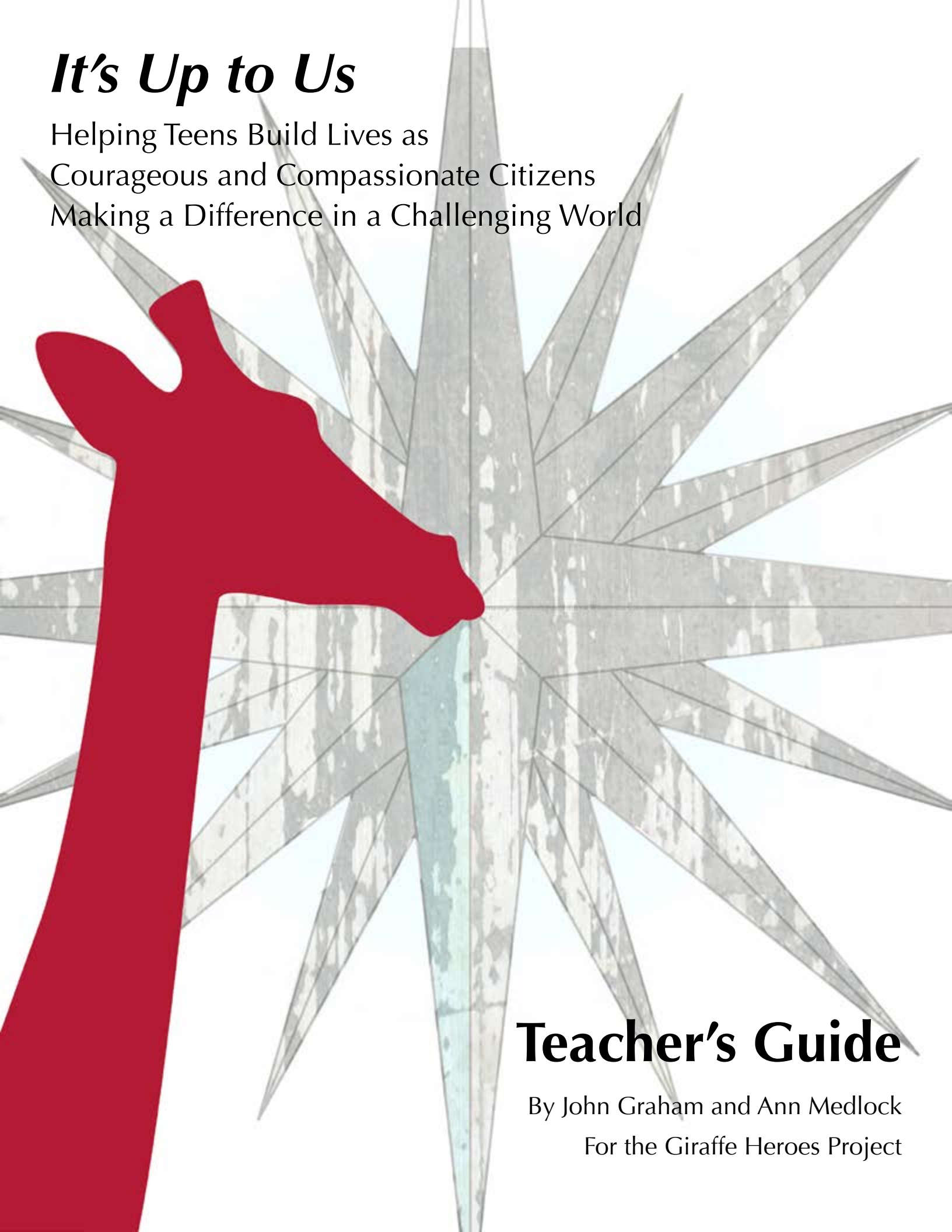


# ***It's Up to Us***

Helping Teens Build Lives as  
Courageous and Compassionate Citizens  
Making a Difference in a Challenging World

## **Teacher's Guide**

By John Graham and Ann Medlock  
For the Giraffe Heroes Project



# Welcome to *It's Up to Us*

## The Giraffe Heroes Program for Teens

This is the **Teachers Guide** to accompany the student book, *It's Up to Us*, which you and your students will find at <http://giraffe.org/its-up-to-us/>

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# Nobis est—It's up to us

That's the motto of the Giraffe Heroes Project. The idea is that nobody's going to magically appear and make everything better in our lives. So we don't wait around, whining and wondering, why "they" don't make it all the way it should be. Instead, we stick our necks out and move into courageous, caring action ourselves.

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# Section A ~ Ready, set...

## Acknowledgements

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John Graham did most of the rewriting for this digital version. Marisa Vitiello of Dot Dot Inc rewrote the Resources section, did the design work and managed the intricate process of converting the print version of this Guide into the digital version.

The print version of *It's Up to Us* has now been retired.

# Foreword

All the way back in 1984, Patch Adams, MD, was named a Giraffe by the Giraffe Heroes Project, the nonprofit that publishes this book. Giraffes stick their necks out for the common good, and Patch was certainly doing that. As medical care becomes more and more costly, this physician decided to make money the least important factor in the health equation. Patch wouldn't take money from the patients who came to his Gesundheit clinic, and he wouldn't take any from their insurance companies. To pay the clinic's bills, he worked night shifts at a mental hospital.

A public television documentary about the Giraffe Heroes Project introduced him to millions of people across the country as the doctor in a clown suit who said he was "throwing a pie in the face" of expensive, depersonalized medical care. Now the whole world knows Patch, even if they think he looks like Robin Williams, who played him in the movie Patch Adams..

These days, when people ask him for autographs, they get a present—a tiny flyer called "Take 10 and Call Me in the Morning." In it Patch prescribes 10 books, 10 web sites, 10 questions, 10 ideas, 10 magazines and 10 things to do. We can't give you the whole flyer here, but some excerpts fit especially well with what this book has to say. One of the questions: "If compassion and generosity were the measure of success that money and power are now, how would your life change?" And some things to do: "Turn off your TV and become interesting." "Take your vacations in your own home town and spend the money working on projects there that help build

community.” (You can pick up more wisdom from Patch at [www.patchadams.org](http://www.patchadams.org).)

Knowing that he shared our view that people are, at heart, brave and compassionate, I asked Patch if he had anything he'd like to say to high school students. He said “Yes and Yahoo!” and sent the following message for you.

—the Editor

The human world needs major shifts in activity if human culture is to survive. No longer can we wait until “Tomorrow.” But the world society's lust for money and power has left much of the population feeling powerless to affect change. Consumerism has put value in things and power and has left people feeling depressed, anxious—and bored. Young people who see adults in this condition experience a crisis in meaning.

John Graham's book is the golden ticket to meaning. He's giving you the ABC's of making your life count. Bless you, John.

I know how to make a project happen, even if in our case it will take 33 years.:-} I've had to learn through relentless trial and error. I wish I had had John's book! It doesn't tell you the task will be easy to do, but it tells you how to do important, complicated, difficult things without making every mistake I made.

No longer does a young brave (I like the word “brave”) have to go into the woods with a piece of flint and a knife and come back days later with a vision and a plan. You can just read *It's Up To Us*, a comprehensive, programmed text, with many fun, important exercises that will make your quest—whatever it is—intelligent, creative and enriching.

We who want a world of peace and justice know it can come if each of us envisions our role and then does it. And I'm sure we must not make social change a long, arduous, lonely, sacrificing journey. It is the task of social change artists to find humongous fun and delight at every turn,

to feel that each day good things happen as a consequence of their joyful effort.

The sweet nectar of the quest, (here you can burst into a rousing rendition of "To Dream the Impossible Dream") is the fuel for sustained effort. If we radiate our joy in the effort then, like Tom Sawyer, we get all the other kids involved, not out of duty but for the thrill of involvement—and John provides the play book for the action.

In the world of computer games, players become fully absorbed in a few variables that they master to progress to ever higher, more complicated variables. The higher the progress, the more exhilarated the player. This hunger for exhilaration leads to the creation of ever more complicated games. There are magazines that function as primers, helping a person learn and master the games quicker. All this for a goal that has no meaning.

John Graham has made a primer for the most complicated of games—social change. One of the raw thrills of being a change agent is being engrossed in a game with many more variables than all the computer games put together. Do you dare to master this game?

Everything I read in these pages made me smile and shake my head in agreement as something I learned along the way. This is not an academic, rhetorical, hypothetical treatise on making a difference. This is a guide book. I can't wait for them to be on the bookshelves so I can hand them out.

May all who open this book feel they have drawn Excalibur from the stone, and may they use that surge of empowerment to join all those who stick their necks out for a better world. I'll meet you Out There.

In peace,

Patch



# What is *It's Up to Us*?

It's the version of the Giraffe Heroes Program for teens, a story-based set of K-12 curricula that gives students

- » role models for leading meaningful lives
- » character development without lecturing and
- » proven steps for creating and carrying out successful service projects in their communities, projects that
  - provide opportunity and motivation for honing academic skills,
  - build skills for oral and written communication, conflict resolution, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving and decision-making, and
  - forge and value connections with community, as students become participating, valuable contributors.

You can use *It's Up To Us* for character education, service-learning and training in active citizenship. It can be implemented in a broad variety of settings and situations, including social studies, language arts, electives and clubs.

*It's Up to Us* can be offered without having the kids do a service project, and it will do a lot of good. But our experience is clear—when kids *apply* their inspiration and skills to solve problems in the real world they care about, the lessons are much more likely to last.

The student book for *It's Up to Us* is at <http://giraffe.org/its-up-to-us/>

This **Teachers Guide** to *It's Up to Us* includes

- » ideas for working with each chapter of the text
- » settings and situations for using *It's Up to Us*
- » information that can help you involve your school and community in the program and
- » a guide to other resources.

# The Big Picture

## Putting *It's Up to Us* in the larger context of your work and our times

### Your heroic task

As a teacher working with teens, your job may sometimes feel close to impossible. You're supposed to get order in the room so you can do some teaching and get their grades up to satisfy demands for top performance and be sure they'll qualify for jobs and careers and see that they don't hurt each other or themselves and make up for everything they may not be getting at home or in the community—it goes on and on. We know.

Given the unprecedented obstacles you face, you may be trying to meet the biggest challenges ever put to a generation of teachers. Those who don't throw up their hands and take up another profession deserve medals from their communities. We don't have a medal for you, but we do have some answers and some tools for doing the Herculean job you've taken on.

### A Giraffe answer to a big "Why"?

This book is for all teens, no matter how they've been categorized or stereotyped. You'll find here tested ideas and processes that can help anyone be a capable, responsible, valued participant in the community.

We know that most teens are not making negative headlines or even negative statistics; they're doing just fine. But for those kids that are in trouble, our experience is that too much of the discussion and planning stops at instigating new controls—security guards and



metal detectors at school doors, expulsion of trouble makers, drug tests, bans on types of clothing. No matter what we think of the merits of such measures, it's clear they're about beating back symptoms. Obviously we need to take steps to protect kids and deal with real troublemakers right now, today, but we also need to address root causes, looking below the presenting symptoms and working with kids out of our understanding of those causes. Giving pep talks and putting up posters isn't going to do it.

And beyond the kids "at risk," we need to look at why even some kids who are in no visible trouble are apathetic, cynical and disconnected, why they have no picture of themselves as participating, contributing members of a civil society—and why so many resist learning. At the Giraffe Heroes Project, the search for root causes for all these negative behaviors converges on a single point—the lack of meaning in many kids' lives—a lack reinforced by a commercial culture that bombards them with the message that their only reasons for existing are to buy and to consume.

More and more often, discussions of public matters identify us—all of us—not with the uplifting, powerful title of "citizens" but with the commercial label, "consumers." Is that all we are in this democracy, devourers of stuff? Is being a smart shopper the highest aspiration we can offer our kids? If this is our culture's "story" for our young, our legacy to them is bereft of meaning.

We see that lack of meaning underlying the corrosive culture of some high schools. Again and again we find a pervasive attitude that everything is a scam, and to be cool is to believe that everyone is up to something underhanded and self-serving. Peer pressure is strong to stand back and throw attitudinal acid on any altruistic thought or action.

Of course many kids withstand both the commercial culture and

that of such a school, maintaining a sense of themselves as worthy human beings who contribute to their world now and expect to keep doing so. But in a hostile environment, some of these kids get through the days “undercover,” keeping quiet about their views and ideals, or assuming a don’t-care veneer to avoid the scorn of peers.

The underlying premise of the Giraffe Heroes Program, including *It's Up to Us*, is that kids are good, that they want to do good, and that they will do good given the right “enCouragement.” Some of them will need more help than others. You no doubt have kids of all stripes in your classes, from openly eager ones, to kids buried in layers of belief that the world is irredeemably awful and that nothing they could do would ever matter. *It's Up to Us* can help you reach all of them.

### **Educating by storytelling**

A sure-fire way into a heart, even an armored one, is storytelling. 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 just 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.

*It's Up to Us* gives you stories about real people who have chosen to make good changes in their worlds, no matter how difficult that may be to do. Their stories come from the Giraffe Heroes Project’s storybank—hundreds of files on real, living people we’ve honored because they’ve stuck their necks out for the common good ([http://www.giraffe.org/option.com\\_sobi2/Itemid,53/](http://www.giraffe.org/option.com_sobi2/Itemid,53/)). Learning about them, the kids you work with can 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.

Studies tell us that many teens look up to no one; many of those who do have a hero tend to name someone who is just rich, talented, gorgeous or wildly fictional. The elements of character that make a true hero have gotten lost from their definition. The Giraffe Heroes Program, including *It's Up to Us*, brings them back. When kids take in real heroes' stories and then move into courageous, compassionate action themselves, their learning goes deeper than memorized rules can take them, into the experiences that make learning stick. You'll find this a profoundly effective approach to character development, one that avoids the train wrecks that can come from debating current issues, as well as the resistance kids can put up to being given rules.

### **A little history**

The mission of the Giraffe Heroes Project ([www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org)) is to inspire more people to stick their necks out for the common good. Since 1982, the Project has been finding people taking risks to solve tough problems in their communities or farther afield, then telling their stories through national and local broadcast and print media, and in our own publications. These special people, whom we call "Giraffe Heroes," become examples for others. Others see or hear their stories and are inspired to take on the challenges that matter to them. Because we know that inspiration by itself is rarely enough, the Project has developed a wide variety of training materials and workshops to help people of all ages change their communities and their world. *It's Up to Us* is part of that arsenal for activists.

Because news is too often been defined as "what went wrong today," stories about people making headway against the challenges of our times have been deemed "soft," not worth serious media attention.

The net effect of this media attitude has been enormous. In a nation deluged with information about the worst that humans can do, people pull the covers over their collective heads, sure that they can have no effect on the all-pervasive chaos and disintegration that's being described to them.

The Giraffe Heroes Project has been feeding the media stories of heroes who show us a way out from under those covers. And the heroes are here, all around us. People who refuse to be daunted by the odds, who plunge into the devastation and start setting things right. For news to be truly balanced, we have to know about them. To heal our society, more of us have to become like them.

### **Calling Giraffes to the classroom**

Two decades ago, teachers began telling us they were using Giraffe stories in their classrooms, but they wanted a full program—one in which kids would experience making a positive impact on their world, no matter how tough their circumstances might be.

The Giraffe Heroes Project took on this challenge, looking for ways to meet it 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 is the Giraffe Heroes Program, a series of curricula, now covering the entire K-12 spectrum, that instill courage, caring and a sense of personal ability and responsibility in kids, and help them build lifelong commitments to active citizenship and service. *It's Up to Us* is an edition of that Program aimed at teens. You'll find more information on the full range of Giraffe programs for kids at <http://www.giraffe.org/the-giraffe-heroes-program/training-tomorrows-heroes>.

We agree wholeheartedly with Patch Adams who says in the foreword to *It's Up to Us* that this shouldn't be a "long, arduous, lonely, sacrificing journey." It's got to be, instead, "humongous fun," as kids

see the results of their joyful efforts.

Unfortunately, “community service” has come to mean some dreary task a judge orders you to do instead of jail time. That’s almost as great a social theft as calling us only consumers. With this book, you can erase the dull, punitive cast on community service— if you’re mindful of the basic premises of this program. It gives students role models, gets them working together in a community of learners and, most importantly perhaps, gives them choices.

### ***Educare***

If there was ever a program that held to the root meaning of “education,” this is it. Educare, to bring forth, is what all editions of the Giraffe Heroes Program, including *It's Up to Us*, are set up to do. Yes, the authors have knowledge to impart as do you, the class teacher. But all Giraffe programs assume that your students want to lead meaningful lives, that they have concerns about the world they’re living in, that they want to have a positive impact on that world. The book is here to help you bring that forth, not to lay it on them.

You’ll be guiding them through a process that is that bringing forth. Question them. Challenge them. Share your own life experiences. But if you tell them what to think or what to do, it’s your stuff, 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. The learning wouldn’t be part of them and they wouldn’t remember it. Leonardo da Vinci wisely said,

*Study without desire spoils the memory,  
and it retains nothing that it takes in.*

### **Learning by doing**

*It's Up to Us* does much more than offer students the stories of heroes, and then invite them to reflect on and discuss important topics

related to service, courage and community. It also invites them to get active, to walk their talk, by choosing a problem in the community or farther afield and then creating and carrying out a service project that helps solve it. In this they are guided by a proven process that both they and you will learn in the course of the program.

This, of course, demands a lot of you, the teacher, both in terms of helping students organize the logistics of a service project and, even more importantly, coaching them where necessary through the steps needed to complete it successfully. Don't worry, there's plenty of stuff in *It's Up to Us* and in this Guide to help you do that, beginning in the next section about "Your role in *It's Up to Us*."

### **Building academic and life skills**

About those demands that your students pass stringent tests in core subjects— *It's Up to Us* can provide you with content for language arts, social studies, civics and life skills and math and science skills. Students in the Giraffe Heroes Program, including *It's Up to Us*, have done research, written letters, made presentations, spoken in public, solved problems, done math and science calculations and learned and used higher level thinking skills. Looking at the National Standards and Benchmarks for core subjects, you'll see dozens of ways this book meets the requirements.

And here's the thing: teachers report an upsurge of interest in the needed academic skills as students become immersed in completing their service projects. Now academics are no longer "academic"—they are tools the kids need to get something done that they dearly want to do. Guiding them into a real-world context for skills—the basics and the higher level thinking skills—shows them the value that they may find hard to see in the abstract acquisition of core subjects. Math, spelling, reading, science—the things the school is trying to teach them—all mean something. What a revelation.

Writing persuasive letters and doing research require grammatical structure and accurate spelling; reports can involve mathematics and science; convincing others to join them can mean writing, talking and presenting well. Organizing and carrying out a complex task over time teaches kids how to plan, work in teams, fundraise, negotiate, resolve conflicts, speak in public, make good decisions, take responsibility and solve complex problems.

Practicing these skills in the real world through a service project—and seeing the positive difference their actions can make in their communities—kids learn that they are valuable members of society and can live their entire lives as involved citizens. This gives a huge boost to kids' confidence, as they see how valuable their actions can be. Taking part in the GHP gives young people confidence and skills, but perhaps, most importantly, it gives them hope.

### **... and the movements of the moment**

The Giraffe Heroes Program, including *It's Up to Us*, is being used for service-learning, character development, experiential learning, community service, active citizenship, applied learning, prevention/diversion, and social and emotional learning. By the time you read this, there may be another movement that discovers the Program is just what they've been looking for.

We're all for it. All of us are calling for an education for our children that is more than being sure they can read, write and calculate; we want them to be decent people and active citizens of this democracy. It's vital to their well-being, and to our nation's.

We're especially pleased when the Program is used for prevention/diversion, giving kids something to say Yes! to. It's an engaging, respectful way to avoid a danger President Teddy Roosevelt saw for education:

*To educate a person in mind and not in morals  
is to educate a menace to society.*

### **School reform and community outreach**

A major goal of the school reform movement is breaking through the barriers between schools and their communities. *It's Up to Us* is very community-oriented. It coaches kids to assess community needs and to implement their own service projects to meet those needs. In this process, students become stakeholders in the community; they learn to care about what happens there. And they gain pride in where they live—a pride that can rub off on teachers, parents and anyone else exposed to the program.

Media can help with community outreach. The book gives kids step-by-step ideas on getting television stations and newspapers to report on their service projects, and to apply their own awesome skills in social media. Putting such stories in the media sends up a flag saying, “Our school cares about this community” and “This community’s kids are doing great stuff.”

### **Testing, testing...**

We strongly urge you not to test students on the ideas in this book. It really doesn't matter if your students can memorize and reiterate the authors' points. What matters is that they get the point, in their lives, in their actions, in their bones. This isn't about making a grade or pleasing adults—this is about their lives.

There are boxes marked “What's the point?” throughout the pages and a summary marked “Recap” at the end of each chapter. In most books, that would be a signal to read only those parts so you can pass the test. But you aren't going to use them for testing, right? They're great launching points for discussions, however.



**About rewards**

We urge you, in using this program, to avoid the temptation of using any kind of rewards to evoke particular behaviors from your students. An important point for them to learn is that Giraffe Heroes—the real heroes they'll get to know in the course of this program—do what they do because it's the right thing to do. For your students as well, their reward is in the doing of the work. An expectation of being rewarded distracts kids toward thinking about the reward instead of focusing on the excitement and joy of being Giraffely. You're leading them into the discovery that they love Giraffe action. Dangling potential rewards just teaches kids to jump through one more hoop. Trust the program and it will be one of those that spark your students' enthusiasm and their thirst for knowledge.

Do encourage your students to take notice when they've exceeded their own perceived limitations, and when they've seen each other do so. When their service project is over, they can and should have a major celebration of what they've done—and kids do feel like celebrating at that point. With the work accomplished, you can feel free to acknowledge what they've done, helping them recognize the value of their accomplishment.

**Learning as you teach**

The principles and methods for making change in this book are proving 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 a fellow traveler on this road with your students. You can use the processes in this book to tackle any problem that needs solving in your own life, whether it's at work, at home or in your community.

## The depth of the Program

The Giraffe Heroes Program has deep roots in human culture, following an ancient path that communities have laid out for the young to prove their courage, honor, and merit. As they do *It's Up to Us*, kids brave difficulties, overcome obstacles, and exceed their own perceived limitations to bring something of benefit to their world. That achievement qualifies them as valued members of the community of those who work for a better world.

Keep this depth in mind as you coach them through whatever difficulties they may encounter, and as you help them celebrate their success. When they accomplish their goals, welcome them warmly into this brave and caring community. See this as a rite of passage and honor their successful arrival.

Years from now, people who went through this program will remember in their bones how they felt when they saw what they could do. 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.

## Launch

Your work with *It's Up to Us* can change the course of your students' lives, but don't be alarmed by the size of that idea. The only prerequisite for doing the program is caring about kids and about your community.

As you begin, please accept our thanks for all you do for your students. We hope you have a great time bringing forth the Giraffe in each of them.

**—Ann Medlock,  
Founder, Giraffe Heroes Project**

# Your role in *It's Up to Us*

## Overview

If you are reading this, you've already downloaded the Teachers Guide to *It's Up to Us*. Next, download *It's Up to Us*. Go through both it and this Teachers Guide until you are familiar with both.

You will notice that the program gives you ideas and options for many levels of involvement. We've written *It's Up to Us* to be so user-friendly that it's possible for an individual student or a group of students to do the program by just following the book, on their own, or with parental help. Needless to say, we hope you get more involved than that. *It's Up to Us*—like most student-based programs, works significantly better with a good teacher. And we know from experience that there are huge mutual benefits in spending some good time with your students on this. In doing *It's Up to Us*, skillful teachers give their students the freedom to think, plan and achieve, at the same time that they guide their students through each chapter in a way that brings out their best.

Section B of this Teachers Guide gives you step-by-step ideas for each chapter. These chapter notes parallel the book, supplementing it, but not supplanting it. *This guide cannot stand alone*. We wrote it only to make it easy for you to facilitate the activities in the book. Much of this Guide is about your students

1. choosing an issue that concerns them,
2. translating that concern into a service project and then
3. implementing that project.

Your task is to usher them through the project while they acquire the attitude and skills of active, involved citizens—an attitude and skills that will be significant to them for the rest of their lives.

Yes, kids gain a lot from *It's Up to Us* even if they don't do a service project. But we know from over a decade's experience that both the skills and the life-lessons gained from *It's Up to Us* are much more likely to last when kids get their hands dirty—when they *apply* their inspiration, skills and lessons to solve problems in the real world they care about.

### First steps

Help your students download *It's Up to Us* onto their individual computers, save it on their desktops, and learn the basics of moving through its pages. Show them how they can toggle back and forth between content in the book and the lines in the Table of Contents that describe it. Show them, in the left sidebar, how to use the Bookmarks feature and the Page Thumbnails feature to go quickly to specific pages and sections of the book.

Point out several features that provide both summations and springboards for discussion:

#### What's the point?

**You can be fully alive by doing things that are meaningful to you. People who lead meaningful lives, like Giraffes, don't find that meaning in possessions or positions; they find it in personal commitments to goals bigger than their own needs.**

These **What's-the-point?** boxes appear throughout the chapters. And there are **Recap** pages at the ends of chapters. We think that you'll find these summations useful as teaching strategies—to help you and

your students encapsulate what's in the book. We also caution you that much of the impact of this program would be lost if students used the summations as Cliff Notes and didn't read the book!

### **“Think about it” questions: reflection and privacy**

These questions, found throughout the book and repeated in the Teachers Guide, serve two purposes: first, they give individual readers—including yourself—opportunities to reflect on important issues, especially as the issues relate to their own lives. And second, they can provide additional springboards for class discussions. These Questions are the primary interactive feature in *It's Up to Us*, and they may take a little practice to use effectively. Go with your students to the Think About It bookmark in *It's Up to Us* to see instructions for using these questions. Go through each step until your students understand how to produce the blank answer page, and then to enter, save and print their answers.

Some of these **Think about it** questions might be sensitive for some students. In these questions, students are asked to think, to reflect on their lives and their world. They're asked about their concerns and hopes. These are all private, internal matters that can't be found in the library and can't be tested. Students might be willing to think about them--and to write something in a personal journal--but not engage in open discussion. Use your knowledge of your class to determine if open-class discussion is appropriate for any particular **Think about it** question. Private journaling is an excellent use of this feature whether or not you feel whole-class discussion is a good idea.

If you do opt for discussion, you can spark it by relating the question to your own life; sharing your thoughts can encourage students to do the same. But do establish some ground rules early, e.g.:

- » Everyone has a right to speak, and everyone has a right not to speak.

- » No one should be put down.
- » Discussions should remain confidential; even so, people shouldn't use names when relating personal anecdotes.

Whether or not students discuss their answers to the **Think about it** questions in class, make sure that they do write down their answers and save them on their computers. Whether they share them with you or with anyone else should be up to them.

They can print the answer pages out and save them. Doing so can help students organize their thoughts and clarify their feelings, as well as track how those thoughts and feelings might have changed during the course. The answer sheets can also form the basis of a journal, or portfolio, that might include other writing, notes, anecdotes, photos, art work and memorabilia from students' experiences in doing *It's Up to Us*.

### **Making a class portfolio**

As your students move through the book, keep in mind that the finale is a celebration of what they've accomplished. You may want to set up a class portfolio in which students collect any papers, art work, photos, research documents, and reports that they create. Such a collection (some of which might come—with permission—from students' individual journals) will help them realize and celebrate what they've accomplished and will help them present the work to others if they decide to invite guests to a wind-up celebration.

### **Understanding Giraffe Hero stories**

*It's Up to Us* gives you 22 stories about "Giraffe Heroes"—the heroes honored by the Giraffe Heroes Project. Many of the Giraffe Heroes in the book have done extraordinarily brave things. Make sure your students understand that they don't have to duplicate the heroics of such Giraffe Heroes to lead a meaningful life. Meaning isn't tied to comparative levels of courage or to the scope of a person's actions.

A frightened teen who manages to make a small gesture of caring toward someone who isn't cool could be sticking his neck waaay out.

As part of your preparation, read the 22 stories already in the book. Then log onto [http://www.giraffe.org/option.com\\_sobi2/Itemid,53/](http://www.giraffe.org/option.com_sobi2/Itemid,53/). The hundreds of stories there can be sorted by name, age, location, gender, field of work and occupation. Browse them and pick out another couple dozen that you think would be particularly interesting to your class. Familiarize yourself enough with the stories you read, either from the book or the website, so that you can lead provocative discussions about them with your students.

### **Notes on guiding kids to choose a service project**

No matter what your own concerns are, or your own hopes for the world, let the kids find their concerns and hopes. Resist the temptation to enlist them in a cause just because you care about it. Your goal is to help them be the enthusiastically committed citizens they can be when they're acting on their own concerns and plans. "Ownership" works.

Even if the kids are obliged to meet a school or district requirement for community service, give them the slack to choose the issue or problem they'll work on and the project they'll do. Reports are surfacing 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, you can expect them to work hard and well.

A fine illustration of the value of choice came from a teacher who described her first experience with a graduation requirement for community service. She announced to her class that they were going to do a park cleanup and she provided everything they needed to do the job. When they got there, most of the kids dispersed to all parts

of the park, with few of them doing any work. A few of the boys caught snakes and threw them at each other. The African-American students protested that the assignment was slavery. The teacher described it as the low point of her teaching career. The next year she tried something different: the kids got to decide what they would do and how. To her surprise, they chose to return to that same park, but with a park upgrade plan they'd designed themselves that went beyond just picking up trash. One feature of it was building and installing bat boxes so those bug-eating creatures would take up residence in the park and keep the mosquito population down. The kids threw themselves into the task and when they left the park, proudly, it was not only clean, it was beautiful—and with fewer mosquitoes. The kids were commended with a local environmental award, and one teacher learned a lesson about human nature that she would never forget.

Choosing an issue/problem to work on and then designing a project that helps solve it can be—*should* be—a pretty lively process if all the creativity in the group is to come forward. As in all class discussions, you'll want to make sure the quickest and most verbal students don't do all the talking, and you'll want to encourage quieter class members to speak up, without muzzling anyone or squashing ideas. For small-group discussions, you may want to suggest that students decide who on their team will take specific roles, e.g., a Timekeeper, a Facilitator, a Recorder, or a Reporter.

You may want to send a letter home to parents before you start the *It's Up to Us* program, explaining what the program is and what it aims to do. You'll find a sample letter on the next page. You may want to personalize your letters—or you can copy and send them as is. Such a letter is more than a courtesy; you will probably need the help of some of these parents in supplying transportation or other logistics help during the service project.



Dear Parent/Guardian,

I'd like you to know about an exciting new program the class is doing this year. It's called the Giraffe Heroes Program, and it's from the Giraffe Heroes Project, a national nonprofit organization that teaches people of all ages to be active, caring members of their communities. The Project works by finding heroes who are sticking their necks out to take on tough challenges, then telling their stories through the media and in schools and youth clubs. These special people (the Project calls them "Giraffe Heroes") are women, men and children of all ages and ethnic backgrounds.

The book we're using is *It's Up to Us*, the Giraffe Heroes Program for teens. It tells the stories of 22 Giraffes including:

- » Craig Kielburger, a teenager who's running an international campaign against child slavery,
- » Ranya Kelly, a woman who found a dumpster full of new shoes and salvaged them for people at a homeless shelter, going on to run a busy nonprofit that recovers such goods for thousands of needy people, and
- » John Croyle, a college football star who walked away from NFL offers to create a home for hundreds of orphaned kids.

Using such exemplary citizens as models, the students consider their own concerns about the community, looking for the problems they care about. Using democratic processes, they choose an issue and then create a service project to address that issue. In this process, they become actively involved in our community, learn how important their personal efforts can be, and apply academic skills to a real-world situation.

And yes, the *It's Up to Us* program--and especially a service project attached to it--provide great opportunities for learning and practicing both academic and critical thinking skills.

Schools all over the country are using this very special program with excellent results, reporting an upswing in academic enthusiasm as students realize the practical value of basic skills, and a downturn in negative behaviors.

When the students begin work on their service project, there will be many ways you can help facilitate the Program, if you wish, including helping supervise class and team activities and assisting them in their service project, perhaps by providing transportation or helping them find materials.

Please call me if you have questions, if you'd like to volunteer to help with this Program, or if you want to review the curriculum.

Sincerely,

# Questionnaires

Should you choose to use them, we've included Student Pre-and Post-use Questionnaires on the next several pages of this guide, as well as a Teacher Post-use Questionnaire directly after that. Other teachers have found such measurements extremely informative--and useful in guiding future use of the program. If you *do* use any of the questionnaires, we'd be delighted if you would send copies to us at The Giraffe Heroes Project, PO Box 759 Langley WA 98260. Of course, we'd also love any other comments, anecdotes and pictures that describe your and your students' experience with *It's Up to Us*. Some of them may end up (with permission) on the Giraffe website.

# Student Pre-use Questionnaire

*for It's Up to Us*

Your name

Teacher's name

School name

Today's date

School location

1. Name three of your heroes

2. What is it about them that makes them your heroes?

3. List three issues you're concerned about in each of the following areas:

your school

your community

the world

4. Violence, pollution, hunger, poverty and drug-abuse are problems in many communities. Choose the option that best describes your feelings and opinions about such problems.

a) These problems will always be around and there's nothing I can do about them.

b) I have a responsibility to help solve such problems.

c) These problems should be left solely to authorities such as the police and government agencies.

d) I believe I can make a difference on these things myself.

5. In the following scenarios, please check the one that most closely describes the way you would respond.

a) A new family has just moved into your neighborhood and opened a grocery store. You meet and like the kids, and the family's store is clean, friendly and well-stocked. Other kids are rude to the family because they're from another country and look, act and talk differently. Many adults in the neighborhood don't speak to the family and won't shop in their store. Would you:

If you chose "Other" please explain here:

b) There's a new student in your class who's different. His clothes, hair and talk are outdated. He's pretty quiet and he spends most of his time reading. The teachers like him because he's smart, but a lot of kids ignore or insult him. Would you:

If you chose "Other" please explain here:

6. Are you now involved in some form of volunteer service? Yes      No

If so, is it meaningful to you? Yes      No

Why or why not?

7. Do you see yourself doing volunteer service in the future? Yes      No

Why or why not?

8. Have you ever stuck your neck out for the benefit of others? Yes      No

If so, what was the situation and why did you do it?

9. Do you see yourself sticking your neck out for others in the future? Yes      No

Why or why not?

# Student Post-use Questionnaire

for *It's Up to Us*

Your name

Teacher's name

School name

Today's date

School location

1. Name three of your heroes

2. What is it about them that makes them your heroes?

3. List three issues you're concerned about in each of the following areas:

your school

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the world

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If so, is it meaningful to you? Yes      No

Why or why not?

7. Do you see yourself doing volunteer service in the future? Yes      No

Why or why not?

8. Have you ever stuck your neck out for the benefit of others? Yes      No

If so, what was the situation and why did you do it?

9. Do you see yourself sticking your neck out for others in the future? Yes      No

Why or why not?



# Teacher/facilitator Post-use Questionnaire

for *It's Up to Us*

Your Name

Today's Date

School Name

School Location

As you answer questions 2-6, please consider any changes you've noticed in your students that are attributable to their experience with *It's Up to Us*.

1. Did your students do a service project? Yes      No

If so, please describe it.

2. Have you seen an increase in compassionate behavior by your students? Yes      No

If so, please provide specific examples or anecdotes.

3. Has your students' level of participation in academics and other programs been affected?

Yes      No

If so, how?

4. Has your students' academic performance or general behavior changed? Yes      No

If so, how?

5. Do you see an increased willingness in your students to take on responsibility?

Yes      No

If so, please describe.

6. Are your students stepping into leadership positions? Yes      No

If so, please give an example or two.

We'd be delighted if you would send a copy of this completed questionnaire, and the student pre-and post-use questionnaires, to us at The Giraffe Heroes Project PO Box 759 Langley WA 98260 or via email at [office@giraffe.org](mailto:office@giraffe.org).

## Section B ~ Go!

### Day one in class

Since so much of the power of *It's Up to Us* comes from the stories of Giraffe Heroes, that's where you will start.

Pick a half dozen or so stories you have already previewed from *It's Up to Us*. Also, review Chapter One of the book. Ask students to read the stories you've picked out loud to the class and write the name of each Giraffe Hero on the board. Spark a class discussion about the Giraffe Heroes. What stands out about these people for the students? Tell the students they will be learning much more about Giraffe Heroes as they move through *It's Up to Us*, but for now, you want them to just notice a common trait: each Giraffe Hero took risks, and did it for the common good, that is, to help other people, often by helping solve some common problem in their community or beyond.

Go through the names on the board and ask students what risks each Giraffe Hero has taken and whom they helped by their actions. Help students see that a hero is not the same as a celebrity. Being rich, talented or gorgeous can make people celebrities, not heroes. Celebrities might inspire you to work on your jump shot or your guitar licks; heroes inspire you to take on a challenge that will help others.

If you've decided to use the pre-and post-use questionnaires, hand out the pre-course questionnaire from Section A of this Guide and go through its questions, answering any questions your students may have. When students have completed the questionnaire, ask

them to share any thoughts they have about the heroes they named in Question 1.

Homework: Tell students to read Chapter One of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

If you choose to use the letter home from Section A, copy, sign and distribute it to your students.

# Teacher's Guide to the Chapters of *It's up To Us*

## Chapter One

### Living a Meaningful Life

#### Our thoughts

A challenging and beautiful question from the poet Mary Oliver opens the proceedings:

*Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*

It's a profound query, one that was not written to young people exclusively—it's applicable to everyone, always. The text then asks students to look at people around them for models of meaningful lives. Given how many people believe that getting, rather than giving, is going to make them happy, you can expect views to range widely the minute the class starts this book. Will they devote their "one wild and precious life" to getting stuff and advancements and whatever else they think they want to *have*? Or will there always be room in that life for giving of their time, talents and abilities, for being active, caring participants in the lives around them?

- » The concept of being fully alive rather than joining the "zombies" can attract the attention of even a committed "mall rat." Looking at substance abuse as a way to escape from meaninglessness could be another eye-opener for kids who have never considered that as an aspect of being drunk or stoned.

## Your actions

### 1. Ads

Using the bookmarks panel in *It's Up to Us*, go with your students to **Think about It** Question (TAIQ) #1 and ask a student to read it out loud:

**Think about it:** When you watch television or go to the mall, you see ads designed to sell stuff to people your age. You and I both know that the companies that create those messages are focused on one thing—getting you to buy products. To get you to do that, they've developed clear ideas about who you are. What are their pictures of you? Are they right?

- » Open a discussion on this question. Then tell students that the first part of their homework for Chapter One is to continue thinking about this question and the class's discussion of it at home, and then to write their own answers to Question #1 directly into their electronic copies of *It's Up to Us*. Review with students how to work with the **Think about it** questions on their computers.

2. Ask students to summarize the stories of Craig Kielburger, Lois Gibbs, and Ernesto "Neto" Villareal. Use the bookmarks panel to find all Giraffe Heroes stories. Focus a discussion on these questions:

- » What did they risk by sticking their necks out?
- » What would have happened if they hadn't stuck their necks out?
- » What kinds of situations similar to these do you see around you, and what could you do about them?

### 3. Against the Crowd

Open a discussion of **TAIQ** #2 from the book.

**Think about it:** Have you ever been alone against the crowd—maybe even facing active, vocal opposition—when you knew you were right? What did you do? If you kept going, why did you?



As with all the **Think about it** questions in this course, tell students that you want them to continue thinking about this question and the class's discussion of it at home, and then to write their own answers directly into their electronic copies of *It's Up to Us*.

### 4. Why not Quit?

Open a discussion of **TAIQ** #3.

**Think about it:** Why didn't Neto Villareal give up when he ran into the first adult blocking his path? Hearing a few rude calls during a game couldn't have been *that* bad. Or could it? Would *you* have kept pressing the issue, as Villareal did? What would have been lost if he'd quit?



5. Ask students who are already involved in service—whether it's through a club, a religious group, or on their own—to talk about what it means to them. Share any of your own relevant experiences.
6. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Two of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# Start Here

## What Would You Like to Change in Your World?

### Our thoughts

Make sure your students understand that issues and projects are not the same. An issue is a broad concern--a problem that affects a lot of people beyond a student and her or his family. A project is a specific set of actions that will have an impact on the issue--that will help solve the problem, or part of it. Getting a project going is a two-step process. The first step is to choose the issue; the second is to design a specific project that addresses it.

- » Choosing the issue before deciding on a specific project focuses students' attention on what they really care about. If they don't first discuss their concerns and choose one, but just start in on some project that sounds exciting, that project may never reach their hearts, never generate much enthusiasm and commitment.
- » The issue your kids choose can be a big one. But the *project* they do to address the issue needs to be something that's doable in the time they've got. They can create a project that deals with an element of a large issue. If, say, their issue is global warming, they might tackle getting more carpools organized in the community.
- » The Giraffe Heroes Project's files are full of stories of kids in this Program doing amazing, intense things. We also have stories from teachers who were nervous about what they saw as their students' overreaching—until the kids came through



with some really stellar accomplishments. So help your students stretch. They shouldn't settle for a project that won't be a real challenge for them. This is about people sticking their necks out—whatever they take on should take them outside their usual comfort zone and give them a real sense of achievement when they're done. Don't veto projects that require money, volunteers or other resources they don't now have. This book shows them how they can get all those things.

- » Not every student has to be enthusiastic from the start about the issue and project chosen. Teachers have found that things go well if even a few students are inspired initially—the momentum picks up and enthusiasm spreads as the work progresses. All the students will learn a process of identifying and taking responsibility for issues. Even the ones who are lukewarm at the beginning will experience being active, contributing participants in a democracy, and that knowledge will serve them and the communities they'll live in, for the rest of their lives.

## Your actions

### 1. Issues that concern you and Local issue

As students are beginning to choose issues, open a discussion on **TAIQ** #4 and #5 from the book:

**Think about it:** If you can't think of an issue you care about, look around. What do you think could be better? Are there people in your community who don't have enough food or who have no shelter? Is there racial or religious prejudice that turns people in your community against each other? Are there too many fights in your school, too many kids abusing drugs, getting pregnant or dropping out? Is the air where you live fit to breathe and the water fit to drink? Are there global issues that concern you—environmental issues or human rights problems like the one that Craig Kielburger spotted?



**Think about it:** Sometimes it's easier to see an issue far away than right in front of you. Is there some local issue or problem that's affecting people you know? Something that's right in your face?



As before, tell students that you want them to continue thinking about these questions and then, after class, to write their own answers directly into their electronic copies of *It's Up to Us*.

2. Facilitate “Gimme five,” “Check it out,” or “Brainstorming” (p. 28) to choose issues that students are especially interested in. Be aware of potential obstacles—as well as their solutions:

- » *During “Gimme five,” students may consider issues that are meaningful only to them.*

Explain to students that they'll be choosing an issue for the entire class to work with, so they should be thinking about issues that have appeal to others as well.

- » *You may not have the resources to physically “Check it out.”*

Ask students to bring in photographs, articles from newspapers, or even their own written descriptions that they can share.

- » *During “brainstorming,” students may start coming up with humorous yet surreal issues and begin to try to outdo each other with increasingly outlandish ideas.*

This isn't necessarily an obstacle; in fact, it may be part of the glue that bonds the class to their eventually agreed-upon issue. You can certainly remind them of their goal—to come up with an issue that's both meaningful and doable. But give them the latitude to reach the goal in their own way. This is a good test for you as a teacher/facilitator: Can you let go? If you can show students that you trust them with the process here, they'll gain confidence that you'll trust them with it later and, most importantly, that they're worthy of that trust.

3. If the entire class agrees to pursue one issue, go with that. If, however, there are strongly different opinions, consider separating the class into two groups, each with its issue. Remind students, however, that the “issues” will soon be manifested in “projects,” and often the more people are on the project, the easier it will be to handle all the responsibilities.
4. Walk the line between guiding and controlling as you help students follow the steps in the book (see bookmark “Choosing a project”) to choose a project—or projects—that address the issue they've chosen.

- » Review the issue with them to make sure everyone agrees on what it is.
  - » Facilitate brainstorming ideas.
  - » Have someone describe the idea in one or two sentences and have someone else write it down.
  - » Take suggestions for naming the project, have the class vote on the name they want, and suggest that interested class members create a poster describing the issue and the project.
5. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Three of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# Vision

## What Would It Look Like If You Changed It?

### Our thoughts

Visioning is a popular practice, especially in business and in sports. We've been helping people and organizations use the power of a vision for years, and the way the process is laid out in this book represents all that experience, including plenty of trial and error. Please follow the steps as they're written. We know they work.

- » If the concept of a vision is new or strange to you, play with it before you start using it with students. Read the chapter and then create a vision for something in your own life. It can be something personal, such as your picture of a great meal you'll prepare or a really good result at a faculty meeting you're about to attend. Once you've experienced visioning as a helpful tool, it will be easier to teach your students to do it.
- » Remind your students that visioning is putting themselves in the future and looking back. So they need to describe what they see at that future date using only the present and past tenses, never the future tense. Using future tense describes a wish, not a vision, so when they slip into "will be" nudge them back to "is" and "was."
- » Help your students make their vision as clear and concrete as possible. Ask them for the fine points—to feel the breeze, listen to the little kids on the swings, smell the hot dogs—you get the idea.

- » To help them see with even more clarity, ask them detailed questions such as, “OK, you say everybody’s happy. How do you know? Can you hear laughter? Do you see them smiling? dancing? hugging each other? What do you hear them saying?”
- » If you’ve got a bit of ham in you, use role-plays—put yourself into that future scene as a passerby. Say what you see and ask, “What’s going on here?” You’ll know the process is working when your students’ descriptions become more and more animated.
- » Visioning is a great place for creating—no surprise here— visuals. The artists in the group can put the vision into drawings, paintings, collages and posters that illustrate the group’s words.

## Your actions

1. Ask students to summarize the stories of Michael Stewartt and Sarah Swagart. Focus a discussion on the following questions:

“What did they risk by sticking their necks out?”

“What would have happened if they hadn't stuck their necks out?”

2. This activity, which is not in the book, can help students experience the power of a vision. It's active and fun to do, and it draws forth unsuspected visioning talents.
  - » Ask students to imagine they've been given prime time on television stations to air Public Service Announcements—PSA's—promoting their project. Tell them that TV commercials often give people a vision. For example, car ads don't often give facts; they just show people being cool—with the car. The idea is that the people watching the ad will “see” themselves behind the wheel, being just as cool. Urge students to use most of the 60 seconds they'll be given to communicate their vision—how things are after their project is finished.
  - » Since visions are pictures and their ad is for a visual medium, they'll want to make their presentation look interesting, using, for example, art, photos, skits, dance, songs, and props. One powerful technique is to contrast how things are before their project starts with how things are after it's finished.
  - » Students should remember that they want viewers to *do* something. Their presentations should end with a call to action. They need to decide if they're asking for time, money, votes, or some other form of support.
  - » They also need to consider their audience. Which channel do they imagine their PSA will be on? Who watches that channel, and what's the best way to appeal to them? (You might want

to assign channels to be sure there's an array of audiences considered—the people watching a CBS affiliate as well as those watching MTV.)

3. Arrange students into teams of five or six and tell them they have the rest of the period to create their PSA's. Provide materials like large sheets of paper, colored markers, and props.
4. At the next session, have the teams perform their PSA's. If you want to videotape the presentations, you'll need a videocassette recorder and, eventually, a monitor. After each performance, ask the entire class if the vision presented was clear. Could they all "see" the completed project? If they were viewing the PSA on television, would they do what was asked of them? The class can discuss specifically what worked and what didn't work.
5. Encourage students to incorporate any insights from this exercise into the vision they're developing.
6. **New ideas about your project?**

TAIQ #6

**Think about it:** Did the process of creating the vision spark any new thinking about your project? Is there anything that should be added to the first poster you made, the one describing your project?



As before, tell students that you want them to continue thinking about this question and then to write their own answers directly into their electronic copies of *It's Up to Us*.

7. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Four of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.



# Putting Your Compassion into Action

## Our thoughts

This chapter steps back from the movement toward doing a project and gets to some core social and emotional learning. There are ideas here that may be difficult, even for people who think they're very caring. If you have disaffected kids in your class who think caring about others is for fools, this chapter will certainly challenge their assumptions.

- » There are concepts here about empathy, respect, the mutability of relationships, about going against negative peer pressure, acting compassionately when that's risky, being a good listener, and acknowledging others—and yourself. Students may never have considered the possibility that compassion can be as powerful a force as it is described here, or that conflict can be an addiction.
- » Some people think caring for opponents is weird-to-nuts. Responding negatively to opponents and to anyone who injures us is “normal.” Students may even tell you it's just “human nature” and therefore natural and unchangeable. The Giraffe stories in this chapter can help them absorb the possibility of compassion, even for enemies, as they see it played out by these Giraffes.
- » There are many **Think about it** questions in this chapter, some of them perhaps sensitive to some students. As you go through the chapter, you don't have to use all the questions. Use your judgment. But do ask the students to answer all of them, at home, in their personal copies of *It's Up to Us*.

## Your actions

1. As you meet these heroes in this chapter, ask students to summarize the stories of Grandma Edie Lewis, Steve Mariotti and Peggy Schlagger. Focus a discussion on the following questions:
  - » “What did they risk by sticking their necks out?”
  - » “What would have happened if they hadn’t stuck their necks out?”

2. Assign material on Nelson Mandela, one of the most admired people in the world. Mandela’s compassion for those who imprisoned him and who oppressed his people has been a crucial factor in the successful transition from a white-ruled South Africa to a country in which everyone votes, and he himself became the first president elected by the entire nation.

3. Review what the book says about “moving compassion from theory to action” by discussing each topic and then posing the Think about it question related to it. Those questions are:

- » **Putting yourself in other people’s shoes**

TAIQ #7

**Think about it:** Think of people you don’t want to associate with. Think of one admirable thing about each of them. Do you have *anything* in common with them? Are you willing to find out more about them? What would it be like to *be* them?



- » **Seeing people as fellow humans, not as objects to be manipulated**

TAIQ #8

**Think about it:** Have you ever taken the risk of befriending someone your friends think isn’t cool? If you have, why did you? What happened?



- » **Allowing the possibility that an opponent could become an ally**

TAIQ #9

**Think about it:** Do you have any friends now who were once “enemies”? If you do, what caused the change? Do you have an opponent now that you could get on better terms with? Would you want to if you could? How could you go about it?



- » **Listening—without judging**

TAIQ #10

**Think about it:** Think of a time, perhaps when you were feeling down, when someone really listened to you, not to tell you what's wrong with you—just listening. What was the situation? What difference did that person's listening make for you? Have you ever listened that way to somebody? What was *that* situation? In both cases, what effect did this kind of listening have on the relationship?



- » **Following through/Doing small favors/Acknowledging people for their strengths and contributions**

TAIQ #11

**Think about it:** Think of a time someone acknowledged you for something you did and a time when you acknowledged someone. How did it feel to get that recognition? How did it feel to give it?



» **Caring for yourself**

TAIQ #12

**Think about it:** Have you ever really celebrated a personal accomplishment, or even given yourself a simple pat on the back? What did you do?

» **When we *don't* act with compassion**

TAIQ #13

**Think about it:** Think of a time when you had an opportunity to act compassionately, but you didn't. What was the situation and why didn't you act? Think of a time when you've done something compassionate, despite the effort or risk. What did you do? Why did you do it? What were the results?

» **Caring for an opponent**

TAIQ #14

**Think about it:** Have you ever seen a conflict avoided or resolved because somebody—maybe you—had the courage to actively care for an “opponent”? What happened?

» **Active caring can open doors, even in big organizations**

TAIQ #15

**Think about it:** Think of a time when you had to deal with someone in a big organization, maybe the Department of Motor Vehicles or a large store. How did it go? What was your attitude and what effect did it have on the person you dealt with?

» **You don't know until you try**

TAIQ #16

**Think about it:** Are there people in your life who would reject any caring action from you? How do you know this? What would happen if you tried? Are you sure?

» **What about people who seem to like to fight?**

TAIQ #17

**Think about it:** Do you know people who seem to be happy only when there's something to fight about? If you do, how have you dealt with them?

» **Caring and conflict**

TAIQ #18

**Think about it:** Think of the person you find yourself in conflict with most often. Imagine a scenario in which you are actively compassionate toward that person. Imagine your caring actions melting your own negative feelings, and those of your opponent. Imagine getting to a caring, respectful solution to a longstanding conflict.



4. Based on the previous discussions, ask students to commit to the following actions within the next month or so:

- » "Try to establish—or re-establish—a positive relationship with someone with whom you've had problems in the past."
- » "Go out of your way to show compassion to someone who's being dumped on."
- » "Do a small favor for someone just because you're able to."
- » "Publicly acknowledge someone's strength or contributions."

At some point in the next month or so, ask students to report back on the results of these efforts:

- » “What happened?”
- » “How did you feel?”
- » “What would have made it easier to do what you did?”

5. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Five of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# Risktaking and Courage

## Have You Got the Nerve?

### Our thoughts

Here again, we go to the social and emotional. Your students are likely to associate courage with physical risks; in this chapter, they look at the kind of courage it can take to stand up against peer pressure, to do the right thing. This chapter gives them reasons to take such risks, and tips on reducing the level of risk they're facing. This is information they're unlikely to have encountered before.

A core Giraffe concept is here: distinguishing between celebrities and heroes. When your students identify their heroes and their favorite celebrities, help them keep the difference clear. Even when they name someone who is both (they might, for instance, consider Mandela a celebrity because he's so famous) make sure they understand that it's the heroism, not the fame that's important.

- » This is a good place in the program to invite people to class who can talk about courage in their own lives. The students can choose courageous people in the community they'd like to invite.

## Your actions

1. Ask students to summarize the stories of Ranya Kelly, David Charvat, and Emma Lou Kogo. Focus a discussion on the following questions:

- » “What did they risk by sticking their necks out?”
- » “What would have happened if they hadn’t stuck their necks out?”

2. Go with your students to the following **Think about It** questions:

» **Risk**

TAIQ #19

**Think about it:** If people like Kelly and Charvat were guaranteed in advance they could never get hurt, then there’d be no risk. It would be like a video game—if Ranya gets thrown in jail or David gets fired, just press the reset button and start over. But you and I know that’s not the way life works. The risks that come with sticking your neck out are real.

» **How have you taken risks?**

TAIQ #20

**Think about it:** Think of a time you’ve faced a risk that tested your spirit. What was the risk? What did you do? What was the result?





3. Review with students the Giraffe Project definitions of “hero” and “celebrity”:
- » “hero”—someone who takes on serious challenges at real personal risk to serve the common good
  - » “celebrity”—someone who is famous but not usually a her
  - » **Who are your heroes?**

Ask students to respond to **TAIQ #21**

**Think about it:** Using those Giraffe Project definitions, who are your heroes? Who are your favorite celebrities? What influence do these people have on your life?



4. Ask students if they can describe the way the book suggests to take risks. Review the three steps:

- » **Risk disappears in light of new information**

Ask students to respond to **TAIQ #22**

**Think about it:** Have you ever been in a situation in which the risks you first perceived disappeared in the light of new information? As an example, you might be summoned to a meeting with the principal or your boss, and think that you're in trouble. Then you find out the person just wants to thank you for some job well done. If something like this has happened to you, what was it?



- » **Reducing risk**

Ask students to respond to **TAIQ #23**

**Think about it:** Have you ever been able to reduce a risk by increasing your competence to take it? Studying for an exam in your most difficult class is an obvious example. What else?



» **Courage**  
**TAIQ #24**

**Think about it:** Think of a time when you've been courageous. What did you do? What happened? Where did you find the courage?



- » Remind students that they'll have to take risks in order to complete the project they've chosen and that they'll constantly be getting facts, increasing their competence, and finding their courage.

**5.** Here's a script you can use to ask students to do a little "risk-free" risktaking exercise:

- » "First, think about something that's really important to you—and this time it could be just you. Maybe it's the environment. Maybe it's a certain relationship. Maybe it's freedom of speech. Take a minute or so to think of that, and then write it down on a sheet of paper.
- » "Now think of a situation in which that 'something' is jeopardized. A factory is pumping sludge into your neighborhood. A person you deeply care for is in trouble. Someone forbids you to write something you think is worthwhile. Take another minute or so to think of the situation, and then describe it briefly on your sheet of paper.
- » "All right. You've got your important something. You've got your situation that's threatening that important something. It's almost time to act. So now you're going to go through the steps. What's the first step? 'Get the facts.' Where can you get more information? How can you get that information? Write it down."

- » “Second step—‘Increase your competence.’ You’ve got the information. But now is there any way you can increase your competence in this? We talked about some ways in general, but now think about your particular example. Do you need to be able to speak better in public to make your arguments? Do you need to be able to listen better in private to connect with someone? How can you increase your competence? Keep writing.”
- » “Now the third step—‘Find your courage.’ Look at what you’ve written. Keep in mind how important this is to you, be honest with yourself, and write down what you’ll do, what risks you’ll take, what courage you’ll show, to accomplish what you want.”
- » “What I’d like now is for you to share what you wrote with someone else in class, *but only if you want to.*”
- » After several minutes, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.
- » **When are you courageous?**  
TAIQ #25

**Think about it:** Do you think you’re more courageous in some situations than in others? Does whether or not the situation is meaningful to you make a difference?



This is an especially good question for students to ponder on their own, and to write their answers in their personal copies of *It's Up to Us*.

6. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Six of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# Planning Your Moves

## Our thoughts

Your challenge in this chapter is to make a subject lively that some people find boring—planning. It can actually happen, if you use this chapter as written. We've tested this planning process in schools all over the country. It's clear—and it works.

- » Go over the Action Plan steps on your own before the class starts in on it. You'll find it an easy, graphic and effective way to guide a project. Teachers tell us they've applied it successfully to planning challenges in their own lives.
- » In creating the Action Plan, your role may be limited to that of scribe, or you may have to manage the process to keep it on track. You know your students. Try to get each of them engaged in a task, preferably one that interests them.
- » The process of starting with a vision, *then* producing goals and steps may seem strange to your students, and maybe to you, but it works well. Planning backwards from a date when the vision is to be realized infuses the planning process with the power of that vision. Step-by-step planning is boring to many people; remind them of their vision and tell them that the way to make that vision real, in the time that they have, is to do this detailed planning.
- » You're the ringmaster here, getting each team to look at what they have to do, by what dates, and with which checkpoints, then coordinating the timing so that each team's work supports the others.' If charting such efforts is new to you, use the Action Plan (found in the bookmarks panel) of the student book as a template.

- » Fundraising, beyond the usual car washes, may well be a new experience for your students. Don't let fundraising efforts flag if students get an initial turn-down or two. Explain to them that even professional fund-raisers get only a fraction of the grants they apply for. Consider bringing in someone with local fund-raising experience who can help the students build not only their expertise but also the confidence that they can raise money. Use role-plays to let students practice their "ask." Invite people to class who review requests for money, perhaps at a service club or a community foundation. Ask them to explain what they look for in a request.

## Your actions

### 1. Working with others

Open a discussion on **TAIQ #26**

**Think about it:** Have you ever worked on an activity or project in which nobody seemed to be handling the details, or anticipating next steps? What happened? How did you feel?

2. Review the steps of the plan, and think ahead about what you yourself might do to help students further their project. Remember, in a very real sense, the students are in charge of this project, not you. They are the ones who must be responsible for what they do and how they do it. With that in mind, think about ways you can contribute to each of the following steps:

» **Review the issue, the project, and the vision**

Is the project doable in the time allotted with the resources that are likely to be accessible? Is there anything you can do to “grease the skids,” e.g., introduce the project to school officials?

» **Get more information**

Review sources on the Internet.

» **Recruit any help you need**

Do you have any connections with people who work in local media? Can you use your membership in any group—e.g., the PTSA—to help the project along?

» **Create an action plan**

- Do you have access to calendars that show local events?  
Are you familiar with all your students' strengths and interests in order to help them allocate jobs for each other?
- Can you help students brainstorm a list of potential in-kind contributors?

» **Put your plan—and yourself—in gear**

Coaching a project will be “extra” work for you. Think of the satisfaction you’ll get from the successful completion of the project.

» **Assess progress as you go**

Are you prepared to help motivate students if interest begins to wane? Are you prepared to keep them focused if they become distracted with other issues and events?

3. Use the advice in the section called “Recruit any help you need” to enlist support. This is a great time to involve the community—parents, service club members and other community members can help your students perfect their plan.

4. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Seven of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# It's Up to You

## Taking Responsibility and Making Decisions

### Our thoughts

Your students may not have thought about their attitudes affecting the world around them. Many may think that what they do, say or believe just doesn't matter. In the discussions, try to help everyone identify some time in their own lives when their attitude did matter and did affect other people.

- » You can use the “body-language” exercise found under the section “Don't send mixed messages” in class, either in skits or in pairs, to help your students realize the confusion that can be caused by sending mixed messages. It gets the point across in an entertaining yet impactful way.
- » Emphasize to your students that the step-by-step system for making decisions looks time-consuming when laid out on paper; it's purposely slowed down so they can easily see its parts. In real life, it's done quickly. What's important for them to learn is the way of *thinking* about decisions that the book is suggesting—constructing options, getting good information, then weighing pros and cons. You may also want to look at the decision-making materials from the Institute for Global Ethics (see the “Other materials of interest” section in the back of this Guide).



## Your actions

1. Ask students to respond to these **Think about it** questions:

» **People in groups**

TAIQ #27

**Think about it:** Have you ever been in a situation in which the attitude or behavior of just one person has changed the mood of an entire group, positively or negatively? If so, what happened? Have *you* ever been that one person? If so, how did that happen; what did you do?



» **Routine interactions**

TAIQ #28

**Think about it:** Think of some routine interaction you have with another person. Maybe it's the woman who serves the French fries in the school cafeteria—always frowning—or your little brother, who never does his share of the dishes. Consciously make your response to that person warmer and more positive than usual. Maybe nothing happens the first few times you do this, but look again after you've kept it up awhile. See any changes?



» **Nonverbal communication**

TAIQ #29

**Think about it:** Have you ever talked to someone whose words said one thing while their gestures, expressions or tone of voice "said" something completely different? What was the effect on you? Have *you* ever said one thing while your nonverbal communication said another? What was the result?



» **Inspired?**

TAIQ #

**Think about it:** Have you ever been inspired by someone else's words or behavior—and never told them that? What was the situation?



2. Ask students to summarize the story of Raoul Wallenberg. Focus a discussion on the following questions:
  - » “What did he risk by sticking his neck out?”
  - » “What would have happened if he hadn't stuck his neck out?”
3. Review with students the Making Decisions section by asking them first to think of a decision they're going to have to make for their project in the next month. Once they've settled on a decision, take them through the process, step by step:
  - » **Think ahead**
    - “When will you have to make this decision?”
    - “What would the consequences be for not making the decision at that time?”
  - » **Take a deep breath**
    - “What can you do to make sure that you're seeing ‘the big picture’ and not being swept away with the emotions of the moment?”
    - “Are there any of you who can do that, who can act as ‘steadiers’ in this process?”
  - » **Come up with as many options as you can**
    - “How will you generate ideas?”
  - » **Get the best information you can on each option**
    - “What are some sources of good information that you can tap into?”

"How will you make sure that everyone who needs to know the information will have access to the information?"

» **Weigh the pros and cons of each option**

"What are some of the qualities against which you'll measure the options—degree of difficulty? speed? size of effect? moral high ground?"

» **Choose**

"How will you make the decision? Will you try for a unanimous vote, a majority vote, or a plurality vote? Will everyone vote? Will you try for consensus?"

» **Reflect**

"How much time will you build into the process to reflect on your decision? For example, will you let everyone 'sleep on it' between the time you make the decision and the time you implement it?"

» **Follow through**

"How will you put your decision into action? Who's responsible?"

» **Have no regrets**

"Can you agree to do your best and not berate yourselves if and when you have to make course corrections?" (If this prompts a discussion on possible failures and setbacks, look ahead to the section called "What if you mess up" in the final chapter)

4. Ask students, "How will you evaluate your decision? When will you evaluate your decision?"
5. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Eight of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# How to Get Your Message Out

## The Secrets of Good PR

### Our thoughts

The Giraffe Project was founded to get real heroes' stories into the media, so we have years of experience in dealing with media. This chapter puts what we know into pointers that will greatly improve your students' chances of getting coverage—coverage that will help them achieve their goals. It also provides information on helping young people use the Internet as a positive tool for getting the word out.

- » Your students will be crossing the barrier that too often separates school and community. Working on a community service project lets that community know that its young people are contributing to the common good.
- » Media are full of stories about bad things young people do. It's important for your community to know that there is good news about its young people, and that something fine is happening at your school. Every school needs support—you need parental participation, you need volunteers, you need "Yes" votes on school bonds. Every poster your students put up in store windows or update they put on social media sites about their service project and every story on the evening news broadcast helps tell a story the community needs to hear.
- » In addition to generating good will toward kids and schools, good public relations work can foster more community involvement. People who hear, see or read about your students'

project can realize their own ability and responsibility to participate in the community.

- » We urge students to engage the media and use the Internet with these higher goals in mind—not for ego gratification or the excitement that media can generate. If their eyes are on those goals, doing media will be a positive experience for them, for you, and for the community. If they start to lose sight of the goals, and to be operating out of ego, help them get back on the high road where a job well done is all the reward that matters.

## Your actions

1. Arrange students into five groups, based on their interests and their abilities or ask for volunteers to:
  - » write press releases
  - » do interviews
  - » create websites, blogs and social media posts
  - » create flyers, posters, and brochures
  - » give speeches
2. For the press-release group, ask students to review the relevant section in the book and then to practice writing press releases on topics relating to their project.
3. For the interview group, ask students to review the relevant section in the book and then to practice interviewing each other—not on a project-related issue but on an issue that's personal to the student being interviewed, e.g., any of the following:
  - » an athletic event that the student participated in
  - » something that the student achieved
  - » a trip that the student went on
  - » how the student feels about a certain issue

Have the interviewer and the interviewee discuss the topic of the interview beforehand so the interviewer can use the information in questioning the interviewee. If you can, record the sessions as a means of providing feedback.

#### 4. Which interviews hold your attention?

TAIQ #31

**Think about it:** Be on the lookout for interviews on television and radio or in newspapers or magazines. As you watch, listen to, or read them, notice the ones that give you a lot of facts, and others that focus on someone's vision for the future, on something exciting that could be done. Note which interviews hold your attention, and why.



5. For the online publicity group, ask students to review the section on creating websites. Then ask students to figure out the best, affordable way to get the word out online, is it a blog, through social media, through a website or all of the above? A site is only useful if people will go to it. How will they share links or posts and with whom? Help students design and set up a site for their project. Make sure that they are in communication with the print media group so that the design is consistent. Students should be reminded that how they present themselves in social media might discredit their cause if they are not careful. A thoughtless post could not only embarrass them, it could discredit the project and the class.
6. For the print media group, ask students to review the section called "Creating flyers, posters, brochures and newsletters" in the book. Provide them with guidelines on what kind of supplies they will be able to use to print brochures, flyers and posters relating to their project. They may need to work within the limits of your print resources. Have them be very strategic about where they might share these materials before setting out to print. Also, make sure they are in communication with the online publicity group about design consistency as well as any URLs they need to place on the materials.

7. For the speech group, ask students to review the section “Giving public presentations.” Remind them that speaking in public is one form of media. Learning how to get a simple message across in public, clearly and persuasively, is an important lifelong skill all people can use. This chapter is a great place to start learning it, or to significantly improve what students already know. Have them follow this procedure:

Practice giving speeches to each other. Whether or not your students are intimidated by speaking in public, organize practice sessions in which each one uses the guidance in this chapter to give a three-minute speech about a subject they already know. Prep other class members in the audience to respond constructively, noting what worked and suggesting improvements without being cruel or insulting. If you can, make video recordings of the sessions, and then have students assess their own presentations; that's an instructive way to give students immediate feedback.

- » Determine what speeches students may have to make in the course of carrying out their project, for example, at a school assembly or to the PTSA.
  - » Gather the information for the speeches.
  - » Prepare the speeches.
  - » Practice them.
8. Appoint several students to coordinate all the components of the media campaign, making sure that the content is consistent and that all audiences are covered.
  9. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Nine of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.



# Finding Common Ground

## Our thoughts

Apply the various steps in this section to conflict scenarios the students suggest. Use role-plays to make these applications as close to real as possible.

- » When there's an actual conflict in class, use it. How are the students—and you—handling those conflicts?
- » Keep returning the discussion on trust building to personal examples, encouraging students to look at issues of trust and distrust in their own lives.
- » Emphasize to your students that theoretical knowledge of conflict resolution isn't worth much. It's how they *act* in a conflict that counts. Talk about your own experiences with conflict, good and bad, and encourage the students to think about or discuss their experiences.
- » Have the class research conflicts in current events. Get them to look for some that have been solved, some that ended badly, and some that are ongoing. In the class discussion, apply the steps in this chapter to the conflicts being considered. How might they affect the outcomes? This is a good chance for some role-plays, with students representing opposing sides in search of common ground.

## Your actions

1. Ask students to respond to these **Think about it** questions:

» **Stuck in conflict**

TAIQ #32

**Think about it:** Think of conflicts you've been in, at home, at school, at work—anywhere. Replay the worst ones in your mind. Can you think of any that continued because people weren't smart enough to solve them? Can you think of any that continued because one or both sides were stuck in emotions they couldn't get past?



» **Endless conflict**

TAIQ #33

**Think about it:** Have you ever been involved in a conflict that seemed to go on forever, with every minor "victory" by one side ratcheting up the conflict one more notch? If you have, what happened? How did it end? *Did* it end?



» **Reaction to words or actions**

TAIQ #34

**Think about it:** How do you feel when someone else's actions or words make you lose your temper or your self-confidence?



» **Negative judgments**

TAIQ #35

**Think about it:** Think of negative judgments you have of people you've had conflicts with. Now think of negative judgments they might have of you. What effect have these judgments had on finding good solutions?

» **Compromise**

TAIQ #36

**Think about it:** Have you ever been in a conflict in which someone in authority enforced a compromise that split the difference between you and the person you were fighting with? What was the result? Was the conflict really solved?

» **Beneath the waterline**

TAIQ #37

**Think about it:** Think of a conflict you've been involved in. Now look at it as an iceberg. What was going on beneath the water-line of the person with whom you had the conflict? What was going on beneath your own waterline?

» **Trust and conflict**

TAIQ #38

**Think about it:** Think of a conflict in which you've trusted a person on the other side, even though you disagreed with him. Now think of another conflict in which there was no trust anywhere. How did trusting, or not trusting, affect your actions?



2. Review with your students the section on “Steps for resolving conflicts:”
  - » Handle your “inside stuff.”
  - » Look for stereotypes and negative judgments you may have of people who oppose you.
  - » Look beneath the “waterline.”
  - » Build trust.
  - » Look for easy fixes.
  - » Confirm the issues that are still in conflict.
  - » Help people create a shared vision.
  - » Build an agreement on the common ground you find.
  - » Commit to carrying out the agreement.
3. Have students create a poster of the steps and display it. Ask students to use the steps when they need to resolve conflicts within their group as well as with others.
4. Ask students to summarize the story of John Hayes. Focus a discussion on the following questions:
  - » “What did he risk by sticking his neck out?”
  - » “What would have happened if he hadn’t stuck his neck out?”
5. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Ten of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# Lead—Who, You?

## Our thoughts

When students discuss, in Action 3, below, who among them have stepped forward as leaders, remind them that

- » Leadership comes in different styles. As noted in the book, some leaders use a lot of words, some few. Some joke around; others are more serious. Some speak loudly; others are soft-spoken. Many styles can work. Encourage your students to recognize all types of leaders. What leadership styles have they seen and how did they respond to each of them?
- » No one needs to be a leader all the time. Lots of times what's needed most are good followers. Pronouncing a student an all-purpose "leader" can put undue pressure on that student. And take care that your students don't set up a hierarchy, in which "followers" are treated as second-class.
- » Both males and females make good leaders, but gender bias exists. Discuss with students whether they think that they all have the same opportunities to attain leadership positions and succeed at them, regardless of their sex, their ethnicity, their appearance, and their personal style. Ask how each of them reacts to a person of a different sex, ethnicity, appearance, and personal style.

## Your actions

1. Ask students to summarize the stories of Roxanne Black, Louise Stanley, Hazel Wolf, Melissa Poe, and Charles Spann. Focus a discussion on the following questions:

- » “What did they risk by sticking their necks out?”
- » “What would have happened if they hadn’t stuck their necks out?”

2. Ask students to respond to these **Think about it** questions:

» **You as leader**

TAIQ #39

**Think about it:** Has leadership ever “happened” to you? If it has, what’s the story?

» **Conditions worsen**

TAIQ #40

**Think about it:** Have you ever been part of a group when conditions suddenly worsened, prompting a need for someone to take more charge? If you have, what happened?

» **Doing the right thing**

TAIQ #41

**Think about it:** Have you ever done something you knew was right even though your friends didn’t want you to do it? What happened? How did that feel?

3. Ask the class to note who among them have stepped forward and taken the lead on one matter or another, large or small:

- » What were the circumstances?



- » Have people surprised themselves, stepping forward when they didn't expect to?
  - » Are abilities being revealed that they hadn't noticed before?
  - » What leadership styles have they seen and how did people respond to each of them?
4. Ask students to do the "What's your leadership style?" activity. This can be a lot of fun but, since it might seem a little goofy, you may have to cajole your students into it. Once they've started, most people find it brings them both laughs and insights.
  5. When students are clear on what we mean by leadership, ask them to describe in writing at least one opportunity they have to lead, right now. It could be as simple as leading a younger sibling or something of wider range. Ask them to do the following:
  6. Note the leadership actions they could take.
    - » Describe the situation.
    - » List the resources they could call on to help them lead.
  7. Read the papers, without identifying the writers. Ask students to add suggestions on resources and possible actions for each potential leadership opportunity.
  8. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Eleven of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# What It Takes to Lead Well

## Our thoughts

The focus in this chapter on the need for leaders to build trusting relationships may be mysterious to your students if they still think leadership has to be about command and control, or if they can't imagine leaders deserving trust.

- » There certainly have been and are leaders who shouldn't be trusted. In the quotes at the end of the chapter, you'll see one from Hermann Goering. It describes a kind of leadership that gives leadership a bad name—manipulating people to do things that do great harm.



## Your actions

1. Ask students to respond to these **Think about it** questions:

» **Littky and Kiffkin's qualities**

TAIQ #42

**Think about it:** What skills and personal qualities do Littky and Kiffin have that helped them lead their communities so well?



» **Faith**

TAIQ #43

**Think about it:** Has someone's faith in you ever helped you succeed? Has your faith in other people helped *them*? In each case, what happened?



» **Leader motives**

TAIQ #44

**Think about it:** Have you ever been part of a group whose leader had authority over you—but whose motives and/or competence you didn't trust? How did you feel about following his lead? Did you work well with him? Have you been part of a group whose leader—with or without an official title—earned your trust? Were your responses to that leader different? If so, how?

» **Leaders and trust**

TAIQ #45

**Think about it:** Have you ever been in a group whose leader didn't seem to care about you personally? Have you been in a group whose leader obviously cared about you? Which one did you trust more? Which one were you more ready to follow?

» **Commitment**

TAIQ #46

**Think about it:** Think of a time when you've been trusted to carry out a vital part of a plan, and another when you've been allowed only to do stuff that doesn't matter. Has your role affected your commitment? If so, how?

» **Head or heart?**

TAIQ #47

**Think about it:** Do you tend to rely more on your head or your heart? Where do you think the leaders at your school or in your community would fall on a scale that ran from "all head" at one end to "all heart" at the other?



2. Ask students to summarize the stories of Dennis Littky, Dolly Kiffin, Calvin Bryant, Eileen Szychowski, and John Croyle. Focus a discussion on the following questions:

- » "What did they risk by sticking their necks out?"
- » "What would have happened if they hadn't stuck their necks out?"

3. Review the skills and qualities important to good leaders starting with the section “What do good leaders do?”, and ask students to think about people they know who possess those characteristics:
  - » Good leaders inspire people to believe in themselves.
  - » Good leaders build trusting relationships with the people they lead.
  - » Good leaders help people grow.
  - » Good leaders help build and maintain an atmosphere that's upbeat and respectful.
  - » Good leaders don't abuse their authority.
  - » Good leaders are good managers.
  - » Good leaders use their hearts as well as their heads.
4. Homework: Tell students to read Chapter Twelve of *It's Up to Us*; they'll discuss it at the next session.

# Where Do You Go From Here?

## Our thoughts

Now that your students have finished a service project, it's time to stop, reflect and celebrate.

- » Set aside time for a final reflection on accomplishments, both those of the group and of individuals. This Program is about chang-ing lives—how did their lives change? How did they change others' lives?
  - » Remind students that what they've learned in *It's Up to Us* is not a one-shot deal. It's not like memorizing facts for an exam— they now have concepts, skills and experiences that they can use again and again.
  - » Your students have now developed and exercised Giraffe qualities of character, and have gained an understanding of their world that can serve them—and that world—for the rest of their lives. Going through *It's Up to Us* is not so much the completion of a course, as it is an initiation into the company of courageous, caring, and responsible human beings. Let them know that's a pretty good thing to celebrate.
  - » Some classes have organized parties, inviting friends, family and people who have helped on the project. Others have done assemblies for their schools. The material in the class portfolio comes in handy here, for displays that explain what's been done. Make sure the celebration includes a strong acknowledgement of the students' accomplishment; they may also want to thank others who have helped them achieve their vision.

- » If there's time in this class-year, they can design and implement another service project as a class, using the structure they've already set up and the skills and experience they've gained. If there isn't time for that, urge them to take on new projects by working with their families, friends, neighbors and youth clubs. Students have also started Giraffe clubs so they can keep working together.

The section called "What if you mess up" in the book is a quick distillation of extensive research by psychologists on how people handle setbacks. Some people look at failures as permanent, pervasive and personal—it'll never be better, it means *everything* is going down the tubes, and it's all their fault. If you see this kind of thinking coming up in your class, urge students to make the more resilient and practical choice of using the moment to make appropriate course corrections. Resilient thinkers see setbacks as temporary, limited in scope, and related to the circumstances, not to their own "woeful inadequacies." That helps them bounce back and look to their next moves, ones that will work better. Clearly, there's room here for a lively discussion of how class members look at the world.

- » As they look to next steps, discuss the fear of success, the final point in this book. It's often more powerful than fear of failure, and understanding this will help them meet the challenges ahead of them.
- » Take them through the concept slowly, helping them face the fears that can come from understanding how effective and valuable they can be, and accepting the risk of using those strengths to make their lives full and meaningful.

## Your actions

1. Organize a celebration with your students. Help them consider the following:
  - » what the celebration is for
  - » where and when it will be held
  - » who will be invited
  - » what the agenda will be
  - » how they can use the celebration to inspire others to stick *their* necks out

2. Ask students to respond to these **Think about it** questions:

- » **Review your project**

TAIQ #48

**Think about it:** As part of your celebration, talk about how your project went. How close to your vision did you come? Were there obstacles or resources that surprised you along the way? What did you learn about your community? About the people you worked with? About yourself? What, if anything, would you do differently if you could?



- » As part of your celebration, talk about how your project went. How close to your vision did you come? Were there obstacles or resources that surprised you along the way? What did you learn about your community? about the people you worked with? about yourself? What, if anything, would you do differently if you could?

- » **Failure**

TAIQ #49

**Think about it:** Failures can hurt, of course. Think of a failure you've experienced. How did you feel about it? How did you deal with it? How do you *wish* you'd dealt with it?



3. Consider having students write—or create an audio or video recording—about what the Giraffe experience has meant to them—practically, socially, academically, morally, spiritually.
  - » Then ask them to think about what comes next. What issues are they ready to take on now, as they continue sticking their necks out?
  - » Hand out copies of the post-use questionnaire on [page 38](#) of this Guide.
4. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

## Section C ~ Backgrounders

# Who's behind the Giraffe Heroes Program?

The Giraffe Heroes Program, including *It's Up to Us*, has been created and is distributed by the Giraffe Heroes Project.

The world needs real heroes, courageous compassionate people who take on tough problems like violence, hunger and pollution and who serve as compelling models for the rest of us. The Giraffe Heroes Project moves people to stick their necks out for the common good and gives them tools to succeed. In person, in print, on the air, and on line.

- » The Project tells the stories of Giraffe Heroes—people we commend for sticking their necks out for the common good. Their stories inspire others to take on the public challenges they see—speaking out against corruption, building bridges across conflicts, taking a stand against injustice, being a voice for the powerless. Coverage of Giraffe Heroes has included *Good Morning America*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, *Parade*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, the Associated Press, *Scholastic*, *Education Today*, and *People*.
- » Giraffe speeches bring people to their feet and into action, inspiring them to solve the public problems that concern them. Giraffe workshops are street-smart trainings in the nuts and bolts of getting the job done.



- » Articles, Op-Eds and media interviews by Project leaders take strong positions in the national debates on key issues such as civil liberties, social security, public education and wise leadership.
- » Our website, [www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org), features inspiring stories of Giraffe Heroes, information on Giraffe programs and products, and interactive ways of sharing the Giraffe message of courageous compassion..
- » *Stick Your Neck Out: A Street-Smart Guide to Creating Change in Your Community and Beyond* is the Project's handbook for successful, active citizenship. A workbook turns this book into a great tool for mentoring upper-level high school kids in civic engagement.
- » Heads-Up, the Project's e-zine and the Giraffe Heroes Facebook page bring inspiration and information to thousands more people across the country and around the world.
- » Giraffe Heroes International brings Giraffe inspiration, methods and materials for citizen action to countries all over the globe
- » The K-12 Giraffe Heroes Program is a curriculum for grades K-12 that uses stories of real heroes to inspire kids to be brave and caring citizens, carrying out service projects that solve problems in their communities and beyond. The Program has reached a quarter-million kids in all fifty states and in American schools abroad. For more information, please see the following pages and also <http://www.giraffe.org/the-giraffe-heroes-program/training-tomorrows-heroes/>

# The Giraffe Heroes Program

*It's Up to Us* is part of the Giraffe Heroes Program, a curriculum for grades K-12 that uses stories of real heroes to inspire kids to be brave and caring citizens and responsible members of the community. It gives kids something to say *Yes!* to. It is in use in classrooms all across the United States and in American schools abroad.

The Program has been created in versions to reach kids from 5 through 20, from kindergarten to past high school. *It's Up to Us* is the version best suited for middle teens.

The Program works equally well in afterschool programs of all kinds, and for home-schooling.

All elements of the Giraffe Heroes Program combine service-learning, character education, civic education and, in the case of *Voices of Hope*, literacy training. All foster academic success.

All rely heavily on the stories of Giraffe Heroes—the extraordinary people honored by the Giraffe Heroes Project for sticking their necks out for the common good.

The Program is based on the following principles

- » Human beings have within them an innate compassion for others that can be encouraged and developed in the schooling of our young.
- » Teaching kids to be brave, caring and responsible can at the same time be a powerful tool for promoting their academic success.
- » A healthy society has true heroes who give its people models of the courage and compassion that make for meaningful indi-

vidual lives and, in a democracy, keep that democracy alive.

- » The path of a meaningful life is one of service to goals larger than our personal needs.
- » Apathy, cynicism and disengagement are symptoms of a lack of meaning and hope, symptoms that are a great threat to the future of our democracy, which depends on the active participation of its citizens.
- » Even troubled kids without personal support systems can connect with their community and recognize in themselves valuable and valued members of that community.
- » Kids who engage in destructive behaviors are often reported to feel no connection with their community and have no picture of their own lives that gives them hope; this Program helps kids make that connection and find that hope.

Currently there are six elements of the Giraffe Heroes Program:

- » Curricula in print binder versions for grade levels K-2, 3-5 and 6-9.
- » *It's Up to Us*—a mentoring book for teens, and its Teacher's Guide, are, as you know, now online for free download at [www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org).
- » *Stick Your Neck Out: A Street-Smart Guide to Creating Change in Your Community and Beyond* is the Project's handbook for successful, active citizenship. *The Stick Your Neck Out Workbook* turns this book into a great tool for mentoring upper-level high school kids in civic engagement.
- » *Voices of Hope* uses the stories of Giraffe Heroes to build reading skills in teens, while encouraging and guiding them to be effective, active citizens. The *Voices of Hope Service-Learning Guide* condenses the Project's fifteen years of experience into a concise, user-friendly guide.

- » The Giraffe Kit, a shorter version of the Giraffe Heroes Program for middle school, is especially good for afterschool and home school uses.
- » Recordings of the adventures of twin giraffes Stan Tall & Bea Tall bring Giraffe stories to the very young.

You can learn more about the Giraffe Heroes Program in the essays that follow this page, and at <http://www.giraffe.org/the-giraffe-heroes-program/training-tomorrows-heroes/> There you will also find:

- » Formal third-party evaluations of the Giraffe Heroes Program.
- » Tips on using the GHP for civic education programs, service learning, character education, afterschool and community based youth programs and programs for gifted / talented / highly capable students.
- » Correlations with national educational standards.
- » Case studies and field reports.

## How the Giraffe Heroes Program can benefit your school or youth program

The Giraffe Heroes Program makes the core curriculum *relevant*. Students who have a low interest in academics or actively resist learning can suddenly click into lively pursuit of core skills when they experience applying academics in a context that's important to them. That's what happens as they move through the Program. Even severely disaffected students begin to see that they don't have to settle for passivity and inaction.

**Language arts.** Students doing the Program have raised their interest in reading; the material motivates them to read more, to look up new words and concepts, to find the words to discuss and write down the ideas and opinions the Program encourages them to express. As they move along in creating and carrying out their own service project, they eagerly do research, reports, planning, analyses, and persuasive speaking and writing. Many classes have lobbied government officials for their cause, writing letters, creating reports and doing oral presentations.

**Social studies.** The Program brings students in contact with real-world ideas and problems, in a positive, activating way. Each Giraffe story in the text is about a person addressing a social problem and making headway toward a solution. The book doesn't focus on the problems; it focuses on the actions people are taking to solve them. The text guides students in considering the community problems that concern *them* and helps them turn their concern into valuable action. This is what makes the Program "powerful, powerful stuff." Students have both a broad look at the issues of our times and a personal experience of having a positive effect on their community. They use democratic decision-making and teamwork to create and carry out their projects, practicing the skills of active citizenship. The Giraffe Heroes Program is a dynamic, engaging way to help students look at their world, their times, and their place in both.

**Electives and teaching methods.** The Giraffe Heroes Program is used in a broad array of subjects and settings, including some the Giraffe Project didn't anticipate, like the career track classes at West High in Wichita—we didn't think of that one, but we're delighted to report it's working well.

Teachers of many subjects have seen a match to their needs, like the high school economics teacher who has used the Program for years. "Economics is making value judgments with your money and time," he told the Giraffe Project. "That's exactly what this Program helps kids do."

Teachers with many goals have seen such connections between the Program and what they want to teach their students. They've used the Program for:

- » meeting community service and character education mandates
- » prevention programs
- » social and emotional learning
- » applied and experiential learning
- » building developmental assets identified by the Search Institute
- » life skills, health, career track, economics
- » and sociology,
- » at-risk, gifted, and leadership classes
- » a whole-school theme, across all subjects
- » leadership groups
- » older students mentoring younger ones
- » school-to-work programs
- » after school clubs

- » faith-based programs
- » service clubs
- » summer programs

## Using the Giraffe Heroes Program to build school/community partnerships

The school reform movement stresses the power of bringing the community into the schools and the schools into the community. The Giraffe Heroes Program can help you do both.

An important part of the Program is a community service project. Students assess the needs they see in their community, then design and carry out a service project that helps meet the need they care most about. Getting students involved in this way makes them participants and stakeholders in the community; they learn they can affect what happens there. Service to the community makes students valued members of that community, part of the active, caring core of people who care about the common good.

This is the essence of good citizenship. Endless studies have described “disconnection” and “isolation” as factors in young people’s destructive behaviors; helping them connect with their community is the antidote.

Bringing the community into the schools is important too. Schools can foster the character development of a student, but there should be other input. Ideally, parents are involved; many have assisted in classrooms doing the Giraffe Heroes Program as have other adults from communities. Service club members are particularly good volunteers in this Program, since their missions involve service. The Giraffe Project, for example, has for years worked with teams of volunteers from Rotary to help facilitate the Giraffe Heroes Program in Seattle classrooms.

Community volunteers can read stories of heroes to younger students, and talk with students of all ages about what service and citizenship mean in their own lives. They can help kids carry out their service project, and honor them and celebrate with them when



the project has been completed.

Becoming more aware of local role models helps students combat cynicism, gives them hope, and builds their sense of the possibilities for their own lives.

From the community's viewpoint, seeing students carry out positive community actions affects people's view of young people and of their schools. Community mentors have told us they are so impressed by their time with students doing the Giraffe Heroes Program that they will never again vote against a school bond!

## The Giraffe Heroes Program and service-learning

The Giraffe Heroes Program encompasses all the main strengths of service-learning including: problem-solving, teamwork, practical experience of the real world, applied academic learning, and improved academic performance. Service-learning students exercise their humanity and empathy, and become better citizens. They learn responsibility and discipline, and they see themselves as included in the community.

### **Is service-learning “involuntary servitude”?**

That concern has been expressed about service-learning, linking it to the “community service” ordered by judges as a punishment. Not so. Even when service is mandated as a graduation requirement, teachers can avoid the “involuntary” problem by giving students the latitude that’s afforded in the Giraffe Heroes Program. Resistance from the community and from students themselves can be strong when kids are told what service they’ll do. But ask them to choose a concern they themselves have, and to choose their own response to that concern, and the service is no longer something the school is imposing—it’s their own project. They not only aren’t resistant, they’re deeply committed.

### **Is service-learning too much trouble for teachers?**

The teacher’s workload in the Giraffe Heroes Program is lightened by the expert instructions that are part of each version—in *It’s Up to Us*, they’re contained in the Teachers Guide.

### **What are the pluses of service-learning?**

A study by Florida Learn and Serve K-12 reported these results from service-learning sites over a three-year period:

- » attendance improved 83%
- » discipline referrals went down 80%
- » 76% of students improved their GPAs.

Of the at-risk students in the study:

- » 89% improved their attendance
- » 89% had fewer discipline referrals
- » 88% improved their GPAs.

In a Brandeis University study of service-learning sites, service-learning participants scored “significantly higher” than non-participants on:

- » school engagement
- » grades in math, social studies and science
- » their core GPA (English, math, social studies and science)
- » their desire to get a college education.

In the same study 87% of service-learning students reported having learned a new skill they believed would be valuable in the future, and all participants reported an increased sense of personal and social responsibility.

## The Giraffe Heroes Program and character development

In other times, the prime mission of the public school system was clearly understood to be the development of students' character. This was a given. Public education was to insure the health of society by turning out upstanding human beings.

In recent times, clashes over the content of programs to teach ethics knocked character education off the agenda at far too many schools. Whose values will be taught and what positions taken on hot-button issues? Should morality be the realm only of the family and of religion, not the schools? And should teachers be charged with "co-parenting" their students?

Fortunately, concern is growing that neither individuals nor society are faring well without the schools' involvement in character development, and the concept is returning to more and more schools.

On the questions of whose values and what positions will be taught, it's becoming clear in community after community that people from many viewpoints and belief systems agree far more than they disagree. When they look at what they want their children to know and be, they come up with remarkably similar ideas: integrity, compassion, respect, responsibility, civic-mindedness, fairness and courage keep coming up, and are endorsed by all.

As the movement to foster character education in the schools grows, it also deepens. Excellent educators, sociologists, psychologists and philosophers have contributed to an understanding of how to do the job well and what the goals are.

### Some core principles

**Character isn't just how people behave, it's also how they think and feel.** Character education needs to develop students' intrinsic motivation. Thomas Lickona, Director of the Center for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Rs, has famously said that the goal is for students to, "Know the

good, love the good and do the good.” The late Michael Rothenberg, a noted child psychiatrist, said that character cannot be, “Do it because I said so and I’m bigger and stronger than you are. It has to be the child doing it because he *loves* to do it.”

Like Lickona and Rothenberg, the Giraffe Project does not use or recommend a “command and control” approach to character education. Teachers and parents are all too familiar with the child who obeys all orders while seething with resistance and resentment that sooner or later burst forth in deeply negative behaviors. Students who are obedient do not necessarily know the good, love the good and do the good. The goal of good character education is students who have taken the good to heart and made it their own, an ingrained way of thinking, feeling and acting in any and all situations, whether or not someone in authority is observing them. The Giraffe Heroes Program is designed to achieve that goal. The Program fully engages students in their own character development.

We think the best way to introduce qualities of character is to tell stories about people displaying those qualities in all their glory, in action, in real-world situations, rather than in abstract words or principles. Stories go straight to the heart and hold there, in place when the student needs to call on them as models for new choices and actions. Giraffes are moral models for your students’ future behavior, whether or not those students have memorized a list of ethical attributes.

The narrative, the questions and the reflection points in the Giraffe Heroes Program are also aimed at getting students to internalize their own character development. This is a profound process, one that involves their spiritual well-being, no matter what faith they may profess, or if they have no religious affiliation. We are much moved by the work of Nel Noddings, Parker Palmer and Rachel Kessler in bringing a nonsectarian understanding of spiritual de-

velopment to public education.

### **Students need opportunities for moral action**

Humans learn best by doing. The Giraffe Heroes Program certainly provides that, as students work together to make ethical choices, work together in teams, and move into service, addressing problems that concern them in the community. This is real-world, experiential education, the kind that sticks rather than being memorized until the test, then forgotten.

### **School should be a caring community**

We are deeply concerned by how often this is not the case in high schools. It seems far more common to find students operating in an atmosphere that one could call an emotional acid bath rather than a caring community. Cyber-bullying is a case in point. The toll on young people's sense of well-being is overwhelmingly negative, deepening alienation and even despair in far too many teens. Acid can scar, sometimes permanently.

As students move through the Giraffe Heroes Program, their shared mission and their constant teamwork create an atmosphere that can counterbalance a destructive, divisive student culture.

When entire schools and districts do the Program, that attitude change can pervade the larger system, helping it become a larger caring community. Bringing in parents and other community members to help facilitate the Program can spread positive effects home and into the thinking and actions of an entire area.

**Character education and academic learning are integral to each other, not separate realms.** The Giraffe Heroes Program links well into the curriculum, providing meaningful, engaging content for a wide range of subjects, whether core, elective or after school (see "A. How the Giraffe Heroes Program can benefit your school or youth

program" above).

A key aim of the Giraffe Heroes Program is to promote the theme that a public education system needs to produce graduates who are "morally literate" as well as academically skilled.

No one has said it better than Teddy Roosevelt—

*To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.*

## The Giraffe Heroes Program and active citizenship

The Giraffe Heroes Program introduces kids to Giraffe Heroes who not only model good character, but are also involved, outspoken citizens. They look at the world around them with keen, caring eyes, observing for themselves what needs to be done and stepping forward to get it done. Their stories are antidotes to the hopelessness and disengagement of, “It’s all too much for me to deal with.”

The Founders of this democracy counted on an informed, active citizenry to make the whole system work. That system is one of balanced forces; without an engaged citizenry, the system is out of balance and no longer the magnificent participatory democracy it is meant to be.

As students absorb Giraffe stories and move into concerned, active involvement in their community, they begin to see their world and their role in it with new eyes, the eyes of contributing citizens. They learn that their concerns and their actions matter, that what they do can change what happens. This experience of effective participation is indelible and usable, throughout their lives.

Brian O’Connell’s *Civil Society, The Underpinnings of American Democracy*, (Tufts University 1999) is a well researched, beautifully written and still very relevant look at the state of our democracy and what is at stake for the nation’s future. He describes a widespread and growing perception that our system is impervious to public input, and gives us this stirring quote from John Gardner:

**“People want meaning in their lives, but in this turbulent era a context of meaning is rarely handed to us as a comfortable inheritance. Today we have to build meaning into our lives, and we build it through our commitments. One such commitment is service to one’s community. ... Let us tell people that there is hope. Let’s tell them there’s a role for everyone. ... Let’s say to everyone who will listen: ‘Lend a hand—out of concern for**



**your community, out of love for our country, out of the depths of whatever faith you hold. Lend a hand."**

O'Connell wants us to realize that keeping our democracy isn't a given—it depends on what we do, or don't do, on what we give, or withhold. If we allow ourselves to become a nation of passive consumers, detached from public life, if we raise up future generations who do not understand that participation is the price of freedom, democracy cannot survive. He writes that he is haunted by this quote from Edward Gibbon about the death of democracy in another time and place:

**"They wanted a comfortable life and they lost it all—security, comfort and freedom\* ... When the Athenians\* finally wanted not to give to society but for society to give to them, when the freedom they wished for most was freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free."**

The Giraffe Heroes Program gives you the tools to help create a new generation of citizens who want more than self-involved comfort, who understand their ability and their responsibility to take part in public life. Throughout the Program, students are using democratic processes, in the larger picture of contributing to a successful democracy, now and in the years to come.

Vincent Harding in *Hope and History* has this to say about *your* role in the future of democracy:

*The message is for all of us who teach.  
We are the nurturers, the encouragers of all the dreams,  
all the seeds deep in all the hearts where the future  
of a redeemed and rescued land now dwells.*

# 17 reasons to do the Giraffe Heroes Program

(in case you need to convince your colleagues, principles or school boards!)

1. You'll have exciting, motivating content for language arts and social studies, content that will help your students be courageous, caring, responsible members of the community.
2. You'll give them something to say "Yes" to—a positive prevention/diversion away from substance abuse, violence, and dropping out.
3. You'll give them dozens of real heroes so they can distinguish between heroes and celebrities—and know which ones to emulate.
4. You'll guide them into leading meaningful lives.
5. You'll foster their eagerness to learn.
6. You'll demonstrate the value of academic skills in accomplishing real-world goals they want to achieve, making the curriculum relevant.
7. You'll help them recognize and use their ability to make good decisions and to have a positive impact on their world.
8. You'll give them the experience of active citizenship.
9. You'll have the power of storytelling to engage their hearts for learning.
10. You'll meet requirements for community service, service-learning.

ing, and character education.

11. You'll have a video from public television about human Giraffes.
12. You'll have materials that explain the Program to others.
13. You'll have a tested, effective system for coaching students through a successful service project.
14. You'll have inviting, practical ways to involve the community.
15. You'll have a way for your students to mentor younger students.
16. You'll show your community the goodness of its young people and your school.
17. You'll increase your own joy in teaching

# Section D ~ Other Materials

## Websites

### **The Bully Project**

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

The BULLY Project is the social action campaign inspired by the award-winning film BULLY. The Bully Project has sparked a national movement to stop bullying that is transforming kids' lives and changing a culture of bullying into one of empathy and action.

### **Center for Character and Social Responsibility**

Boston University

[www.bu.edu/ccsr/](http://www.bu.edu/ccsr/)

The first center focusing on educating teachers as character educators and giving them resources for teaching character.

### **Center for Media Literacy**

[www.medialit.org/](http://www.medialit.org/)

Dedicated to promoting and supporting media literacy education as a framework for accessing, analyzing, evaluating, creating and participating with media content, CML works to help citizens, especially the young, develop critical thinking and media production skills needed to live fully in the 21st century media culture.

### **Character Education Partnership**

[www.character.org](http://www.character.org)

A national coalition fostering character education and doing research on the relevant issues. Many of the major voices in the field are heard at CEP's national conferences, in its books, pamphlets and newsletter, and on its website.

**Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (casel)**

[www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

Casel's many projects include a book for educators, available for download, describing best practices to help students achieve emotional intelligence.

**Educators for Social Responsibility**

[www.esrnational.org/](http://www.esrnational.org/)

ESR is dedicated to children's ethical and social development. They offer creative, productive ways of dealing with differences, promoting problem-solving, and fostering informed decision-making. Their catalog includes books and trainings for both teachers and parents.

**George Lucas Educational Foundation: Edutopia**

[www.edutopia.org/](http://www.edutopia.org/)

GLEF's primary goal is to help students become lifelong learners and develop 21st-century skills, especially:

- » how to find information;
- » how to assess the quality of information;
- » how to creatively and effectively use information to accomplish a goal.

**The Giraffe Project (Hey, that's us)**

[www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org)

Produces teacher trainings and a K-12 curriculum, of which It's Up to Us is the 10-12 component. Check the website for more Giraffe Heroes' stories, and for news of other teachers' experiences with this Program.

**Heartwood Institute**

[www.envirolink.org/](http://www.envirolink.org/)

Provides access to story-based curricula that foster character development and conducts seminars, conferences, and teacher trainings.

**Institute for Global Ethics**

[www.globalethics.org](http://www.globalethics.org)

Materials on ethics for youth and adults are available, as well as speakers who can lead seminars and workshops. Their curriculum for middle schools and high schools, Ethics and Service, combines service-learning and ethical decision-making.

**National Dropout Prevention Center**

[www.dropoutprevention.org](http://www.dropoutprevention.org)

Recognizing that service-learning is a strong factor in keeping students in school, the Center publishes An Administrator's Guide to Service Learning.

**National Youth Leadership Council**

[www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)

The mission of this organization is to engage young people in their communities and schools through innovation in learning, service, leadership and public policy. NYLC operates a national clearinghouse, has created technical assistance centers and brings together cooperative partner organizations on a national level.

**New Horizons for Learning**

[www.newhorizons.org](http://www.newhorizons.org)

Since 1980, **New Horizons for Learning (NHFL)** has served as a leading-edge resource for educational change by identifying, communicating, and helping to implement successful educational strategies.

**OneWorld On-line**

[www.oneworld.org](http://www.oneworld.org)

OneWorld innovates new media, mobile and web technologies for social good - helping the world's poorest people to improve their lives.

**One World Youth Project**

[www.oneworldyouthproject.org](http://www.oneworldyouthproject.org)

One World Youth Project is a year-long, project-based global learning experience for middle school youth that actively links middle school classrooms with classrooms abroad.

**Raoul Wallenberg Committee of the United States**

[www.raoulwallenberg.org](http://www.raoulwallenberg.org)

Creators of *A Study of Heroes*, a K-12 curriculum based on the stories of heroes throughout history, including Wallenberg himself. Lots of stories about public figures, nicely complementing Giraffe heroes; Giraffes tend not to be well known. The materials for all the grades come in one boxed set.

### **Search Institute**

[www.search-institute.org/](http://www.search-institute.org/)

The national nonprofit that researched and published “Forty Assets,” a listing of what a community and its schools need to do to nurture competent, caring, responsible kids. Excellent and practical research materials, publications, and advisories.

### **Youth Activism Project**

<http://youthactivismproject.org/>

The Youth Activism Project is a non-partisan organization that encourages young people to speak up and pursue lasting solutions to problems they care deeply about. The website includes lots of resources for teachers and other adults who support youth activism.

## Books

Elias, Maurice, et al, *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning*, The Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Developers, 1999

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

Kessler, Rachel, *The Soul of Education: Nourishing Spiritual Development in Secular Schools*, The Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Developers, 2000

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

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 usually selfexplanatory; here are some of them, 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*, ASCD (The Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Developers) 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 Standard*, Houghton Mifflin, 1999



Kroloff, Rabbi Charles A., *54 Ways You Can Help The Homeless*, Macmillan, 1993

Practical suggestions for helping the homeless—from easy, cost-free actions to those requiring committed community involvement. Includes tips on involving children in helping.

Liedloff, Jean, *The Continuum Concept: In Search of Happiness Lost*, Perseus Books, 1985

This one is for your personal interest in understanding your students, your family, yourself and our culture. A stunning look at the differences between child-rearing in “instinctive” societies and in our “denatured,” post-industrial world.

Loeb, Paul Rogat, *Soul of a Citizen*, St. Martin's Press, 1999

Beautifully written case for active citizenship, including many stories of fascinating people. The Website [www.soulofacitizen.org](http://www.soulofacitizen.org) gives you sample chapters and good links to other sites concerned with democracy and participation.

Lickona, Thomas, *Educating for Character*, Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1992

A well-known voice in character education, Lickona discusses the “fourth and fifth R’s”—respect and responsibility.

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. The Chair of the American Council on Education says, “This is the book that educators have been looking for to help guide us in reintroducing citizenship and service to society as hallmarks of an American education.”

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.

Also by Parker Palmer:

*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.

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

Palmer, like Noddings (above) urges us to remember that kids have souls and hearts as well as brains and bodies and 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.

Prensky, Marc, *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning*, Corwin, 2010.

### **And furthermore**

The Giraffe Project has been fortunate to have as its board chair one of the most dynamic thinkers in the education world. Dee Dickinson of New Horizons for Learning is a pioneer in broadening educational approaches—her rallying cry is “Anyone can learn.” We just need to figure out which approach works for each learner. She recommends these books to teachers who are exploring these ideas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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