In this unit, you’ll read about three kids who came up with great ways to help people in their communities. Before you read, answer the questions below.

**What Do You Know?**
What does it mean to be part of a community?


**What Do You Think?**
What’s one thing you could do to make your community a better place?


Each time you read the text, return to what you wrote here to see if new information changes or adds to your answers.
Think about all the people who live in your community. How many of them do you know? How many are strangers? Even if you don’t know everyone in your community, they are connected to you in some way. You live in the same place. You share the same surroundings. And sometimes things happen in your community that affect everyone.

This is why communities work together. Communities may hire crossing guards to keep students safe or set up gardens where people can grow vegetables and flowers. Communities may have people pick up litter along roads or have after-school sports programs for everyone.

connected: joined together
After big storms or earthquakes, communities come together to help rebuild homes and businesses.

Sometimes a single member of a community chooses to do something to make life better for others. Kids are no exception. Even something simple like sharing toys with a friend can make a community stronger. But kids can do much more than that.

**Kymani Leads the Way**

Kymani Quarrie is from Broward County, Florida. When he was seven, he saw people sleeping on the street. He asked his mom why they were there. She told him that they were homeless. Kymani

_EXCEPTION_: someone or something that is different from others
These are some of the items in Kymani’s hygiene bags.

didn’t think it was right that some people didn’t have homes. He wanted to help.

Kymani’s mom tried to find a homeless shelter where he could volunteer. But all the shelters said that Kymani was too young to help out. So, Kymani and his mom started their own group to raise money for homeless people called KQ Cares. After the first KQ Cares event, Kymani’s group provided 500 meals to local homeless residents.

Twice a month, Kymani delivers 200 hygiene bags to homeless shelters. The bags contain everyday items that homeless people might not have, like soap and toothpaste. Since 2010, Kymani has led clothing drives, provided meals, and worked to make a better life for people in his community. No one can tell him he is too young to help now!

**Abigail’s Gift of Music**

Abigail Lupi is from Stockholm, New Jersey. Abigail’s great-grandmother lived in an assisted living center. When she was eight, Abigail

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**volunteer:** to do work without getting paid for it  
**residents:** people who live in a certain place  
**hygiene:** things you do to keep yourself healthy  
**assisted living:** housing and other services for people who need help taking care of themselves
sang there for her great-grandmother’s 100th birthday. She saw how happy her singing made the other residents. “That’s when I discovered many of the elderly didn’t have visitors,” Abigail recalled in an interview.

Abigail decided that she would be their visitor. She started to sing regularly for them. She invited some of her friends to join her. Before long, there were 15 girls from ages six to thirteen singing together! They sang at assisted living centers, nursing homes, and children’s hospitals all over New Jersey.

Abigail and her friends named themselves the CareGirlz. They learned more than 90 songs, from pop hits to Broadway show tunes. Abigail is dedicated to making sure the people in her community don’t feel lonely. “I like to brighten up people’s days and help them have a fun time,” she said. “If I do my best, they’ll have a smile on their faces by the end.”

**regularly:** very often

**dedicated:** completely focused on a certain task or goal
Jessica’s Care Bears

Jessica Carscadden wanted to help people smile, too. She was born in China. She spent the first five years of her life in an orphanage. Her life changed when she was adopted by a family in San Diego. But change can be scary, even if it’s a good change. Jessica’s stuffed animals comforted her. They helped her feel less afraid.

Jessica wanted to share that feeling. So she donated all of her stuffed animals to the local fire department to comfort kids rescued from fires. Jessica knew that firefighters and police officers helped a lot of scared kids. Jessica wanted to make sure that every scared kid felt safe and loved. So she started a project called We Care Bears.

**comforted:** made someone feel less scared or upset

**donated:** gave money or things to help people or groups
Jessica and her family asked others to help. For their first project, they collected over 3,000 stuffed bears. They filled about 580 bags. Because of We Care Bears, every police car and fire engine in San Diego had stuffed animals ready for any kid who needed comfort.

We Care Bears has grown since Jessica started it. Now, three other states have stuffed animals from We Care Bears in police cars, too.

Choose to Make a Change!

Kymani, Abigail, and Jessica realized they had the power to make positive changes in people’s lives. Each day, communities grow stronger because of kids like them.
Think back to the people in your community. What do you know about the needs of the people around you? What could you do to make a difference? Whatever you decide, start making that change! Even a small step can make a big difference. The future depends on what you and other young people choose to do.
Check Your Understanding

Instructions

• Read each question and the answer choices carefully.
• Look back at the text to answer the question.
• Fill in the circle next to the answer you choose.
• After you finish the quiz, turn to the next page.

1. What does the text say is always true about all communities?
   A. The people in a community are strangers.
   B. The people in a community know each other.
   C. The people in a community are connected in some way.
   D. The people in a community live on the same street.

2. Which of these is a resident of your community?
   A. a homeless shelter
   B. your neighbor
   C. your school
   D. the fire department

3. What is the main idea of the text?
   A. Most kids do more for their communities than adults.
   B. Kids can find ways to make their communities better.
   C. Most kids know only some people in their communities.
   D. Kids wonder why people in their communities are homeless.

4. Which detail from the text best supports your answer to question 3?
   A. “So, Kymani and his mom started their own group to raise money for homeless people called KQ Cares.” (p. 24)
   B. “When he was seven, he saw people sleeping on the street.” (p. 23)
   C. “And sometimes things happen in your community that affect everyone.” (p. 22)
   D. “This is why communities work together.” (p. 22)

After you finish reading, look at the places you marked with an H. Use what you marked to help you write an answer to this focus question:

Which of these ways to help your community would you most want to try?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Give two pieces of evidence to support your answer above.

One piece of evidence that supports your answer:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Another piece of evidence that supports your answer:

________________________________________________________________________

Your evidence can be:
• A detail from the text, like a fact or a quote
• A detail from a photo, chart, or other text feature

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

After you reread, make notes, and complete this page, check the box above. When it’s time for the discussion, go to the next page.
Use the answer and evidence you wrote on the previous page to participate in the Shared Inquiry discussion.

After discussion, think about whether your answer changed or stayed the same. Write it below. Then write a piece of evidence that changed or strengthened your answer.

Your answer to the focus question after discussion:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Evidence you found or that someone else used that helped you (circle one) change your answer / make your first answer stronger:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS
After you finish this page, check the box above and go to the next page.
Write your answer to the essay question. Then write three pieces of evidence that support your answer.

Essay question:

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Your answer:

Evidence #1:

How this evidence supports your answer:

Your evidence can be:
- A detail from the text, like a fact or a quote
- A detail from a photo, chart, or other text feature
- A fact about the topic, and where you learned it
Evidence #2:

How this evidence supports your answer:

Evidence #3:

How this evidence supports your answer:

Use these notes to write your essay. Then use the Writer's Checklist on page 131 to make sure your draft is ready to turn in.
1. Look at the questions you wrote on sticky notes and the class list of questions. Think about questions that came up during your discussion, too. Are there any you still want to know more about?

2. Write your questions below, along with some ideas about how you might get started if you wanted to answer them. (For instance, you might look for an answer online, read a book on the topic, or ask an expert.)

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Junior Great Books Series 2–5

Combine Junior Great Books Series 2–5 fiction with our Nonfiction Inquiry program to build cross-curricular units that enable students to compare and contrast texts and concepts. Each volume in the Junior Great Books fiction series includes nine stories, grouped by theme, that capture students’ imagination and sustain a thoughtful process of reading, writing, and discussion.

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**THEME: FRIENDSHIP**
The Happy Lion Louise Fatio
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Anancy and Dog and Puss and Friendship West Indian folklore as told by James Berry

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Catalog Cats/Our Garden (from *The Stories Julian Tells*) Ann Cameron
Carlos and the Cornfield Jan Romero Stevens
The Wedding Basket West African folklore as told by Donna L. Washington

**THEME: BRAVERY**
The Jade Stone Chinese folklore as told by Caryn Yacowitz
The Girl and the Chenoo Native American folklore as told by Joseph Bruchac and Gayle Ross
Jack and the Beanstalk English folklore as told by Joseph Jacobs

Series 2, Book Two

**THEME: GENEROSITY**
Erandi’s Braids Antonio Hernández Madrigal
The Invisible Hunters Nicaraguan folklore as told by Harriet Rohmer
Fishing Day Andrea Davis Pinkney

**THEME: COMMUNITY**
Perfect Crane Anne Laurin
Hurricane Flowers Ethel Pochocki
My Great-Grandmother’s Gourd Cristina Kessler

**THEME: BEING YOURSELF**
The Wise Little Toad Rosario Ferré
Doodle Flute Daniel Pinkwater
The Velveteen Rabbit Margery Williams

Series 3, Book One

**THEME: RELATIONSHIPS**
Boundless Grace Mary Hoffman
The Scarebird Sid Fleischman
Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat Jennifer Armstrong

**THEME: KINDNESS**
The Gold Coin Alma Flor Ada
The Magic Listening Cap Japanese folklore as told by Yoshiko Uchida
The Mushroom Man Ethel Pochocki

**THEME: CONFIDENCE**
The Banza Haitian folklore as told by Diane Wolkstein
The Upside-Down Boy Juan Felipe Herrera
The Ugly Duckling Hans Christian Andersen

**THEME: GRATITUDE**
White Wave Chinese folklore as told by Diane Wolkstein
Luba and the Wren Ukrainian folklore as told by Patricia Polacco
Basheo and the River Stones Tim Myers

**THEME: COURAGE**
The Monster Who Grew Small Joan Grant
The Buffalo Storm Katherine Applegate
Pierre’s Dream Jennifer Armstrong

**THEME: CLEVERNESS**
The Dream Weaver Concha Castroviejo
The Man Whose Trade Was Tricks Georgian folklore as told by George and Helen Papavishvili
The Emperor’s New Clothes Hans Christian Andersen

**THEME: TRUST**
Thank You, M’am Langston Hughes
Crow Call Lois Lowry
Fresh Philippa Pearce

**THEME: RESOURCEFULNESS**
Shrewd Todie and Lyzer the Miser Ukrainian folklore as told by Isaac Bashevis Singer
On Sand Island Jacqueline Briggs Martin
The Green Man Gail E. Haley

**THEME: COMMUNICATION**
Song of Hope Peggy Duffy
Jean Labadie’s Big Black Dog French-Canadian folklore as told by Natalie Savage Carlson
Thunder, Elephant, and Dorobo African folklore as told by Humphrey Harman

Series 4, Book One

**THEME: TRUST**
Thank You, M’am Langston Hughes
Crow Call Lois Lowry
Fresh Philippa Pearce

**THEME: INTEGRITY**
The No-Guitar Blues Gary Soto
The Fire on the Mountain Ethiopian folklore as told by Harold Courlander and Wolf Leslau
Ooka and the Honest Thief Japanese folklore as told by I. G. Edmonds

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Ghost Cat Donna Hill
The Hemulen Who Loved Silence Tove Jansson

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Kaddo’s Wall West African folklore as told by Harold Courlander and George Herzog
The Prince and the Goose Girl Elinor Mordaunt

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A Bad Road for Cats Cynthia Rylant
Lenny’s Red-Letter Day Bernard Ashley
Through the Mickie Woods Valiska Gregory