

# C.A.T.S.

February 2010



**Character Activities for  
Teachers and Students**

**Duval County Public Schools  
Jacksonville, Florida**

***“Character Education isn’t one more thing  
on your plate. It IS the plate!”***

**\*\*The Florida state legislature mandates the character traits that are covered each year.  
The order is consistent from year to year for ease of planning.**

***ADVERTISING WORKS!***  
***How did YOUR school celebrate***  
***Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.***  
***in January?***



***How will your students exhibit this***  
***month's trait of***  
***Charity?***

***Send photos and text about the character education program at***  
***your school to Deborah Hansen at [debrhan48@comcast.net](mailto:debrhan48@comcast.net).***

# February: Charity

*“Generous actions or donations to aid the poor, ill, or helpless; benevolent feeling, esp. toward those in need or in disfavor; a charitable fund, foundation, or institution.”*

Dictionary.com

*Synonyms for charity: kindness, consideration, humanity, sympathy.*

*Antonyms for charity: malevolence, unkindness, indifference, disregard, mean-spiritedness.*

**Children exhibit charity when they:**

**\*\* share.**

**\*\* assist others, those known to them as well as strangers.**

**\*\* seek out ways to help others in need.**

*Quote: “True charity is the desire to be useful to others without thought of recompense.”*

*Emanuel Swedenborg*



**Some books that focus on the trait of charity are:**

**Elementary:**

- \*\* Dear Mr. Rosenwald, by Carole Boston Weatherford.
- \*\* Abuelita Full of Life-Ilena de vida, Costalese, A.,
- \*\* New Life: New Room, Jordan, J.

**Secondary:**

- \*\* Rabbi's Girls, Hurwitz, J.
- \*\* Animal Family, Jarrell, R.
- \*\* Look Through My Window, Little, J.

**These books, along with many others, were purchased for your Character Libraries, are housed in school media centers.**



# Building Kids of Character



## Teacher Tips

**With recent (and seemingly ongoing) world events, there are numerous opportunities for educators to discuss the concept of charity in their classrooms. For example:**

**Should we offer assistance to the earthquake victims in Haiti (or victims of other natural disasters)? Why or why not?**

**Do geographic borders matter when these events happen, even if those affected are political “enemies”?**

**Is it possible for a group of young people in the US to make any significant difference to people on the other side of the world who are in need? How?**

**Do you think it is up to those who are in need to get themselves out of their situations? Why or why not?**

**Ask your students to brainstorm ways to lend assistance to those in need in your own community. These discussions and plans need only take a few minutes at a time!**

# Parent Tips

Charity is both an attitude and an action. And in reality, the attitude alone is not enough. We can have the best intentions to help others, but those intentions are empty unless we follow through in some way.

Children learn empathy and a sense of community through lessons in charity. Parents can instill this altruism in their families in a number of ways:

- Begin by discussing the concept of charity toward others, and start within the family unit. How can we each be “generous and helpful” to one another every day? Make a poster and put it in a visible location. Refer to it often, especially when sibling rivalry takes over.
- If your children receive an allowance, ask that they put a portion in a “Service Jar.” Allow them to decide the recipients of the money and distribute it periodically. Include them in taking the fund to the charity so they can see the results of their generosity.
- Organize a “Closet Clothing Drive” every few months—in their own closets! Children can sort through clothes and toys that are too small or no longer wanted, and donate them, even if it is to a younger sibling. Parents should do the same.
- Discuss the needs in your neighborhood. Are there elderly or disabled residents on your street who could use a helping hand? Children can pull garbage cans out on pick-up day, mow and rake, or walk pets, for example. These tasks are perfect for instilling a helpful attitude followed by action. The immediate feedback children get from the recipients of their charity will encourage them to continue.
- Finally, your family can get involved in a community service project at least once a year. Food baskets, holiday gift trees, and baked treats are part of many local charities’ needs on a seasonal basis.

No matter what your family’s spiritual framework, charity is a traditional virtue and an integral part of many religious traditions. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and many other faiths revolve around charitable works. Incorporate some of these suggestions into your family routine, and the results will help not only others, but your children as well.



# Bully Proofing Your School



*By teaching young people how to resolve their conflicts peacefully and without a lot of drama, we will be eliminating many of the causes of bullying. Those who bully were often raised by people who bully; therefore, the cycle must be broken, and as educators we can give this gift of a future filled with success to our students.*

*Teach these guidelines as conflicts arise in your classroom or other area of responsibility. This includes instances of bullying that you witness or become aware of in a variety of ways.*

*The basics to teach, and model, for students are:*

*Above all else.....STOP and THINK about what you are saying and doing! When you start to breathe heavily in the heat of an argument or “discussion” or your heart starts to beat faster, use those things as a “STOP” sign that alerts you to step back from the situation before it gets out of control.*

- 1. Remain calm. Use a low tone of voice and non-aggressive body language.*
- 2. Choose a quiet, private place to discuss the conflict. If you need to calm down first, agree to discuss it later. Too often we believe that all situations must be handled RIGHT NOW! This is not true and often allows the conflict to get out of control.*
- 3. Use the Rules for Fighting Fair:  
Focus on the problem, not the person.  
Listen to the other person...don't just wait to talk!*

*Treat the other person with the respect you expect for yourself.*

*Take responsibility for your actions! Both parties contributed to the problem or conflict, so both should be prepared to help fix it.*

**4. Don't use Fouls!**

*Blaming, name-calling, threats, put-downs, bossing, trying to get even, bringing up the past, hitting or other physical contact.*

**5. Avoid "you" language, such as "you never....", "you always...." Instead, use "I" language: "I don't like it when....." or "It hurts my feelings when...."**

**6. Don't assume you know what the other person's perspective is. Ask the other person who he/she sees the problem. Very often this will show that the conflict is actually a misunderstanding, especially when "friends" and others are gossiping and fueling the fire with drama.**

**7. Suggest one or two ways that YOU are willing to try to solve the problem. Invite the other person to do the same.**

**8. If these steps fail to bring any resolution, even a partial agreement of how to resolve the problem, ask a trusted, neutral person to help mediate the conflict.**

**9. If you DO reach a satisfactory resolution, congratulations! You have achieved something most adults can't even manage today!**

*These steps, practiced over time, will allow students to handle their conflicts peacefully and productively. They will teach students who are being bullied to turn the situation into an opportunity to stand up for themselves in a safe, proactive way. It will also allow students who bully others to be confronted in a non-confrontational manner that will help them learn how to deal with others in a humane, respectful way.*

## **Welcome to Your Resources** **For Character Education**

**Florida Statutes require that all schools in the state provide a character development program in all grades, K-12.**

**However, the most important reason for teaching children positive character is encompassed in our job as educators: To prepare our students to be positive, productive members of society.**

**The character traits for 2009-10 are as follows:**

- **August: Responsibility**
- **September: Respect for authority, life, liberty, and personal property.**
- **October: Cooperation**
- **November: Patriotism**
- **December: Kindness**
- **January: Racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance.**
- **February: Charity**
- **March: Honesty**
- **April: Self-control**
- **May: Citizenship: Living a life of character.**

**The DCPS district has supplied the schools with a diverse selection of materials to meet this mandate. The monthly newsletter can help you meet the requirement for character education through its tips for teachers and parents.**

**The elementary character education curriculum, *Mini-Lessons for Maximum Character*, is found on RiverDeep. (Please look under “Courses” under the Instructional Organizer tab.)**

The secondary curriculum, *Connect with Kids*, is a complete set of lessons by trait, accompanied by video clips. Check in your media center.

## Additional Resources



### Workshops:

- Infusing character into your school climate and your classroom.
- Bully prevention through character development.
- Parents building kids of character (available to PTA and other parent groups).
- Early release mini-workshops on the above topics.
- Training for bus drivers using the Foundations model.
- Peer mediation programs/mediator training.
- Sessions for bus drivers that service your school! Put together a team to work cooperatively with the drivers.

Please call **Deborah Hansen, Coordinator**, at 904-568-0786 to discuss or schedule any of the above, or email her at [hansend2@duvalschools.org](mailto:hansend2@duvalschools.org).



**Character libraries were purchased for every school in the district. These libraries consist of approximately 150 books of all genres and should be in your media center.**

**Use these books to support your “Book of the Month” program!**

**Contact Information:**

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