

HUMAN COMMUNITY

Objectives

- Students will map their community to determine that food banks are a resource in need of assistance.
- Students will examine the reasons why food banks and shelters are necessary and reflect on their personal beliefs about families and individuals in need.
- The project will help students recognize the need for services assisting families who struggle to obtain basic necessities such as food and shelter.
- Students will conduct a food or supply drive, learning what it means to become “part of the solution” and work to end hunger and homelessness for families and children in their community.

Essential Questions for Students

- How do people end up in situations where they need to use food banks?
- How are families and children who are homeless similar to you?

Outcomes

- Students will realize their ability to impact the day-to-day lives of those living in poverty.
- Students will develop an understanding of the reasons why children and families find themselves in need of food banks.
- Students will develop a deeper understanding of the human impact of homelessness and food insecurity.
- Students will develop oral and written communications skills, including engaging in collaborative discussions, conveying information, and supporting a point of view.

Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts Standards, Writing, Grade 3

- Text Types and Purposes: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1 – Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
- Text Types and Purposes: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2 – Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

English Language Arts Standards, Speaking & Listening, Grade 3

- Comprehension and Collaboration: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Community Connections

- Contact a local homeless shelter serving families to discuss your classes’ intent to conduct a food or supply drive. A representative from the shelter will be able to assist you with your project. Many organizations provide educational materials regarding homelessness, as well as general marketing materials.
- General ideas for assisting homeless families and children include:
 - Running a food drive.
 - Collecting baby diapers and wipes (many food banks also distribute diapers).
 - Collecting school supplies.
 - Collecting art supplies.
 - Utilizing media and local businesses to advertise your project.

Materials

- Book(s) about food banks/homelessness.



- Materials provided by a local food bank.
- Large sheets of paper.
- Journals.
- Materials for posters.

Vocabulary Terms

- **Homeless** – Describes a person who has no home or permanent place to live.
- **Shelter** – Something that provides cover or protection; for example, from heat, cold, or other weather. In regard to humans, a place that provides temporary housing for people who are homeless.
- **Poverty** – The state of being poor; a condition lacking in the necessities for living safely, healthily, and comfortably.
- **Poverty Level** – An income level below which a person is officially considered to lack adequate resources for daily life and to be living in poverty.
- **Food Security** – Another official term, used specifically to refer to a person's or family's access to food. A household is said to be food secure when its members do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. The United Nations reports that, worldwide, approximately 852 million people are hungry due to extreme poverty.

Lessons

Students will learn about the issues surrounding homelessness and poverty and engage their peers and adults in conducting a food drive.

Building Knowledge (approximately one to two class periods)

- Ask students to read selected book(s) about homelessness or materials from the local food bank or shelter.
- Title a large sheet of paper "What We Believe about Food Banks and Homelessness." Have students share their ideas about what a food bank is, who it serves, and why it is needed.
- Have students draw or describe what they think a person who goes to a food bank looks like.
- Have students review information provided by the food bank.
- Title another large sheet of paper "FACTS about Food Banks and Homelessness." Have students offer new ideas about what they've learned.

Building Compassion (approximately two to four class periods)

- Using what they have learned, have your students develop informational posters to be placed around the school (and community) to advertise their food/supply drive. Posters should include pertinent information about the drive, such as the start and end dates of the drive, the types of food/supplies that are most needed, the name of the shelter or food bank that will benefit from the drive, and the number of people/families that the shelter serves. Encourage students to focus on the needs of families and children who are hungry.
- Have students write letters to local businesses asking for permission to hang their posters advertising the drive—and asking the business to make a donation as well!
- Have students write thank-you notes to their parents or caregivers for everything that they provide for them. Help students focus on necessities like food and safe shelter in their letters.

Taking Action (allow approximately two to four weeks for the food/supply drive)

- Go to work! Have students conduct a food and/or supply drive for a local food bank or homeless shelter. Students should be involved in every aspect of the project, from advertising to creating bins in which food/supplies are deposited, and from collecting the items to delivering them to the shelter.
- Your Roots & Shoots project should end on a day when your students deliver the food and/or supplies to the shelter, or when representatives from the shelter come to your school to accept the gifts on behalf of the people



they serve. After all the donations are collected, discuss how many families/children this drive will provide with food.

Extension Activities

- Chart the types of food that were collected by the item or by the pound.
- Convert the amount of food collected into meals.
- Create a food bank mobile to raise awareness among potential donors. Ideas can be found at: <http://www.crayola.com/lesson-plans/food-bank-mobile-lesson-plan/>.

Journal Questions

- Why is it important to help other people in your community? How does this make your community better for everyone?
- What would you like others in your community to know about homelessness? What information do you think is important for others in your community to know about homelessness?

Accommodations/Modifications

- Utilize posters provided by the food bank.
- Bring in different types of perishable and non-perishable foods and have students sort appropriate donations from inappropriate donations, then discuss.

Additional Taking Action Ideas

- Start a vegetable garden at your school, or work with a community garden to grow fresh organic vegetables for donation to a food bank or shelter.
- Host a Free Trade Fair at your school to promote livable wages and education in developing nations. (Refer to Bead for Life at www.beadforlife.org or SERRV International at www.serrv.org.)
- Organize a team from your school to participate in a local fundraising walk supporting homeless shelters.
- Look into local art museums or galleries to see if any are hosting an exhibit focused on the faces of poverty. Students can also create their own exhibit using www.animoto.com.
- Visit a local soup kitchen or shelter and volunteer to serve a meal.
- Write your local representatives regarding issues that are affecting poor and homeless families in your community.

Family Connection

- Send an informative letter or email outlining your project to students' families.
- Have students create a "thank-you meal" for their parents or caregivers at home. Have students plan the meal using the types of food that were collected in the food drive, or food that is distributed by food banks.

