

Resourcefulness

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY EDUCATOR BULLETIN

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Vs. Wastefulness

I WILL:

- see value in objects, ideas, and people.
- repair, reuse, and recycle.
- make wise use of my time, talents, energy, and mind.
- give away or sell the things I do not use.
- not litter.

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Finding practical uses for that which others would overlook or discard.

We all know the 3 “Green” R’s of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Did you know that they now have two more siblings? Renew and Respect. Renew refers to choosing energy sources and raw materials that are renewable. Respect is a more encompassing idea relating to how an individual or community impacts their environment with every choice.

There was a story many years ago about a family who was so eco-conscious that they only had one can of garbage a year! - the ultimate in being resourceful! Consider everything in your kitchen



garbage can and come up with an alternative that would have prevented that garbage item. Wow! They used all plastic containers instead of bags and wraps, they used cloth towels for spills instead of paper towels, they purchased food in bulk through a co-op where they brought their own containers, etc. This month the Resourcefulness focus is on being earth-friendly.

Trade Show Time

Organize a TRADE show for your classroom, grade or school. Pick an item that kids can trade such as books, games or toys. Anyone who brings in an item can pick a similar item from the collection. You may need to create rules about what is not acceptable (books in poor condition) and how to calculate an “even” trade. Students do not need to trade with each other. All items are collected over several days. Students bringing in items on the first day are the first to choose, etc. As each student brings in something to trade they are given a coupon or the number of trades they get in return is recorded. You may want to consider a two-fer strategy: Get 1 book for every 2 books you bring in. This assures that those to pick last at least have a choice. Leftover items can be donated.

When the trading is complete, process the activity by asking students what would have happened to the items that were recycled if they hadn’t been traded. How do they feel about getting “new” stuff? Would they want to do it again next year? Are there other items that can be traded?

Go to the Root

The Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary identifies the root of the word Resource as from the French word, *ressourdre*, meaning to arise anew. Can you visualize this when you picture old car tires being shredded and used for playground padding or a previously owned game being played by a new family?





Resourcefulness Quotes

"There's nothing more dangerous than a **resourceful** idiot."

Scott Adams

"To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk."

Thomas Jefferson

"It's not what you've got, it's what you use that makes a difference."

Zig Ziglar

"Everything in the world is good for something."

Dryden

"While no one is expected to leap tall buildings in a single bound, our aspiring heroes will be tested on their courage, integrity, self-sacrifice, compassion and resourcefulness - the stuff of all true superheroes."

Stan Lee

"Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without."

Proverb

"I only feel angry when I see waste. When I see people throwing away things we could use."

Mother Teresa

"The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."

Gaylord Nelson
co-founder of Earth Day

"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired in value. "

Theodore Roosevelt

"Do not wait for extraordinary circumstances to do good action; try to use ordinary situations."

Jean Paul Richter

"President Bush has a plan [to fight global warming]. He says that if we need to, we can lower the temperature dramatically just by switching from Fahrenheit to Celsius."

Jimmy Kimmel

Curriculum Connection Math

Garbage Pizza is an activity that will help students to become aware of what they throw away. This can be done any number of ways. You can give each student a paper plate for them to create a garbage pizza. You can look up statistics of what is in a typical landfill or you can have the student graph what is in their garbage can at home. They would need to do all cans, not just a kitchen can to get a more diverse and accurate look at what is thrown away. Rather than have them actually go through the garbage, you can have them post a chart indicating the following categories and household members have to record what they throw away.

(Paper, yard waste, food, plastics, metals, rubber/ leather/ textiles, wood, glass, and other.) You will need to come up with a common measure to compare for volume. For instance, a baseball or a brick. Each person would record how many "baseball size" units of garbage was thrown away. The pie chart on the paper plate will reflect what percentage of trash is in each category. You can also come up with different categories or more simple ones such as recyclable, reusable, compostable, etc. Once you have created the pie chart on the paper plate, discuss if the results matched expectations. Was there a trend among what is thrown away across multiple households? Are there other methods of disposal that could have been used such as a recycling or composting? What about altering what is purchased in the first place? Compare the amount of packaging in a single serve pack to a typical multiple serving package.





MacGyver - Resourcefulness Hero

Angus MacGyver is the definition of this month's quality of resourcefulness. MacGyver was a fictional character from the action adventure series of the same name that aired on ABC from 1985 to 1992.

"The story arc of *MacGyver* follows the intelligent, optimistic, laid-back, resourceful secret agent Angus MacGyver, played by Richard Dean Anderson. He prefers non-violent

conflict resolution where possible, and refuses to use a gun. MacGyver works as a problem solver for the fictional *Phoenix Foundation* in Los Angeles. Educated as a scientist he is used as a resourceful agent able to solve a range of problems. MacGyver's main asset is his practical application of scientific knowledge and inventive use of common items—along with his ever-present Swiss Army knife. The clever solutions MacGyver implemented to seemingly intractable problems—often in life-or-death situations requiring him to improvise complex devices in a matter of minutes—were a major attraction of the show, which was

praised for generating interest in the applied sciences, and particularly engineering, as well as providing entertaining story lines."

Even though the show has been off the air today's students may have seen it in reruns or be familiar with the terms "MacGyverisms" or "to MacGyver".

For more information on MacGyver refer to

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MacGyver>

The Denim Project



There are a multitude of items that can be made from worn out jeans. Why not organize a drive to collect and recycle old jeans into clever new uses? Younger students can be in charge of sorting and dismantling and older students or moms can volunteer to sew up the pieces at home. There are even projects that do not require sewing. Host a contest for families to submit completed projects for a prize. The finished items can then be sold at a PTA event. Profits can be used to buy character education materials or donated to a local charity (perhaps Haitian relief).

Once the project has completed, review the results. Ask the students to come up with another common item that can be recycled into something useful.

During or after the project, ask some older students to document the project and write press releases (with pictures) to submit to local newspapers.



For some ideas, go to

<http://teachinggoodthings.com/blog/denim-projects-using-those-old-jeans/>

http://parentingteens.about.com/od/jeanscraftsforteens/Jeans_Crafts_for_Teens_Recycled_Blue_Jean_and_Denim_Crafts.htm

http://sewingneedlework.suite101.com/article.cfm/recycle_and_repurpose_old_jeans



Robin's Reading List

Why Should I Recycle by Jen Green (ages 4-8)

Mr. Jones is a teacher who sets a good example for kids by separating his trash for recycling. He takes them on a field trip to a recycling plant in order to learn the value of recycling. This is one of a four-book "Why Should I?" series that demonstrate the importance of protecting nature.

The Earth is Painted Green: A Garden of Poems About Our Planet by Barbara Brenner (ages 4-8)

This garden of poetry is divided into nine sections, with verses speaking of changing seasons to prayers of hope to keep the Earth "forever green". Great respect for and awareness of our world makes being green a little more easy.

A Hot Planet Needs Cool Kids by Julie Hall (ages 4-8)

Kids, parents, and teachers will find the very latest information about the causes and effects of climate change, how people are working to reduce it, and ways schools, kids and their families can join the fight. This book teaches and inspires through clear and accessible writing, engaging illustrations, hands-on activities, cool and hot facts, eco-hero features, and a hopeful and empowering message to get kids involved in confronting global warming



and developing their best selves through such work.

True Green Kids by Kim McKay and Jenny Bonnin (ages 9 – 12) This book is one book every home should have in its library. It invites the whole family to take an eco-adventure through a collection of fun and practical ways to help kids become involved in environmental changes in their world.

The Three R's: Reuse, Reduce, Recycle by Nuria Roca (ages 9-12)

One in a series of four "What Do You Know About?" books, it presents factual information in which kids and their families can be environmentally conscious.

Earth Book for Kids: Activities to Help Heal the Environment by Linda Schwartz (ages 9-12) A great book to make children aware of environmental problems. The book is divided into many sections that provide simple facts and information while providing ways for children to help out and be involved in each particular topic. At the end of the book there's a "Where to write" which provides many resources/organizations that children can write to to obtain more information.

What It's Like Living Green?: Kids Teaching Kids by the Way They Live by Jill Ammon Vanderwood (ages 9 and up). This book discusses how other kids live green, along with tips as simple as putting on a sweater rather than turning up the heat. Kids will see that they can make a

difference. Read about a girl who learned to drive a car fueled by used cooking grease. Learn about a boy who raised funds to build his first well to provide clean water for an entire village when he was only seven years old. Great book!

The Rag Coat by Lauren A. Mills (ages 9 – 12) A young girl's Appalachian school-mates make fun of her new quilted coat until she relates real stories that connect each child to one of the scraps.

The Green Teen: The Eco-Friendly Teen's Guide to Saving the Planet by Jenn Savedge (teens) Learn about tips that teens can easily do to green up the world in which they live. There are also a few more challenging actions for those ready to really "dig in" and commit further by starting a school recycling program.

Generation Green: The Ultimate Teen Guide to Living an Eco-Friendly Life by Linda Sivertsen (teens) This unique book talks of Sivertsen and her teenage son drawing on scientific findings, celebrity and teen interviews, and personal experiences to provide readers with a responsible, environmentally friendly lifestyle, embracing the "Five R's"...reduce, recycle, reuse, refuse, rethink. It tells teens that making small changes in their lifestyles can make a big difference, for example shorter showers!! Great book!

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Croskey's Corner

The February Character Quality of the Month is Resourcefulness. The folks at Character First! define it as "Finding practical uses for that which others would overlook or discard." They also remind us to

- See values in objects, ideas, and people
- Repair, reuse, and recycle
- Make wise use of my time, talents, energy, and mind
- Give away or sell the things I do not use
- Not litter



They always tickle me with those "Good Citizen" reminders, such as the No Littering one. Especially funny, because when I think of the ultimate model for Resourcefulness (excluding MacGyver; see the Hero Column in this newsletter), I think of a very Good Citizen, The Lone Ranger. Many of you youngsters are saying: "Who?" "The Lone Ranger" was a radio and TV program from the last century. A band of Texas Rangers was ambushed, and the only survivor called himself the Lone Ranger. He was rescued by a Native American, Tonto, and they fought bad guys in the West, all to the tune of the "William Tell Overture." The Lone Ranger was described by the announcer as "the daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains."

"The Lone Ranger" was mostly just a cowboy show, but it had more going for it than most. Almost every show's focus was to teach a moral about religious and ethnic Tolerance, about second chances for reformed criminals, about valuing children and family, or about making the right choice when the majority seemed to be against you. In fact, the Lone Ranger and Tonto were a whole Character Building program. Kids could send in their name and address and sign up to be in a Lone Ranger club. Fran Striker, the creator of the Ranger, even wrote a Creed, a statement of what Junior Rangers believed in:

"I believe that to have a friend, a man must be one. That all men are created equal and that everyone has within himself the power to make this a better world. That God put the firewood there but that every man must gather and light it himself. In being prepared physically, mentally and morally to fight when necessary for that which is right. That a man should make the most of what equipment he has. That 'This government of the people, by the people and for the people' shall live always. That men should live by the rule of what is best for the greatest number. That sooner or later ...somewhere ...somehow ...we must settle with the world and make payment for what we have taken. That all things change but truth...and that truth alone...lives on forever. In my Creator...my country...and my fellow man." Corny? Perhaps. But pretty Resourceful. Taking what you have been given and making something out of it. Being prepared for what challenges you might face. Making payment for what we have taken from the world. These are Resourceful beliefs.

In my youth, many of my heroes had similar clubs. Supermen of America, Captain Midnight. These were clubs that encouraged their members to practice Good Character. I am a little bit out of the Kids TV loop these days, since our kids are pretty much grown. So I wonder if Yu-Gi-Oh! or Sonic the Hedgehog have creeds or character building clubs. If not, that's too bad. It suggests to me that in the "old days," character building of kids was taken on by families, churches, schools, communities, and even movies and TV. Today, some of those are still working at Character, but for teachers it sometimes feels like the school is pretty much alone in fighting the Good Character fight. If more of this falls on schools, and they are already loaded down with accountability and tests scores, teachers are going to have to really be resourceful in building Character lessons into social studies or science units, or in choosing books for the class to read which promote Good Character ideas. We hope that this Character newsletter can help. Boy, couldn't we use a Lone Ranger to help us out right about now?

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Character...It Starts With Me!

Character in the Classroom *Continuously*

There are many ways that you can teach the Character Quality of Month. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Ask students to make posters to hang in the classroom or around the school.
- Challenge students to find quotes, news stories, current (or classic) songs or movies that portray the character quality of the month. Be sure to share these with the class and “archive” these to use in future years.
- Add the character trait of the month to the spelling word list. (Even if it is posted in the classroom to copy!)
- Offer for students to make a video or write a rap that demonstrates the Character Quality of the Month.
- If you teach younger students, see if you can “borrow” some older students to lead your students in an activity or switch the roles and have the younger students “teach” a rhyme to the older students.
- If you teach older students, you can be the initiator in the previous activities.
- Invite local business leaders or small business owners to talk about the importance of a character trait. If you teach older students, aim to get a representative from a business that typically hires teens so that they can relate the importance of good character when applying for and *keeping* a job.
- Men and women in uniform usually make impressive guest speakers. Police departments, fire departments and military recruiting offices are usually willing to come into a classroom. Do not be afraid to give them specific requests or guidelines for speaking so that it is pertinent to the lessons of the month.
- Always have a generic character activity planned and ready to go that you can use as filler when you have time to kill or that a substitute teacher can use in your absence.