

THE TORCH

CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 2007

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans

Welcome to the last 2007 issue of our monthly newsletter, *The Torch*. We finished our last two regional student trainings this month, just in time to usher in the busiest season on the civil rights calendar. January is host to both Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and No Name Calling Week, February is Black History Month and March is Women's History Month. So, gear up and read on for great ideas on how to kick off this season.

“Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.”



1968 / AP

A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
DAY: JANUARY 21, 2008

As Dr. King's quote implies, we can all be great, no matter who we are, because we all have the ability to serve the greater good, to better the world around us in some small, but quantifiable way. While few of us ever consider ourselves to be great by virtue of having done a good deed, perhaps we should give ourselves more credit for the small things that we do. Most of us will never accomplish a public service of monumental proportion, but we can all do small things that make our communities, and therefore our world, a better place for everyone.

Along those lines, think of what community service project you and your team or members of your school community can do to honor the memory of Dr. King. Are there senior citizens in your local nursing home who would love a visit from young people that might include reading favorite children's books or some group songs? Does your rec center need volunteers to paint a room, make colorful posters, or lead games? Maybe your project won't take place on January 21st, but perhaps you can organize something for the spring. Do you have a park in your town that needs sprucing up? Will your own school need volunteers to help pick up trash that accumulated on your playground over the winter? Is there graffiti on your school building or other local building that needs to be removed?

Take some time at an upcoming meeting to think about what community service project your team can do, perhaps with volunteers from your school community as well, that will honor the spirit of Dr. King's commitment to public service. Help those around you understand the importance of Dr. King's belief that we can all be great because we can all serve.

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Other ideas to honor Dr. King's memory

VISIT the official site of The King Center. Presently, when you visit the site by clicking on www.thekingcenter.org/, you will immediately hear a short excerpt of Dr. King's speech entitled *The Drum Major Instinct* during which he makes the statement "everyone can be great because everyone can serve." Hearing Dr. King's words in his own voice helps students understand how he became such a powerful figure in the Civil Rights Movement.

□READ QUOTES from Dr. King's speeches during morning announcements or post them around your school in the days leading up to his birthday. Find a good list of quotes from his famous speeches at <http://grove.ufl.edu/~leo/mlk.html>.

□Who is your Hero? Project. Consider doing a project that asks members of your school community to identify their own heroes. Find out what makes someone a hero and who the students in your school look up to today. It could be a famous person or it could be their mother, a friend or some other person close to them. For a printable worksheet to help get this project started, click on <http://fun.familyeducation.com/martin-luther-king-jr/activities/32832.html>, then scroll

down to and click on *What Makes a Hero?* To further personalize their hero project poster or worksheet, students can bring in a photograph or other picture of their hero.

After students have completed the project, hang their Who is My Hero poster or worksheet up where everyone can see the wide range of heroes in your community.

□**Sponsor an MLK, Jr. Day Bee.** Have team members research facts about Martin Luther King, Jr. and then post them around school on posters. Add new posters every few days leading up to the date of your Bee. On the date of the Bee, provide each classroom with a list of the MLK, JR. Day facts and have each classroom conduct its own Bee. Honor the winners at a special event such as an MLK, Jr. Day birthday party. (see below)

□Host a Birthday Party for Dr. King.

Consider inviting members of your school community to a birthday party for Dr. King. If you have held a Bee, invite the individual classroom winners to be honored at the party. Decorate with paper chains made of different colored hands. Ask the Bee winners to contribute a tracing of their hands to be used in the decorations. The entertainment portion of the party can consist of readings of some of Dr. King's quotes, brief excerpts

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from his speeches or readings from works by other civil rights activists. This would also be a perfect occasion for opening the exhibition of the Who is My Hero? Project. And of course, no birthday party is complete without cake.

□ Sponsor a Group Presentation of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" Speech with follow up discussion.

Millions of people associate the phrase "I have a dream" with the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. However, only a tiny fraction of those people have ever heard the speech that made that phrase famous, even though Dr. King's speech was only nine minutes long.

An exemplary way to honor the life and achievements of Dr. King during Black History Month is to bring the text of his speech alive for your school community. One means of doing this is for the Civil Rights Team to sponsor a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day program during which the team recites the speech and leads a discussion of what Dr. King meant by his words.

Have your team members prepare for this activity by watching the You Tube video at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm> of Dr. King delivering this speech at the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. This was done with 1960's recording technology so the audio is not as loud as it could be, but it nonetheless imparts the significance of the event and the

power of Dr. King's words. To supplement this, you could give team members a text copy of the speech in order to follow along with his words. The text is available from the same site as the audio. Just scroll down the same page as the audio presentation for the full text.

The Speech Presentation. Begin the activity by explaining to the audience when the speech was given (at the civil rights march on Washington D.C. in 1963) and what the situation was in the country at that time (the civil rights movement was working to make it illegal to discriminate against people based on the color of their skin). After the groundwork is laid so students understand the historical context in which the speech was given, present the speech to them.

Here is one way for the team to present the speech. Have the team arrange itself in a semi-circle at the front of the room or stage. Assign each team member lines from the speech. Some lines can be assigned to one member and others to groups of two or more who read their lines at the same time. Other lines can be read as one voice by the entire team. For this to be most effective, have team members who are reading lines step forward, out of the semi-circle when they recite lines, and then back into the semi-circle when they finish. This helps to focus attention on the speaker(s) when they are delivering their lines and visually breaks the speech into pieces. When the team reads lines as a group, have them stay in place.

Delivery of the speech needs to be practiced several times by the time before it is presented to the public. Students need to be confident of the pronunciation of the words in their lines and be able to speak loudly,

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slowly and with appropriate expression. If you do not feel that your team is large enough or has enough confident members to execute this activity, have team members or advisors recruit some additional students to take part.

The King Middle School team (Portland) presented the speech to their student body as described above and it was well received.

Tip for Elementary students: The text of the *I Have a Dream* speech is a bit heady for younger students, but they can still get a good sense of the power of that speech by listening to a short audio clip at http://k6educators.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=k6educators&dn=education&tm=6&gps=145_278_1020_590&f=00&su=p554.2.150.ip_&tt=2&bt=0&bts=0&zu=http%3A//www.stanford.edu/group/King/popular_requests/. Scroll down to March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and click on Realmedia or Quicktime to reach the audio for this speech. (Audio excerpts are also available from four other speeches at this site.)

Discussion. After the speech is read, have the team lead a discussion of the speech using questions prepared in advance. Here is a sample of potential discussion questions:

1. What are the issues blacks faced in 1963 to which Dr. King was so passionately opposed?
2. What is Dr. King trying to persuade the public to do?
3. How does Dr. King feel about the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence?

4. Does Dr. King support violence as a means for achieving his dream? How do you know?

5. What words and phrases did Dr. King repeat throughout his speech? Do you think that was an effective way to deliver his message? Why?

5. What feelings or emotions did the speech cause you to have? What was it that caused those feelings or emotions in you?

6. Do you believe Dr. King's dream has been realized? Why/why not?

Follow-up Activity: Have team members create posters using excerpts of Dr. King's speeches and hang them in the hallways of your school. The full text of his speeches can be found at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/mlkpapers/>. Assign a different landmark speech to each team member (or allow them to pick their own) and have each team member choose a passage to write on a poster, noting the name of the speech and the date and location of its delivery.

A couple of sentences describing the significance of the speech and what was happening in the Civil Rights Movement at the time of the speech would add depth to this project. For example, explaining that four young girls were killed at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church when it was bombed, and that the church bombing was one of a series that took place in the South at that time, would put Dr. King's eulogy on that subject into perspective.

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Check out the December 2006 issue of The Torch for many more ideas on how to celebrate MLK, Jr. Day.



A word of warning to teachers. Googling the name “Martin Luther King, Jr.” is a great way to find a tremendous amount of information about Dr. King that is useful to teachers and students alike. However, some sites are maintained by hate groups and do not flatter the memory of Dr. King or the Civil Rights Movement. By way of illustration, visit www.martinlutherking.org/, which is titled “Martin Luther King, Jr., A True Historical Examination.” To say that this site impugns the memory of Dr. King is an understatement. Among its varied offerings is an invitation to join an online discussion of Martin Luther King, Jr, sponsored by Stormfront, a well known white supremacist organization.

Sites that are a **good** source of factual information about Dr. King include: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/mlkjrday1.html> (MLK bio, crossword puzzle, time line and quiz); <http://www.geocities.com/athens/troy/9087/mlk/> (arts and crafts, language activities, and songs for children); <http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/martin-luther-king-jr-day/index.html> (word scramble, bio information, jigsaw puzzles and more) and <http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/special/mlk/> (lots of historical information and photographs).

No matter how you choose to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday, remember that its purpose is not to provide you with a day off from school or work. It is a day for service and a day to remember a man with a revolutionary spirit who believed that nonviolent protest could bring an end to injustice and intolerance based on the color of one’s skin.



Raise awareness of the power of words by sponsoring a No Name Calling Week at your school.

No Name-Calling Week is an annual week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling of all kinds and providing schools with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to eliminate bullying in their communities.

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This national project, which was created by GLSEN and Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, will take place the week of January 21-25, 2008. For all practical purposes, this is a project that can take place at any time during the school year, although the earlier it occurs in the year, the more effective it can be.

One of the beauties of No Name Calling Week, other than its purpose, is the wealth of resources that have already been developed for it. Go to www.nonamecallingweek.org and view the list of activities that have been developed primarily for elementary and middle school students. There are five elementary school curriculums and 11 middle school curriculums. (Some of the activities are designated for grades 9 and 10 as well.) High schools wishing to participate in this event can easily adapt the middle school activities for their own use. Teams can look over the available activities and chose one or more that best suit their interests.

An example of one middle school activity involves reading an excerpt of Judith Blume's book *Blubber*, about a girl who struggles with her weight. (See Lesson #2, Using Literature as a Tool to End Name Calling.) The chapter that is read and discussed centers around the overweight character being teased at lunchtime because she is on a diet. The prepared curriculum includes the discussion questions, topics to reflect upon, and a follow up activity. This is a particularly

good activity because it deals with size bias, one of the last frontiers of accepted prejudice and an area in which children in particular are cruelly treated. Another excellent middle school activity is "Are You Part of the In Crowd", which is designed to cause students to think about how group name calling and labels can be negative forces in school.

The most effective way to use No Name Calling activities in your school is to have school wide participation by classroom teachers. Teachers and administrators need to buy in to the proposed activities and agree to participate. For example, if the agreed upon activity is reading from *Blubber*, teachers need to agree to allocate a block of time for the reading and discussion of the excerpt. Team members can be assigned to the different classrooms to help lead the activity. Teams can tailor the activities they choose to meet the available block(s) of time.

Tips on how to plan for a successful No Name Calling Week are available at <http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/event/index.html>. Other free resources can be viewed by clicking on www.nonamecallingweek.org.

For your convenience, links to the free, lesson plan/activities that have been created for the 2008 No Name Calling Week are included here. All activities can be downloaded for your own use.

RESOURCES: Elementary Level Lesson Plans

It's All in a Name

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We're All Different Alike

Staying Safe in the Face of Name-Calling

What If It's Not Me? Speaking Up About Name-Calling

Building a Bully-Free Building

RESOURCES: Middle Level Lesson Plans

Reflections - Four short pieces - a story, two essays, and a poem - provide students with personal reflections on name-calling by young people who have been targeted because of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression, and mental ability.

Using Literature as a Tool to End Name-Calling - Guided use of books to help solve problems: They can be used to address name-calling both by supporting the targets of bullying as they express their feelings and learn coping strategies and by helping those who bully to increase their empathy for others.

Name-Calling in Our School - Students are provided with the opportunity to objectively observe the way in which name-calling and other types of disrespectful language are used in school over a three-day period.

Creating an Anti-Slur Policy - Students work collaboratively to develop an anti-slur policy for their classroom.

I Was Just Kidding! - Students consider the difference between good-natured teasing and bullying through discussion of

fictional scenarios and reflection on real-life situations.

Instant Replay - Students discuss and practice safe and realistic responses to name-calling and bullying by role-playing fictional scenarios. They use the "instant replay" technique, in which they rehearse and retry responses to name-calling, and receive support from their peers.

Don't Just Stand By - Students discuss what it means to be a bystander to bullying and brainstorm ways to intervene.

Instant Replay - Students begin by articulating their values regarding conduct toward others and fashioning their statements into a class "code of ethics." They look at why they sometimes stray from their values and participate in hurtful behavior when tempted or pressured to bully. Students also consider the feelings of those who are targeted for bullying, and apply what they have learned

What's in a Name? - Students consider the extent to which name-calling is a part of their lives and the damage that can be done by the names they use so casually.

Beauty is Skin Deep - Students learn about media literacy and examine media images for "attractiveness messages" that impact our attitudes and behavior towards others.

Are You Part of the In-Crowd? - Students think about the impact of group labels and social hierarchies on their sense of identity, self-esteem, and the way they

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socialize with others. Through discussion, poetry and personal narrative, students explore ways to bridge social boundaries. They learn to plan a special event for their school.

Still looking for more ideas? Here are 10 Simple Ways to Celebrate No Name-Calling Week in Your School

Here is a sampler of no-fuss activities, developed by GLSEN and its coalition partners, which require little planning and classroom time.

1. Sponsor a *No Name-Calling Week* Student Expression Contest. Encourage students to submit poems, essays, and artwork and honor the outstanding entries on the final day of No Name Calling Week.

2. Hold a poster contest. Use an art class to create anti-bullying posters, or plan an after-school poster making session. Decorate the hallways with the images and slogans students create.

3. Spread the message in your morning announcements. Remind the school community of the significance of the week by

advertising events and sharing student essays or poetry during morning announcements.

4. Develop a classroom anti-slur policy. Work with students to outline rules and expectations about classroom language, and display your anti-slur policy prominently.

5. Write an article for the school newspapers. Encourage your student news hounds to cover *No Name-Calling Week* in your school publications and local newspaper.

6. Create a library display. Ask your school librarian to create an eye-catching display of books that deal with name-calling and bullying.

7. Discuss sportsmanship in physical education classes. Since so much bullying occurs on the field and in the locker room, ask physical education teachers to take a few minutes to discuss the values of sportsmanship and respect in athletics.

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8. **Screen the *No Name-Calling Week* video.** The 27-minute video available in the *No Name-Calling Week* kit features young people talking about their experiences with name-calling, vignettes from *The Misfits*, name-calling scenarios, and effective anti-bullying strategies from a social worker. (The kit referred to is not a free resource and is available for purchase from www.nonamecallingweek.org.)

9. **Share tips with parents and staff.** Reproducible tip sheets for parents and school personnel are available in the Resources section of this site. The *No Name-Calling Week* kit features additional advice for families, administrators, and health and safety professionals.

10. **Wear *No Name-Calling Week* stickers.** Faculty, administrators, and support staff can all show their dedication to ending verbal bullying by wearing or displaying *No Name-Calling Week* stickers. Downloadable versions are available in the Resources section of this site. Sixty

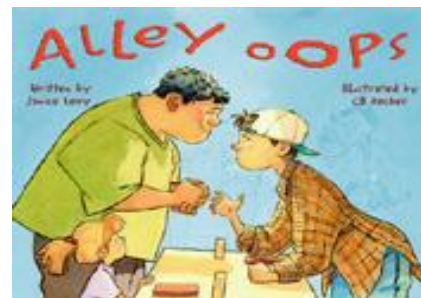
glossy three-color stickers come with the *No Name-Calling Week* Kit, and stickers can also be bulk-ordered from Human Relations Media.

As always, you are also encouraged to come up with your own ideas for No Name Calling Week. Please share original ideas with The Torch so we can share them with other teams around the state.

If you choose to sponsor a No Name Calling Week at your school, remember that it does not have to take place the week of Jan. 21-25. Whatever dates you select, the most important thing is to raise awareness of the pain caused by hurtful words. The fact of the matter is, words hurt and you have the power to help end the pain endured by students in your own school community.



In the Book Corner: *Alley Oops*, by Janice Levy and illustrated by C.B. Decker.



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Alley Oops is the story of a popular boy who picks on a new student because he is fat. There are two unusual twists to this old story. First, it is told from the bully's perspective. Second, the new student is not only fat, he is also very big and very strong and the bully is small and physically much weaker than his victim. Despite the victim's size, being called names like "Pig- Pen" and "Porker" are too much for him and he reaches the point of being afraid to go to school.

This book stresses the importance of finding common ground in resolving conflicts. Common ground is reached in *Alley Oops* after the bully's father relates his own experience as a youthful bully and the consequences of his actions that he faced recently, long after the incident took place. The bully seeks to make amends for his actions by challenging the new boy to an arm wrestling match and experiences what the author describes as an "alley oops" moment when he realizes that he has done the right thing.

Alley Oops, which has great dialogue and illustrations, is the perfect launch pad for a discussion on bullying and the tremendous power of hurtful, as well as healing, words. Consider using this book for small group discussions in your school or take it into some lower grade classrooms to initiate conversation about name calling and the power of doing the right thing. *Alley Oops* is a perfect book to include in your No Name Calling Week line up.



DOES YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY NEED A DOSE OF R-E-S-P-E-C-T?

Is respect something that could use some improvement in your school? In the spirit of both Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and No Name Calling Week, here is a great set of activities from EdWorld that will get your students talking and thinking about R-E-S-P-E-C-T. After all, it does no good to talk the talk if we aren't walking the walk at the same time.

Education World provides five lessons to help you weave the theme of respect into your curriculum and classroom routine. Before introducing this week's new lessons, here are a few ideas to start your students thinking and talking about *respect*:

- Have students work as a class or in small groups to brainstorm responses to the question, *What does "respect" mean to me?* Will they mention the "Golden Rule" -- *treat others the way you would like to be treated* -- as a simple definition of the word?
- Have students make a list of synonyms for the word *respect*. For example, *esteem, honor, regard, value, cherish, appreciate, admire, praise, compliment...*

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- Share books in which *respect* is a clear theme. You can find an excellent booklist at [Children's Books That Illustrate the Six Pillars](#) on the Character Counts Web site.

You will find additional activities in the dialogue box on the next page, but first we want to leap right into our...

FIVE LESSONS FOR TEACHING ABOUT RESPECT

Click each of the five lesson headlines below for a complete teaching resource. (Appropriate grade levels for each lesson appear in parentheses.)

[Everybody Is Unique: A Lesson in Respect for Others](#)

Teach respect for others' unique qualities. (Grades K-8) (*This is a great hands on activity.*)

[Simon Says "Who Are You?"](#)

Play a variation of Simon Says to highlight people's similarities and differences. (Grades K-5)

[RESPECT Popcorn Party](#)

Reinforce respect by celebrating examples of it in your classroom. Student work sheet included.

(Grades K-8)

[Positively Respectful](#)

Create a positive environment by teaching students to show respect and share compliments. (Grades K-8)

[Property: Ownership, Respect, and Responsibility](#)

Students learn to respect others' property by rating the severity of a variety of damaging acts. (Grades K-12)

ADDITIONAL LESSON IDEAS

- Different people have different likes and dislikes. To emphasize that point, you might invite each student to share something he or she likes very much. That could be a food, an activity, a place... or anything else. After students share, you might ask some of the students to identify things that other students like but they don't like as much. Conclude the discussion by emphasizing that people should treat one another respectfully in spite of their differences.
- Have students look through magazines for pictures that show people respecting others' differences or pictures of different kinds of people working or playing together. Create a class "We Respect Differences" collage.
- After talking about some of the things that *respect* means, you might start a class or small-group discussion about what respect does *not* mean. What kinds of things or actions could be considered disrespectful? Students might provide such responses as rudeness, malicious gossip, criticism, insults... As a follow-up activity, ask students to offer synonyms for the word *disrespect*. For example, *rudeness*, *dishonor*, *ridicule*, *scorn*, *disregard*, *ignore*, *disdain*...

Get Some More Respect

Still looking for more respect? Click [here](#) for more than a dozen additional lesson plan ideas.

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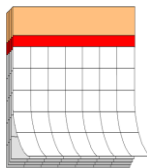
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One more word, or so, on the topic of R-E-S-P-E-C-T. If you are a person of a certain age, no discussion of this topic is complete without hearing the fabulous Aretha Franklin belt out her views on the subject.

Go to <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-355771691412799695&q=RESPECT&total=38545&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=0> to hear the version she sang in *The Blues Brothers* movie. When your team members get tired of talking about respect, let Aretha take over while you use this opportunity to introduce your students to The Queen of Soul.



UPCOMING EVENTS AND SIGNIFICANT DATES

March: Women's History Month

**Friday, May 16, 2008: CRTP
Statewide Conference, Augusta
Civic Center**

Save the date and book your bus now.

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If you are not receiving your issues of *The Torch* via e-mail, please contact Debi Lettre at debi.lettre@maine.gov and provide her with your e-mail address.



“Extra, Extra, Read All About It!”

Has your team just completed a successful project, read a great book, had a good fundraiser, listened to an inspiring speaker, seen a compelling video, or done something that was just plain fun that you would like to share with other teams? If we don't hear about it, we can't share it with other teams. Give your team a chance to be the next Spot Light School by sharing what you have been up to. Send in a blurb to *The Torch* and we will include it in a future issue. Send your news to amy@maine.rr.com with the subject heading: **Newsletter item.**

This newsletter is written and distributed by the Civil Rights Team Project, a state-wide program under the auspices of the Maine Office of the Attorney General. The mission of the Civil Rights Team Project is to increase the safety of high school, middle school and elementary school students and to reduce the incidence of bias-motivated harassment and violence in schools.

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