CARING

GIVE A LITTLE BIT BACK

ED U. GATOR LEARNS HE’S FORTUNATE

ACTORS WHO HELP KIDS
T
here’s a child living on the street, hungry and cold, in New York City. There’s a family in Florida whose house has been destroyed by a hurricane. There’s a seagull in Ontario whose home has been poisoned by acid rain.

Who cares? Hopefully, you do! It’s easy not to think about people and other living things that exist thousands of miles away. We don’t know their names, we’ve never seen their pictures and we’ll probably never meet them. But does that mean we shouldn’t care about what happens to them? Absolutely not! If every person on the planet only cared about himself, it would be a very sad and lonely world!

Take a moment to think about all the people who care about you. There’s probably a very long list of concerned individuals. Your parents, your brothers and sisters, your aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, friends, teachers, doctors, neighbors—Whew! That’s an awful lot of caring! You’re in very good hands!

Now it’s time to give back to the world some of that caring. Having compassion, understanding and respect for others is a good place to start. Acting responsibly and doing the right thing is next in line.

Looking out for and helping those in need, whether they live upstairs or across the world, is the icing on the cake! When you hold the door open for someone, it shows you care. When you listen to a friend’s problems, it shows you care. When you put bird seed outside in the winter, it shows you care. When you throw away your trash, conserve water and electricity, recycle bottles, cans and newspapers, it shows you care. When you donate clothes and food to goodwill centers, it shows you care. Oh, you do some of these caring things already? See, I knew you had it in you!

ACTIVITY:

Imagine you were a member of that family in Florida. After the hurricane you lost everything you had. Suddenly, a relief worker arrives with some care packages from Nashville, Tennessee. What do you hope is in those boxes? What things would you need just to survive? What would your family do if nobody else cared?
friends. Ed here. Boy, I was feeling pretty sorry for myself at the beginning of the week. Mom and I were at the Marshland Mall when I saw a really cool jacket at the store. I just had to have it! But Mom said we had to wait because it was kind of expensive, and we needed some things for the house more than I needed the jacket. I said okay, but deep down I was really disappointed.

Wednesday morning at school, Mr. Salam Ander talked to the class about poverty and world hunger. He showed us some pictures of starving children in South America and Asia. He said some of them went without food for days. I started thinking about how hungry I get a half hour before lunch! Mr. Salam Ander said we are especially fortunate because most of us get three good meals a day. The people in the pictures had very little clothing and what they had was old and torn. Here I was in class, wearing a nice new shirt, a pair of pants and some big hiking boots. Two days ago I was griping about not getting that new jacket! Well, that made me feel about two inches tall.

When I got home that afternoon, I spent some time looking through my drawers and closet. I counted two dozen shirts, six pairs of pants, four pairs of shoes and sneakers, 10 pairs of underwear and about 20 pairs of socks. I had three jackets, too, including a blue denim one that I had completely forgotten about! Then I went down to the kitchen. The pantry and refrigerator were full of canned vegetables and fruit, frozen foods like steak and chicken, a ton of cheese and lunch meats and an endless variety of snack stuff and drinks. I thought about how often I've complained to Mom, “there’s nothing to eat!” I kept seeing those starving children in those pictures, and it made me feel really guilty on one hand, and really lucky on the other.

That night, Mom came in my room and told me we could go to the mall on Saturday and get that new jacket. I told her thanks, but I really didn’t need a new jacket after all.

**QUESTIONS**

1) Why was Ed disappointed at the mall?
2) What did Ed learn about in Mr. Ander’s class?
3) Why did Ed feel fortunate? What did he discover when he went home that afternoon?
4) How did Ed and his friends show they cared?
5) How did they feel after their trip to the mission?
6) Why did Ed say he didn’t need the new jacket after all?
7) What could you and your friends do to help the homeless and starving people in your community?
HOW I SHOW I CARE

Directions: In what ways do you show you care about the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Friends</th>
<th>Your Family</th>
<th>Other People</th>
<th>The Earth</th>
<th>Yourself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MORE THAN JUST WORDS

Directions: Sometimes we use words without really thinking about what they mean. Pretend you’re writing a dictionary, and create your own definitions for the following words:

- compassion: _________________________________________
- concern: __________________________________________
- responsibility: ____________________________________
- understanding: _____________________________________
- beneficial: ________________________________________
IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: The newspaper contains stories about homelessness, world hunger and people who have been victims of natural disasters like floods, fires and hurricanes. Read one of these stories. Then, imagine you had the resources to visit these people in person. In the space below, write a short paragraph about what you would do to help and show you care.

_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

GOTTA GET A MESSAGE TO YOU!

Directions: Think about how good it feels when someone lets you know how much they care about you. Is there a friend, a neighbor or a relative who might benefit from hearing some kind words from you? Write a “Just thinking about you” card, fax or e-mail and send it to that lucky person!
Caring

Bradley Carruthers was a pretty careless kid. He hardly ever did his chores around the house, and when he did, they were frequently left unfinished. From the minute he got home from school till the time he crawled into his unmade bed, Bradley left a trail of junk and stuff behind him.

Clothes were left wherever they fell, draped over chairs or dumped in piles on the floor. Books with torn pages, and games with missing pieces littered tables and shelves. His parents were forever asking him to pick up after himself, but the truth is, Bradley just didn’t care. He didn’t care about his belongings, he didn’t care about his family, and, as was obvious to anyone who knew him, he didn’t care very much about himself. But that all changed one Saturday in the middle of a very hot summer. Bradley’s parents woke him up at the crack of dawn. “Let’s go honey!” said his mom, who, despite her son’s irresponsible nature, still cared a great deal about him.

“Where are we going?” asked Bradley groggily.

“Well, actually, it read ‘WELCOME TO CARELESS COUNTY,’” said his parents in unison, shaking their heads in the rear view mirror. And that’s the last thing that was said on the way out of Careless County, and on the trip back home. When the Carruthers pulled into their neat driveway with their perfectly manicured lawn and their newly painted porch, Bradley breathed a sigh of relief. From that day on, he was like a different kid. He completed all his chores without being told. He neatly put away his clothes and books and games. He helped his mom and dad and the neighbors on the street whenever anyone needed a hand. He became quite a caring kid, that Bradley Carruthers. And to think all it took was a casual drive through Careless County, Population 14!
Danny Thomas was a popular actor who starred in a long-running television series called *Make Room for Daddy*. In the later years of his life, Thomas became famous for something other than acting: his compassion for children with catastrophic and terminal illnesses.

In 1962, Thomas founded the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. The research conducted there by the scientific and medical staff has brought about major advances in the study of pediatric cancer. Until he passed away, Thomas continued to devote much of his time to increasing awareness and fund-raising for this fine, caring institution.

Danny Thomas’s daughter, Marlo, is also a famous television actress. Her comedy series *That Girl* was a big hit, and lasted for several seasons. Today, Marlo Thomas continues her father’s mission of helping kids with cancer.

In March of 1996, Marlo Thomas read a newspaper article about a 7-year-old girl from Bolivia, South America named Gabriela Salinas, who was dying from a disease called Ewing sarcoma, one of the most common types of childhood bone cancer.

The doctors in Bolivia were unable to treat her. Her father brought her to New York City’s Mount Sinai Medical center, but she was refused treatment because her family could not afford the $250,000 medical expenses.

With great compassion, Marlo Thomas arranged for Gabriela to enter St. Jude Children’s Hospital, which regularly treats children whose families are unable to pay for medical treatment and services. After seven months, Gabriela’s cancer was in remission, with a very positive outlook for her future.

For the time being, Gabriela will continue to see doctors at St. Jude’s, where they will monitor her recovery and give her two more rounds of chemotherapy. Even though Gabriela would rather be back in Bolivia, St. Jude’s has provided her with a home away from home. She lives with her parents and three siblings in Memphis, in a comfortable house donated to her family.

VOCABULARY:
- **Catastrophic**: terrible.
- **Terminal**: a disease that has no cure.
- **Pediatric**: having to do with children.
- **Remission**: when the symptoms of an illness disappear.
- **Chemotherapy**: the use of chemicals to treat cancer patients.
TIPS

1) Children often learn caring behavior from observing the way adults interact with each other and the world around them. Since caring is a trait you probably wish to encourage in your child, look for opportunities to model compassion for other people and living things. Let your child accompany you on a visit to a sick friend or an elderly neighbor or relative. Take your child with you when your family pet visits the vet. Let your child assist you on your next recycling run. If your child sees and understands that caring is a significant aspect of your daily life, it will come more naturally to him, too.

2) It’s essential to communicate that concern for other people and things is a frame of mind and a way of life, not just something you do in an isolated circumstance. When you’re a caring individual you show compassion for all living things, from the tiniest ladybug to human beings. A concerned individual takes care of her personal items, and the Earth at large. Caring means you strive to do the right thing and act responsibly all the time.

3) We often tell our kids to “Be nice to your brother” or “Give your grandpa a big hug.” Caring about members of the family is extremely important, but true compassion extends to nameless people across town and around the world. Educate, don’t shield your children from difficult topics like homelessness and world hunger. Your child may find compassion on his own and want to contribute to helping his fellow man and woman. At the very least, he may be more appreciative and respectful of the things he has and the secure roof over his head.

4) Like every other positive behavior, it’s beneficial to “catch” your child demonstrating compassion. Letting her know how much you respect her caring ways will only encourage more of the same.

RESOURCES


FAMILY PLEDGE CARD

Our family has completed the Family Page together.

______________________________
Child’s name

Family members:

______________________    ___________________
______________________    ___________________

School: ___________________________

Teacher/grade: ___________________________

For more information about Project: Solution, call 726-8918 or 1-800-351-1227, ext. 8033 or 8918.