

# CHARACTER EDUCATION

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 2011



RESPONSIBILITY

CHARACTER — THE CORE OF OUR LIVES

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Meeting obligations by being reliable, accountable, and dependable to self and others.

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*"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing."  
-Edmund Burke*

*"The price of greatness is responsibility."  
-Winston Churchill*

*"The one with the primary responsibility to the individual's future is that individual."  
-Dorcas Hardy*

*"It is my firm belief that I have a link with the past and a responsibility to the future."  
-King of Jordan*

*"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."  
-Abraham Lincoln*

*"The reason people blame things on the previous generations is that there's only one other choice."  
-Doug Larson*

*"Success on any major scale requires you to accept responsibility... in the final analysis, the one quality that all successful people have... is the ability to take on responsibility."  
-Michael Korda*

*"I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; I will not refuse to do something I can do."  
-Helen Keller*

*"Man must cease attributing his problems to his environment, and learn again to exercise his will—his personal responsibility."  
-Albert Schweitzer*

*"Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and to let him know that you trust him."  
-Booker T. Washington*

*"Always do right — this will gratify some and astonish the rest."  
-Mark Twain*



## READ / WRITE / DISCUSS



- ◆ Read *Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story* to the class. Discuss why this would be a story about responsibility. Why was Mr. Sugihara responsible? What responsibilities did he have?
- ◆ Ask students to choose one of the quotes listed on the front of the activity sheet and describe what this quotation means and how it can be applied to their lives. \*\*
- ◆ In today's society, students find it difficult or unnecessary to report a friend's threat of using a gun or drugs. Discuss with the class how a person can be responsible in a situation where a friend tells him/her that he/she has a gun or is using drugs.
- ◆ What does responsibility look like (actions and behavior)? Brainstorm ways people are responsible.
- ◆ Discuss with the class and list duties students have at home. Do they do them or try to get out of doing them? Should kids have responsibilities at home? Why?
- ◆ With students, create a home responsibility chart. Give these to students and ask them to choose three of the responsibilities they can do at home. Discuss the possibility of doing these with their parents to make certain the selected responsibilities are appropriate. Then, the following week, ask students to carry out the selected responsibilities and have their parents sign the form as they are completed. Ask students to write an essay about the experience. The following questions can be answered in the essay: Why did they select the responsibilities? How did they enjoy doing the tasks? How did their parents respond? What was the outcome? \*\*
- ◆ Discuss responsibility to our environment, beginning with the classroom. How can students protect this environment? Brainstorm ideas like picking up papers, respecting books and materials, and keeping desks clean. After the discussion, lead students in cleaning up the room and their desks.
- ◆ Ask students to write about the way they feel when they are doing the tasks that they have to do (not necessarily the things that they want or like to do). \*\*
- ◆ Have students write about a time when they had something they really wanted to do that conflicted with something that they were responsible for doing. How did they decide what they would do? \*\*
- ◆ Discuss opportunities where the students can demonstrate responsibility as role models for younger students/siblings both in and out of school. Discuss what the possible outcomes would be if the students were positive or negative role models. Possibly set up a program with a younger class where older students can work responsibly with younger students.
- ◆ Discuss with the students what they might do if they had a close friend who knocked on their door asking for help. What responsibility do the students have to their friends? Would the students change their responses if they found out that the friend was fleeing from authority?
- ◆ Present the following scenario to the class: They must do a science fair project this year. They have one month to complete the assignment, but wait until the last minute to decide what they are going to do. They rush home the night before the project is due and ask their parents for help, but their parents refuse. Have the students write about what they would do and what they should do the next time they have an assignment due. \*\*
- ◆ Review the Constitution of the United States and list under two headings (RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES) what has been written into the "Law of the Land." How would students compare these responsibilities to their responsibilities at home and in school? Use a Venn diagram to help with the comparison process.
- ◆ Visit the web site "Role Models on the Web" @ [www.rolemodel.net/guide.htm/](http://www.rolemodel.net/guide.htm/). Select a role model to "visit" and use the Study Guide on the web site for a class discussion.
- ◆ Litter is a big problem in our city. People throw cups and cans out of car windows. Children throw candy wrappers on the floor at home and at school. Discuss the consequences of these actions to people, the environment, etc. Discuss what the students can do to help solve this problem.
- ◆ Discuss the following scenario with the class: "Last week Fran found a newborn kitten under a tree. What would be a responsible thing for Fran to do?"
- ◆ A responsible person follows through on tasks he/she is expected to do. Have students keep a journal of the times they complete their chores, finish their homework, feed their pet, and complete other tasks without being reminded. \*\*
- ◆ Discuss with the class the responsibility of caring for a pet. When people own a pet, it becomes their responsibility to care for it. Have students make a list of all the things they need to do to raise a pet. Discuss why it is important to be a responsible person before owning a pet.
- ◆ Show, by charting the major scientific breakthroughs in history, how a variety of scientists and inventors accepted responsibility for trying to make life better for the people of their culture and/or the world. \*\*

### SHARE YOUR GREAT IDEAS & BEST PRACTICES

If you have feedback regarding any of these activities or have successfully implemented an activity which is not listed that you would like to add, e-mail a one- to two-paragraph overview of the activity to Renee Brown @ CAB or [renee.m.brown@browardschools.com](mailto:renee.m.brown@browardschools.com).



## HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS



- ◆ Encourage students to find examples in history of individuals who took responsibility to help people in need. Students can use online databases, classroom texts, biographies, or historical novels for reference. \*\*
- ◆ Using newspapers, magazines, online databases, or current publications, ask students to list examples of individuals or groups exhibiting acts of responsibility toward others. This could include pets, peers, and elders. \*\*
- ◆ Read the following scenario: "Your grandmother is living with you and your family now that she is getting older. She is not able to do a lot of the things she did when she was younger. She needs more care and sometimes has a difficult time remembering things. You are a very responsible person and help your parents care for your grandmother. You read to her, watch TV together, and help her find things she misplaced. This has made your family very happy." Create a pamphlet of things kids can do to help elderly grandparents. The pamphlet can be shared with others who are in the same situation. \*\*
- ◆ Have students design a T-shirt that tells or shows how to be a responsible pet owner. \*\*
- ◆ Read: "A TV producer wants to create a program that showcases responsible people. He wants you to create a list of criteria for selecting the most responsible people." Ask students to develop the list and explain why each trait is important. \*\*
- ◆ Look at the word RESPONSIBILITY. Have students take each letter in this word and write what each letter represents. For example, R is for readily doing chores. The teacher may want to divide the class into groups and have each group be responsible for one or two of the letters in the word. \*\*
- ◆ Have students brainstorm examples of responsibility that they exhibit every day. In cooperative learning groups, encourage students to create a Venn diagram to show the responsibilities they have in common. \*\*
- ◆ Create a class Responsibility book or bulletin board by posting ways that members of the class are responsible to themselves, to each other, to the teacher and to others in the school community. \*\*
- ◆ Have the class take on the responsibility of organizing a "Keep Our Campus (or Classroom) Clean" project. Create posters, buttons, slogans, jingles, etc. to promote the project. Create a post-evaluation checklist. Evaluate the success of the project at the end of the month (or each month, depending on the duration of the project). \*\*
- ◆ Math connection: Have the class do a litter pick-up project at the beginning of the month. Record the types and amounts of litter found. Repeat the exercise at the end of the month and compare the two results in at least two different ways.
- ◆ A friend has asked you to help him study for a test. As you are walking to his house another friend comes up and asks you to go to the baseball game. Role play the following:
  - Say to yourself: "Man, I would love to go to that game!"
  - Stop and think: "Why should I keep my promise?" (benefits/consequences)
  - Say, "I sure would like to go but I promised someone I would help him."Discuss: Did you act responsibly? Why should we keep our promises?
- ◆ Divide the class into groups of three. Give each group one sheet of paper and a box of crayons. Instruct them to decide on a picture of students in a class acting responsibly (e.g., sharing crayons, helping each other, keeping their area clean). Next, draw the picture. After they have finished, discuss how they got along and if they acted responsibly while drawing their picture.
- ◆ Divide the class into groups of three. Hand out magazines. Ask the students to cut out pictures showing people acting responsibly and then paste the pictures on a piece of paper. After the exercise, discuss how they worked together. Who took responsibility for what part of the project from beginning to end? Did they act responsibly?
- ◆ Design a RESPONSIBILITY bulletin board in the class or school. Have students list a responsible act and then draw a picture of someone depicting this action. \*\*
- ◆ Ask students to choose any type of pet. It may or may not be one that they actually own. Students will then need to research all of the responsibilities that are involved with owning the pet of their choice. Have students make a chart, creative display, or multimedia project to show what responsibilities are involved with the care of their selected pet. \*\*
- ◆ Students need to take appropriate steps throughout the school year to prepare themselves to advance to the next grade or level of school. There are a number of responsibilities that are required of the student to make this happen. Have students work in groups of two to come up with a list of these responsibilities. Then, expand the group to four. Working cooperatively, ask each group of students to chart or outline on chart paper these responsibilities. Display these charts in the room. Then select a reporter from each group. Going from chart to chart, ask each reporter to explain one of the responsibilities. Then, ask a student to create one list of the responsibilities or goals that students in the class need to achieve to successfully advance to the next grade or level. This list should be displayed in the class so students are reminded throughout the school year.

**\*\* These items can be used as homework assignments.**

# PROJECT BRIDGE SAFE SCHOOLS/HEALTHY STUDENTS GRANT UPDATE



## **"RESPONSIBILITY" IS KEY TO BULLYING PREVENTION**

*By Aimee Wood*

*"It's not MY fault!"* How many times have we heard that? Unfortunately, without realizing it, by denying responsibility we are actually throwing away much of the power and control we have over our lives. This is why the best anti-bullying efforts focus on bystanders and the power they hold as the majority to reduce and prevent bullying.

During the Nazi regime in Germany, for those bystanders who stood by and did nothing as their neighbors were one by one taken away – how responsible were they for what happened? By failing to utilize the power they held to resist the violence, did they in fact become colluders to it? How do we view those Germans now with the lens of hindsight? Along the same line, how do we look at figures through history who chose to use their personal power to take responsibility for themselves and their fellow man? We view them as heroes - such men are Gandhi, Arthur Ashe, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Heroes walk the halls of our Broward County schools every day. Let's help our students find and celebrate their inner hero by taking responsibility for themselves and their fellow students, by picking up and acting on the power they hold as bystanders.



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## **DRUG FREE IS THE KEY!**

Being responsible is when students are accountable for their actions; they don't make excuses or blame others.

It is about using good judgment and thinking through the consequences of their actions.

A responsible student:

- ◆ is reliable
- ◆ is dependable



Being responsible puts you in charge of your life; your future is up to you.



October 23-31 has been designated as Red Ribbon Week. The Red Ribbon campaign has become the catalyst to show intolerance for drugs in our schools, work places, and communities.

This is an opportunity to talk with your students about peer pressure and learning to say "**no**" to experimenting with drugs or other harmful substances. It is a time to teach students some strategies by preparing them in advance for a possible pressure situation.

Saying "**no**" to friends can be very hard. Students may be afraid of what their peers will think if they don't follow along with them.

For *Red Ribbon Week* ideas and activities visit our website at:  
**[www.browardprevention.org](http://www.browardprevention.org)**

# NEWS TO KNOW... CHARACTER CONNECTION

## CHARACTER EDUCATION ACTIVITY SHEET:

Below you'll find very helpful information pertaining to our Character Education Program. Please take full advantage of these initiatives designed to get your school site off to a great new year in building a positive school culture of CHARACTER!

In addition, for archived activity sheets visit our Web site: [www.browardprevention.org](http://www.browardprevention.org) (under "Character")

## ACTIVITY SHEET UPDATE:

Access to all monthly activity sheets with Sunshine State Standards will now be available in **electronic version only via BEEP** (through Learning Village).

## EDCO'S FREE CERTIFICATES & PLAQUES:

Here is the process for how to receive **free** certificates and plaques:

1. Each month, each teacher may choose a "Kid of Character" from his/her classroom. (Middle and high schools may decide if they want to do this by teams, department or other methods.) Those students should receive a certificate at the end of the month for the trait that is represented for that month. It's suggested that these awards be given out to students at an assembly or via morning/afternoon announcements.
2. From the group of students who receive the certificates, schools may choose **ONE** of these students to receive a **FREE** plaque from EDCO. You may order your plaque from EDCO Awards and Specialties by logging onto [www.edcoawards.com/kidsofcharacter](http://www.edcoawards.com/kidsofcharacter). **ALL CERTIFICATES AND PLAQUES ARE FREE. (ONLY ONE PLAQUE PER SCHOOL PER MONTH IS PROVIDED FREE.** Schools may order additional plaques at a reduced rate from EDCO.)
3. Certificates may be ordered through the Character Education Department, courtesy of the *SunSentinel*, or through EDCO. The ones from the *SunSentinel* must be filled in at the school site. The certificates from EDCO may be entered on-line and will be printed by EDCO. Please note: This takes an advance time of 1-2 weeks. Please contact Renee Brown at 754-321-2568 ext. 2748, or email her via CAB or at [renee.m.brown@browardschools.com](mailto:renee.m.brown@browardschools.com) if you have any additional questions about this process.

## \*\*LET'S HONOR OUR STUDENTS IN THE NEWSPAPER\*\*

### \*\*ATTENTION TEACHERS... KIDS OF CHARACTER STORY SUBMISSION PROCESS\*\*

1. To see your student and school highlighted in the Sun-Sentinel, start by sending a paragraph or two about what makes your student special to Julie Landry Laviolette at [julavio@gmail.com](mailto:julavio@gmail.com). Julie is handling nominations for the Sun-Sentinel.
2. Be sure to include specific details about actions your student takes to show their good character.
3. Remember this is not based on academic performance: Those students will be awarded through honor roll or other academic honors. These are **EXCEPTIONAL** students in other unique areas.
4. Once the stories are evaluated you will be notified directly. If your student is chosen, you will receive a short questionnaire to fill out and a form to give to the parents. Thank you for your time!

**WE DO APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!!**



<http://www.broward.org/Kids/CharacterEducation/Pages/CharacterEducation.aspx>  
Pollution Prevention, Remediation and Air Quality Division



## Character: The Core of Our Lives Patriotism: The Core of Our Nation's Strength



### **Patriotism**

To weave Patriotism throughout our Character Education Program, this month's suggested activities that can be integrated into the responsibility trait are related to service and sacrifice – community service, service to the country, and contributions of world leaders.

### **Patriotic Quotes**

"If you want children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders."

- Abigail Van Buren

"We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future."

- George Bernard Shaw

### **Patriotic Activities**

- ◆ Students should recall a time that they behaved in a responsible manner. Ask them how it felt to be empowered with responsibility.
- ◆ Discussion these questions with students:
  - Name a community or national figure you believe is a responsible person.
  - What are some of the responsibilities the community or national figure has?
  - What are some rewards the community or national figure receives for being a responsible person?
  - How do you think the community or national figure's self-esteem is affected by all the responsibilities (s)he has?

Students can write an essay describing the community or national figure and how (s)he exhibit responsibility.

- ◆ Have the students consider individuals they know who have performed community service activities. Direct the students to interview the individuals, asking them why their experiences were rewarding, what other types of community service they have performed, and why they feel performing community service is important. During the interview, the students should also ask how responsibility played a role in their community service. What roles of responsibility did the individuals have? Why was it important for the individual to follow through with their assigned tasks?
- ◆ Have students create a list of the various ways an individual can serve our country. Divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the ways listed. The students should then list the types of responsibilities each position has. The small groups will report out to the large group as a whole.
- ◆ Have the class as a whole brainstorm different world leaders. Divide the students into small groups and assign each two world leaders. The small groups of students should create a graphic organizer (e.g., Venn diagram) comparing the two world leaders. Issues to consider include responsibilities of the world leaders, specific actions of the world leader, etc.
- ◆ Discuss with students their perception of the United States military. What is the role of the military in our society? (Students should think about issues such as protection of territory and boundaries, protection of freedom, as well as the appearance of strength in the international community.)
- ◆ In his Inaugural Address on January 20, 1960, President John F. Kennedy stated, "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Ask students what they think President Kennedy meant by this statement. What are the various ways it could be interpreted? What are the many ways someone could serve the nation or his community?
- ◆ One of the major responsibilities of American citizens is to serve jury duty. Discuss the following questions pertaining to jury duty with students:
  - How important is the jury in deciding the fate of a defendant?
  - How great of a difference can changing the jury composition make?
  - What happens when people choose not to participate?
  - What happens when the decision is left to the judge?
  - What responsibilities do people have when it comes to serving on a jury?
- ◆ Give students the following scenario: You are 18 years old. You and two of your friends go over to your house after school. On the way in, you pick up the mail and notice a letter addressed to you. You open it and find a notice inside to report to jury duty. One of your friends thinks that the prospect of serving on a jury is both exciting and important. Your other friend could not disagree more. She thinks that being on a jury is lame and a complete waste of time. She thinks you should just skip it, or use some excuse to get out of being on a jury rather than having to waste a couple of days. You must decide who is right. Will you skip jury duty, or will you participate? Once you decide, write a persuasive letter trying to convince the friend you did not agree with to now agree with you and the other friend.

# RESPONSIBILITY

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Primary



#### Cool Cat, School Cat

Cox, Judy. Holiday House, 2002. 96p.  
082341714X / 9780823417148 Primary

Disorganized Gus misses the dog left behind when his family moved, but then he meets a stray cat and a bossy classmate who breaks school rules to help him care for it.



#### It's Not My Fault!

Carlson, Nancy. Carolrhoda Books, 2003. 32p.  
1575055988 / 9781575055985 Primary

When he is called to the principal's office, George hurries to explain that other people were to blame for the many things that went wrong during the day, from his late arrival to the escape of some mice.



#### Thea's Tree

Jackson, Alison. Dutton, 2008. 32p.  
0525474439 / 9780525474432 Primary

Alison's seeds grow into a giant beanstalk. Sound familiar? Then so will the harp and golden egg, but the adults just don't "get it" in this humorous tale that touches on many subjects. (*Children's Book Award* nominee)

### Intermediate



#### Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat

Jonell, Lynne. Holt, 2007. 352p.  
080508150X / 9780805081503 Intermediate/Middle

When Emmy discovers that she and her formerly loving parents are being drugged by their evil nanny with rodent potions that can change people in frightening ways, she and some new friends must try everything possible to return things to normal. (*Sunshine State Young Readers Award* nominee)



#### Found (The Missing, Book 1)

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. Simon & Schuster, 2008. 320p.  
1416954171 / 9781416954170 Intermediate/Middle

When two adopted boys learn they were discovered on a plane that appeared out of nowhere, they realize that they have uncovered a mystery involving time travel and two opposing forces. (*Sunshine State Young Readers Award* nominee - grades 3-5 and 6-8)



#### Igraine the Brave

Funke, Cornelia. The Chicken House, 2007. 224p.  
0439903793 / 9780439903790 Intermediate/Middle

The daughter of two magicians, Igraine wants nothing more than to be a knight, and when their castle is attacked by a treacherous neighbor bent on stealing their singing magic books, she has an opportunity to demonstrate her bravery. (*Sunshine State Young Readers Award* nominee)

#### MinyanLand

<http://www.minyanland.com>  
Primary (accessed 9/2/09)

Minyanville and the Council for Economic Education created this virtual community so that children can learn about economics and finance in order to be responsible with money.

### Middle



#### Dragon Slippers

George, Jessica Day. Bloomsbury, 2007. 336p.  
1599900573 / 9781599900575 Middle/High

Orphaned after a fever epidemic, Creel befriends a dragon and unknowingly inherits an object that can either save or destroy her kingdom. (*Sunshine State Young Readers Award* nominee)



#### Into the Wild

Durst, Sarah Beth. Razorbill, 2007. 272p.  
1595141561 / 9781595141569 Middle/High

Having escaped from the Wild and the preordained fairy tale plots it imposes, Rapunzel and her daughter Julie try to live a fairly normal life, but when the Wild breaks free and takes over their town, it is Julie who has to prevent everyone from being trapped in the events of a story. (*Sunshine State Young Readers Award* nominee)



#### Runaway

VanDraanen, Wendelin. Knopf, 2006. 256p.  
0375835229 / 9780375835223 Middle/High

After running away from her fifth foster home, Holly, an orphan and now homeless, travels across the country, keeping a journal of her experiences and struggle to survive. (*Sunshine State Young Readers Award* nominee)

### High



#### Chanda's Secrets

Stratton, Allan. Annick Press, 2004. 196p.  
155037835X / 9781550378351 Middle/High

Sixteen-year-old Chanda Kabelo has dreams and she loves school but has to deal with death around her all the time because of AIDS. (*Michael Printz Award Honor Book*)



#### Sledding Hill, The

Crutcher, Chris. Greenwillow Books, 2005. 240p.  
0060502436 / 9780060502430 Middle/High

Billy, recently deceased, keeps an eye on his best friend Eddie, and helps him stand up to a conservative minister and English teacher who is orchestrating a censorship challenge.



#### Suite Scarlett

Johnson, Maureen. Point, 2008. 368p.  
0439899273 / 9780439899277 High

Scarlett is stuck in New York City for the summer working at her quirky family's historic hotel, but her brother's new friend and a seasonal guest who offers her an intriguing and challenging writing project improve her outlook. (*Florida Teens Read Award* nominee)

#### Escape from Knab

<http://www.escapefromknab.com>  
Intermediate/Middle (accessed 9/2/09)  
Students have landed on the planet Knab ("bank" spelled backwards) and have to get a job, spend within a budget, manage their savings, etc. in order to buy a ticket home.

For additional resources, please see your school media specialist.  
Broward County Public Schools