000 kids, in all 50 states and in American schools abroad. Our stats show that kids reached by the Giraffe Heroes Program exhibit significant changes in their own attitudes about caring and service (see page 13).

In 2003, we saw, as we’re sure you did, that the burdens imposed by the No Child Left Behind Act left very little time, if any, for “extras” such as character education, service-learning and civic education. So we got smart(er).

We asked teachers who knew our work well: What if the Project created a version of the Giraffe Heroes Program that helped kids develop lives as active, caring citizens—and at the same time was a powerful literacy tool? What if we wrote an anthology of heroes’ stories that not only helped kids read better, but also helped them develop caring, responsible attitudes toward others and toward their communities? If students were going to spend fifty minutes reading for comprehension

in order to meet a literacy requirement, we asked, why not give them something to read that helped them grow in other areas of their lives that are just as important as reading? And what if we added guidance that would help kids take the caring, responsible attitudes they learned from reading stories in the classroom—and put them to work on real-world problems of personal concern to them?

The response was overwhelmingly positive and *Voices of Hope* is the result—a unique program that builds reading skills in upper-elementary, middle and high school students while it encourages and guides them to become active citizens in their communities. The goals we set for this program were:

- to inspire kids to lives of courageous compassion and active citizenship;
- to create high interest and proficiency in reading;
- to build vocabulary for reading, writing, thinking, assessing and acting;
- to help kids to create and carry out service projects that meet real needs they care about and build academic and life skills; and
- to give kids hope for the future.

***Voices of Hope* is two books.** The first is an anthology of forty exciting stories of Giraffes, taken from the hundreds of such stories in the library of the Giraffe Heroes Project. You can read more of them on the Project’s website at [www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org). These additional stories greatly expand *Voices of Hope*. Simply download them, and compose your own vocabulary and comprehension questions.

Reflection, comprehension and vocabulary questions follow each story. Because it’s structured as a supplementary reading text, the *Voices of Hope* anthology fits easily into existing curricula and tutoring materials for upper-elementary, middle and high school reading programs, helping you meet standards at the same time the content gives kids the hope they need to be active, caring citizens.

We’ve found that reading Giraffe stories naturally inspires many kids to ask, “How can *I* make a difference?”

We help you help kids answer that question with this second book, the *Voices of Hope Service-Learning Guide*. The materials here provide everything you need for coaching your students to create and complete a successful service-learning project.

The core of this *Guide* is the “Seven Neckbones”—seven simple and effective steps any teacher, parent or youth leader can use to help kids create and carry out service-learning\* projects in their communities or beyond. As they take on such projects, kids learn to plan, work in teams, fundraise, resolve conflicts, speak in public, make good decisions and take responsibility. Practicing these skills in the real world—and seeing the positive difference their actions can make in their communities—gives a huge boost to kids’ confidence, as they see how valuable their actions can be. Guiding kids into courageous, caring service can change their attitudes and their lives.

The Seven Neckbones process was designed for students working together as a team—but it can easily be adapted to coach students working alone.

\*“Service-learning” and “service”—there’s a difference. See page 4.

Another section of this *Guide* offers short, easy-to-use lessons for helping your students build skills they'll need, not just in carrying out service-learning projects, but in living their lives.

Finally, a Resource section includes tips on finding and honoring local heroes, pre- and post-use evaluation tools, case studies of service-learning projects, an essay on teaching literacy, resources for teachers and other useful materials.

The wording in this *Guide* assumes a classroom of students, but that setting is not necessary. You can use the *Guide* if you're a youth leader, parent, camp counselor, or religion instructor. In fact, you can use it in *any* role that involves wanting to give kids tools that will help them put their youthful ideals and energy into service to their community and beyond.

You will need to decide when to begin the service project phase of *Voices of Hope*. The Project's experience is that it's best to read and discuss at least a half-dozen stories of Giraffe heroes from the anthology before beginning to consider a project. This not only gives time for the students to get motivated and excited about doing something Giraffe-like themselves, it also allows you to gather additional resources and to get a sense of the problems your students care about.

**It's not just for kids.** Giraffe stories will move your students to ask lots of questions, and the discussions will challenge you as well as them. The principles and methods for active citizenship in this *Service-Learning Guide* are as valuable to adult facilitators as they are to students. That's no surprise—they're based on Giraffe

Heroes Project seminars and workshops for adults. So see yourself as traveling this road *with* your students. You can use these processes to tackle any problem that needs solving in your own life, whether it's at work, at home or in your community.

**This is powerful stuff.** When you see your students using the Seven Neckbones to carry out a service-learning project they really care about, you'll be amazed at the results—for them, for you and for the community. Courageous, caring service can change their lives like nothing else. Kids who do Giraffe programs remember in their bones how they felt when they saw what they could accomplish. They'll know from experience things many people never learn—that they can rise to a challenge, that they can affect their world, that service can bring them joy.

Your work with Giraffe programs can change the course of your students' lives, but don't be alarmed by the size of that idea. The only prerequisite for doing this is caring about kids and about your world.

**As you begin, please accept our thanks for  
all you do for your students.**

**We hope you have a great time bringing forth the  
courageous, compassionate citizen in each of them.**

**The Giraffe Heroes Project staff**

P.S. Don't hesitate to email us with questions and comments. We're at [office@giraffe.org](mailto:office@giraffe.org).



# Introduction

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and Civic Education—What are They and  
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# Character Education, Service-Learning and Civic Education—

## What are They and Why do They Belong in Your Classroom?

*Voices of Hope* weaves together character education, service-learning and civic education. It's three programs in two books—an anthology of stories of Giraffe heroes, and this *Service-Learning Guide*.

### CHARACTER EDUCATION

**The power of telling stories.** Our years of experience with the Giraffe Heroes Program demonstrate that storytelling is a sure-fire way to reach kids with messages of character and values. People have known for millennia that stories can go straight to the heart, even when the listener might brush off any principles embedded in those stories if they were merely rules and admonitions. The love of stories may be programmed into our genes, going back to the first campfires, where people gathered to tell each other about their days, and their ancestors' days.

The stories in the *Voices of Hope* anthology let the kids you work with take in the principles of living bravely, ethically and compassionately, without your hitting them over the head with those concepts. Understanding falls out of the stories, all over kids' lives. The motivating message to kids in these stories is that there's a brave and caring world out there—a world they're growing

up in and can help shape, just like the heroes in this anthology have done. Kids need to know that their own lives count, that their ideas and values count, and that their voices and actions can make a difference. Giraffes are living examples of the possible, and kids need to hear their stories.

### SERVICE-LEARNING

As we all know, character lessons are more likely to stay with us, and with kids, if we go beyond discussion of concepts and actually put those lessons to work in our own lives. Exercising our values is how we learn that they actually can affect the world around us. For example, learning to care about something beyond self is important. But what drives that lesson home is putting that caring into action with a real project that makes a difference in other people's lives.

"I feel great that I helped a lot of people... I feel proud and powerful," said a middle school student in New Hampshire who participated in a voter registration drive as part of the Giraffe Heroes Program. "I learned that if everybody does nothing and just ignores problems, then our world would be awful. I know we made a difference in lots of people's lives... The feeling I get from that is so great, I would do all the work ten times over."

As noted in the welcoming section of this *Guide*, our experience at the Giraffe Heroes Project is that reading Giraffe stories naturally inspires many kids to ask, “How can I make a difference?”

The answer is this *Service-Learning Guide*. It’s all you need to help your kids create and carry out service-learning projects that meet needs they care about. Doing so lets kids live their values through direct action and experience.

**“Service” is not the same as “service-learning.”** “Service” is simply that—meeting some community need, such as reading stories to kids in a day-care center or stacking food at a homeless shelter. “Service” has no intentional relevance to classroom learning.

“Service-learning,” on the other hand, is a teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning, especially in language arts, social studies, mathematics and science. Students improve their academic skills by applying them in the real world to reach goals they care about.

In service-learning, kids address community needs by planning and executing service projects that are tied to curricula. Using resources such as this *Service-Learning Guide*, you can help kids structure their project so that they do research, brainstorm, write letters, think critically, solve problems, do math and even perform science and technology experiments.

Here are several examples of the difference between service and service-learning:

- Picking up trash by a riverbank is service. But if students also collect and analyze river water and soil samples and then persuade the local pollution control agency to use the findings to help clean up the river—that is service-learning.

- Distributing emergency supply kits to elders in the community is service. Identifying items needed to cope with various emergencies, creating a budget for making emergency kits, raising the money to buy supplies, putting the kits together and then distributing them to seniors is service-learning.

**Service-learning boosts student achievement.** Guiding kids into a real-world context for solid skills demonstrates the value of those skills in ways the kids cannot and do not ignore. When they use academic skills to complete a project *they’ve* designed to help solve a real-world problem *they* care about—those skills are no longer “academic.” They are tools the kids need to get something done that they dearly want to do. If they have to do careful research, write persuasive letters and organize a public presentation to get the job done, they’ll do it.

That’s our experience at the Giraffe Heroes Project and we’re hardly alone. Current research indicates that when rigorous study in academic disciplines is linked to serious work on real-world problems, students’ motivation to learn increases. Interest and excitement for acquiring skills to solve problems increases, especially when students take an active role in determining which problems to tackle and how the problem-solving is carried out. Service-learning is education in action.

Service-learning also gives kids the chance to learn and practice *life* skills which will be important to them in their workplaces, families and communities, for the rest of their lives. Those life skills include leadership, critical thinking, dealing with conflicts, making decisions, negotiating, speaking in public, working with others, honoring diverse views, taking responsibility, setting and managing goals and performing hard and committed work.

---

**In service-learning, give kids more responsibility than you may be comfortable with.** Challenge the kids to consider what *they* care about, and to decide *amongst themselves* what problems they feel are most important to solve in their community or beyond. Let them lobby each other; if there's no consensus, then have them vote. Tell them that advocating for their ideas and voting on them are core elements of a participatory democracy.

Then—acting as a coach and not a decision-maker—guide them in planning a service project that helps solve that problem, using their talents, their experience, and their resources. Support them as they carry out that project. Don't dictate what that project should be.

Giving kids the major responsibility for choosing, creating, planning and carrying out their project makes them real stakeholders in the outcome. It makes their experience more impactful on their spirits, their self-esteem and on their likelihood of continuing to do active service. If you *tell* them what to think or what to do, it's *your* project, not theirs. Even if they didn't resist you, they'd lose the sense of ownership and of achievement that comes from figuring it out themselves.

Even if the kids are obliged to meet a graduation requirement for community service, give them the slack to choose the problem they'll work on and the project they'll do. Reports have surfaced in educational publications and on the Internet of service programs that crash and burn. We suspect it's because the students were not involved in choosing what they would do. So far, we haven't heard of a choice-based program crashing and burning. If you give your students the latitude of inventing their own projects, they're committed.

Here's a good example of what can happen if the problem and project are chosen and "owned" by the kids:

The Discovery School in Coupeville, Washington is a public school for kids who've had problems with school work and discipline. When one class at the school took on the Giraffe Heroes Program, things really changed.

Intrigued by the stories of Giraffes, the kids asked themselves what issue they cared about. The choice was easy. A student had almost been hit by a car speeding past the school grounds, ignoring the speed limit to get to the nearby ferry landing. The kids knew that this wasn't the only near-miss, and if something wasn't done, somebody was going to get seriously hurt. Making the streets around their school safe was their issue.

The students started off their project by videotaping speeding cars, clocking them, and graphing the results. Then they interviewed workers in the area about near-misses these people had seen. With that data in hand, they got a State trooper to confirm their findings with his radar gun. They got one of the county commissioners to visit their school, to see the problem for himself, then made a formal presentation to all the commissioners.

The result was a \$12,000 traffic light, a crosswalk, a feature on a Seattle television station and the admiration of everyone who witnessed what they'd accomplished. The students themselves experienced the power of teamwork and of their own value as people who could get an important job done. For kids who'd always been on the receiving end rather than contributing, it was a revelation.

## **CIVIC EDUCATION**

Civic education goes beyond the teaching of how our government is organized and how it functions, and the importance of its founding documents. Civic education focuses on the *practice* of good citizenship. There's no better way to do that than through service-learning

projects in which kids assess a public problem and then design and carry out a project that helps solve it.

The service-learning/civic education process becomes more intense if the kids pick a project in which they might question existing public customs, laws or policies and want to work toward changing them. Often, a project that initially seems not to have a civic education component grows into one that does. Here's an example:

The kids decide to implement an adopt-a grandparent project at a home for the elderly. In the course of that project, they learn that the home is about to be razed to build an office building and that the seniors are to be moved to a location much less suitable, in a part of the city where land prices are lower. Public transportation in the new location is poor, shopping is harder, crime is more prevalent and there are no nearby parks. The kids may be rightly concerned about the future of the residents they are getting to know and they may logically wonder why such a change is happening. This may lead them to explore community attitudes toward the elderly and zoning laws and other public policies that affect this problem. They may ask what they can do to help solve what they see as a significant public problem affecting their new friends.

If *your* kids start looking for first causes like this, please resist any urge you might feel to stop them! Support them in researching the issue and in creating a plan to do something about it—including seeking to change public attitudes and policies.

We understand that it can be scary to give kids this much latitude. They *will* make some mistakes—they're young and inexperienced. Talk their plans through with them and join in the discussion of options and alternatives. You definitely will want to review their letter to the city's Director of Housing and make sure the language is respectful and the grammar is correct. You will want to make sure they are well-prepared and well-dressed if they go to a city council meeting to voice their concerns.

But don't shut the kids down or they'll get exactly the wrong lesson—that they should never raise a voice to power. Show them how to be active, caring citizens. It's important to their future, and to the future of the country, that they learn to participate effectively in the public process, and to trust their competence to do that.

Opening service-learning to this range of civic education projects lets kids see first-hand the complex problems that exist in society. When kids see the impact they can have on *solving* public problems, they see themselves as active contributors to their world. Former Senator John Glenn, chair of the National Commission on Service-Learning, called this kind of service-learning the single best way to educate young people for active citizenship in a democracy.

Your thoughtful encouragement and counsel will be vital to the task. This *Service-Learning Guide* will help you help your kids use their skills and resources—and accept their responsibility—to shape the future for the common good.





## The Importance of Reflection

Reflection is a key factor in making any kind of values education real and lasting. Kids need to put the positive qualities of character they learn about in the context of a value system that makes sense to them—one that has enough perceived merit for them to take it seriously as guidance for their lives. They need to wrestle with these elements and test them, not just recite them. Reflection helps the teaching get all the way home.

Don't use Yes/No questions in guiding reflections with your kids. Instead, ask them questions that will lead them to truly ponder what they've learned. After reading the story of a hero from the *Voices of Hope* anthology, for example, discuss the hero's qualities of character and the obstacles he or she had to overcome. Why did this hero do what he or she did? What, if any, is the relevance to the kids' lives? Would the kids do what the hero did? Why or why not?

As part of reflecting on heroes' stories, *challenge your kids to see the difference between heroes and celebrities*—people who may be famous for their talents in music or sports or movies. We've got nothing against celebrities, but most of them have nothing to do with courage, compassion or service. The hero takes risks for the

common good. As myth expert Joseph Campbell put it, the hero goes into the dark forest alone, at a place where there is no path, and he does so to serve others.

Reflection is also important to the success of any service-learning project. There are two paths here. The first asks kids to reflect on the *content* of their project. Why does this need exist? Are there customs, laws or policies that cause this problem or make it worse? What changes might be necessary and how could they be made? See CIVIC EDUCATION, page 5.

The second path is more personal. Kids need to reflect, for example, on what they're learning from their experience and how they feel about it. Even if the kids have chosen the problem and the project they're working on, service without reflection misses large opportunities for them to learn about themselves and about their world. See the *Voices of Hope* Student Post-Use Survey on page 85 for questions that can be used to guide reflections.

Offer your own reflections on service you've done. The kids will love to hear from you and your thoughts will give them something to bounce off of.



# How to Talk to Your Kids About Service

Suggestions for motivation and reflection

Many kids may not appreciate, at least initially, why they should get involved in service or service-learning projects. Some may be cynical or resistant.

Below is the text of a speech by Giraffe Heroes Project President John Graham to the student body of Mercer Island High School in Seattle WA—just before the kids headed out on a school-organized “day of service.” You may find some of the thoughts here useful in talking to your own kids.

Why are you doing this? Why are you going out on an all-day service project today? It could rain. The work could be hard. There may be other things you’d rather be doing.

So why do it?

Because everybody else is doing it? Because you might be marked absent if you don’t? Because it might affect a grade? Because it will look good on your college applications? Because you want to help?

It’s important to feel motivated for anything you do, and not just go through the motions.

Why? You know why.

When you’re motivated, you do your best work. It’s more fun. You feel alive and excited. Your brain is working at top speed. And if you’re not motivated—for example when you have to do assignments you think are stupid—well, we all know how we feel then.

But what *are* the motivations for service?

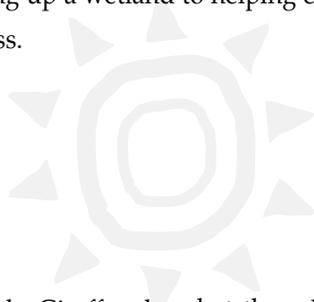
Let’s ask Giraffes. I know many of you have been through the Giraffe Heroes Program when you were in middle school, right? So you know that I’m not talking about animal giraffes. I’m talking about people who stick their necks out for the common good. People like:

- Casey Ruud, a safety inspector who put his job on the line when he refused to ignore dangerous safety violations at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington State;



- Craig Kielburger, a Toronto student who heard reports of child slave labor in Pakistan, went there to do his own investigation, then started an international campaign to free the children.
- Andy and Vashti Hurst, who walked away from a comfortable life to fight poverty, disease and injustice on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

The Giraffe Heroes Project tells the stories of Giraffes like these in our publications, on our website, in schools, and at public events. People see or hear about Giraffes and are inspired to take on the challenges *they* see, from cleaning up a wetland to helping end hunger and homelessness.



But why do Giraffes do what they do, taking risks and working hard to help other people? When we ask Giraffes this question, many of them tell us, in so many words, that this is a damn-fool question. The problem was right in front of them, they'll say, and nobody else was acting—so what else were they supposed to do? A few of them use religious language, as in “I was led to do what I did”—but most don't.

The more you talk to them the clearer it gets that Giraffes are motivated to be of service, to help solve public problems, by a strong sense that what they're doing is *meaningful* to them—that is, that it satisfies a personal sense of purpose at the core of their being. It's this motivation that makes Giraffes so powerful in solving problems and so inspiring to people who hear their stories.

Of course it isn't just Giraffes who are motivated by a sense of meaning.

Philosophers and spiritual leaders have been telling us for millennia that there's no deeper human need and no more powerful yearning than to live a life we know is meaningful. We all want to be able to look at ourselves in the mirror and know that who we are and what we're doing reflects our deepest priorities and values, that we're not just marking time.

Look to your own experience. Isn't it true that the more meaning there is in the things you do—work, relationships, activities—the more alive you feel? You may work very hard and there may be trials, but there's also an energy, a sense of excitement, a deep satisfaction of being in the right place at the right time. You're inspiring to others, and they're attracted to join you, to follow your lead. You're much more likely to get the results you want.

And we all know people who seem to operate without meaning in their lives, and for them, life seems to be like slogging through wet concrete.



It took me a long time to learn the importance of meaning.

As a young man, the most important thing in my life was adventure, the bigger the better. I shipped out on a freighter when I was seventeen, and made the first direct ascent of the north wall of Alaska's Mt. McKinley at 21, a climb so dangerous that it's never been repeated. I hitchhiked around the world alone at 22.

In the US Foreign Service, I was in the middle of the revolution in Libya and the war in Vietnam. I was smart and tough and got promoted rapidly. But even after the promotions, what I was doing for a living began to sit like a bad meal in the pit of my stomach. Something was wrong. Something was missing.

In the late 70's, I worked at the US Mission to the United Nations in New York. Part of my job was representing the US on the Security Council committee charged with overseeing the arms embargo on South Africa. The UN had imposed the embargo because guns sold to the white South African Government in those years could be used to enforce apartheid, a brutal system of institutionalized racism.

But the embargo leaked like a sieve. There were huge amounts of money to be made in the arms trade, and the arms dealers had their friends in legislatures in Europe and in our own Congress. So guns and other military equipment slipped through to the South African police and army, and were used against black South Africans. The situation reeked of greed and hypocrisy, and our country, despite our lofty rhetoric on human rights, was right in the middle of it.

I thought that was wrong. So I ignored my instructions to go easy with those flaunting the embargo. Instead, I worked secretly for months to tighten it. I did that by helping the Third World countries on the Security Council increase their pressure against my own government. I gave these Third World countries documents that showed who was profiting from the arms trade. I told them which strategies I thought would work to force the U.S. and others to tighten the embargo. I even helped some Third World countries write their attacks on my own government—once I saw an emphatic message from an African Foreign Minister to the US Secretary of State that I myself had helped draft two weeks before.

When all this was humming, I went to my own bosses and told them that the pressure (which I'd helped create) was now so intense that the US had no choice but to agree to a tougher embargo. It worked. With the US on board, the Europeans were forced to go along. A tougher embargo was passed in the spring of 1980.

At any time in this process I could and should have been fired—and almost was.

Why did I do this? Why did I risk a career that was very important to me? I did it because of one afternoon in South Africa that started in the squalor and oppression of the black township of Soweto. I walked down dusty, garbage-strewn streets and felt dozens of angry black eyes boring into the back of my white head. As a US diplomat, I was invited that evening to a fancy cocktail party in Johannesburg's richest white suburb, in a mansion protected by iron fences and guard dogs.

Apartheid stank. From that day on, helping end apartheid *meant* something to me at a deep place in my soul. I risked my career to serve a cause I believed in. In the end, the motivation was so strong I couldn't not do what I did.

The experience was like learning to swim. I couldn't forget what it felt like or how to do it. I couldn't forget the sense of joy and fulfillment I had in making a difference like that. I'd found the meaning for my life and I'd found it in service, in bettering the lives of others, in helping solve a significant public problem.

The lesson to me, repeated many times since, is that nothing is more important than finding meaning for our lives.

I also learned that meaning and service are linked. Service is the surest path to a meaningful life. And meaning is a strong and stable motivation for service.



How can you serve?

Today is important. Do what you are doing well. Think about what you are doing and reflect on it, talk about it.

But don't stop there, with one day's work. See service as a lifetime occupation. I'm not suggesting that you all become Mother Therasas or that you all start nonprofits.

There are many opportunities to do meaningful things and many opportunities to serve.

You can serve in government, helping solve public problems. You can serve in business, making good, needed products that are fairly priced and produced by well-treated employees. You can serve in science, education, the arts... You can serve as parents, members of communities, citizens... you can serve anywhere.

I understand that 98% of you in this school will go on to college. I'm sure you're all tired of being told that you are future leaders. That you are privileged, that you need to give back.

Look, I have degrees from both Harvard and Stanford. I was one of the youngest people ever to reach the senior ranks of the Foreign Service. I didn't exactly start small myself. Let me tell you something:

You may well end up making a lot of money. You may well end up having power. It's my experience, and the experience of many Giraffes, that you won't find meaning in money or power. You'll find it in *using* your positions and professions and possessions to be of service, to help solve important public problems, to make life better for other people.

Every one of us has and will have unique opportunities to make a difference, if only in small and quiet ways. A successful life is about spotting those opportunities and acting on them. The only mistake you can make is to ignore the quest, to settle for a plodding life, to just look out for Number One, to live and die without ever having made a difference.

There are enormous temptations to try to find meaning in shallow things. It's in the culture. We've become a nation of consumers more than we are citizens. We define ourselves more by what we can buy than who we are. Advertising urges us each to grab our piece of the pie, rather than spending our minds and hearts in advancing the good for all of us. All around you, every day,

there are constant messages that your lives will be perfect if you have this cool car, that knock-em-dead shirt, the right music—always something you have to buy.

It's your life. It's your decisions. Soon you will start making choices that will determine whether you live a life that you find meaningful—or not. We all make such choices.

Choose a meaningful life. Choose to be of service.



Now let me raise the ante.

Don't limit your service to just helping meet needs. Extend that service to finding out what *creates* those needs, and then doing something about *that*.

There's an old story about some people living on a riverbank who saw, to their horror, that there were babies floating down the river. They immediately rushed into the river to save the babies. Except for one woman who started running upstream. "What are you doing," the others called, "the babies are drowning." "I'm going to find out who's throwing the babies into the river," the woman called back as she ran, "and stop them."

If you're working on a project to clean up a wetland, for example, and you see that a local company is polluting the wetland, and that your town's anti-pollution laws are too lax to stop them—then you should run upstream. You should look for first causes and figure out how to stop the polluting.

As you get older, keep going upstream. See the big picture. Be aware of the public problems around you and contribute to their solutions:

How will you deal with Social Security and with the crisis in health care if, as it looks now, your elders dump those problems in your laps?

What will you do with the conflicts that erupt when the price of crude oil hits \$100 a barrel?

How will you keep your communities from flying apart as the rising gap in income between rich and poor radicalizes the poor, as such gaps have always done?

How will you cope with worsening environmental problems, when the effects of global warming will be a lot worse than more and bigger hurricanes?

You will inherit a war on terrorism with unknown and unthinkable dangers.

And each of you will have local problems to deal with wherever you live.

Dealing with all this will take people with motivation, creativity, caring, guts, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility for the greater good—both the people who will lead and those who will work with them.

Is that you? Can you make a difference? Will you try?

Don't wait until you are completely grown to realize the impact you can have on the world. Start today in answering this question from the poet Mary Oliver: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

It's the most important question any of us will ever ask. And it extends far beyond one day of service. Find the problems and issues that concern you, large or small. What can you do about them, with the skills, resources and energy you have *now*?

Of course there will be trials and risks. Show me a life without risks and I will show you a life that is unfulfilled.

Tackle the problems that you've found with everything you've got. See the impact you can make on your communities and even on your nation and the world.

Do it to make things better for other people. But also do it for *you*—to find the joy and fulfillment of living a meaningful life.



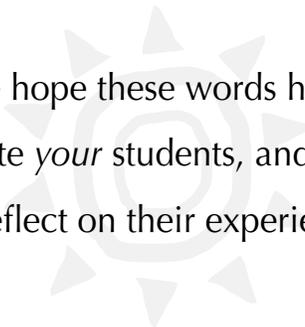
Not long ago I went back for a high school reunion in Tacoma. Nearly all my classmates were leading comfortable lives in business or the professions. They worried about the stock market and college tuitions for their kids. To be honest, I was bored to death.

Except for one man. He'd been the slowest kid in class, the butt of our jokes, the Least Likely to Succeed. He had also for 30 years been directing a social service agency in the worst area of Tacoma and had just started a controversial needle exchange program.

He was fascinating. He spoke with the charisma, energy and peace of mind of a person who'd truly found his calling and was answering it with everything he had.

What will you see in yourself and your classmates at *your* reunions? How will you have answered Mary Oliver's question "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

We hope these words help you  
motivate *your* students, and help them  
reflect on their experiences.





# Evaluations, Questionnaire Results and Correlations with National Standards

## 1. EVALUATIONS

*Voices of Hope* is new and no formal third-party evaluations of it have yet been made. However, there have been two such evaluations done of its parent program, the Giraffe Heroes Program. Those two evaluations are described briefly below. To receive a copy of either of them, write the Giraffe Heroes Project at PO Box 759, Langley WA 98260.

1. A formal, third-party study of the Giraffe Heroes Program was completed by evaluators at the University of Washington in 1997.

- 100% of teachers in the study stated that they observed some or many positive attitude and behavior changes in students as a result of using the Giraffe Heroes Program; they particularly noted an increase in self-esteem, caring, teamwork and problem-solving skills.
- 75% of teachers said they observed positive changes in their *own* attitude or behavior as a result of using the Program.
- 92% of teachers rated the overall effectiveness of the Program as excellent. 100% rated its user-friendliness as excellent.
- 83% said they would encourage other teachers to use it.

2. A formal assessment of the program by a team from the University of Washington indicated in August 1996 that

- 90% of teachers returning surveys reported positive changes in the attitude and behavior of students in the Giraffe Heroes Program.
- 80% reported positive shifts in their own attitudes and behavior. These results track anecdotal feedback that both students and teachers gain confidence and competence from the Program.

## 2. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

There have been many sets of questionnaires returned by users of the Giraffe Heroes Program. Summaries of two of them are described below:

1. From a sample of 86 pre- and post-use questionnaires taken over one semester on Guam in 1995, the number of kids using the Giraffe Heroes Program:
- who thought that “nothing could be done” to solve problems in their schools or communities dropped by 29%;
  - who agreed that they, personally, could make a difference in helping solve such problems went up by 24%;

- who chose heroes because they were famous, rich and “did whatever they want” dropped by 20%;
  - who chose heroes because they were brave, caring and “did what’s right, no matter what” went up by 39%.
2. From a sample of 150 pre- and post-use questionnaires taken over 15 months in Seattle in 1994-95, the number of kids using the Giraffe Heroes Program:
- who thought that “nothing could be done” to solve problems in their schools or communities dropped by 55%;
  - who agreed that *they* should help solve such problems went up by 27%;
  - who named sports or media celebrities as their “heroes” dropped by 50%, replaced by people they had met in the program who worked to solve problems in their communities

### 3. CORRELATIONS WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS

*Voices of Hope* has not yet been correlated against any national standards. However, the Giraffe Heroes Program, the parent program for *Voices of Hope*, has been correlated against national standards for academic learning, character education, service-learning and prevention, as follows:

#### **Correlation of the Giraffe Heroes Program and national academic standards**

All versions of the Giraffe Heroes Program have been correlated against the national academic standards established by the McRel Standards Database—a coherent

compendium of academic standards for primary, intermediate, middle school and high school grades. “McRel” stands for Midcontinent Research for Education and Learning—a private, nonprofit organization, established in 1966 and based in Aurora Colorado, whose purpose is to improve education through applied research and development. McRel’s vision is that clear consistent standards provide clearer expectations for students and the possibility of better communication among teachers, administrators, parents and the larger community. The McRel Standards Database is based on work sponsored wholly, or in part, by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education.

#### **Correlation of the Giraffe Heroes Program and *The Essential Elements of Service-Learning Practice***

*The Essential Elements of Service-Learning Practice* were proposed and written with the support and input of the National Service-Learning Cooperative, a group of thirteen organizations funded by the Corporation for National Service to provide technical assistance across every region of the United States in the area of service-learning. This initiative was conducted by the National Youth Leadership Council which is the coordinating organization for the Cooperative. The *Essential Elements* were first published in April 1998.

The *Essential Elements* were identified by teachers, community educators, school administrators, community-based personnel and state Learn and Serve directors who had extensive personal and system wide experience with teaching and implementing service-learning. Their objective was to define the purposes, conditions and techniques under which service-learning

can best contribute to a quality education—one rich in skills, knowledge, meaning and long-term benefits both to individuals and to the community.

### **Correlation of the Giraffe Heroes Program and Character Education Quality Standards**

The *Character Education Quality Standards* present the key components of effective character education, so that schools and districts can evaluate their efforts, using these criteria. Released in 2000, they provide a means for educators, administrators, and community members to reflect on current practices, identify short- and long-term objectives, better organize strategic plans, and evaluate character education programs, books and curriculum resources.

The *Standards* are based on the Character Education Partnership's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education™* and were originally designed in collaboration with the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character (CAEC) at Boston University and the 1999 National Schools of Character Blue Ribbon Panel.

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) is a nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to developing moral character and civic virtue in our nation's youth as one means of creating a more compassionate and responsible society. CEP is not affiliated with any party or creed. It is dedicated to the idea that character and education are natural partners in helping children become ethical, responsible adults. It holds that core ethical values can be a matter of consensus and a model for our youth. It is committed to the practical implementation of character education throughout the learning process.

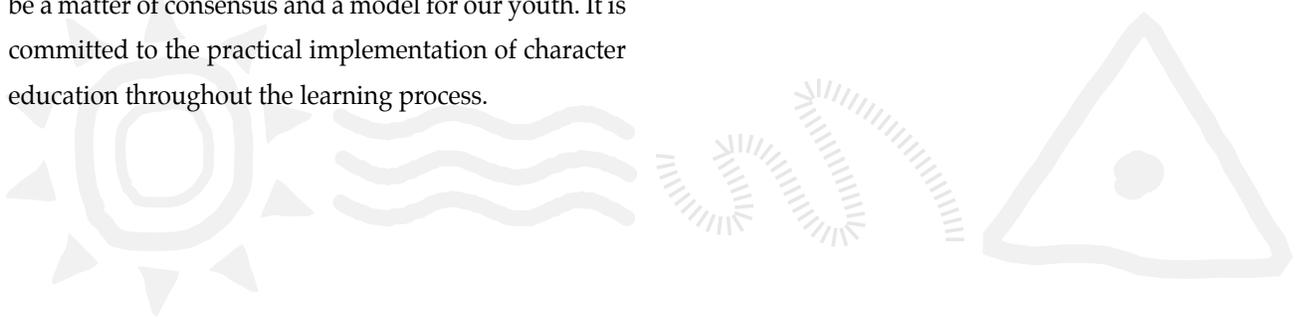
### **Correlation of the Giraffe Heroes Program and Prevention standards—the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets**

The 40 Developmental Assets are key factors which research shows nurture competent, caring and responsible behavior in the lives of children or adolescents. A definitive study of almost 100,000 6th-12th grade public school students in 213 cities during the 1996-97 school year indicated that the more of these Assets there are in a young person's life, the more likely he or she was to succeed in school, help others, value diversity, maintain good health, exhibit leadership, resist danger, delay gratification and overcome adversity.

The 40 Developmental Assets are widely used by schools, school districts and communities nationwide as guides for creating comprehensive programs to support the healthy development of youth, and to diminish or prevent negative behaviors, such as violence, substance abuse and teen pregnancy.

The 40 Developmental Assets were developed by the Search Institute, an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to advance the well-being of adolescents and children by generating knowledge and promoting its application. The Institute conducts research and evaluation, develops publications and practical tools, and provides training and technical assistance.

To receive a copy of any of these correlations, write the Giraffe Heroes Project at PO Box 759, Langley WA 98260.







# The “Seven Neckbones”

## **Seven Steps to a Successful Service Project**

Choose the Problem  
page 19

Research the Problem  
page 23

Decide on a Project that Addresses  
the Problem  
page 29

Create a Vision of the Results You Want  
page 33

Make a Plan  
page 43

Take Action  
page 51

Reflect, Celebrate and Begin Again  
page 55



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

## Neckbone ONE — Choose the Problem

Think about any problems that concern you in your school, neighborhood, community or in the world. Which one seems most important to you?

### How long will this take?

One or two 45-minute sessions, depending on how many ideas are generated.

### Materials you'll need:

- flip chart and marking pens
- large sticky-notes

### How to get ready:

Read through the process for each of the Seven Neckbones (pages 19-58) so you will have a clear overview of how you and the students will accomplish the service-learning project.

Remember throughout this process to step back from your role as a teacher and focus on your role as a coach, facilitator and guide.

### Objective:

Students identify problems they care about and choose one they'd like to work on.

### Method:

Students use a variety of methods to develop a list of problems they care about, and narrow the options until they agree on one problem to take on.





1

Tell students that the first step in starting a class service project is to talk about what they care about. You don't mean their favorite food, clothes, music, or actor. You mean how they feel about some *problem* (or cause or concern or issue) *that affects many people*. Examples from other students doing this program include pollution, violence, homelessness, or substance abuse.



2

Start generating a list of problems students care about by asking if any of them have already been thinking of problems that concern them—maybe ones suggested by the heroes' stories they've read. Write the problems they name on the board, on a flip chart, or on large sticky-notes (these make it easier to group similar ideas together in Step 3). Brainstorm more problems, and put them up on the board, chart or sticky-notes too.



It's important for the students to identify the problem they care about first, *then* choose a specific service project that addresses that problem. By choosing the problem first, they sharpen their focus for choosing a project, making that process a lot easier than if they started with the whole universe of possible projects. More importantly, by focusing on the problem first, they'll also make it far more likely that, in carrying out the project they *do* choose, they'll be making a difference on something that really *matters* to them. This depth of concern will make the project more fun, exciting and meaningful, and deepen their commitment to carrying it out. Here are a few examples of problems, and of specific projects that address them:

- Violence at school:  
Create a student-run process for mediating disputes
- Homelessness:  
Clean and repaint a homeless shelter; lobby for more public housing
- A polluted river:  
Organize and implement a "clean up the river" campaign

The choosing process you're starting here can be chaotic and sometimes frustrating. Resist the temptation to shorten or simplify it by making the choices yourself. Your role here is as a facilitator. Again, your students will put maximum energy and commitment into a service project if it deals with a problem *they've* identified as being of real concern to them.



**3** Have students combine problems that are similar until they've narrowed the field down to at most ten. Make sure students feel no important ideas have been lost or misinterpreted.



**4** Tell students that now they need to decide which of these problems is most important to the class as a whole at this time. Go for consensus, but if there is none, we suggest setting aside 15-20 minutes to let students lobby their classmates, explaining why this or that problem should be the one the class chooses as the basis for its service project. Tell your students that trying to influence other people's opinions is a core part of the process by which laws and policies are made in a democracy.



**5** Conduct a series of votes, with the lowest-vote-getting problem eliminated in each succeeding round, until only one problem is left. Students can vote by show of hands or by secret ballot. Give each student two or three votes in the first several rounds, then one vote in the final round(s).



Another option is to use colored dots, with each student sticking no more than one dot next to each option. A green dot could mean they care about this problem so much they'd be willing to work hard on a project that dealt with it. A blue dot could mean they could go along with this suggestion, but it's not their first choice. A red dot could mean "No way."



At this point, not every student has to be enthusiastic about the problem chosen. Things will go well if even a few students are inspired initially. Enthusiasm in the class will grow as the service project gets underway, especially if the project is multi-faceted enough so all students can find roles that interest them.



What is important at this stage is that students begin to think about public problems, not as something "somebody else" always handles, but as matters of personal concern and responsibility. They'll soon move from thought into action by creating and carrying out a service project. As they do that, they become active citizens.



6

After the problem has been chosen, help the class write a short description of it. Examples:

*"The lake in our town is so polluted that nobody can swim there any more."*

*"The AIDS epidemic in Africa has created thousands of orphans who are very poor and sometimes sick themselves."*

*"There's no safe place in our community for people to gather and for kids to play."*



## Neckbone TWO — Research the Problem

Get a better idea of the size and shape of the problem you care about. Find out what, if anything, is already being done about it.

### How long will this take?

Two 45-minute sessions plus out-of-class time for research.

### Materials you'll need:

- flip chart and marking pens

This Neckbone is a good opportunity for tying students' work on a service project to academic learning in the curriculum. For example, research on an environmental problem could tie into the science and math curricula. Two sessions are allotted here for students to do this research. The Neckbone can be extended if that's needed to support academic requirements. We've scheduled the break between sessions here after Step 5, but feel free to shift the break to fit your situation.

### Objective:

Students find out important details about the problem they've chosen, including what, if anything, is already being done about it.

### Method:

Students do research using the Internet and other sources.



## SESSION ONE

# 1

Tell the class that, now that they've decided on the problem they want to work on, they need to gather more information on it before they design and carry out a service project that addresses it.

What do they need to know about this problem that will make it easier for them to design a project? Write out the students' questions on a flip chart page that can be saved, leaving space for answers in between each one.

If the class doesn't bring them up, suggest that these questions are also important:

*How widespread is this problem?*

*Who does this problem affect and in what ways?*

*Who else has tackled this problem? Where? What did they do? With what results?*

*Is anything being done on this problem now?*

*Are there people or organizations that could help the class address this problem?*

# 2

Start the search for answers to these questions with a class brainstorming session. What information do the students already have? Write their responses down on the flip chart page, under the relevant question.

# 3

Identify answers that are still missing. Have the class go back into brainstorm mode and generate ideas on where to look for these answers. The most obvious sources include:

- site visits
- adults they know who have some knowledge of the problem
- libraries, including the school library
- the Worldwide Web
- agencies and organizations concerned with this problem that they can call or email



4

Divide the class up into teams and assign each team the task of answering or completing the answer to one or more of the questions that remain unanswered. Alternatively, make this an individual assignment.

5

Give the class several days to complete this assignment and report back.

## SESSION TWO



6

Refer to the flip chart page and ask students to complete the answers, using what they've learned in their research.

The class may find that some significant gaps still remain, and/or that their research has generated questions they hadn't thought of earlier. If so, discuss these remaining questions. Any answers in the room? If not, ask a few students to find them before the next class meeting.

The students' research may also have generated new perspectives on the problem. If so, discuss the enlarged picture that students now have of the problem that they've chosen.

Is the class still eager to work on this problem? If they're not, then they'll need to go back to the list of options they generated in Neckbone 1, choose another problem, and answer the key questions about *it* before they proceed.



7

After class, add (or ask a small team of students to add) key points from the research done by the class to the short description of the problem the class came up with in Neckbone 1. This will be the class's Problem Statement. Hand out copies to the class at the next session. Here are three sample Problem Statements:





▶▶ **Problem A: The lake in our town is so polluted that nobody swims there any more.**

*Key points from research:*

- There is now a ban on swimming enforced by the City Health Department.
- Part of the problem is people illegally dumping garbage near the lake shore.
- A newspaper story six months ago identified the harmful chemicals in the lake as mostly coming from household fertilizers and pesticides.
- The city has done nothing about trying to control either the dumping of garbage or the leaching of household chemicals into the lake.
- Many people living near the lake feel frustrated and angry about the situation but nobody has done anything about it yet.
- There are environmental groups in the city that might be able to help us do something about this problem.



▶▶ **Problem B: The AIDS epidemic in Africa has created thousands of orphans who are very poor and sometimes sick themselves.**

*Key points from research:*

- AIDS kills 6,000 people per day in Africa—more than wars, famines and floods.
- There are now 12 million kids in Africa orphaned because of AIDS.
- 470,000 children die of AIDS in Africa each year, most of them infected by their mothers.
- Many children in Africa have to drop out of school to take care of other family members because of AIDS.
- Most people with AIDS in Africa cannot afford the medical care and drug treatment they need.
- Other nations are contributing some money to help, but it is not nearly enough.
- Many people and organizations are trying to help, for example, the 'Q' Fund for AIDS (see page 101 in the *Voices of Hope* anthology for the story of Chellie Kew).



**Problem C: There's no safe place in our community for people to gather and for kids to play.**

*Key points from research:*

- Parks are the most important places in our community for people to gather and for kids to play.
- There are six parks in our community and all of them are shabby and run-down. There aren't enough trash bins and the few there are aren't being used. Most of the flowers and plants have died.
- The city's budget for maintaining parks was cut drastically two years ago and nobody in City Hall seems interested in doing anything about it.
- Many people say they are afraid to use the parks; they say it's dangerous to be there, especially at night.
- At least some of the people living near a park say they'd be willing to help clean it up, if somebody would organize the effort.
- A few individuals have done park clean-ups or planted flowers over the last year or so but there's been no large, organized effort. People seem discouraged.





## Neckbone THREE — Decide on a Project that Addresses the Problem

**What can you and your classmates do that will help make a difference? Describe this project in as much detail as you can. Give it a name.**

### How long will this take?

One or two 45-minute sessions, depending on how many ideas are generated.

### Materials you'll need:

- flip chart and marking pens
- Problem Statement developed in Neckbone 2

### How to get ready:

Review the Problem Statement from Neckbone 2. Check your schedule and the academic calendar and decide on a time frame for the students' service project. When will it start and by when must it be completed?

### Objective:

Students come up with a description of a project they will do to impact the problem they chose in Neckbone 1.

### Method:

Students brainstorm, discuss ideas, and choose a specific project designed to impact the problem they've identified.

Once your students start implementing their project, you may well need help in transportation and other logistics from parents or other community volunteers. Now's the time for you to think about that. Consider sending notices home or otherwise contacting potential adult volunteers. Alert them to the students' upcoming project, ask for their help and tell them more details will soon follow. Try to find one "spark-plug" volunteer who will take charge of enlisting and organizing the help you need.



1

Pass out copies of the Problem Statement developed at the end of Neckbone 2. Discuss any elements that are not clear. Tell students that with the problem they want to work on identified and researched, they're now ready to choose a specific project that will make a difference on the problem they care about.

Discuss the time frame they've got to work with. To help anchor students' sense of time, you might put up a rough calendar of the relevant months on a poster board or flip chart page, with vacations and breaks identified.

Start the process of choosing a project with a class brainstorm. What could the class do within that time frame that would make a difference on the problem they've chosen? What would produce the most benefit? Encourage students to let their minds range over all the possible projects they can think of.

Encourage quieter students to offer their ideas.

Write all suggestions on the board or a flip chart.

The process of choosing a project can be chaotic. Your job is to keep this process on track, to summarize what's been said every now and then, and to generally keep things flowing. You want to catalyze the creative process in your class—not supplant it. Resist the temptation to shorten or simplify it by making the choice yourself. In this process, your students are learning how to be active, participating citizens.

You're a coach here, and your coaching role is a delicate one. You'll want to guide students toward projects that are challenging and away from any that are so *unchallenging* that they'll get no sense of achievement from doing them (e.g. making "Don't Litter" posters for the school bulletin boards). Remind students of the stories of Giraffe heroes they have read; Giraffe heroes stick their necks out, and so can they. Whatever they choose should be a real stretch, far enough outside their usual comfort zone so that success will be a "personal best" for them.

If the students really want to do something that's out of reach—at least in the time they've got—you might suggest that they tackle a significant piece of the larger project, one in which short-term progress is possible. For example, instead of trying to "end homelessness in our town," students can help clean and repaint a homeless shelter and lobby the city council or a city agency to do more for the homeless. Instead of providing food and medicine for every needy child in Africa, they might find a way, through their research, to partner with one village, raising money and sending supplies.



Don't veto and don't let students turn away from projects that require a little money, help from volunteers or other resources the class doesn't have yet. Tell students they can raise money, recruit volunteers, and find other resources they need as part of their project.

2

When the class has come up with some good options, tell them that they must now choose just one project from this list.



*It is possible for the class to break into smaller groups and do more than one project at once, especially if the projects are closely related, but this increases the challenges of planning and logistics.*



Students can start narrowing the list by combining project ideas where feasible. For example, helping to repaint a homeless shelter *and* lobbying the city council on homelessness could be planned as aspects of a single project.

As in Neckbone 1, go for consensus, but if there is none, we suggest that the next step be setting aside 15-20 minutes to let students lobby their classmates—explaining why this or that project should be the one the class chooses.



*As in the choosing process in Neckbone 1, democracy is the lesson here: students are attempting to influence others with their ideas. This is a good opportunity to engage the class in discussion of the democratic process, of which lobbying and voting are key elements.*



3

Conduct a series of votes, with the lowest-vote-getting problem eliminated in each succeeding round, until only one problem is left. Use whatever method worked for you in choosing the problem in Neckbone 1, such as colored dots, show-of-hands or secret balloting.



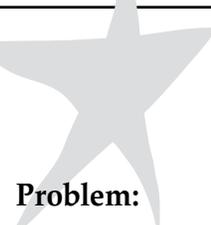
4

Confirm the time frame, and break it down roughly into planning time and implementation time.



# 5

Once the class project idea has been identified, start creating a Project Description Sheet by putting the key points you now know about the project on a savable poster or flip chart page or other permanent display. Start by writing the class's short description of the *problem* (from Neckbones 1 and 2) near the top, leaving room above it for a project name, to be added later. Below that, write a short description of the *project*. Then enter the time frame for the project. Here's a sample Project Description Sheet at this phase of the project:

 <h2>PROJECT NAME (to be added later)</h2> <p><b>Problem:</b> There's no safe place in our community for people to gather and for kids to play.</p> <p><b>Project:</b> Hilltop Park, near our school, has become ugly and dirty. Nobody wants to walk or play there anymore. We'll clean it up, making it a place people will be so proud of they'll keep it clean.</p> <p><b>Time frame:</b> April 9 – May 31. Three weeks for planning and one month for fieldwork.</p>
--





### Objective:

Students create a clear, concrete vision of the results they want to achieve for their project.

### Method:

**Session 1:** Students learn what a vision is and why it's important for their class project.

**Session 2:** Students create a vision for their project.

**Session 3:** Students add key details to the description of the project.

## Neckbone FOUR — Create a Vision of the Results You Want

How will your project look when it's completed? A clear, detailed mental picture will help keep you on course. It will also help keep everyone excited, energized and working together.

### How long will this take?

Three 45-minute sessions.

### Materials you'll need:

- Problem Statement from Neckbone 2
- Project Description Sheet started in Neckbone 3
- flip chart and marking pens
- art supplies (if you choose the posters option in Session 3)

### How to get ready:

Review the information on the Problem Statement and the Project Description. Go over the information in this Neckbone to make sure you understand what a vision is and why it's important. To help you get ready to coach this lesson, you might go through the vision creation exercise yourself, for a project you'd like to accomplish in your own life.

We urge you not to skip or skim over the visioning process. Learning to create and use a vision not only helps students succeed with their projects, it gives them a tool they can use for the rest of their lives. Teachers across the country tell us that using this process has also helped *them* achieve their own personal and professional goals. These benefits make facilitating this Neckbone worth your time and effort, even if it's unfamiliar ground.

## SESSION ONE

# 1

Introduce the concept of a “vision” to your students. Explain that a vision is simply a mental picture of something that doesn’t yet exist—but that picture is so clear and strong that holding onto it can actually help you make that something real.

For example—top free-throw shooters in basketball can “see” the ball going into the basket before they shoot. The best artists can “see” a finished painting before they ever lift a brush. Experienced cooks can “see” a beautiful meal on the table before they lift a spoon. Top directors can “see” a perfect production before rehearsals begin.

Tell your students that a vision is not just a dream or a wish, like hoping you’ll get a certain present for Christmas. Visions are more deliberate and more powerful than that. Creating a vision is mentally standing in the future and actually “seeing” the results of plans and efforts that have not yet taken place. Visions can help them succeed in any project or challenge, now or in the future.

Ask your students if any of them ever had a strong, clear picture of an important goal and kept that picture topmost in their minds until it became real. Maybe it was a picture of winning an important game, finishing a big project, or leaving on some long-awaited family trip.

Tell students that visions are important because they are inspiration, guidance, and glue.

### **Inspiration.**

A powerful vision inspires people to act, to persist and to give their best, despite the obstacles which arise along the way.

**Example:** When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. described his vision for ending racial discrimination in America, it was unlikely that racial equality would ever become the law of the land, so strong was the opposition. But by describing his vivid picture of “the sons of slaves and the sons of slave-owners sitting down at the table of fellowship together,” Dr. King touched millions of people’s hearts and set in motion political activity throughout the country that resulted in laws that supported the progress he could “see” coming into existence.





### Guidance.

A vision is a practical guide for planning and carrying out the work on any project, large or small; it's like true north on a compass. Holding a clear vision of what you want will help you decide whether an action you are considering will help get you there—or take you down a side-track and waste your time.

**Example:** Dr. King was constantly urged by others to condone violence as part of the campaign for racial equality. But his vision was a nonviolent one, and Dr. King stayed on that course, knowing that in the end it would prove to be the most powerful force for change.



### Glue.

A vision can help keep everyone working together in a group for the long haul, even people who might not be used to working together.

**Example:** Dr. King's movement involved many people who did not agree with each other on many things. But they all shared a common vision of racial equality and justice. That common vision kept them planning and working together, despite their personal differences, and even when there were arguments.



Tell students that in Neckbone 3 they chose their class project; now they'll create a vision of the results they want for that project—a vision which will help them succeed.

Not every picture is a vision, however. Go over the elements of a vision below and read the examples. Then ask students to come up with their own examples.



### ELEMENTS OF A VISION

#### A vision should be very clear.

An effective vision is so sharp and so real that you can see it in detail (and hear it, smell it, taste it...).

**Example:** A runner has a vision of achieving a personal best. She not only sees herself flying down the track, she feels the air rushing past her ears and hears people's voices urging her on. At the finish line she sees herself looking up to see that she has just done her best time ever.



**A vision should include changes in people's attitudes.**

Most problems are caused at least in part by people's *attitudes*. Think of the problem of pollution, for example. Unless the attitudes that lead people to pollute are changed, a project aimed at simply cleaning up the pollution will only help for a little while; then things will slide back to "normal."

**Example:** A middle school class working to help clean up a local wetland distributes posters and flyers in the nearby community that show that using less lawn fertilizers and weed killers makes a big difference in the quality of the water that goes into the wetland. Their research tells them that simply cleaning up the wetland, without educating people about the sources of pollution and changing their attitudes about using certain fertilizers and weed killers, is only a short-term fix. In their vision, changes in public attitudes have lowered the use of these pollutants permanently.

**A vision should be big enough.**

*Stretch* your vision even beyond your own project.

**Example:** A classroom doing a recycling project "sees" that their project has become a model that's used by the whole school, and then by other schools.

**A vision comes from your heart, not your head.**

It's a question of timing. Once you have a vision, *then* use your rational thinking skills to plan and problem-solve the moves that will get you to that vision (see Neckbone 5). But you can't *think* your way to a vision—you've got to get there with your heart and your imagination.

**Example:** The class doing that recycling project (above) needs to "see" the good results of its project first—*then* figure out how to design and carry out the work that will produce those results.



## SESSION TWO

# 4

Briefly review what the students learned about visions in the last session. Tell them that now it's time for them to create their own vision of what their service project will achieve.

Before they start, review with them the Problem Statement from Neckbone 2 and the Project Description sheet started in Neckbone 3.

# 5

With this information in mind, help students create a vision for their project using the following technique:

### CREATING A VISION

▶▶ **Have students pair up.**

▶▶ **Use your imagination.**

Tell them that in order to create a vision of the results they want for their project, they need to put themselves into the future. Ask them to imagine, as clearly as they can, that they are visiting the site of their project *one month after* its successful completion. Then set the scene further, for example by saying:

*As you look around, you feel proud because your project has been a success—it's really helped with the problem the class chose to take on. But what, specifically, has changed? What looks different? What do you see people doing? What do you hear them saying about the project? What attitudes have changed?*

Urge students to come up with as many clear pictures as possible. Also—what sounds do they hear? What smells do they smell? Sounds and smells are part of the “picture” too.

▶▶ **Tell your story.**

Then tell them that the person sitting across from them was out of town for the entire time it took to do the project and now you're going to tell him/her about what you and the class did.

Each pair chooses who will go first. That person starts by telling the other person about the problem the class chose, and why. Then, in two





minutes or less, that person describes what he or she has just “seen” at the site of the completed project, giving lots of details.

As an alternative, let one person pretend to be listening to the radio on that day in the future, while the other person “broadcasts” from the scene, describing what’s going on, how things look, what people are saying, etc.

Remind students that they are in the future, so they are to describe the changes their project has caused using the present tense, not the future tense. For example: “*Children are playing in the clean and beautiful park*”—not “*children will be playing..*” And in describing any activities that led to those results, they must use the past tense, not the future tense. For example: “*We got the neighbors to agree..*”—not “*We’ll get the neighbors to agree..*”

#### **Identify the obstacles or risks.**

When the first student has finished, have them switch talker/listener roles. But the second student has a different task. He or she must first think of at least two significant *obstacles* or *risks* that the class saw *before* they started their project—then describe these obstacles or risks to the other person.

Explain to students that *obstacles* are problems that have to be overcome—for example, having no money to buy supplies or no way to transport the class to the project site. *Risks* are things that might scare them—for example, doing something they’ve never done before. Some things might be both obstacles and risks—such as trying to change somebody’s unhelpful attitude.

The speaker then puts him- or herself into the future and says: “*You know that project the class accomplished? Well, before we started, we knew we had to overcome two serious obstacles (or risks). They were.....* (speaker then describes the obstacles or risks—at least one of them should be caused by somebody’s unhelpful attitude). The speaker then continues: “*We got through both of them—and here’s how we did it.*” In two minutes or less he or she then describes what the class did to overcome the two obstacles or risks.



Remind students that they are in the future, so they are to describe the solutions in the present or past tense, not the future tense. For example: “We had no money so we did two car washes and made enough money to buy all the supplies we needed.” “We realized that neighbors had no idea how harmful the pesticides they were using were, so we sat down and talked with them and showed them charts until their attitudes began to change.”

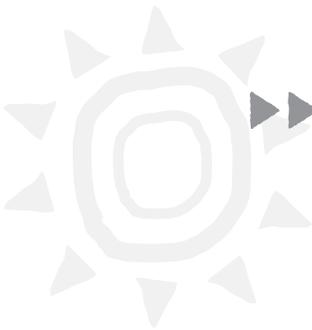


Tell students not to *think* their way through this exercise, but to *just start talking*, describing how they overcame the obstacles or risks. They’ll be amazed at the ideas that pop out! The solutions they come up with should also help them add important details to their vision.



### **Share the stories.**

When all students have had a chance to talk, refocus the class on the present. Ask for volunteers to describe to the whole class the vision they heard and the obstacles and risks faced and how they were overcome. Write the key points on the board or a flip chart. The idea is to quickly capture the pictures while they’re still fresh, which can be done with words and short phrases.



### **Combine similar elements.**

Underline those that seem most important to the students. They will form the basis of a Vision Statement.



You might use this alternative technique for creating a vision: Divide students up into groups of five or six. Have each group create “before-and-after” posters for their project. On the “before” poster, have them use pictures, drawings and/or photographs to show how things looked before their project. The “after” poster depicts their vision of how things look after their project is completed.

Ask the groups to present their posters. After each presentation, ask the rest of the class if the vision was clear. Could they “see” what the completed project accomplished? Then ask students to put the key pictures from each “after” poster in words on the board or a flip chart page. Combine the pictures (vision elements) that are similar and underline those that seem most important to the students. They will form the basis of a Vision Statement.

## SESSION THREE

6

Before this next session starts, condense the vision elements students have generated into a short “Vision Statement” (or choose a few students to do this). Remember that this statement should describe the class’s vision in the present tense, *as if their project has already changed the way things are*. If the future tense is used to describe the pictures the students have come up with—as in “we *will* clean up the park,” as opposed to “the park is cleaned-up”—their pictures are only a wish, not a vision, and will not be nearly as powerful in inspiring and guiding them to the result they want.

For the Hilltop Park example given in Neckbone 3, the vision statement might be:

*Vision: Flowers and shrubs are blooming. People of all ages are walking and sitting on freshly painted benches or having picnics on the grass. Children are playing, running, laughing and swinging on the swings. There’s no trash anywhere. People are dropping trash into big new containers and signs encourage everyone to do this. People are admiring the wonderful mural we painted near the park entrance. There’s an article about the revived park in the newspaper.*

7

Go over the draft Vision Statement with students to make sure it captures what they “saw.” Make any changes necessary.

8

Using the Vision Statement as a base, ask the students to describe specific details of their project. What did they see when the work was done? Tell them to pay particular attention to the scope of the project. How much can they do in the time they’ve got? Write all these suggestions down on the board or on another flipchart page as the students develop and discuss them. Then work with the class to winnow them down into 8-10 details that students feel fully describe what they want to do. Again, guide the class in creating a project that’s a real stretch for them, but not wholly impossible.

Tell students that nothing on this list is cast in concrete. They can add, subtract or amend details of the project as they get further into it.

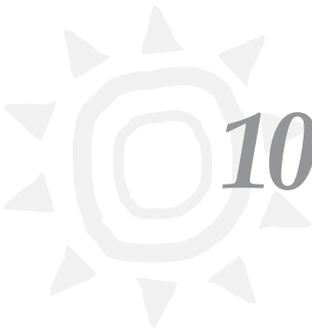


In the Hilltop Park example, these details might include:

- our project will cover the entire park, between 5th and 6th Streets, and between Wilson Avenue and the train tracks;
- we'll start by visiting people living next to the park, and by distributing flyers, telling people what we're doing, and inviting them to join us;
- we'll replace the litter barrels and pick up the trash;
- we'll get the city to schedule more trash pickups;
- we'll paint a wall mural on the side of the abandoned warehouse on 5th Street;
- we'll plant flowers and shrubs in key places;
- we'll raise the money we need or get donations of materials;
- we'll use the newspaper and TV station to attract support.



Now ask students to look back and forth between the Vision Statement and the list of details they've just compiled. They should be in sync. If they are not, students should edit either the Vision Statement or the list of details until they match. When they match, ask a student to add both to the Project Description Sheet.

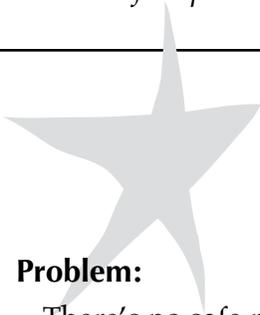


Have the students think of an appropriate name for their project—something that describes the project in a positive and energetic way (e.g. "Hilltop Rocks"). Write the name they choose at the top of the Project Description Sheet.



Before the next session, type up the Project Description Sheet as it now looks after Neckbone 4, or get a student to do this. Make a copy for each student. On the next page is a sample Project Description Sheet at this phase of the project.





## HILLTOP ROCKS

**Problem:**

There's no safe place in our community for people to gather and for kids to play.

**Project:**

Hilltop Park, near our school, has become ugly and dirty. Nobody wants to walk or play there anymore. We'll clean it up, making it a place people will be so proud of they'll keep it clean.

**Time frame:**

April 9 – May 31. Three weeks for planning and one month for fieldwork.

**Vision:**

Flowers and shrubs are blooming. People of all ages are walking and sitting on freshly painted benches or having picnics on the grass. Children are playing, running, laughing and swinging on the swings. There's no trash anywhere. People are dropping trash into big new containers and signs encourage everyone to do this. People are admiring the wonderful mural we painted near the park entrance. There's an article about the revived park in the newspaper.

**Project details:**

- Our project will cover the entire park, between 5th and 6th Streets, and between Wilson Avenue and the train tracks.
- We'll start by visiting people living next to the park, and by distributing flyers, telling people what we're doing, and inviting them to join us.
- We'll replace the litter barrels and pick up the trash.
- We'll get the city to schedule more trash pickups.
- We'll paint a wall mural on the side of the abandoned warehouse on 5th Street.
- We'll plant flowers and shrubs in key places.
- We'll raise the money we need or get donations of materials.
- We'll use the newspaper and TV station to attract support.

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**Objective:**

Students learn and implement practical planning techniques, by creating a plan for completing the project they've chosen and entering that plan on a calendar for their project.

**Method:**

**Session 1:** Students break their project down into specific "jobs".

**Session 2:** Students form teams to break each job down into smaller "steps" and assign responsibilities for completing each step.

**Session 3:** The class enters and coordinates all their planning information on a Class Planning Calendar.

## Neckbone FIVE — Make a Plan

Assess the obstacles and risks that may lie ahead—and the resources you have or can get to deal with them. Break your project down into separate jobs, then into the steps you need to take to get each job done. Decide who will do each step and create a planning calendar that will guide the entire project.

We know how difficult it is to get students (and many adults) to learn and use the discipline of planning. We urge you to hang in there. Creating a sound plan will greatly increase the odds that the class project will be successful—and the students will learn an important skill they can use all their lives. The guidance here is field-tested and it works.

**How long will this take?**

Three 45-minute sessions.

**Materials you'll need:**

- flip chart and marking pens
- butcher paper or other large sheets of paper
- poster or flip chart version of Project Description Sheet from Neckbone 4
- sticky-notes in multiple colors

**How to get ready:**

Go over *Teamwork* on page 67 and decide whether or not you want to use this guidance with this Neckbone.

If you've arranged for parent/guardian volunteers to help you facilitate the service project, go over this Neckbone to determine your volunteer needs for this planning phase, then contact the people you need (or have that "sparkplug" parent do it—see page 29). Volunteers will be particularly useful for Session 2 of this Neckbone. Brief the volunteers in advance and give them copies of key materials.



## SESSION ONE



Before the detailed planning starts, you (or an adult volunteer) and a few students should check out the project site, looking for any unforeseen elements that might affect the project and the planning process.

Start a Class Planning Calendar on a large sheet of paper (bigger than a flip chart page) by drawing just the structure of a calendar, with enough boxes to encompass the time frame for your service project (see the sample Class Planning Calendar on page 50 so you can see what the end product of this Neckbone looks like). Check your school's academic calendar and enter any holidays or other interruptions on the Class Planning Calendar.

We've scheduled session breaks at the points we think appropriate for most classes. If your class is moving faster or slower, adjust the breaks.

**1** Remind the class that they've now chosen a problem to work on, decided on a project to address that problem, formed a vision of the results they want, and added necessary details. Now it's time to make a *plan* for the work ahead and then to put it into action. Tell students that planning takes time, patience and clear thinking—but a good plan is key to getting good results, whether the task is organizing a family camping trip or completing a service project. Plans will help keep them organized and focused, making the most of their time and energy. Without a plan, any project risks becoming disorganized and chaotic—wasting people's time, fraying nerves and undermining success.

**2** Review the Project Description Sheet created in Neckbone 4. Any last minute questions or suggested changes?

**3** Tell students that the first step in creating their plan is to break the overall project into smaller pieces. They'll do that by looking at all the information on the Project Description Sheet, then brainstorming all

the separate *jobs* that have to be done in order to complete the entire project. For example, if they see that their project will require some money and transportation, then one of the jobs must be raising money and another must be organizing transportation.

We urge you to suggest to the class that one of their jobs should be telling the community about their work through the media. Media coverage of a student community service project can inspire both the students and the community. At the same time, we entreat you not to tell your kids that the possibility of making the news is *why* they should act. Creating and carrying out their own service project is an exciting, joyful thing in and of itself. If the kids get the idea that they're only doing this to get in the newspaper or on television, the value they place on the actions themselves drops.

Write all the job ideas on the board, then work with the class to combine similar ideas until there's a list of jobs that, taken together, includes everything that must be done to complete the project. List these jobs down the left hand side of a flip chart page, under the name of the class project. This is the Jobs List. Leave plenty of space between the jobs (see sample Jobs List, in step 5).

4

Form a team of students to take on each of the jobs the class has defined. Size the teams according to the amount of work involved. Note that the whole class will probably be the team for the biggest job(s).

As much as possible, let students select the jobs/teams they prefer. If you suspect self-selecting might become too "clique-ish," then assign students to teams yourself, or use some form of lottery. If there are jobs *nobody* wants to do, discuss those jobs and think of interesting ways of doing them, until somebody *does* volunteer.

5

Under each job on the Jobs List, write in the names of the team members who have taken it on. Later, you'll ask each team to pick a name for itself. Here's how a Jobs List might look at this point:



## JOBS LIST

**Project Name:**

**Hilltop Rocks**

**Jobs and Teams:**

1. Raise the money and/or in-kind donations needed to complete this project.  
(DeShan, Crystal, John, Karyn, Darin, Lisa)
2. Contact people living near the park to tell them what's happening and to ask for their support. (Larry and Trina)
3. Work with the city government to get more frequent trash pickups in the park.  
(Franklin and Roberto)
4. Organize the transportation. (Karyn, Tyler, Kate)
5. Get all the supplies and tools we need, and have them at the work site on time.  
(Malory, Jorge, Mary Lou, Jackson)
6. Get the word out about the project, and enlist the support we need from others.  
(Amanda, Miguel, Kendra, Ryan, Courtney)
7. Schedule and manage the work parties so all parts of the work get done.  
(Dominic, Jose, David, Ann)
8. Show up at the work site at the specified times to dig, paint, clean—whatever needs to be done. (Whole class)

### SESSION TWO

6

Have each team meet in a different part of the room. Give each team several blank flip chart pages and tell them their task is to start creating a plan for carrying out the job their team has been assigned. If you've decided to use the guidance in *Teamwork* (see page 67) now is the time to introduce these concepts to your students and to assign the various roles.

This session is a great place for using adult classroom volunteers, if you've been able to line some up.



▶▶ Ask each team to break its job down into smaller steps, just as the class as a whole has broken the entire project down into jobs. They'll do this by brainstorming what needs to be done before their team's job is completed. For example, if the team's job is raising money, then two of the steps might be "Make a budget" and "Do two car washes." Tell them that the last step for all the teams must be "Make sure all these steps get done on time."



▶▶ When the team agrees that they've identified all the steps, tell them to create a Steps List by writing all those steps on the left hand side of a large sheet of paper, under the project name and the name of the job this team has taken on. Have them leave plenty of room under each step (see sample Steps List, page 48).



▶▶ Team members now decide who will take primary responsibility for getting each step done, and enter that name or names under each step.



▶▶ Ask each team to draw horizontal "time lines" across the sheet of paper next to each step. The beginning of the line represents the day work on the class project starts (taken from the Project Description sheet) and the end of the line represents the day on which it is finished.



▶▶ Students will notice that most of their steps will take several actions to complete. For each step, have students mark on the time line when each of those actions will be completed (see sample Steps List).



▶▶ Ask them to think of a name for their team and enter that on their Steps List too (and also on the class Jobs List). Here's a sample team Steps List:

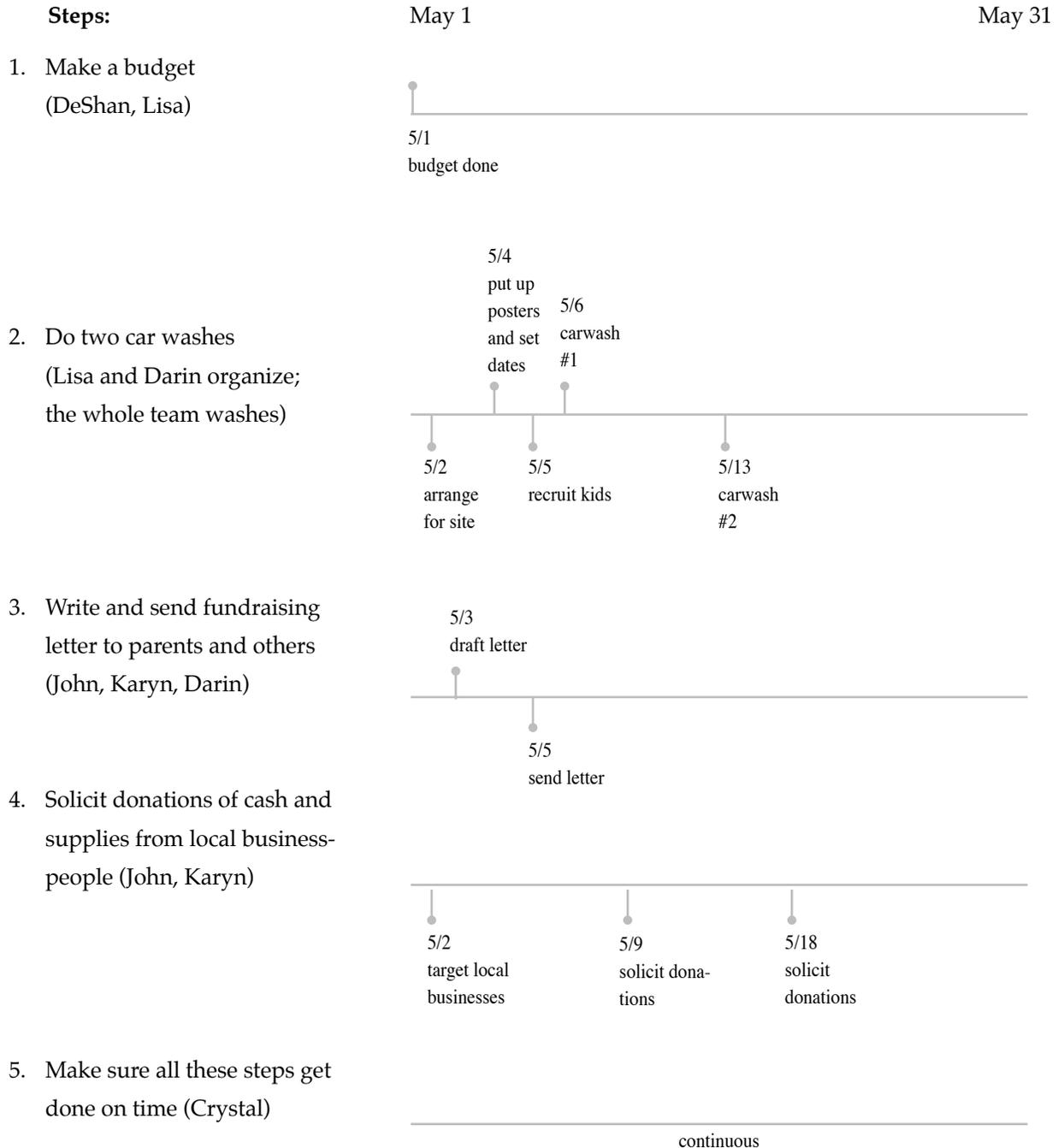


## STEPS LIST

**Project Name:** Hilltop Rocks

**Team:** The Money Makers (DeShan, Crystal, John, Karyn, Darin, Lisa)

**Job:** Raise the money and/or in-kind donations needed to complete this project.





7

When the teams have completed their Steps Lists, have each team report its results to the class. This is the time for team members to flag any actions they don't feel prepared for or that they have questions about. Ask the whole class to help you (and hopefully your adult volunteers) work with the teams until you feel all of them are ready to start work on their project.

## SESSION THREE

8

Show the class the Class Planning Calendar. Tell the class that the next task is to enter on this calendar all the finish dates for all the actions from all the teams—using the information they've just put on their Steps Lists.

Start by putting a sticky-note with a phrase describing the final event in their project (e.g. "cleaned-up park opens for business!") on the date when the entire project must be finished. Then move backwards one day and ask the teams for any actions that must be finished by that date, if the entire project is to be finished on time. Enter each action with a sticky-note on that calendar square. *Use different colored sticky-notes for the actions of each team.* Keep moving backwards one day at a time until you get to the first day of the project. All finish dates for all actions should now be on the calendar (see sample Class Planning Calendar, page 50).

Now look at all the sticky-notes and see if any adjustments must be made in their order on the calendar. For example, if the project includes painting park benches then "buy the paint" has to come before the painting takes place, and raising the money to buy the paint has to come before the paint is bought.

Tell the class that this Class Project Calendar will now be their guide for the remainder of their project.



9

Create, or have a student create, a smaller version of the Class Project Calendar. Hand out a copy to each student, as a personal guide for the service project.

Sample Class Planning Calendar "Hilltop Rocks" park project						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 30	May 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draw up budget</li> <li>organize visits</li> <li>neighbors to solicit support</li> </ul>	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arrange for carwash site</li> <li>target local businesses for contributions</li> </ul>	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draft/edit \$ letter to parents</li> <li>class meeting</li> <li>write city about trash pickups</li> </ul>	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>set dates for carwashes</li> <li>put up carwash posters</li> <li>develop media strategy</li> </ul>	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>send \$ letter to parents</li> <li>recruit kids for carwashes</li> </ul>	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carwash #1</li> </ul>
7	8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visit neighbors</li> <li>determine transportation needs</li> <li>determine tools &amp; supplies needed</li> </ul>	9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visit neighbors</li> <li>send press release</li> <li>solicit business cash and in-kind contributions</li> </ul>	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visit neighbors</li> <li>arrange for transportation to work site</li> <li>class meeting</li> </ul>	11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visit neighbors</li> <li>buy/borrow tools &amp; supplies</li> </ul>	12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organize class work party</li> <li>confirm transportation</li> </ul>	13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carwash #2</li> <li>class work party at the park</li> </ul>
14	15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>follow up press release</li> <li>call on city officials about trash pickups</li> </ul>	16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>buy additional supplies</li> </ul>	17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class meeting</li> </ul>	18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>solicit add'l cash and in-kind contributions</li> </ul>	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organize class work party</li> <li>confirm transportation</li> </ul>	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class work party at the park</li> </ul>
21	22	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>buy additional supplies</li> </ul>	24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class meeting; plan celebration</li> </ul>	25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>confirm trash pickups with city</li> </ul>	26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organize class work party</li> <li>confirm transportation</li> </ul>	27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class work party at the park</li> </ul>
28	29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>final site visit and clean-up</li> </ul>	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class meeting for reflection and next steps</li> </ul>	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>renewed park open for business!</li> <li>class celebration</li> </ul>			



## Neckbone SIX — Take Action

**Implement the plan. Meet with your classmates regularly to check on how you're doing. What's working well? What needs to be changed? Who needs help? Will you get done in time? Decide what needs to be done to keep the project on track.**

### How long will this take?

This depends on the project chosen. In addition to field time for working on the project, figure on one 15-to-30-minute classroom session each week the project is underway—for assessments, reflection and coaching.

### Materials you'll need:

- Project Description Sheet from Neckbone 4
- Jobs List from Neckbone 5
- Steps List for each job from Neckbone 5
- Class Planning Calendar from Neckbone 5
- personal copies of Class Planning Calendar (each student should have one from Neckbone 5)
- Skills-building Materials as you need them (pages 63-71)
- a loose-leaf notebook and art supplies for making a Class Project Portfolio

### How to get ready:

Review the Project Description Sheet, and all the planning materials created in Neckbone 5.

Review the Skills-building Materials (pages 63-71), so you're prepared to facilitate a coaching session if and when the class project demands any of these skills. Alternatively, you can bring in a relevant expert to facilitate a training session. Some of your classroom volunteers may be of help here, or they may know of an expert who could assist.

### Objective:

Students carry out the plan they've developed for their project, and understand the value of good planning.

### Method:

Students put the plan they've created into action, assessing their progress and solving problems as they go.



If you've arranged for volunteers to help you facilitate Neckbone 6 (including helping with the logistics of the service project) now's the time for you (or that "sparkplug parent"—see page 29) to hold an organizational meeting. This meeting can be via email but is better in person. The purpose is to go over what's required of the volunteers, and to set schedules and responsibilities. Hopefully, at least some of the volunteers for Neckbone 6 will already be familiar with the class project from having helped with Neckbone 5.

**1** Review with the class the Project Description, the Jobs List, the Team Steps Lists and the Class Planning Calendar. Make sure that students understand the importance of the Class Planning Calendar in guiding them through their work, and for reminding them of what needs to be done, and when.

**2** Review (or have a volunteer review) with each team their Steps List. Ask the team if there are any final adjustments they would like to make to their list before proceeding.

**3** Ask if students feel they need more information or guidance before starting work on their project. Assure them that training in specific skills, such as speaking in public or fundraising, can be part of this Neckbone if they need it. If what's missing is some key piece of information—suggest that the students look in the library or on the Internet, or ask local sources.

**4** Tell the class that, in addition to working on the project outside the classroom, they'll also meet regularly in class to assess how they're doing, to discuss solutions to any problems that come up, and to make any necessary course corrections to their plan. They'll be asking each other questions such as:

- Is the project easier or harder than we thought it would be? Why?
- Is the work on each step going forward on schedule?
- Is everyone on each team completing the steps he or she signed up for?



- If there are problems or delays, what help is needed?
- Do any of the steps or work assignments need to be adjusted?
- Do any *new* steps need to be added to the planning calendar?
- Does our vision still seem doable, or do we need to make changes in it?

Tell students they can also use the progress meetings for any skills-building they need in order to complete the project.



Show the class the loose-leaf notebook and appoint a group of students whose additional job will be to create a visual and written record of the class's project by building a Class Project Portfolio. That group should include:

- reporters to create a written record of the project, gathering material from each team, from the class meetings, and from their own observations; and
- photographers and artists, to help tell the story.



The class's planning documents can be the first entries in the Portfolio.



In addition to creating a Class Project Portfolio, you might want to have the students each keep a personal journal to record their own observations, assessments and feelings about their work on the project. They can illustrate their journals with photographs, drawings, comic strips or collages that tell the story.



If you choose this step, talk to the students about the value of creating such a record, and suggest ways they might start. Set aside regular times for students to write in their journals and, before each journaling session, provide a few reflection questions to help get them going.



Go into action! Use the Class Planning Calendar to stay focused and on schedule. Meet regularly to assess progress and make calendar adjustments as needed.



8

When the service project is finished, ask the reporters for the Class Project Portfolio to write up a short report describing it. Give a copy of the report to each student. To spread the story further, send a copy of the report (and some good photos) to the Giraffe Heroes Project, so we can tell other classes and schools around the country what your class did. They can send the words and photos to: The Giraffe Heroes Project, PO Box 759, Langley WA 98260, or email them to [office@giraffe.org](mailto:office@giraffe.org).

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

**Objective:**

Students understand and appreciate what they've learned and accomplished in doing their service project, and they plan any next steps.

**Method:**

Students use their Jobs List, Steps Lists, Class Planning Calendar and Think About It questions (see page 59) to assess their results. They complete the Class Project Portfolio (as well as their individual journals, if they've been keeping them). They celebrate their success and consider options for more projects.

## Neckbone SEVEN — Reflect, Celebrate, and Begin Again

This project is over. How did it go? What did you learn? Celebrate what you've accomplished. Think about what you'd like to do next.

**How long will this take?**

One 45-minute session.

**Materials you'll need:**

- Project Description Sheet (from Neckbone 4)
- Jobs List (from Neckbone 5)
- Steps List (each team should have one from Neckbone 5)
- Class Planning Calendar (from Neckbone 5)
- Think About It page (see page 59)
- template for Certificate of Completion (following page 60)

**How to get ready:**

Make a copy of the Think About It page for each student. Organize a celebration of the class's achievement in finishing their service project. As part of that, make a Certificate of Completion for each student who's completed the program (see model following page 60).





1

Have students make a final evaluation of their project, using the same kind of assessment questions they asked in their previous progress meetings. Have a student enter key observations in the Project Portfolio. Invite students to enter their own assessments into their personal journals as well, if they are keeping them.



2

Hand out the Think About It page on page 59. In answering its questions, tell students they are to think about their experience of the entire project, from start to finish. Consider filling out one yourself.

After students have had time to write, ask if anyone would like to talk about their answers. You can prime the discussion by sharing your own thoughts.



3

Organize a celebration of the class's achievement in finishing their service project.

Your students have drawn forth and implemented qualities of character, and they've gained an understanding of their world that can serve them—and their world—for the rest of their lives. Completing a service project is not so much the completion of a project, as it is an initiation into the company of courageous, caring, and responsible human beings. Make your celebration suitably ceremonial, so the kids feel the importance and value of what they've accomplished. We strongly recommend that the celebration include a brief ceremony in which an elder—such as the school principal—hands out a Certificate of Completion to each student.



Items from the Giraffe Heroes Project, such as T-shirts, are available to hand out to students as part of a completion celebration (see [www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org)).



4

We suggest that your class make a display of all the materials they've created during the service project, starting with the Class Project Portfolio.

If you've got the time and resources, you might consider organizing a public presentation, inviting others into the classroom to see the display and to hear about what the students have done and learned by doing their service project. If you go this route, appoint a team or involve the whole class in the planning.

The audience for a presentation could include, for example, school and school board officials, other classes, parents/guardians and other family members, heroic people found in the community, and anyone who participated in and/or supported the service project.

Part of the presentation could be a short "show-and-tell" program that will, along with the display, explain to class guests what being a hero is about and what the students did to exercise their own heroic qualities through active service. Students can use the Think About It reflection questions to help structure their presentation.

If you have not already presented the Certificates of Completion, you can also use a public presentation as the vehicle for presenting them. Consider asking someone known for his or her public service to do the presentation.



5

Discuss next steps with the students. If there's time in this school year, they can tackle additional problems by designing and implementing more service projects, using the Seven Neckbones strategy they've just learned. If there isn't time for another project in this class, they can consider taking on more projects after school by working with their families, friends, neighbors, youth clubs, etc. They can also:

- publish a Giraffe newsletter with stories about local heroes, articles about challenges that need tackling, service project ideas, editorials and cartoons;
- create and maintain a list of service opportunities in the community, and spread it to other classes and other schools;
- mentor other students in doing service; and
- start their own club as a vehicle for more service work.





6

And for you, dear teacher, a heartfelt

***Bravo!***

You've given your students an experience that's invaluable  
to the development of their character  
and of their social and emotional intelligence,  
to the stimulation of their intellectual curiosity and  
to their perception of themselves  
—now and in the future—  
as involved, active citizens.

We hope that this has been a deeply satisfying  
experience for you as a teacher.

You are greatly appreciated by  
all of us at  
**The Giraffe Heroes Project.**



## THINK ABOUT IT

1. What did you learn about yourself while working on the service project? Is there, for example, something you can do now that you couldn't do before—or didn't know you could?
2. What did you learn about people in your community?
3. Did anything in this project make you uncomfortable, nervous or scared? If so, what was it—and what helped keep you going?
4. What advice would you give to other kids about working in teams?
5. What did you learn from doing this service project that would change the way you do the next one?
6. What kind of issue would you like to take on next?
7. Thinking of the entire Voices of Hope program—what are the two most important things you've learned?



Whereas, the Person named below  
Has successfully completed a Project  
Demonstrating Courage & Compassion  
In Service to the Community,

&

Whereas,  
The Giraffe Heroes Project  
Is duly constituted  
To promote such Service,

**The Giraffe Heroes Project**

Hereby expresses its appreciation of

---

Given this \_\_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_,

by

---







## Skills-Building Materials

**The following six short pieces will provide the basics of skills your students may find useful as they work on their service project. They are also very useful life-skills. You can facilitate these skill-building sessions yourself. Alternatively, adult volunteers may be of help here, or they may know of others who could help coach the kids on these and other skills.**

Fundraising  
page 65

Speaking in Public  
page 66

Teamwork  
page 67

Writing Press Releases  
page 68

Giving an Interview  
page 70

Creating a Budget  
page 71





# Fundraising

Most service projects require at least some money or in-kind donations. Tried-and-true methods for middle- and high schoolers include car washes, bake sales and appeals to parents and friends.

It's also possible to raise money from organizations, such as local service clubs and businesses. The first step is to identify those organizations most likely to contribute the money or in-kind resources needed. For this information, ask people who are members or employees, or people who belong to other groups that have received such contributions in the past.

Call or write likely organizations to find out how to apply for a grant or in-kind donation. If possible, find someone (a parent? a relative or friend of the family? a classroom volunteer?) who has a contact in the organization and who is willing to make an introduction to the person or persons who make funding decisions.

Sending a letter asking for money or in-kind donations is easier and perhaps less scary than a personal visit—but less likely to be successful. A good plan is to start with a letter and then try to follow up with a visit or

at least a phone call. Well-thought-out service projects are attractive to funders and people may be delighted to talk to a concerned, active young person.

In a letter, call or visit, you should make these points:

- Describe the problem the class has taken on and the project it has designed.
- Present the class's clear, sharp vision of how things will look when the project is completed.
- Briefly describe your work plan.
- Include a simple budget with your letter (or bring it with you on a visit).
- Ask for a specific amount of money or a specific in-kind donation that you need.

It's better if two or three students go together on a fundraising visit. Before you go, write an outline of what you want to say and practice how you will say it. Take along any back-up materials that might help you make your case, such as photos or a sheet of facts you've researched.



# Speaking in Public

“Speaking in public” can be anything from a personal meeting with a potential funder to a speech to a local service club. Here are some tips for making such presentations:

*Assume audience support.* Assume that your audience will support you and what you’re doing, and that they really want to hear what you have to say. Be yourself and you’ll do just fine.

*Be prepared.* Have backup materials you might need with you, such as budgets, planning charts, photos, etc. Write an outline of what you want to say and rehearse it several times.

*Introduce yourself.* Begin by introducing yourself and briefly explaining the purpose of your presentation.

*Explain project highlights.* Briefly explain your class service project:

- Why did you decide to tackle this problem and why did you create this project?
- What results do you expect? Describe the project’s vision—remember how powerful a vision can be in getting people interested, inspired and supportive.
- Include a few personal stories about your own participation, or quotes or stories from classmates.

*Ask for support.* If you’re asking for support, be specific about what you need and clearly explain why you want it. Describe the effect the contribution you’re seeking will have.

*Restate the vision.* Reiterate the vision for your project, and why it’s important to reach it. What will happen if your project doesn’t take place?

*Finish on time.* Thank your audience for coming.

*Send thank you.* Follow-up with a note of thanks for the opportunity to speak. Include contact information in case anyone in your audience wishes to obtain more information or get involved.





# Teamwork

## GROUND RULES

- Teamwork is not a competition but a collaboration.
- Assume that many people may have pieces of the answer; the object is to bring the pieces together.
- Search for and acknowledge the strengths and value in what others say.
- Listen carefully when others are speaking.
- Respect others and their points of view, even if you don't agree.
- Be willing to look for common ground if there's a dispute, instead of insisting on getting your own way.

## TEAM ROLES

- *Facilitator*—who reminds team members of the ground rules, guides the discussion and keeps it on track.
- *Recorder*—who records decisions and other important points made.
- *Timekeeper*—who tracks agreed-upon times and alerts others when they are speaking too long.
- *Spokesperson*—who speaks for the group.





## Writing Press Releases

Consider writing a press release to bring your project to the attention of local newspapers and/or TV and radio stations. This can help you gain community support for your project and also enhance the school's reputation. It may well inspire other people, old and young, to start similar projects.

Sending a press release is not a guarantee that the media will come to an event or print or broadcast a story on your project. You shouldn't be shocked if your release is ignored—there are many competing stories. But if you don't send the release, the media will never know what you're doing. If the class is hoping for on-site coverage of an event that's part of your project, of course you need to send your press release before the event. An example follows this page.

Press releases answer the questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? They are usually written with the most important information first and the least important last. This allows editors to cut the piece from the bottom up if they need to shorten the

story, without picking through the paragraphs. Your task is to make the editor's job as easy as possible, thereby increasing the chances of the release being used.

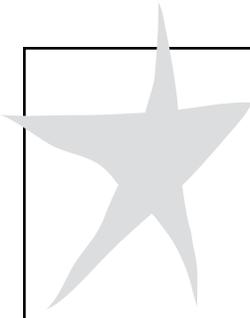
You should make sure to:

- keep the release short;
- give the important facts, without exaggerating;
- confine opinions to quotes by individuals;
- double-space it, setting ample margins on the sides for editors to write in; and
- include a release date and at least one name and number reporters can call for more information.

Good photographs, with captions, can be mailed or emailed with a press release.

On the next page is a sample press release written to send *before* an event, to encourage media to come and see the results of a project for themselves. A press release can also be sent *after* an event, telling people what's taken place.





## **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE— before the event**

For Immediate Release

For more information call: Kendra Watkins 555-221-5667

### **MAYOR TO TOUR HILLTOP PARK RENEWAL A PROJECT OF LINCOLN STUDENTS**

Mayor Frank Jones will tour Hilltop Park in the southeast section of Homeville, this Saturday starting at 10 AM. He'll see a neighborhood that has been changed by the efforts of 30 eighth grade students at Lincoln Middle School. Over the last month, the students cleaned up and beautified the area by picking up trash, planting flowers and shrubs, and painting a large wall mural.

The work was part of a program at the school called *Voices of Hope*, developed by the Giraffe Heroes Project, a national nonprofit. The program gave students the stories of real heroes, then prompted the students to become heroic themselves by deciding on a community problem they cared about, then creating and carrying out a service project that addressed it. Students decided on the Hilltop Park project, then met with local residents, created a plan, raised funds and did the job.

"It was fun," said Amy Harrington, one of the students, "especially when we saw kids playing in the park for the first time in years. I hope people will come when the mayor does. Everybody can be proud."

Susan Harrison, the students' teacher, reported she was overwhelmed by the students' persistence. "I thought they were biting off an awful lot," she said, "but they are really concerned about how the neighborhood looks, and they decided they could do something about it."

— END —



## Giving an Interview

It may be that a newspaper or television station is so interested in your project that they want a reporter to interview you about it. If this happens:

*Remember—reporters need you.* Their job is to get a good story and they need your help to do that. They are most likely going to be sympathetic to your project, which makes your job easier. All you have to do is tell the story.

*It's worth it.* In describing your project to lots of people, you'll bring favorable attention to your school—and you might inspire others to similar efforts.

*Be prepared.* Discuss and write down in advance the points the class wants to make. Have handy any backup information you think you might need, such as the project budget, or a map of the project area.

*Rehearse.* Practice talking to someone who is playing the role of a reporter. Or record your answers and listen to them. Practice giving answers that are short and right to the point.

*Be polite but assertive.* Don't let yourself be sidetracked by irrelevant questions. Politely steer the interview back on track by saying things like, "Well, that's an interesting point, but even more interesting to us was the way people in the neighborhood wanted to help..."

*Be cool.* Don't grandstand, but don't be too shy either. Be direct and honest. Try to think through your comments before you make them. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't fake it—tell the reporter you don't know but you'll be glad to find out.





# Creating a Budget

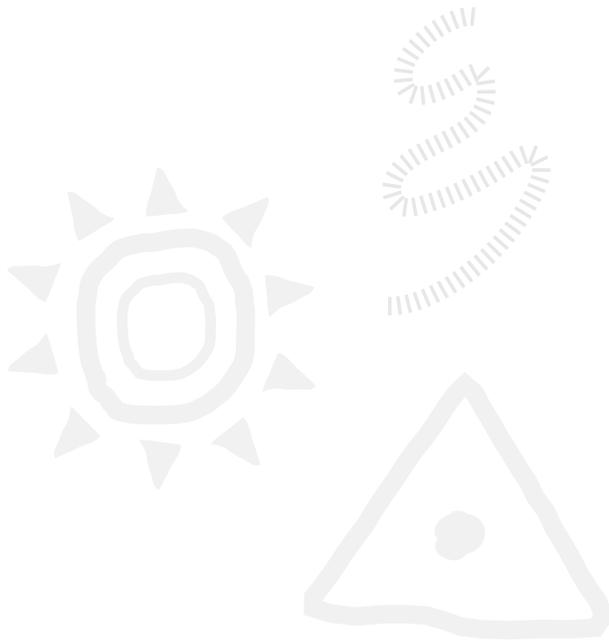
Most projects will run up some expenses. Before the fundraising to cover these expenses can begin, however, it's important to know how much money will be needed. This means creating a budget.

Tell your students that a budget is simply a list of expected expenses matched against a list of expected income. The income must equal or exceed the expenses.

## SAMPLE BUDGET FOR "HILLTOP ROCKS"

ITEM	EXPECTED EXPENSE
dump fees	\$35
flowers and shrubs	150
seeds	5
baby trees	70
paint	30
other supplies and miscellaneous	<u>50</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$340</b>

ITEM	EXPECTED INCOME
contributions from parents	\$30
in-kind donations from merchants	100
Rotary Club contribution	100
car wash receipts	<u>120</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$350</b>







## Resources

Tips on Using the *Voices of Hope*  
Anthology of Giraffe stories:

Finding and Honoring Local Heroes  
page 75

More Ideas for Using Voices of Hope  
page 76

Voices of Hope as a Literacy Tool  
page 77

Service-Learning Project Examples  
page 81

Pre- and Post-use Evaluation Tools  
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Resources for Teachers  
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Other Materials  
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The Giraffe Heroes Project  
page 96





# Tips on Using the *Voices of Hope* Anthology of Giraffe stories

You will have—or can get from the Giraffe Heroes Project—the *Voices of Hope* anthology of heroes' stories, the companion book to this *Service-Learning Guide*. This part of the Resources Section will help you maximize the benefits from that anthology.

Again, the two books go together. The anthology of heroes' stories provides an exciting, involving, credible way for kids to absorb important values, including courage, compassion and service. The *Service-Learning Guide* helps them take that learning further, so that these values—practiced in the real world to meet a challenge the kids care about—become the basis for a life of active, caring citizenship.

## FINDING AND HONORING LOCAL HEROES

After your students have read stories of heroes in *Voices of Hope*, suggest to them that they find some heroes in their own community—it may be brimming with heroes!

Remind students what they learned from reading the stories—*Heroes are people who stick their necks out for the common good*, not letting risks and obstacles stop them from making their world a better place.

Heroes are not the same as celebrities, who may be famous for reasons that have nothing to do with being heroic.

Heroes are young and old, male and female, and from every ethnic and economic background. They're working on issues from environmental cleanups to safe schools, from women's rights to poverty, from homelessness to providing positive alternatives to gangs.

Ask your students to brainstorm the names of people they know or have heard about in their community who might have stuck their necks out for the common good. Perhaps it's someone in their own families, or in the school, neighborhood, local government or community groups.

Write the suggestions on a flip chart. For each suggestion, ask some further questions that will help the students determine if the person is a hero or not:

*What has this person done that's courageous?*

*How have the person's actions served the common good?*

If there isn't enough information to make a decision, have the students do some additional research on the suggested names and report back to the class later.

When the class has decided on a list of local heroes, they can~

- ~ **invite a local hero to class.** Students can invite heroes they've found in the community to class to be honored and to tell their stories. Hearing about how a local hero has taken on a problem can inspire students to stick their necks out too.
- ~ **start a Heroes' Hall of Fame.** Students can create a bulletin board or display case in the classroom or school corridor. They can include short write-ups and photos of community heroes the class has found, and an explanation of what qualities it takes to be a hero.
- ~ **look for Giraffes in the family tree.** Ask kids to look for heroes within their own families, going as far back as they can. Invite them to interview extended family and friends to learn more about how family members may have stuck their necks out for the common good. They can create ways to recognize and celebrate family heroes, such as murals, mobiles, scrapbooks, etc.
- ~ **create a heroes' newsletter, website or video.** Students can create a newsletter, website or video, focusing on the stories of local heroes. They might enlist an adult reporter, webmaster or video producer to coach them.

## **MORE IDEAS FOR USING VOICES OF HOPE**

**Giraffe Heroes Day.** Set aside one day a week or month as a school-wide "Giraffe Heroes Day" when teachers link Giraffes heroes and Giraffe concepts to the topics they're teaching. For example, in a history lesson, the teacher might ask, "Was anyone in this lesson acting like a Giraffe?" or "How would a Giraffe deal with this situation?"

**Current events.** Have students look for and share in class some news item that ties in with a Giraffe action they've read about in the *Voices of Hope* anthology. Remind them that Giraffe-like activities are out there and happening every day.

**Lights, camera, action!** Use video or theatre to extend students' understanding of what it means to be a "Giraffe" and of the problems that Giraffes take on. Using information from the *Voices of Hope* anthology and other sources, have kids write and act out skits, plays, musical expressions or even a short video to increase their awareness of Giraffes and the problems Giraffes are working on.

**What's character?** Using the stories in the *Voices of Hope* anthology, create an awareness program focusing on individual character traits, such as courage, compassion, responsibility, hope and perseverance.

Through discussions, have kids identify individual traits that Giraffe heroes have shown in the stories. Have the kids then try to identify those same traits in people they know, people in the community, people in stories and people in the news. Have the students seen these same traits in themselves?

The goal of this exercise is to awaken awareness that these traits are more than just words or phrases; they're part of a common humanity, evident in others and in ourselves.

**Internet skills.** Have kids use the Internet to learn more about the problems that Giraffe heroes have taken on.

**PR skills.** Have the kids create brochures, posters, ads, even web sites that tell Giraffe stories, feature Giraffe traits or encourage others to work on the problems Giraffes are working on.

**I'm a poet!** Using word-webs, mind-mapping and other brainstorming/journaling techniques, have the kids capture their emotional responses to the Giraffe stories they're reading. Then encourage them to write poems around these feelings. Suggest that students share their poetry in a special reading. Have the class create a book of Giraffe poetry.

**Create word banks.** As kids read the stories, encourage them to do vocabulary development exercises to learn new words. Have them, for example, write those words on 5x8 cards and display them on the wall. Use the words to play word games, such as Hangman. How many new words can they learn in a month?

## **VOICES OF HOPE AS A LITERACY TOOL**

**A letter to teachers by Dr. Martin Laster,  
reading specialist and former Superintendent,  
South Whidbey Schools, Washington State**

Dear fellow teacher,

It is my hope that you and your students will feel the same sense of energy, optimism, and positive potential that I felt in reviewing the stories in the *Voices of Hope* anthology. These "Voices" reflect the ability of ordinary people to do extraordinary things. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to help make the decisions for inclusion in this book, as well as guide its instructional purpose.

### **The Purpose of *Voices of Hope***

A major purpose of *Voices of Hope* is to provide a vehicle for stimulating and expanding literacy. Words are the raw material of meaning. The greater one's grasp of vocabulary, the stronger is one's ability to interact with the challenges in our world. The readings are designed to assist teachers and young adults to strengthen all areas of communication with a particular focus on vocabulary acquisition.

A second purpose of these materials is to demonstrate that each of us can make an extraordinary difference in our world—and to involve students in doing just that. The inspiring readings about "Giraffes" from all over the world and in our own neighborhoods clearly show that each of us has it within us to make a difference in the lives of those around us. Giraffes have already heard and responded to the challenges in their lives and they are a "call to arms" for all of us who also wonder how we can make this a better planet or a better neighborhood. Who better than these contemporary heroes to foster the goal of an enlightened citizenry?



**Teaching Strategies**

Curriculum is the combination of three elements: content, process, and product. The guiding principle used in the development of these materials is that these three elements are of equal importance. Students must recognize the key facts and content, yet should not be overwhelmed by details. Students must also be able to critically analyze issues, generate alternative solutions, and evaluate differing positions. Finally, students should be encouraged to create varied products in response to these issues. Ultimately, this learning journey should contribute to the student's self-confidence as a young adult facing difficult decisions and proposing possible solutions.

Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. In *Voices of Hope*, reading is given the lion's share of our attention, specifically vocabulary acquisition. In every way possible, vocabulary acquisition should be a corollary focus of the stories and daily readings to increase literacy. The premise is that vocabulary is the building block of reading, writing, and thinking.

All too often, struggling secondary readers "read over" unfamiliar words and lose meaning. One of the aims here is to provide meaning-decoding skills and ways to decipher other unfamiliar words encountered in the future. Therefore, time is spent with prefixes and root words.

**Teacher Preparation**

Often a teacher's confidence and professional self-image is based on a sound knowledge of his or her content area. In dealing with a program like *Voices of Hope*, that confidence can be difficult to achieve. Not only will

you be teaching students to read who may have been previously unsuccessful at this crucial complex set of skills—you will also be talking to students about what it takes to change their communities and the world, and that demands both intelligence and sensitivity. No amount of preparation will give you all the right answers.

You may find yourself a bare step ahead of the students in these discussions, and that's fine. With all the information that exists and all the questions that can arise, few teachers have the time to become an expert on every topic that is raised by a Giraffe's or a student's quest. Learn along with your students and let your own learning be a model for theirs.

The streams of questions that can be generated by stories of Giraffe heroes can become vehicles that help you teach not only about specific topics, but also about research methods: use the questions to teach students how to use reference materials, read a newspaper or periodical, find the right person and address for a query and then write a clear letter that will get them the answers they need. The Internet is essential to their research, but the telephone can be re-discovered, not just as a social tool, but also a learning tool, a source of information.

*Voices of Hope* has been developed to allow the teacher to function as a facilitator, someone who arranges the learning environment. In using *Voices*, read the stories yourself before you start teaching. Identify words that are likely to be unfamiliar to your students, choose what sample questions and activities you will use from the provided materials, prepare additional activities, and locate any additional resources you may need.

## Vocabulary Development

In any new arena of learning there is almost always novel vocabulary to master in order to understand the issues fully. Many new words are introduced which are essential to a complete mastery of the issues. Direct instruction on the key vocabulary is the best educational strategy: teach students the specific words they need to know. Key words and their definitions should be addressed through structure, context clues, examples and repetition.

Before you start each new story with your class, I recommend, as noted above, that you identify words that you feel the group will have difficulty with and provide prior instruction as necessary. Highlight the definitions of key words and revisit them frequently to keep them alive and present. I also strongly urge you to have your students keep personal journals, adding new words as they learn them, as well as observations and reflections on the heroes they read about.

The *Voices of Hope* anthology provides forty stories. At a minimum, students should be learning ten new words a week from these stories, so if thirty-six weeks can be dedicated to these materials, each student can add three hundred and sixty words to their vocabulary.

## Additional Considerations

**1. “Differentiated Instruction.”** While you have to be clear about your expectations for student performance, individual students can demonstrate their ability to respond differently and you should vary your expectations based upon the skills of your students. An example is strategies for asking questions. We have all had students in our classes who raise their hands

to answer questions before most students have even finished reading the question. Particularly in the area of vocabulary development, ask entry-level students the more basic questions, especially when you know they know the answer. Save the more demanding, complex questions for the hand-raisers. The questions and activities that follow each story are samples. They offer a road map for class discussions, not a cookbook. Follow your path, the path that meets your students’ needs.

**2. Creating a “community of scholars.”** Some of your students will be shyer and/or more self-conscious than others. That reticence, coupled with the fact that some issues raised by the heroes’ stories might be controversial in your school and community, makes it imperative that you nurture in your classroom a safe environment for dialogue, analysis and synthesis. The attitude or climate in class should be one of a community of scholars in which the teacher also participates.

You need to model respect for all your students and, by proxy, their parents, cultures, and values. This does not mean you or your students need to agree with each other. As students master essential information and increase their confidence as learners, we should help them identify their own values and not overpower them with our own. We must assist them in establishing and using valid criteria to judge decisions that they and others make on any given issue. This should lead to a recognition that other people may hold different but valid positions on the same issue. Teachers should tolerate and encourage this diversity and, more importantly, assist students in analyzing the reasons behind positions.

Additionally, be looking for areas where every student can share his or her expertise with the class. Find that pathway where each student can become both learner and teacher, a fellow traveler on the journey of learning.

### **Grading**

The primary educational purpose of grading is to measure a student's performance based upon the mastery of pre-established standards over time. A second purpose is motivation.

Not every assignment needs to distinguish the "A" and the "F" student. Assignments can be geared to pull all students into the learning experience. Another consideration in designing any grading system is that the more samplings of student performance, the fairer and more accurate the final grade.

With these considerations in mind, the following is offered as a possible guide for grading student performance in *Voices of Hope*. First, set up criteria for vocabulary work, both classwork and homework. This should be based upon both quantity and quality. For instance, turning in all but one of the weekly vocabulary journal assignments with 70 percent completeness and accuracy merits a "C." Turning in all assignments with 80 percent completeness and accuracy merits a "B", and turning in all assignments with better than 90 percent completeness and accuracy merits an "A." Again this is an area of teacher choice, but I suggest a "B" should be minimum competency. Allow students to make corrections in class as you review information. Make minimum competency easily attainable. You want students to learn and achieve; you can use grades to encourage this.

A second grade could focus on discussion activities. Criteria could include evidence of having read the material, listening respectfully to others, offering positive comments, and judging by criteria versus stereotypes. The grade for each student could be assigned by the class or by the teacher, or each student could self-grade. Of course, the same criteria should be used in each case, and students should know the criteria in advance.

### **Final Thoughts**

This guide is not intended to tell you how to teach; it strives to make teaching as easy, rewarding, and meaningful as possible for teachers who already have many demands on their time. Be creative, take what works in your setting and discard what is not a match for your students. Feel free to modify activities; use them as a springboard. *Voices of Hope* is designed so that it can be used in conjunction with other materials. Be eclectic—you can incorporate these materials into current courses or use them to create new coursework for learners at many stages of their journey.

In using these materials, you are a part of the magic that is inherent in the courage of the heroes whose stories are read—and in the magic you do every day in your classroom. You and your students can change the world. Remember to have fun in the process!

Sincerely,  
**Martin Laster, PhD.**  
Langley, Washington



## Service-Learning Project Examples

To help students focus on what's possible, here are a few examples of service projects other classes have done.

- Students at Roosevelt School in Sioux City IA hauled a week's worth of school trash to a city council meeting to underscore the need for a city recycling program. The council voted "yes."
- A fifth-grade math class at Anderson School in Cheyenne WY calculated the waste put out by fast food restaurants in the area, then "positive-picketed" the least wasteful restaurant, praising its lower impact on the environment.
- Students at Corrales School in Corrales NM collected blankets and sleeping bags for a nearby homeless shelter, then decided to "adopt" the shelter, keeping up a steady stream of donations and visits.
- Students in a re-entry program at South Whidbey High School in Langley WA tutored students with learning disabilities in primary, intermediate and middle schools.
- Students with disabilities at Crippled Children's Hospital and School in Sioux Falls SD fit recycling barrels onto their wheelchairs and took charge of a recycling program in their building.
- Students at Merrymount School in Quincy MA cleaned up a two-mile stretch of beach, collecting and inventorying more than 2,000 pieces of trash. They used their data in a campaign to educate the public about solid waste problems.
- Students at South Whidbey Intermediate School researched the life cycle and habitat of the salmon, wrote and performed puppet plays to educate the community about protecting the salmon, then raised and released salmon into a nearby creek.
- Students at Jackson Elementary in Salt Lake City UT researched the dangers of a toxic waste site they discovered in their neighborhood, informed the neighbors, then successfully lobbied city, state and federal officials to clean it up.
- Eighth-graders from Bellamy Middle School in Chicopee MA brainstormed a solution to the town's sludge-disposal problem and presented a report to the city council, saving the town more than \$100,000.
- Fifth-graders at Anne Beers Elementary School in Washington DC surveyed the community on drug issues, and organized a public forum where local people could meet with officials involved in combating the drug problem.

Other classrooms have initiated litter patrols, led anti-drug campaigns, started community gardens, adopted nursing homes, collected used books for homeless children, painted out graffiti, led workshops in bike safety, and organized cleanups of neighborhoods and beaches.

You can find many more examples on the web site of the National Youth Leadership Council, <http://www.nylc.org/rc-projectexamples.cfm>.



## Pre- and Post-use Evaluation Tools

Here are three surveys that you can copy and use to evaluate the impact of *Voices of Hope* on your students.

The two **Student Surveys** on pages 83-87 are designed to be administered before and after students have read the stories in *Voices of Hope*. By comparing student responses before and after, you can get an idea of how the stories have affected students' choice of heroes, their sense of personal responsibility and empowerment to address societal problems, and their willingness to get involved and take risks to benefit the greater good.

The **Post-use Student Survey** includes a section asking for student assessment of their service-learning project, if they completed one.

The **Post-use Teacher/Facilitator Survey** on page 88 is meant to help you form your own assessment of the impact of *Voices of Hope* on your students.

Please send the Giraffe Heroes Project a summary of your student surveys and a copy of the Teacher/Facilitator Survey. Anecdotes are welcome! We're at Box 759, Langley WA 98260. We love the feedback—and we may use your results on our website to inspire and inform other teachers using *Voices of Hope*.





## *Voices of Hope* **STUDENT PRE-USE SURVEY**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

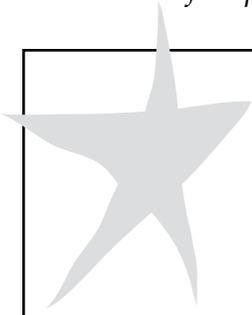
1. Name some of your heroes. For each one, write why this person is a hero to you. (If you have no heroes, leave this answer blank.)

2. List your own strengths—your best qualities.

3. List two problems that concern you in your school, your community or in the wider world. Why do these problems concern you? (If no problems concern you, leave this answer blank.)

4. Problems such as pollution, hunger, poverty and drug-abuse affect many communities. Circle the numbers below that best describe your feelings and opinions about such problems.

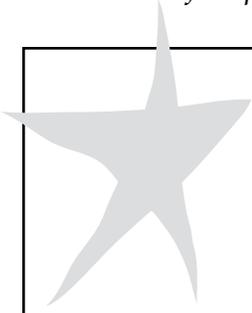
	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) There is nothing one person can do to solve such big problems.	1	2	3	4	5
b) It's my personal responsibility to help solve such problems.	1	2	3	4	5
c) These problems should be left up to government officials.	1	2	3	4	5
d) I can make a difference on these problems.	1	2	3	4	5



5. Describe a situation in which you would stick your neck out to help somebody else. Why you would do this? (Leave this answer blank if you would never do this.)

6. Describe one problem in your school, community or beyond that concerns you so much you would stick your neck out to help solve it. Why you would do this? (Leave this answer blank if you would never do this.)





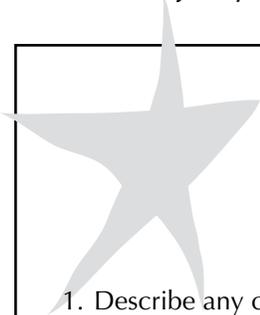
5. Problems such as pollution, hunger, poverty and drug-abuse affect many communities. Circle the numbers below that best describe your feelings and opinions about such problems.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) There is nothing one person can do to solve such big problems.	1	2	3	4	5
b) It's my personal responsibility to help solve such problems.	1	2	3	4	5
c) These problems should be left up to government officials.	1	2	3	4	5
d) I can make a difference on these problems.	1	2	3	4	5

6. Describe one situation in which you would stick your neck out to help somebody else. Why you would do this? (Leave this answer blank if you would never do this.)

7. Describe one problem in your school, community or beyond that concerns you so much you would stick your neck out to help solve it. Why you would do this? (Leave this answer blank if you would never do this.)





## *Voices of Hope* **POST-USE TEACHER/FACILITATOR SURVEY**

1. Describe any changes you've seen in the following parameters for your students, if you think they've been caused or influenced by students' participation in *Voices of Hope*. Provide specific examples or anecdotes if you can:

Proficiency in reading, including interest in reading, comprehension and vocabulary?

Interest and performance in other academic skills?

Participation in class activities?

Demonstration of "Giraffe" qualities such as courage, caring, responsibility, and perseverance?

2. After using *Voices of Hope*, what, if any, differences have you noticed in students' awareness, definitions and appreciation of heroes?

3. Describe any other changes in student skills, attitudes or behavior that seem noteworthy.





## Resources for Teachers

The books, periodical, videos and websites in this list are principally for your own information, but can certainly be shared with interested students.

### BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Armstrong, Tom, *Seven Kinds of Smart*, Los Angeles, Jeremy Tarcher, 1993

Batenburg, M. and Pope, D.C., *The Evaluation Handbook: Practical Tools for Evaluating Service-Learning Programs*, Service Learning Center, 1997, 510.302.0550, [www.yscal.org](http://www.yscal.org)

Billig, Shelley H., *Research on K-12 School Based Service-Learning: The Evidence Builds*, Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 81, No. 9, May 2000, 800 766-1156, [www.pdkintl.org](http://www.pdkintl.org)

Caine, Renate and Geoffrey, *Education on the Edge of Possibility*, Alexandria VA, ASCD, 1997

Chard, Lillian and Silvia, *Engaging Children's Minds; The Project Approach*, Norwood NJ, Ablex, 1990

Clark, Barbara, *Optimizing Learning*, Columbus OH, Merrill, 1988

Cohen, Dr. Janice, *Raising Compassionate, Courageous Children in a Violent World*, Longstreet Press, 1996

DeBono, Edward, *Six Thinking Hats*, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1985

Elias, Maurice, et al, *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning*, Alexandria VA, ASCD, 1999

Elias and his many co-authors (including Rachel Kessler) discuss their field and the best programs that existed when they did their research.

Elias, Maurice & Arnold, Harriet, *The Educator's Guide to Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement*, Corwin Press, 2006

Giraffe Heroes Project Founder Ann Medlock and former Giraffe Heroes Program trainer Eliot Rosenbloom wrote a chapter for this book on SEL in the classroom: "Heroes to the Rescue: Reaching the Roots of Learning." [www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com)

Goleman, Daniel, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ for Character, Health, and Lifelong Achievement*, Bantam Books, 1995

Drawing on groundbreaking brain and behavioral research, Goleman maps out the territory of what constitutes emotional intelligence and shows how being "emotionally smart" may be more important to the individual and to society than being intellectually bright.

Guild, Pat, *Marching to Different Drummers*, Alexandria VA, ASCD, 1986

Harris, Sam, *Reclaiming Our Democracy: Healing the Break Between People and Government*, Camino Books, 1993

Harris (now Sam Daley-Harris) is a Giraffe and the founder of the advocacy group Results. In this book he gets to the heart of what it means to be an active citizen in a democracy. Inspiring, informative and exciting.

Heinig, Ruth Beal, *Creative Drama for the Classroom Teacher*, Prentice Hall, 1993

This one comes recommended by a storyteller and teacher who uses it for creative drama and role-playing with students.

Holt, John, *How Children Learn*, New York NY, Pitman, 1968

Josephson, Michael & Hanson, Wes, *The Power of Character*, Jossey-Bass, 1998

Prominent Americans, including the Giraffe Heroes Project's Founder Ann Medlock, share their observations on living with integrity, honesty and compassion in today's world.

Kaye, Cathryn Berger, *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, and Social Action*, Minneapolis, Free Spirit Publishing, 2003.

Kaye, Cathryn Berger, *The Service-Learning book shelf: A bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action*, ABCD Books, 2000

Kessler, Rachel, *The Soul of Education: Nourishing Spiritual Development in Secular Schools*, ASCD, 2000

Kessler, an authority on young people's passage into adulthood, addresses a key issue in public education.

Kielsmeier, James and Cairn, Rich, *Growing Hope: A sourcebook on Integrating Youth Service into the School Curriculum*, National Youth Leadership Council, 1991, 651.631.3672, [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)

Kohn, Alfie.

In all his books, this former classroom teacher is consistently wise, funny, provocative, and knowledgeable about the supporting research for his positions. His titles are, in chronological order:

*No Contest: The Case Against Competition*, Houghton Mifflin, 1986

*The Brighter Side of Human Nature: Altruism & Empathy in Everyday Life*, Basic Books, 1990

*Punished by Rewards, The Case Against Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise & Other Bribes*, Houghton Mifflin, 1995

*Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community*, Alexandria VA, ASCD, 1996

*Education Inc.: Turning Learning into a Business*, Skylight Publishing, 1997

*What to Look for in a Classroom*, Jossey-Bass, 1998

*The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and Tougher Standards*, Houghton Mifflin, 1999

*The Case Against Standardized Testing: Raising the Scores, Ruining the Schools*, Heinemann, 2000.

Lewis, Barbara, *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People who Want to Make a Difference*, Free Spirit Publishing, 1995, 866.703.7322, [www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com).

Loeb, Paul Rogat, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in a Cynical Time*, St. Martin's, 1999.

A look at active citizens, what they're accomplishing, and the importance of active citizenship in a healthy democracy.

National Youth Leadership Council, *Growing to Greatness: The 2004 State of Service-Learning Project*, 2004, 651.631.3672, [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org).

Noddings, Nel, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, Teachers' College Press, 1992

Professor Noddings is a strong voice for social and emotional learning and for remembering that the heart must be engaged for true learning.

O'Connell, Brian, *Civil Society, The Underpinnings of American Democracy*, Tufts University, 1999

There's no better guide to the ground where education and democracy connect than this eloquent, clear book.

Palmer, Parker, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, Jossey-Bass, 1998

An exploration of what it means to teach, what it takes to truly connect with students, and the importance of self-realization in living a meaningful life.

Palmer, Parker, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, Jossey-Bass, 1999

Palmer asks if the life you're living is your own. As a teacher of teachers, Palmer's work is of high value to the regeneration of teachers' enthusiasm and joy in their work.

Palmer, Parker, *To Know As We Are Known: Education As a Spiritual Journey*, Harper, 1993

Palmer, like Noddings (left), urges us to remember that kids have souls and hearts as well as brains and bodies. He says that in the concern that religion not be espoused in public schools, teachers have been pushed away from acknowledging the shared wisdom of all spiritual traditions.

Rubinsein, Robert, *Curtains Up! Theatre Games and Storytelling*, Fulcrum Publishing, 2000

A book full of fun classroom activities to help you and your students become great tellers of Giraffe stories.

Shumer, Rob and contributing authors, *Shumer's Self-Assessment for Service-Learning*, University of Minnesota, 2000, [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org).

Waldman, Jackie with Dworkis, Janis Leibs, *The Courage to Give*, Conari Press, 1999

Accounts of people who have persevered beyond their own pain to help others. Includes chapters by Giraffes Bo Lozoff, Brianne Schwantes, Millard Fuller, Bill Thomas, Jeff Moyer, Giraffe Heroes Project Founder Ann Medlock, and an afterword by Giraffe Patch Adams.

## HELPFUL ORGANIZATIONS

### **Character Education Partnership**, *www.character.org*

A national organization dedicated to developing young people of good character who become responsible and caring citizens.

### **The Giraffe Heroes Project**, *www.giraffe.org*

That's us—one of the country's most well-regarded creators of materials for service-learning, character education and civic education. There's lots more on this site, including many more stories of Giraffe heroes.

### **Institute for Global Education and Service-Learning**,

*www.igesl.org*

A non-profit training organization that creates service-learning programs and initiates activity based education in collaboration with schools and organizations around the world.

### **Media Channel**, *www.mediachannel.org*

Offers Media Literacy Topic Guides that explain why the ability to understand, evaluate, access and use media is as fundamental as reading and writing.

### **National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC)**,

*www.servicelarning.org*

The national site for service-learning information. A great source of books and videos on service-learning and related topics.

### **National Service-Learning Partnership**, *www.servicelearningpartnership.org*

The Partnership, founded in 2001, is a national network of members dedicated to advancing service-learning as a core part of every young person's education.

### **National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC)**,

*www.nylc.org*

Its mission is to increase the capacity of schools and communities to engage young people in active learning and service.

### **Points of Light Foundation**, *www.pointsoflight.org*

Through a variety of programs and services, the Foundation encourages people from all walks of life to volunteer.

## PERIODICAL

### *Youth Today*

Published by the American Youth Work Center

1200 17th Street NW 4th floor

Washington, D.C. 20036-3006

202-785-0764

*Youth Today* is a newspaper and website with informative and often hard-hitting articles on youth work and youth organizations, an extensive workshop and conference calendar, reviews of books and videos, listings of grants awarded to youth organizations, analysis of issues concerning youth in the legislative arena and more.

## VIDEOS

### *The Altruists*

Institute of Noetic Sciences

475 Gate Five Road #300

Sausalito CA 94965

415-331-5650

This video profiles four Giraffes who are proving that prison inmates and ex-cons can be rehabilitated. Cathrine Sneed, Mimi Silbert, Bo Lozoff and Sita Lozoff are doing inspiring, successful work in a field where many people think nothing meaningful can be accomplished.

*In Search of Character*

Live Wire Media

3450 Sacramento Street

San Francisco CA 94118

415-564-9500; [www.livewiremedia.com](http://www.livewiremedia.com)

A series of ten videos that challenge young people to think about the choices they make and how those choices shape their character. At the heart of each program is an inspiring documentary profile of a teenager who exemplifies the power of individual action. The series comes with guides for discussion and reflection.

*Legacy*

Outreach Extensions

7039 Dume Drive

Malibu CA 90265

310-589-5180; Fax: 310-589-5280;

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

A moving documentary about four generations of a family living in one of the most dangerous housing projects in the US. Seen through the eyes of a 15-year-old, the inspiring story depicts the family's climb up and out of their desperate circumstances. The accompanying Community Action Toolbox provides materials on poverty, addiction, violence and literacy.

*Route to Reform: K-8 Service-Learning Curriculum Ideas,*

M. Wegner, M. Anderson and C. Stenborg

National Youth Leadership Council,

651-631-3672; [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)

The perfect tool for "making the case" for service-learning to teachers, administrators, policy-makers, and funders, this video tells the story of service-learning in three settings, through the voices of the students and educators involved.





## Other Materials

### from The Giraffe Heroes Project

*Voices of Hope* is a direct descendant of the Giraffe Heroes Program, a K-12 service-learning and character education curriculum developed by the Giraffe Heroes Project (see page 96). The Project finds real-life heroes who are bravely making their world a better place, then tells the stories of these “Giraffes” told in speeches and workshops, at public events, on the web, in schools and in national and local media.

The Giraffe Heroes Program takes Giraffe stories and spirit into schools in ways that are engaging to students, acceptable to parents and the community, and compelling enough to help kids build lives as active, caring citizens.

In the Giraffe Heroes Program editions for K-9, students follow a natural and profound three-stage learning process, one that causes learning to go deeper than theories and rules, into the experiences that are the substance of real knowledge and understanding:

#### **HEAR the Story**

Students hear stories of Giraffes—real people who have stuck their necks out for the common good, people whose lives they can emulate.

#### **TELL the Story**

Students do research in their textbooks, in media, and in their communities, looking for heroes whose stories they then tell the group.

#### **BECOME the Story**

Inspired by these stories, students focus on a public problem they care about, then design and carry out a service project that addresses that problem. They learn what it means to be an active citizen, while gaining important academic and life skills.

The edition of the Giraffe Heroes Program for grades 10-12 is organized around *It's Up to Us*—a one-per-student paperback—plus a Resource Guide. The program gives teens action-planning tools for doing service projects, concepts for leading a meaningful life, engaging stories of Giraffes, and reflection questions.

The Giraffe Heroes Project's newest book is *Stick Your Neck Out—a Street-Smart Guide to Creating Change in Your Community and Beyond*. Written for adults, it is increasingly being used in high school upper-grade and leadership classes.

There are full descriptions of all Giraffe educational materials at our website, where you can also find T-shirts, buttons, pins, mugs, notecards, tapes, CDs and more.

To learn more or to place an order, see [www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org), or contact the Giraffe Heroes Project at 360-221-7989.



# The Giraffe Heroes Project

Moving people to stick their necks out for the common good ~ giving them tools to succeed.

## **In schools and youth organizations ~**

- ~ The K-12 Giraffe Heroes Program uses the stories of real heroes to inspire kids to lives of brave and caring citizenship. Tested tools help them create and carry out service projects that meet important needs in their communities and beyond.
- ~ *Voices of Hope* gives kids heroes' stories that build reading skills, while inspiring them to action on problems they care about.
- ~ The *Voices of Hope Service-Learning Guide* condenses the Project's fifteen years of experience into a concise, user-friendly guide.
- ~ Giraffe Trainings help users of all Giraffe programs create the next generation of informed, involved citizens.
- ~ Recordings of the adventures of Stan Tall & Bea Tall bring Giraffe stories to the very young.

## **In print and on the air ~**

*Stick Your Neck Out: A Street-Smart Guide to Creating Change in Your Community and Beyond* is the playbook

for successful, active citizenship. Articles, Op-Eds and media interviews by Project leaders are part of the national debate on key issues such as social security, civil liberties, education and leadership.

## **In person ~**

Giraffe speeches bring people to their feet cheering. Giraffe workshops are street-smart trainings in citizen action.

## **Abroad ~**

The Project takes Giraffe strategies for resolving conflict and building peace into war-torn areas of the Middle East and Africa.

## **On line ~**

[www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org) features inspiring stories of Giraffe Heroes, along with detailed information on all Giraffe programs and products, and interactive ways of sharing the Giraffe message of courageous compassion.

## **In media ~**

Coverage of Giraffe Heroes has included *Good Morning America*, *Time*, *People*, *The New York Times*, *Parade*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, the Associated Press, *Scholastic*, and *Education Today*.



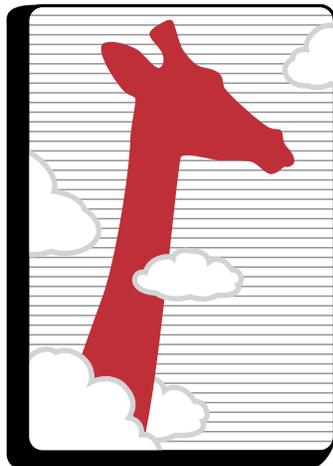
In a time of increasing demands and diminishing resources, how do you motivate kids, improve literacy skills and inspire successful service projects?

The answer is  
in your hands...

*Voices of Hope*

Service-Learning Guide

### Stick Your Neck Out



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