BUILDING COMMUNITY

COOPERATION & COMMUNITY GO TOGETHER

ED U. GATOR MEETS HIS NEIGHBORS

REBA MCENTIRE IS GIVING SOMETHING BACK

PROJECT: SOLUTION
Discovering Lessons for Life
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LEVEL 1
When you drive around your community, you probably see some pretty houses. Did you ever wonder how a house gets built? It's not easy. It takes a lot of time, a lot of hard work and a lot of cooperation, which means people working together. It takes truckloads of supplies and a crew of talented individuals to do the job right.

First, someone has to design the house, then others have to take that plan and make it a reality. You need people with different skills, like carpenters, bricklayers, electricians, plumbers and painters. If this big project is going to be successful, all those hard-working people have to help each other. They must respect each other, too. And when that beautiful house is completed, all those individuals can look proudly at their amazing accomplishment, built by cooperation and teamwork!

Building a house is a lot like building a community. It takes the combined abilities, teamwork, helpfulness and cooperation of its individual members to make a good community. A community might be your school, your place of worship, your neighborhood, your town or your city. Each of these communities consists of many different kinds of people who, by contributing their unique talents, sharing common goals and working together, make that community a great place to be!

If you think about it, the world is like one gigantic community, filled with billions of special people. If we could all somehow set aside our differences, and work together in peace, there’d be a lot less trouble in the world. But, that takes a lot of time, a lot of hard work and a lot of cooperation. Sounds like a pretty good goal though, doesn’t it? Well, if we could all start by getting along and working together in our schools and in our neighborhoods, then maybe someday our cooperating community will include all the people of the earth!

**VOCABULARY:**

- **Talented:** having a natural skill, gift or ability.
- **Carpenter:** a worker who builds and repairs wooden things.
- **Electrician:** a person who works with electrical equipment.
- **Plumber:** a worker who builds and repairs pipes and fixtures for water and gas.
- **Consists:** to be made up of.

**ACTIVITY:**

Your principal and your teacher are two individuals who work hard to build and maintain your school community. But there are many other people who help make your school a cooperative community, and a great place to learn. Can you think of others?
i, friends. Ed here again. For the first time since we’ve moved to Gatorsville Park, I’ve gotten to meet all the folks who live in our community.

My family has been so busy with work, school and activities that we haven’t had much time to get to know who lives on our street. But that all changed in kind of a funny way. Two weeks ago, we were playing baseball in the park, when Alice suddenly noticed her bicycle was gone. Unfortunately, nobody saw who took it. It was a beautiful day, so the park was filled with kids. Alice was very upset, and we were all surprised and a little bit frightened to think that someone would just take something that didn’t belong to them. We stopped the game early and took off on bicycle and on foot to see if we could find anything. But it started getting dark and we knew our parents would get worried, so we all went home.

The next day was Saturday, and Alice and Franklin came over early in the morning. Franklin had a great idea. He suggested we draw a picture of Alice’s bike and distribute copies of it to everyone in the community. Alice is a pretty good artist, so she drew the picture. I have the neatest handwriting so I wrote Alice’s name, her address and her phone number in case anybody saw the bike. Franklin’s the fastest bike rider, so he took the copies around to every house in the neighborhood. It was easy with everybody pitching in and working together!

Late that afternoon, Alice got a phone call. Mr. Cassidy from down the street saw our flier, and suggested our whole neighborhood get together to discuss this situation. He thought we could all meet at the park Monday afternoon. So, Mr. Cassidy made several phone calls, and Alice, Franklin and I knocked on a bunch of doors. Everyone we spoke to seemed enthusiastic about our community gathering. It was great meeting all our neighbors, too!

Monday afternoon, 75 people showed up at the park. It was a great turnout! Mr. Cassidy led the meeting and talked about our need for a Neighborhood Watch program. He thought it was important that we all look out for each other and help each other whenever we could. Then he introduced Alice, who told everyone about her lost bicycle.

Then, just as we were all ready to leave, a girl rode up to the park on Alice’s bike! It turns out she had taken Alice’s bike by mistake because hers was almost exactly like it. She came back to the park hoping whoever owned the bike would be there.

Alice was very thankful, and the rest of us were very relieved that it wasn’t a real thief after all. Even though Alice’s bike wasn’t really stolen, it was a great opportunity for our community to get to know each other.

I learned a whole lot of new names, and even got four more kids to join our baseball team!

QUESTIONS

1) Why was Ed unfamiliar with the people in his community?

2) How many of your neighbors on your street do you know?

3) Why were Ed’s friends surprised, and a little bit frightened about what happened to Alice’s bike?

4) What was Franklin’s great idea? How did Ed, Alice and Franklin make a good team?

5) What did Mr. Cassidy mean by a Neighborhood Watch program? Do you have one in your community?

6) What did Ed’s neighbors accomplish at the meeting in the park?
BUILD YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

Directions: In the jumble of alphabet blocks below, there are enough letters to spell BUILDING COMMUNITY. Cut out the blocks and rearrange them (paste them on a separate piece of paper if you want to!) to spell those two big, important words.
IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: Many times in the newspaper there are pictures of, and articles about, community helpers. They may be individuals in your neighborhood, in your town, in your state or across the country. With the help of an adult, find a story about one of these special people, or about a group of people who showed teamwork and cooperation. Cut out the picture, paste it below and write underneath it in big block letters: COMMUNITY BUILDER!

GO TEAM GO!

Directions: Imagine you're a member of a team that works really hard to help out in the community. Your team members should be proud of their cooperation and helpfulness. Design a T-shirt for your team members to wear.
Rabbit woke up with a start. There was bright light everywhere and the smell of smoke. Suddenly, he came to his senses: “It’s a forest fire!” he thought, “I’ve got to let everyone know!”

So Rabbit scurried off to tell Bear, Raccoon and Squirrel. Chipmunk and Snake already knew, and they warned Mole and Eagle. They all went as fast they could to escape the growing flames. From a safe distance, they watched sadly as their beloved homes burned to the ground. Then, as suddenly as the fire began, the sky opened up and heavy rains poured down, putting out the deadly fire. When it was all over, the animals returned to their homes. “There’s nothing left!” said Mole. “What will we do now?”

“We must start over somewhere else,” said Snake, who was a great leader. “If we all work together we will get the job done.”

So Eagle, who was a remarkable scout, flew off to find the perfect place to build their new community. He came back in an hour and led them all to a lush and wooded area near a running stream. With her great strength, Bear moved heavy boulders and tree trunks. Raccoon, who had a great deal of practice with this sort of thing, gathered materials to build a bridge across the stream. When the workers were hungry, Squirrel and Chipmunk used their foraging skills to collect food. When the sky grew too dark to see, Mole, who had no eyes and didn’t need light, continued to work hard while his weary companions rested.

In the morning, the animals awoke to find their new homes nearly done. Snake slithered up to the top of a tree. “My friends,” he said with great pride, “we have all done an extraordinary job. By working together we have built a fine new community. Just yesterday we watched as our old homes burned to the ground. Today we have new homes, and the promise of a new life!”

And Snake, Bear, Eagle, Raccoon, Chipmunk and Squirrel spent the day finishing their tasks and helping each other whenever they could. When evening came they had a glorious celebration to honor their hard work. Fortunately, Mole, who had stayed up all night working and slept all day, woke up just in time for the joyful festivities.
Reba McEntire is one of the most successful, and popular, country music artists of all time. She has recorded a lengthy list of million-plus selling albums, and has filled several greatest hits packages with her famous songs.

She has won countless awards for her records and for her exciting concert performances, including Female Vocalist of the Year four years in a row! She has also acted in many movies, had two specials for television, and written an autobiography.

McEntire is a very busy entertainer, but somehow, in the midst of all her singing, writing and acting commitments, she’s found time to support her community in numerous ways.

For years, McEntire volunteered many hours to Habitat for Humanity, an organization dedicated to building houses and selling them to low-income families at no profit. Habitat’s community-building efforts have provided many needy families with a safe and secure place to live.

In 1996, McEntire switched her volunteer activities to another worthy community project: the school system. She is currently the spokesperson and honorary chair for the Schools Now Campaign, which raises money and community support for education by selling coupon books. During a two-week period in 1995, 96 schools raised $700,000! The 1996 goal was $1,000,000. With McEntire’s help, and the teamwork of students, teachers and families across the state, anything is possible!

McEntire has said, “As a parent and a citizen, I want to contribute my time and energy to something as important as education.” Reba McEntire is a great example of someone dedicated to helping others and building community.

**VOCABULARY:**

- Commitment: making a promise.
- Habitat: the place where something or somebody lives.
- Volunteer: offering to do something, often without being paid.
1) Cooperation is a difficult concept to convey to a young child. Sharing with, or helping a sibling or friend is often the exact opposite of what your child has in mind. Look for opportunities to promote cooperation when the outcome is less threatening, when your child is not in fear of giving up a treasured toy or activity. It may take some creativity to come up with activities that require kids’ playing together for pure enjoyment. 

2) As we move closer to the 21st century, we appear to be moving further away from other people. Out of a fear or mistrust of the outside world, we concentrate more of our time as a family within our own walls. A possible way to break this cycle is to actively pursue and engage in activities with people in the neighborhood, or in the community. It will benefit your child if they realize they are an important small part of a bigger picture! 

3) Teamwork is a concept easily taught at home. Kids are surprisingly enthusiastic about helping with a household task if it’s presented in a fun and creative way. Demonstrate how, when all the members of your family contribute to completing a chore or project, you make a terrific team, and how each contribution is unique and necessary. 

4) Teach your child what it means to be a responsible member of the community. That community may be the neighborhood, school, a place of worship, the town, the city or the state. A community builder does many things outlined in the Project: Solution series: he or she gives service, demonstrates honesty, nurtures family and friends, cares, models democracy, does the right thing, takes initiative and respects others. All of these character traits will benefit your child, the family, and the community at large.

RESOURCES

FAMILY ACTIVITY
To get your child interested in community involvement, sit down with her and make a list of possible community projects, in the neighborhood, at a place of worship or at school. Try to brainstorm creative ways to get other people in the community involved. A project that involves the environment, like energy conservation or recycling, would involve other community members. Perhaps you could discuss what measures the community could take to promote safety. Once you come up with a great idea, try to think of the steps needed to put your community-building plan into action!

FAMILY PLEDGE CARD
Our family has completed the Family Page together.

______________________________
Child’s name

______________________    ___________________
Family members:

______________________    ___________________

School: ___________________________________

Teacher/grade: ___________________________