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Introduction

Kids of all ages are eager to help build a better world. They see problems, in school and out. Many are concerned about both their immediate situations and their futures. They want to know what they can do to help.

Research shows that helping others relieves anxiety, reduces stress, improves mood, boosts self-esteem, and instills a sense of purpose and satisfaction. Taking positive actions can help kids cope with their fears and become informed, active citizens in their communities.

The informational texts in this book present examples of positive activism initiated by young people. The kids in these texts are “everyday people” making a difference in their communities through positive activism related to their environments, their education, and their desire to help people in need. They put their imaginations and optimism to work and truly make a difference. Their examples encourage students to find positive solutions and show them that their age is not a barrier to becoming forces for positive change.

“Young people, when they understand a problem, are empowered to take action. When we listen to their voices (they) actually are changing the world and making it better for people, for animals, and for the environment because everything is interconnected.”—Jane Goodall

How to Use This Book

Community Investigation

Start by discussing the concept of community. Use the *Community Investigation* pages (5–6) to have students research and learn more about the communities they are a part of. Depending on how deeply students delve into their communities, this activity could take days or even weeks. Once students have an established sense of their own communities, it is time to share units about students in other communities and explore what they have accomplished. You may wish to choose a unit based on student interest, or just start at the beginning and do them all!

Informational Text Units

Each six-page unit for informational text learning is set up in the same manner to provide consistency for students. Each unit includes the following components:

- ⌘ **Nonfiction Passage.** Each two-page nonfiction passage features a young person who spots a need in their community and decides to do something about it. These nonfiction texts include a variety of text features to enhance students’ understanding and draw attention to important facts. They include subheads, quotes, bold-faced words, sidebars and insets, vocabulary callouts, and footnotes. Students can read the texts individually or in groups, and they are perfect for repeated readings.

How to Use This Book *(cont.)*

⌘ **Text Questions.** The three pages of text questions each focus on different nonfiction reading skills:

- *Key Ideas and Details* questions ask students to identify what the text says, including main idea and key details.
- *Craft and Structure* questions focus on the author's craft and organizational patterns, including vocabulary.
- *Integration of Knowledge and Meaning* questions focus on analyzing what the text means, and they also integrate new information with students' own knowledge and experiences.

⌘ **Culminating Unit Activities.** The final page of each unit helps students consolidate the knowledge they have accumulated and consider ways they might put it to use.

- *Group Discussion* questions help students connect the ideas in the text to their own lives and communities and possibly implement them with adult supervision. These can be used for either small-group or whole-group discussion.
- *Taking Action* asks students to apply the ideas in the text to a problem in their own communities. These activities help students understand how collaborating in their communities can help them to be part of solutions.

Vocabulary

Some vocabulary words are defined in callouts within the texts. A more extensive vocabulary list is included on pages 7–8, along with a graphic organizer on page 9 for students to think about word meanings from multiple angles.

Part of Speech <input type="checkbox"/> noun <input type="checkbox"/> verb <input type="checkbox"/> adjective <input type="checkbox"/> adverb	Word _____ Definition (in your own words): _____ _____ _____	Picture Clue _____ _____ _____
Use the word meaningfully in a sentence. _____ _____ _____		Similar word or idea. _____ _____

Take Action in Your Community

As a culminating activity, have students use the *Take Action* activity (pages 10–11) to plan and carry out positive actions.

- In Part 1, students choose a community and define a problem through research and dialogue with community members.
- In Part 2, they make a plan for action and put it into practice. Students may want to take action individually, in small groups, or even as a project for the entire class.
- In Part 3, students reflect on what they have learned and consider what they might do next.

Note to Teacher: As students plan their projects, consider any safety issues and work with them to create a workable plan.

Shanneil Turner

Basketball Dreams

Shanneil Turner loves basketball. As a young player, she practiced all the time and planned to try out for her high school team. But she didn't have a good pair of athletic shoes. The old shoes she had borrowed were ripped, and her family could not afford to buy her a new pair. How could she play her best with a pair of sneakers held together by duct tape?

Shanneil had been a member of her local Boys and Girls Club since she was six. The Boys and Girls Club is a neighborhood place kids can go after school for homework help, sports, and other activities. Shanneil's club gave her a **scholarship** to buy basketball shoes. With the right footwear, Shanneil's tryout went well. Her years of hard work paid off, and she made the high school basketball team. Shanneil knew that if it hadn't been for the scholarship, she probably wouldn't have been able to play. She thought that other kids might be in the same **predicament**. She didn't want a pair of shoes to stand in the way of a kid's sports dreams.



➡ **predicament**—a difficult, unpleasant, or embarrassing situation

Shanneil's Locker

"There are some kids out there who won't even try because they know they don't have what they need."¹

Shanneil went to the Boys and Girls Club. She told them she wanted to raise money to help more kids get the sports equipment they need to play. She wanted to pay it forward. The Boys and Girls Club liked her idea. They decided to call the program Shanneil's Locker. Shanneil was 15 when the program began.

A local newspaper ran a story about Shanneil's Locker. An **executive** at a large company read the story and was impressed by what Shanneil was trying to do. She contacted Shanneil and told her about a **grant** from her company to help promote exercise and healthy lifestyles. She helped Shanneil apply. Shanneil's Locker was awarded a grant.

A state assemblyman also saw the newspaper story. He was impressed to see a 15-year-old working to help others. He donated money to Shanneil's Locker. He also awarded her a Certificate of Appreciation from the state assembly.

1. Hicks, Bill. "Shanneil's Locker opens door for youth sports," Daily Republic, February 7, 2016.

Shanneil Turner *(cont.)*

Shanneil's Locker *(cont.)*

The Boys and Girls Club held a big event to **launch** Shanneil's Locker. Kids at the event got Shanneil's Locker T-shirts signed by Shanneil. They helped give out scholarship applications to other kids. People were asked to donate to support the program.

➡ **launch**—start; introduce; open

Altogether, Shanneil raised enough money to give scholarships to 100 kids. The application for Shanneil's Locker scholarships asks what sport the applicant plans to play. It also asks how they plan to "pay it forward."

Each recipient gets a **voucher** they can use to buy athletic shoes from one of two shoe companies. The companies are helping by offering extra discounts to the Shanneil's Locker scholarship recipients.

Pay It Forward

Have you ever heard the saying, "pay it forward"? It means that when someone does something nice for you, instead of paying them back, you do something nice for another person. Imagine that you hold a door open for someone. That person might pay it forward by holding a door for someone else, offering their seat on the bus to someone who looks tired, or helping a neighbor with some chores. The chain of good deeds keeps going.

When Shanneil received a scholarship from the Boys and Girls Club, she wanted to pay it forward. So she started Shanneil's Locker to help other kids.

Recipients of her scholarships are also asked to pay it forward and keep the kindness going.



Unit 4

Name: _____

Date: _____

Key Ideas and Details

Directions: Answer the questions below about Shanneil Turner. Use complete sentences.

1. What is the main idea of this text?

2. Why did Shanneil want to help kids get new athletic shoes?

3. How did people find out about Shanneil's Locker?

4. What does the application for Shanneil's Locker scholarships ask?



Name: _____

Date: _____

Craft and Structure

Directions: Answer the questions below. Use complete sentences.

1. What is a *voucher*?

2. Why do you think the author chose to include a sidebar on the expression “pay it forward”?

3. Choose one word from the text that you think is important to understanding Shanneil’s story. Define the word and explain its importance to the story.

Word: _____

Definition: _____

Importance to the story: _____

