Dear Educators,

The winter holidays provide an educational opportunity to practice thankful-ness, to give back, and to connect with others. Recognizing the personal benefits of helping others can be especially empowering for students in need whose families find themselves on the receiving end of others’ charity. This lesson guide, which accompanies our issue on giving and receiving, will help you deepen learning from community service projects you may already be engaged in or help you begin a timely conversation about giving.

I would like to take a moment and introduce you to Jillian Luft, Youth Communication’s new curriculum developer, who has contributed two lessons to this guide. She’s worked as an education coordinator and classroom teacher in a downtown Brooklyn middle school and high school. A Bank Street College of Education graduate, Jillian brings her knowledge of best practices in active literacy, social and emotional learning, and supporting the needs of diverse learners. Since joining the team in July she has written lessons for #trending, our new after-school curriculum for middle schoolers that we are already receiving very positive feedback from educators about. (See the flyer on the last page of this guide for more info about #trending).

Thank YOU for all that you give each day to our city’s young people and the schools that serve them.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Johnson
Education Director

Don’t let this issue be your last!
Have you renewed your YCteen subscription yet? If you haven’t filled out the renewal form for this school year, please take 5 minutes to do it now: bit.ly/RenewYCteen
Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who gets a job helping the elderly and learns a lot through this experience.

2. Introduce the **toss one, take one** activity by explaining that they will have an opportunity to hear multiple perspectives in the room.

3. Share the following quote, lifted from Melvin Pichardo’s story:
   “They helped push me through a dark moment in my life in a way my family and other people I love couldn’t.”

4. **Then, read aloud these questions and ask students to write a response on their paper:**
   - Think about people who aren’t your family who have, or could, support you through hard times in your life. Who would this person or these people be? How could they help?
5. Give students think time and then have them write their responses. If some students are struggling, ask them to write down why they found it difficult to answer the questions.

6. After group members have written their responses, tell them to crumple them into paper balls and toss them into a large container. Then tell them that they should each retrieve an anonymous response from the container and return to their seats. As an alternative, walk around the circle with the container and have each group member blindly pick a paper ball. (If a group member happens to choose their own response, it’s OK because no one will know.)

7. Either going around in a circle, or by asking for volunteers, each group member reads the response on their paper. Invite group members to make observations about what they heard, such as similarities, differences, or personal connections they had to their peers’ responses.

8. Thank students for sharing their thoughts.

During Reading (20 min.)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called reading for a purpose. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. Reading for a purpose directions: Ask students to read for moments in the text when Melvin has a positive interaction with a senior. When this occurs in the text, students should draw a smiley face in the margins of the story. Then ask them to put an “M” if they think Melvin is helped the most or an “S” if they think the senior is helped the most during this interaction.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote a smiley face next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. Next, ask the group to further consider these questions:
   - What did Melvin learn about himself by working at Citymeals-on-Wheels?
   - How did the people he served change his attitude toward his future?
   - Do you personally connect with Melvin’s story? How?
After Reading the Story (15 min)
During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. Introduce the journal writing activity by explaining to the group that they will be taking the perspective of one of the elderly people that Melvin helps in his story.

2. Read the following quote from the story to the group:
“I think many of the seniors I delivered to feel like they’ve been thrown to the dumps and are no longer worthy. But that couldn’t be farther from the truth. If you listen closely, they’ve got a lot to say that is valuable.”

3. Journal writing directions:
   - After reading this quote, explain to the group that they’re going to put themselves in the shoes of the seniors to think about what they might have thought about Melvin, at first, and what they learned from him. Melvin helped the seniors, but they gave a lot to him in return.
   
   - Read aloud and have students respond to this prompt:
     Select one senior from the story that Melvin helped. Using the parts of the story where you put a smiley face to help you, write a diary entry as if you were him/her and include:
     - Details about your daily life
     - What you think about Melvin when he delivers food on his first day
     - How you feel about Melvin after you get to know him better
     - What Melvin has taught you or given you
     - Why or how you want to help Melvin

4. After students have completed the journaling activity, transition to a pair share. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.

5. Pair share directions: Facing each other, and practicing active listening, partners should each take a turn sharing their responses. Each speaker will have two minutes to talk and is in charge of what they choose to share from their writing. The listener does not need to respond. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.

6. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to Melvin’s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
**Common Core**

**ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning**

**A Place to Grow and to Give**

**Story to Use:** “Out of Trouble and Into Mentorship,” by Lisuini Palacios, p. 11

**Story Summary:** As an elementary school student, Lisuini disliked school and preferred to hang out on the streets and in the park. After his mom enrolls him in the Boys & Girls Club he begins to learn important life lessons about himself and discovers a supportive community in which he can both grow and contribute.

**Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections:**
- Students make personal connections to a text and successfully participate in story-based activities and discussions.
- Students will be better able to reflect on past experiences for growth and learning.
- Students will expand their sense of agency by believing their actions can make a difference in their lives and the lives of others.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely for a range of tasks (CCLS W.10).

**Before Reading the Story** (10 min)

*This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.*

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who struggles to belong until he discovers a place that can help him grow and give back.

2. Introduce the freewrite activity by explaining that students will have about four minutes to respond to a prompt in writing. The goal is to express their thoughts freely without worrying about writing conventions. The expectation is that everyone writes, without stopping, for the full time. (Note: writing lists and/or drawing with labels are modifications that support diverse learners.)

3. Freewrite prompt: “Consider these two statements from the story. Choose the one that reminds you of a personal experience you’ve had. Share your connection by writing about the place, people, feelings, and events. Begin by copying down the statement you choose.”
   - It seemed like everybody knew each other and I felt insecure.
   - I felt welcome and safe.

4. After students have completed the freewrite, transition to a pair share. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.
5. **Pair share** directions: Facing each other, and practicing active listening, partners should each take a turn sharing their responses to the freewrite prompt. Each speaker will have two minutes to talk and is in charge of what they choose to share from their writing. The listener does not need to respond. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.

6. Thank students for sharing their experiences and connections.

**During Reading** (20 min)
*By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.*

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to read for moments in the story when Lisuini discovers something about himself (self-awareness). When this occurs in the text students should draw a star in the margins of the story.

5. Read the story aloud together. Stop and discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. You can pose an open question such as, "What stands out to you in this section and why?"

**After Reading the Story** (15 min)
*During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.*

1. Introduce the discussion activity by explaining to the group that they will be thinking about what Lisuini learns at the Boys & Girls Club.

2. **Text-based discussion** directions:
   - Draw on the board/chart paper a T with the left side labeled “What Lisuini learns about himself” and the right side “What Lisuini learns about where he belongs.”
   - Ask students to share specific examples from the text (starred in the margins) that show **Lisuini gaining insights about his strengths, needs, skills, goals, and interests**. Write up their responses on the **left side** of the T chart. Facilitate a brief discussion that promotes understanding of how his experiences at the club help Lisuini become more self-aware.
• Next, ask students to share specific examples from the text (starred in the margins) that show Lisuini gaining insights about what kind of environment is the best fit for him to be successful. Write up their responses on the right side. Facilitate a brief discussion that promotes understanding of how Lisuini learned what environment works best for him through his experiences at the club, and how this knowledge could help him in the future.

3. Transition the group to the draw it activity by restating that Lisuini’s story shows us that finding a place to belong helps you grow as a person and provides an opportunity to give back and help others. Read this excerpt aloud:

“Last year at the Boys & Girls Club was the first time I was old enough to mentor the younger kids. I volunteer for coaching flag football and basketball. If we lose I always tell them to keep their heads up and keep trying…Some of the kids talk to me about their problems outside the club and I try to help them. I wouldn’t be this generous if it wasn’t for the Boys & Girls club; they changed me. Having younger kids look up to me makes me feel proud.”

4. Draw it directions:
   • Say to the group, “Think about a community place in your life that you belong, like Lisuini does at the Boys & Girls Club. Many of us, however, are still looking for that place. If you don’t have one, imagine the community place you wish you belonged to. You may want to revisit your earlier freewrite.”

   • Next, ask students to use a blank piece of white paper to draw a place they belong (or could belong to). They should include the following in their drawing (post up on the board/chart paper):
     - The name of the community place and a brief description of it
     - An activity that occurs there that you participate in
     - How it feels to be there; what the environment is like
     - How you grow as a person
     - What you contribute to others
     - Include speech bubbles for dialogue and thought bubbles for thinking/feelings

   • Invite students to share their drawings, as time allows.

5. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to Lisuini’s story. Afterwards, consider the drawing and discussion that occurred in the group. How can you help connect your students to community places that can help them grow and contribute?
Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them you will be reading a true story by a teen who finds a cause he cares about when he helps a favorite teacher.

2. Introduce the freewrite activity by explaining that students will have about four minutes to respond to a prompt in writing. The goal is to express their thoughts freely without worrying about writing conventions. The expectation is that everyone writes, without stopping, for the full time. (Note: writing lists and/or drawing with labels are modifications that support diverse learners.)

3. Freewrite prompt: “Think of a time when you decided to help someone, or wish that you had. What was the situation? Was it someone you knew or a stranger? How did you help or wish you had helped? How did you feel?”
4. After students have completed the freewrite, transition to a **pair share**. Students should select a partner or turn to the person next to them.

5. **Pair share** directions: Facing each other, and practicing active listening, partners should each take a turn sharing their responses to the freewrite prompt. Each speaker will have two minutes to talk and is in charge of what they choose to share from their writing. The listener does not need to respond. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.

6. Facilitate a large group discussion: Bring pairs back into the large group and ask the following questions:
   - What are ways that we can help others?
   - What are reasons we want to help other people?
   - How does helping others make us feel?

**During Reading** (20 min)

*By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.*

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud; volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Write a star in the margin of the story when Joel does something positive. Write a “!” in the margin of the story when it makes you think about a cause you care about or helping.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote a star and “!” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. Next, ask the group to consider these questions:
   - What did Joel learn about himself by raising money for charity?
   - How did Joel’s reasons for helping change over the course of the story?
   - Does anyone connect with Joel’s story? How?

**After Reading the Story** (15 min)

*During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.*

1. Introduce the **poster writing** activity by explaining to the group that they will be thinking about the causes they care about and exploring ways that they can help others.
2. **Read the following quote from the story to the group:** “I've realized that all my life I've been the one needing support and help. I never thought that while being young, I could be the one that can also help when someone needs it.”

3. After reading this quote, explain to the group that, like Joel, we can all find ways to lend our support to those that need it, whether it is a family member, a teacher, a stranger, or a group of people.

4. Then explain that students will be creating a poster that showcases a cause they care about. The poster should educate and inspire teens in their school to get involved. Let them know they can refer to the parts of the story where they wrote an “!” in the margins to help them.

5. **Read aloud poster guidelines** that you've posted in the room:
   Using words, pictures and symbols, create your poster. Think about including:
   - Cause you care about or are interested in
   - Why it's important to you
   - Who it helps and how
   - Why others should support this cause
   - How teens can get involved with this cause

6. Have students create their posters. When most students have finished their posters, ask for volunteers to share them with the larger group. If possible, have students hang up their posters in school hallways or a heavy-traffic area where all can see.

7. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to Joel’s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
Open-ended questions you can use with any story in YCteen:

1. What main problem or challenge did the writer face?
2. What choices did the teen have in trying to deal with the problem?
3. Which way of dealing with the problem was most effective for the teen? Why?
4. What strengths, skills, or resources did the teen use to address the challenge?
5. If you were in the writer’s shoes what would you have done?
6. What could adults have done better to help this teen?
7. What have you learned from reading this story that you didn’t know before?
8. What connections from your own life, the world, or other text you have read, can you make to this story? This reminds me of…. (text-to-self, text-to-world, text-to-text)
9. What surprised you in this story?
10. Do you have a different view of this issue, or see a different way of dealing with it, after reading this story? Why or why not?

$150 First Prize | $75 Second Prize | $50 Third Prize
Enter online at bit.ly/ycwritingcontest

Describe a time you helped someone and what about it surprised you. In “Wisdom From Older Strangers” (p. 12 of YCteen), Melvin Pichardo takes a job helping older people and unexpectedly finds they help him in return. Joel Rembert discovered he had talents he didn’t recognize when he helped a teacher in distress (p. 9). Describe a time you helped someone and what surprised you about the experience. Did you change in the process?
Deadline: January 22, 2016
#trending

Anthology of teen stories and Lesson Guide

• Fun and youth-centered
• Meets structured enrichment (literacy) mandate
• Tested approach—ready for your staff to implement
• Strengthen SEL skills

Story-based lessons address all four SONYC content areas: literacy enrichment (reading comprehension), leadership development, academic support (text-based learning), and healthy living.

#trending is a collection of 36 stories with lessons on the following themes:
Exploring Identity • Friendships that Matter • Being Healthy • From Bystanders to Allies
Love & Relationships • You & the World • Challenging Stereotypes • Peer Pressure
Sadness, Stress, Anger • Culture & Diversity • Success in School • Me & My Family

Packages include a three-hour training workshop for staff using #trending.
To order #trending, please contact Elena Autin-Hefner at (212) 279-0708 ext. 135 or eautin-hefner@youthcomm.org.

10 copies of #trending, a lesson guide, and one attendee at a training workshop: $300
50 copies of #trending, 5 lesson guides, and up to 5 attendees at a training workshop: $1,350
100 copies of #trending, 10 lesson guides, and an on-site workshop for up to 10 staff: $2,500
200 copies of #trending, 20 lesson guides, and an on-site workshop for up to 20 staff: $4,000

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