

## **LESSON PLAN XI**

### **MAKING A DIFFERENCE #1**

Time Needed one week to gather information; 30 minutes to write letters

Skill Areas Language Arts: writing, reading; current events

Overview One solution which may possibly affect change in government policy regarding homelessness is advocating support.

Objective Students will participate in a letter writing campaign focusing on local, state, or national homeless issues.

Materials Articles from local newspapers on homelessness, poverty, and relevant government policies. Pencils, paper, envelopes, names and addresses of state officials.

Teacher Preparation Find the names and addresses of local and state government officials. If students are writing to U.S. senators or representatives, find their names and use the addresses below.

Activity Have students search local newspapers and magazines to find articles pertaining to homelessness. Students should bring in articles to share with classmates. The teacher will also have articles available for students.

After sharing articles, students will look for common issues and possible solutions to homelessness.

Once common themes and solutions are decided upon, each student will write a letter addressed to a local or state politician sharing their concerns and solutions regarding homelessness in their community.

#### **To a U.S. Senator:**

The Honorable (First name/Last name)  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

#### **To a U.S. Representative:**

The Honorable (First name/ Last name)  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20515

#### **To call anyone in congress:**

Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE #2

Time Needed 2 weeks

Skill Areas Language Arts: writing; community involvement

Overview One possible solution affecting change for homeless individuals is offering support through the donation of material goods.

Objective Students will develop and create “kids that care kits” for homeless people and families.

Teacher Preparation Find a homeless service provider that will accept the donation of the “kids that care kits.”

Activity Students will brainstorm ideas regarding necessary materials for family well-being. Teacher will list these items on the blackboard. The list might include such items as soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, coats, gloves, scarves, shampoo etc.

Next, students and teacher will design a letter to parents and community members describing their cause and asking for their support by way of donations to help create “kids that care kits.” The letter will describe what materials are needed, and where and to whom the materials will be donated. The letter will include the list of items brainstormed earlier in the activity. (A separate letter, written by the teacher, might be sent to the parents as well, notifying them of the project and asking them to assist their child.)

Have students distribute the letter to parents, neighbors, and community businesses. Students and parents will be responsible for and bringing items to school. The class can assemble the “kids that care kits” using the materials collected.

Each student can write a letter to include in the “kit” they assemble. The teacher could help the students write the letter as a large group and have each student make and sign their copy. The letter might look like this:

*Dear Friend:*

*I have been learning about homelessness in school. I am sorry that you are homeless at this time. I care about you and am doing what I can to help end homelessness and help you find a place to call home.*

*Your friend,  
signature*

The teacher should arrange a field trip to the homeless service provider so that the students may present the kits in person. Be sure to notify the local press or media of this event using a press release or media advisory.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE #3

Time Needed 30 minutes preparation time; 1 hour for a speaker

Skill Areas Language Arts; speaking and listening

Objective The reality of homelessness will be emphasized by inviting a homeless person or member of a shelter staff to the classroom. Students will generate questions to ask a guest speaker.

Materials Paper, pencils

Teacher Preparation Teacher will contact an advocacy group or shelter to find a guest speaker who is or has been homeless. Most advocacy groups will be able to assist with this request. ( see directory of advocacy groups )

Activity Each student will write a question or two that they would like to ask of the guest speaker. As a group discuss the questions to evaluate their appropriateness and to avoid redundant questions.

Students will ask their questions during the presentation.

Follow up Have students write thank you letters to the speaker. The class could also visit a shelter or implement an “adopt a homeless service provider” program. See Additional Service Ideas.

