

REACH OUT TO SOVA

**an ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM
TO ADDRESS LOCAL HUNGER**



**These materials have been developed as part of *Healthy West Hollywood*,
City of West Hollywood Social Services Division,
with assistance from SOVA Kosher Food Pantry.**

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from The Public Health Institute, The California Endowment, California Healthy Cities
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**For information about Healthy West Hollywood,
or to request additional copies of Reach out to SOVA,
please call 323/848- 6510**

ABOUT THESE MATERIALS

REACH OUT TO SOVA

an ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM TO ADDRESS LOCAL HUNGER

Why another can food drive? Every year during Thanksgiving and the winter holidays, food banks are brimming with cans of food collected by school children. Granted, food banks need these donations and appreciate the help. But what if the collection took place when the food bank's shelves were not so full, say in the spring or before the end of school? And what if the can food drive was connected to student learning? And what if that learning included information about the food bank and what foods are most needed by the people served by the agency?

Healthy West Hollywood is an evolving project that includes educating children about exercise, nutrition, gardening, and how, with awareness, to provide food for people in need. This kit includes materials to assist classroom teachers in a series of lessons that result in student leadership of a can food drive with a purpose: stocking the shelves of SOVA, the food pantry which serves this area of the county, with nutrition food on a year-round basis. These materials are easily adapted to meet the needs of local agencies and people in your community.

This kit includes:

- ✧ Teacher Tips and Guide to Service Learning
- ✧ About SOVA Food Pantry
- ✧ Classroom Lessons and Activities
- ✧ The Starfish Story
- ✧ Introducing the Play: *The Can-Do Drive*
- ✧ *The Can-Do Drive*, a play based on *The Can-Do Thanksgiving*
- ✧ Interview with Marion Hess Pomeranc, author of *The Can-Do Thanksgiving*
- ✧ Bibliography and Video Resource List, excerpted from *The Service Learning Bookshelf-A Bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action, Second Edition* (ABCD Books, 2000)

Two books are referenced and used in these lessons:

The Edible Pyramid, by Loreen Leedy (Holiday House, 1996), and *The Can-Do Thanksgiving*, by Marion Hess Pomeranc (A. Whitman, 1998).

TEACHER TIPS AND GUIDE TO SERVICE LEARNING

What you are about to embark upon with Reach Out to SOVA is a teaching method called *service learning*. Service learning...

- 👉 is a teaching methodology that allows students to learn and apply academic, social and personal skills to improve the community, continue individual growth, and become better citizens
- 👉 focuses on both the service and the learning
- 👉 is appropriate for all students and all curricular areas
- 👉 provides students structured time to reflect on the service experience
- 👉 is implemented through *preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration*

When integrating service learning into classroom practices, keep in mind these **elements**:

Authentic Learning Students learn skills and content through varied modalities; the service informs the content, and the content informs the service.

Meet Genuine Needs Student actions are valued by community with real consequences, and mutual benefit.... reciprocity and interdependence is emphasized.

Youth Voice & Choice Includes significant age- appropriate challenges which allow for initiative and opportunities to use skills and knowledge, and to demonstrate responsibility and decision- making in an environment safe enough to make mistakes and to succeed.

Collaborative Efforts Opportunities to interact with people of diverse backgrounds and experiences, i.e., age, ability, ethnicity ... the development of partnerships with parents, community members, organizations, and other students.

Reflection Cognitive and affective aspects of experience are put into larger context of self, the community, the world ... occurs before, during and after service.

Civic Responsibility Knowledge, awareness and experience of the ability of individuals and groups of people to make a contribution to the larger community.

Why service learning? Teachers throughout California and the nation are recognizing the benefits of service learning for their students. When integrated into classroom lessons and activities, students have opportunities to learn in a myriad of ways, develop significant skills and knowledge, and retain what they learn through use and reflection. Service learning builds teamwork and encourages civic responsibility both in and out of school. For additional information and resources about service learning, ask your school principal.

About SOVA Kosher Food Pantry of Jewish Community Centers of Greater Los Angeles

Back in 1983, Zucky and Hy Altman observed people in need of food. As proprietors of a successful Santa Monica deli, *Zucky's*, they were able to turn their dream of helping into a reality by establishing SOVA Kosher Food Pantry, a program which they began with Jewish Community Centers of Greater Los Angeles.

SOVA, a Hebrew word from the Bible meaning *to eat and be satisfied*, has three locations to serve a broad population of people in need. SOVA first opened as a Kosher food pantry to enable poor Jewish people who observed *kashrut* (followed religious dietary laws) to get free food. While SOVA does provide kosher food to those in need, it serves people of all backgrounds. SOVA currently feeds approximately 3,000 people each month who need food. Approximately 15% of current clients are people who are homeless and 26% are children. At SOVA Metro nearly 70% of clients are immigrants from the Former Soviet Union who are faced with language and cultural problems in addition to financial difficulties. In the Westside and Valley areas there is a steady increase in the number of people who are homeless or elderly needing assistance.

Each SOVA pantry runs on a minimum budget. More than 50% of all food that SOVA distributes is donated. SOVA also receives food through the Westside Food Bank and the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank at a nominal cost. Donations are picked up regularly by SOVA's truck. Additional food must be purchased in order to provide for nutritional, well-balanced meals for all clients, particularly those with special dietary or health needs. SOVA also pays rent and utilities as well as salaries for a director, site administrator, part-time driver, and part-time case manager.

What started as a grassroots operation over fifteen years ago continues today as a largely grassroots organization dependent on more than 100 volunteers each week who give their time at the three food distribution sites. SOVA welcomes volunteers of all ages to help in its pantries. The miracle of SOVA is that the community, both through volunteering and food collection, makes SOVA work. With community support from schools, religious institutions, and businesses, and grant funding from the City of West Hollywood and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program of FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency), SOVA provides a welcome resource for people in need.

If You Would Like to Help SOVA

Donate food: Protein foods, like peanut butter and tuna, are always needed. SOVA also always needs cans of fruit, juices, and nutritional supplement drinks. Note that plastic food containers are preferred if available.

Donate can openers. These help SOVA's clients to enjoy canned foods.

Volunteer! Classrooms can contact SOVA to have a hands-on experience helping others.

For additional information or to schedule a visit, please call SOVA at 310/828-0469.

LESSON ONE:

A HEALTHY DIET

What makes a healthy diet? Why do we need certain foods every day?

Background: All too often with can food drives, children bring foods that they dislike, or cans that have been sitting in the cupboard for a very long time. However, this can change dramatically as children learn about nutrition, the importance of eating balanced meals and that everyone enjoys foods that taste good and are well prepared. A lesson on nutrition sets the stage for personal healthy eating habits and for selecting appropriate foods for can food drives.

Note: We live in a diverse society where families eat a variety of foods that may not match the pyramid model. Encourage respectful discussion and inclusion of ideas that may provide a unique perspective and opportunities for students to learn about each other.

Materials

The Edible Pyramid - Good Eating Every Day, by Loreen Leedy

Art paper for collage

Glue

Magazines

Construction paper

Scissors

Activity One: Introducing the Food Pyramid

- ✧ There are many ways to introduce the food pyramid concept. This is an easy lesson to tie to mathematics, that is, how shapes are used to represent things in daily life. The food pyramid is a kind of chart or graph. Using a large image of a triangle, you might introduce the pyramid with its design and food groupings. For older students, you may also discuss percentages.
- ✧ Use The Edible Pyramid to examine the different food groups and where they fit onto the pyramid. Students may already be familiar with the pyramid and want to share what they know.

- ✂ There are many opportunities to engage in conversation when sharing this book. Students may, through their initiative or your guidance, discuss shapes and colors of foods, or the different ways foods can be prepared, for example, fruit can be eaten raw, canned, juiced, or baked in a pie.
- ✂ Consider asking a question about other foods that people eat that may not be on the pyramid - where would they fit? Assure students that the pyramid is a guide and that there are many healthy diets.
- ✂ Invite students to bring in magazines or food packaging from home to construct their own pyramid.

Activity Two: My Personal Pyramid or Group or Class Pyramid *Collage*

- ✂ For this pyramid project, you may decide to have students create individual, small group, or a giant class collage. Each has its advantages. For example, the individual one allows a child to see what he or she eats regularly and consider what foods to add. Group or class pyramids often show the diverse diet of the community. Select which method best suits your students.
- ✂ For the food pyramid collage, have students cut out pictures from magazines or food labels, or make their own foods from construction paper. Encourage students to use foods they eat regularly or have a special section for foods they want to try. If a food does not seem to fit inside the pyramid, let it be on the outside - whatever seems to represent the child's eating picture.
- ✂ Share the collages and talk about what we see in the pictures. Which foods seem to be most popular? Is there a category that does not seem to get eaten as much as the others? What does it mean to have "a balanced diet?"

Activity Three: Taking the Next Steps

- ✂ Ask the students how they this information can be useful:
 - at home - what information can they share with their families?
 - at school - how can this help them eat a good lunch at school?
 - at birthday parties and family celebrations - even when we want to have fun and eat special foods, can we also eat healthy foods?
- ✂ Ask the students about how this information may be useful when they think about people who may not have enough food to eat, people who need help from other members of the community. How can this information be helpful?
- ✂ Close by asking students to share what they learned and what they most want to remember. Reflection is an essential component of service learning.

Optional Follow-up: Display the collages in school. When ready to take home,

encourage students to share their work and discuss within their families.
LESSON TWO:

THE FACES OF HUNGER

Students will learn about the problem of hunger - what it means to be hungry, who is hungry, and how people become hungry.

Background: The term “hungry” has several uses. A child may say, “I am hungry!” after school since he or she is eager for a snack. This use of “hungry” is drastically different from the type of hunger experienced by people in poverty. People who do not eat or who do not eat regular nutritionally balanced meals have impaired immune systems and can get sick more often. Their ability to study or work is reduced. They are unable to concentrate and may have decreased mental function. This can lead to a downward spiral unless there is intervention and assistance.

Note: When describing people in need of assistance, frequently we generalize and use the term “homeless people.” Explain to the class that first and foremost these are *people*, and a more respectful term would be *people who are homeless*. As students will learn, many different populations are in situations where assistance from the community is necessary.

Materials:

Drawing paper, one per student

Markers/crayons

Information page -- *Facts: Who is Hungry?*

Note: Some of the information provided makes reference to Los Angeles County. Adapt for your community.

Activity One: What Does it Mean to Be Hungry?

- ! Lead a discussion about what it means to be hungry. Ask the class if anyone is hungry right now. Spend a few minutes talking about what happens when they feel hungry. Usually, students will say they get something to eat or they have to wait a little while. Then the hunger goes away.
- ! Then, using these questions, begin a discussion of sustained hunger:
 - " Who ate breakfast this morning?
 - " Have you ever been really hungry and had to wait to get food? How did you feel?

- " How do you feel if you don't eat breakfast?
 - " How would you feel if you didn't eat breakfast *and* lunch?
 - " What happens at school if you didn't have breakfast? How do you feel? Do your work, or play the same way as if you had breakfast?
 - " If you could not eat, or ate very little, and felt like this for many days in a row, what would happen?
- ! Encourage the students to compare the way the term "hunger" or "hungry" has been used - short term hunger that will most likely be satisfied, and long term hunger. What are the similarities and the differences?

Activity Two: Introduction to Hunger Facts

- ! Give each student a piece of drawing paper and crayon or marker; keep this simple. Ask each student to draw a picture of somebody who is hungry. Let students know they can make a simple drawing, and that they will have five minutes to make their picture. Encourage students to work individually and quietly.
- ! When everyone is done, ask students to place their drawings so others can see them. Ask students to describe the person(s) they drew - young, old, single, part of a family, man, woman, child - and how this person portrays hunger.

Activity Three: Teaching the Facts about *Who is Hungry?*

Note: In this lesson, students find out facts about hunger in our community, and reference to hunger in our country. Most facts are appropriate for children to learn and understand. Some of the information is for you, the teacher, and may help you in explaining hunger and poverty. Some of the information may be in numbers which children cannot understand, for example, federal poverty level dollar figures. Some approaches that teachers have found effective are:

- ☐ When using ratios, e.g., one out of three, ask the appropriate number of students to raise their hands, or have them stand to make a visual representation.
 - ☐ Use drawings of circles or stick figures to represent percentages.
 - ☐ Use props to help demonstrate percentages of people to experience hunger.
- ! Review the information provided about *Who is Hungry*. Consider ways to introduce this to your class. Two options are provided.
- " Have students work in small groups. Assign each group one of the

populations represented below. Students spend five minutes thinking of why this particular population might be hungry and need assistance with food. The students then share their thoughts with the class who can ask questions. Then the teacher presents the facts provided.

- " Invite a representative from a local agency who works with people who are in need of assistance with food. Before the visit, present the facts to the class. Ask them to develop questions based on this information in preparation for the visit. Decide on a format for the discussion with the guest.

General Fact: Nearly 20% of residents in the Los Angeles metropolitan area live in poverty; nationally it is nearly 14%. The Federal Poverty Level is an annual income of \$8,050 for one person, \$16,450 for a family of 4.

Activity Four: Closing

- ! Have students again display their drawings. Ask if, as a group, their pictures portray the many faces of hunger? How would they change, add to or take away from the drawings now that they know more about people who are hungry?
- ! Let students know that while the problem of hunger is real and large and can be overwhelming, there are many ways that people can help to fight hunger and that the class will do just that!
- ! Ask students what they think are possible ways to help people who are hungry in our community. You might have the students take this question home and discuss with family members as well. Their ideas can lead to action!
- ! Allow students time to write about or discuss with a partner the following: How has today's lesson effected their thoughts or feelings about "hunger?"

FACTS: WHO IS HUNGRY?

Homeless People who are homeless are from all religious, ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds, and range in ages from newborn babies to senior citizens. In Los Angeles County there are 80,000 people each night who do not have a place inside to sleep. There are 8,000 shelter beds in Los Angeles County.

Immigrants Many immigrants come to America because of difficulties in their country or poverty in their homeland. They come with the clothes they are wearing and little more. Housing and food costs are high here. There is often a new language to learn and different lifestyle that adds more hardship. Finding paid work can be a big challenge.

Families 5.6 million children in the United States live in households that are poor and need help providing food for every family member. The majority of poor households in California have at least one working parent. Even with one parent working, it can be hard to feed a family.

Children One of every five children in America lives in poverty. One of every three children in Los Angeles lives in poverty.

Veterans Veterans are people who have served in the United States armed forces, usually during a time of war. Veterans are 30% of the homeless population in the United States. They are 36-40% of the homeless population in the larger Los Angeles area.

Unemployed There were many job losses in Los Angeles County between March 1992-March 1993. Fortunately, many new jobs are being created, but it will take a long time for all the people who need work to find employment.

Seniors As people live longer, the cost of living becomes more expensive. But many senior citizens live on a fixed income - the same amount of money, but more expenses. Medical needs can cause an elderly person to have to choose between buying medicine or food. Many seniors live at or below the poverty level.

Lesson Three

OUR CAN FOOD DRIVE

What can we do to help people in need of food in our community? We can learn about people and agencies who are helping, and we can collect food.

Background: Across the country, young people are making a difference with a variety of social needs and concerns. Taking action empowers us to learn more about how many people in our communities do care and want to help. Taking action teaches students first hand that what they do counts. They can use their skills and talents. They collaborate with adults and other students. They find out that the “classroom” can extend beyond the walls of school and into the community. They experience how service is a reciprocal relationship - we work together, we help each other, we learn through our actions, and we all benefit.

The issue of hunger in America is a complex problem that deals with social policy, economics, and resources that is beyond what most students and adults can tackle in a few lessons. We can continue to become knowledgeable and share ideas in a variety of forums. Students *can* help right now with hunger in our communities in myriad ways. By examining options and helping with one agency in an ongoing manner, students will have the experience of being a change agent *now*.

Materials

Book: The Can-Do Thanksgiving, by Marion Hess Pomeranc

Story: The Starfish Story, a traditional story retold by Cathryn Berger Kaye

Play: *The Can-Do Drive*

Interview with Marion Hess Pomeranc

NOTE: These activities take place in preparation, during and following the can food drive - usually over a period of two weeks.

Activity One: Turning Learning Into Action

- ② Begin this activity by having students summarize what they have learned so far about nutrition and about the issue of hunger. Remind students that there are ways children can make a difference.
- ② Inform the students that the City of West Hollywood (or the community

where you live) has a commitment to help people who are hungry in our community, and has asked for their help by doing a can food drive two or more times during the school year. You may let the students know that most students do can food drives once during the year, around Thanksgiving. Ask the students about the importance of having a can food drive more than once a year.

- ② Introduce the book The Can-Do Thanksgiving by describing Dee, a young girl who is curious. With young children you may ask for times they have felt curious as a way to help them identify with the main character. Read the book, and invite the children to share their thoughts about the following:

- * What was Dee curious about?
- * How did the children in her class make a difference?
- * What did Dee and Tyler have in common? Encourage children to think about how, in addition to wearing glasses, Tyler liked to help out, just like Dee. And, they both like making new friends.

- ② Author Marion Hess Pomeranc has offered her thoughts about why she wrote this story. You may want to read this to the children and discuss if she was able to accomplish what she wanted to do through this book. See the *Interview with Marion Hess Pomeranc* in this curriculum packet.

Activity Two: Planning the Can Food Drive

- ② Ask the students to think of what needs to be done to have an effective can food drive. A list of **What CAN Be Done** is provided for reference. After they complete their list of ideas, and you add other ideas, have the students think of the sequencing for their actions. Note that if this is a school-wide drive, teachers may divide up the responsibilities, so each class has specific age-appropriate tasks. Often these tasks can match the content and skills children are learning and practicing in their studies.

- *What CAN Be Done***
- * Decide on a place for the SOVA bin
 - * Design a flyer to go home with children
 - * Make a list of suggested foods to bring in
 - * Publicize the food drive (brainstorm ways!)
 - * Sort the food that is brought in
 - * Keep a chart or graph of cans according to different food groups
 - * Bring in money and shop as a class for nutritious food

- ② Remind the students that just as in The Can-Do Thanksgiving, it is important to know where the food is going. Use **About SOVA Food Pantry** to inform the students (or comparable information about their designated food bank or agency). Depending on the students' age/grade, make copies for the students or read aloud and discuss. Let the students know that a Reach Out To SOVA Food Bin will be in your school for collecting the canned goods.
- ② Plan your timeline for actions that will lead to a successful food drive.

Optional Activity: *The Can-Do Drive* ~ a play!

A play version of The Can-Do Thanksgiving is included. You and your students may enjoy putting on the play as a way to promote the food drive.

Activity Three: During the Reach Out To SOVA Can Food Drive...

- ② The food drive usually lasts two weeks. During this time period, engage the students in following through on their action plan. You may also have them make journal entries about what they are doing to support the food drive.
- ② A bibliography is included of titles and videos that may be appropriate for your class as a read-aloud or for special assignments during the food drive.
- ② Introduce vocabulary that relates to caring and helping others.

Activity Four: Reflection

- ② What does it mean to make a difference? How does it feel? What do you learn through the experience? To begin a reflective conversation, if your students can write independently, have them answer the following questions on paper; adapt as needed. Reflection works best with a combination of questions that include *reporting*, *what has been learned*, and *what is felt*:

- * What did we accomplish through the Reach Out To SOVA drive?
- * What would you do differently next time?
- * What did you learn that you want to remember?
- * What do you want to know more about?
- * How do you feel about helping with the food drive?

- ② Once the students have written their responses, have them share their thoughts and feelings. Usually children give more authentic and personal responses when they first write their reflections, otherwise they can be easily swayed to talk about the same theme introduced by a peer.
- ② Students can also draw pictures or write poetry about their experience. Reflection can take many forms.
- ② Read *The Starfish Story* to your class. Use this to discuss how every person can make a difference. Have the students compare their experience with the can food drive with the girl and the man in the story.

Activity Five: Demonstration of Learning

- ② As the food drive comes to a conclusion, consider having the students write or draw what they have learned to accompany their cans to the SOVA Food Pantry. Students can also write a letter to the City of West Hollywood Council Members and/or an article for the school or community newspaper. This can be a way for students to demonstrate to the larger community what they have accomplished and learned through the can food drive.
- ② Include the children's work as part of open house, parent conferences or another opportunity to showcase how learning and serving are a valued part of the students' experience in your class.
- ② As students become more experienced, encourage them to share with other classes or students in other schools ways to improve their can food drive experience and make direct linkage with classroom learning. Students can write original flyers, brochures, stories, or guides that help others make a difference in their community.

The Starfish Story

a traditional story, retold by Cathryn Berger Kaye

Following a rainstorm, a girl is walking along the beach. She notices that the sand is covered in starfish, more starfish than she can imagine laying all over the wet sand. "What will happen to all these starfish?" she wonders. "They can't live long without being in water, that's for sure." She keeps walking, careful to avoid stepping on any, for there are starfish everywhere.

Just up ahead, the girl sees a man standing among the starfish. She is curious and walks closer to him. "Look at that silly man," she thinks. "He is picking up one starfish after another and throwing each one into the ocean!"

She calls to him, "Hey mister, what do you think you are doing?"

He looks at her, but doesn't say a word. He simply bends over, picks up another starfish and throws it into the water.

She hollers, "Hey mister, don't you see how many starfish there are? There must be hundreds, even thousands of starfish!" Again, no reply, but another starfish is tossed over the waves, into the water.

With a deep sigh and a bit of annoyance, the girl places her hands on her hips and takes a few more steps toward the man. She says, "This is foolish. There are too many starfish. You can't make a difference."

The man, already bent over, picks up another starfish. He looks at the starfish and at the girl. Then, as he had ever since she first noticed him on the beach, the man throws the starfish as far as he can out into the ocean to safety. After the starfish splashes into the water, the man turns to the girl and says, "I made a difference to that one."

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INTRODUCING the PLAY: *The CAN-DO DRIVE*

In *The Can-Do Drive*, we meet Dee, an elementary student. Her class is taking part in a can food drive. Dee is persistent -- she wants to know where her can food goes after she puts it in the food collection box at school. Through her ingenuity, the class learns where the cans go, and the students are invited to help make and serve a meal at a local soup kitchen. Naturally, a dilemma occurs and Dee, along with Tyler, a boy who comes to have the meal with his mother, save the day.

At the end of the play, an epilogue has been added to direct the attention and the *learning* to having an effective can food drive wherever this play is performed.

HOW THIS PLAY CAN BE USED

- ☐ To teach other classes how to participate in a meaningful can food drive
- ☐ To demonstrate to parents, other family members and the larger school community about significant community issues and what can be done to help
- ☐ To model play-writing or adapting stories, so students can develop scripts
- ☐ Students can adapt or revise the Epilogue to reflect the information they want to convey to their audience. Use this as a “teachable moment” for students to learn how they can share their ideas, and inspire others to make a difference.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Little information is provided about staging the play within the script. This is intended to allow for student creativity. The story and situations lend themselves to portraying a variety of environments -- a market, a classroom, the food kitchen. There are also scenes where there could be many people. A few ideas:

- ☐ Let students design props to be oversized and colorful.
 - ☐ Integrate “Propmasters”, i.e., the students who move props around, as important characters in telling the story on stage.
 - ☐ Use life-size cut-outs of people when you don’t have actors. For example, at the Unity Kitchen, all the guests could be cardboard cut-outs, with the exception of Tyler and his mother. A mural painted on sheets of butcher paper could show people shopping in the market.
 - ☐ When a scene involves two players, as in the kitchen scene with Dee and Tyler, you can have the other actors “freeze” or in slow motion.
 - ☐ Feel free to have the students adapt the script to fit their voice and the receiving agency. In this script, reference is made to the SOVA food pantry.
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This script is an adaptation of the book The Can-Do Thanksgiving, by Marion Hess Pomeranc.

THE CAN- DO FOOD DRIVE

adapted by Cathryn Berger Kaye

Based on the picture book,

THE CAN- DO THANKSGIVING, by Marion Hess Pomeranc

CHARACTERS

Dee	a student
Alice	Dee's mother
Priscilla	store cashier, volunteer
Ms. Ortiz	teacher
Hector	student
Keisha	student
Jocelyn	student
David	student
Mr. Hill	agency director
Tyler	child at soup kitchen
Ms. Simon	Tyler's mom
Trisha	agency volunteer
Tony	agency volunteer
Guests	people coming for meal at agency
Propmasters	move items on stage; also are agency volunteers

PROPS

- two cardboard food boxes labeled "Can-Do Food Drive"
- cans of food
- giant yellow labeled: Dee's Peas, Oak Street School
- small yellow sticker labeled: Dee's Peas, Oak Street School
- sign: One Week Later...
- sign: Welcome to Unity Kitchen
- brooms
- trays
- pots and pans
- bowls and plates
- food
- two pair of identical eyeglasses, one for Dee and one for Tyler

- sign: Pantry, that is stocked with vegetable cans, including the pea can with a yellow sticker (can be attached to poster board with velcro)

Please read *Introducing the Play: The Can-Do Food Drive* before proceeding.

Note: Props and sets can be “real” or left to the imagination of the audience. Props can be made out of cardboard or real items (unbreakable) can be used. Even groups of people, such as guests having lunch at the soup kitchen can be a prop!

Scene One: Inside Buster’s Market

(There is an “aisle” and a checkout counter with a cashier -- PRISCILLA, DEE and ALICE walk down the aisles, pushing a cart, or carrying a shopping basket. DEE picks up can after can, returning each one back on the shelf.)

ALICE

Dee, how about the corn?

DEE

No, Mom.

ALICE

Little bitty white potatoes?

DEE

Nope. Here!

(DEE picks up a can)

Peas!

(DEE raises the can)

Please?

(DEE places can on checkout counter; speaks to PRISCILLA who works cash register)

They’re for my class’s “Can-Do Food Drive.” We bring cans and stuff to school, and later they get delivered to people who need them. Somewhere.

PRISCILLA

Where is that, Dee?

DEE

(DEE turns to the audience and shrugs; she pays PRISCILLA, takes the peas, waves and leaves. She meets her MOM by the “door” and asks:)

Where will my peas go?

ALICE

To a hungry person for a nice meal.

(ALICE keeps walking “off stage” and DEE stays behind)

DEE

But, where?

Scene Two: In Class

(DEE stays where she is on stage; OTHER CHILDREN and MS. ORTIZ enter and form the classroom around her. Two boxes labeled CAN-DO FOOD DRIVE are brought in. STUDENTS enter holding cans of food, and are busy stacking the cans in the boxes, and ad lib about their cans, what food they brought.)

KEISHA

I brought in yams. We make a dynamite sweet potato pie for the holidays.

DAVID

We use the tuna for tuna casserole.

DEE

I brought in peas like we use in our family speciality: Veggie Medley!

MS. ORTIZ

Great job everyone. It's almost time for the pick-up.

DEE

The pick-up?

KEISHA

Sure, someone's going to pick up the food. Come on, it's almost recess.

DEE

But my peas! I want to see where they will... I know!

(DEE runs to her desk and takes a yellow sticker. SHE writes on it and adheres it to the can. As SHE does, two PROPMASTERS walk across stage carrying a giant yellow sticker with the words: Dee's Peas, Oak Street School)

I want to see where my peas will go!

HECTOR

No way, pea brain!

MS. ORTIZ

Recess!

(All CHILDREN and MS. ORTIZ exit)

DEE

Maybe Hector's right. Maybe I'll never know what happened to my peas!

(DEE exits. Food boxes removed)

Scene Three: In Class

(PROPMASTERS carry a sign: ONE WEEK LATER...)

MS. ORTIZ

Class! Gather 'round!

(STUDENTS all enter and join around MS. ORTIZ)

I received the most amazing letter. Unity Kitchen, an agency on Beverly Boulevard, received our "Can-Do" cans. It's a mystery how they knew where they came from.

(DEE looks at HECTOR and grins. He pouts a bit.)

Now they've invited us to help their volunteers serve a meal at their soup kitchen.

On Thursday at noon, I will take whoever in our class would like to go.

(All hands up. Everyone freezes, except DEE and HECTOR, who walk toward each other.)

HECTOR

Okay, maybe you're not such a pea-brain after all!

(DEE and HECTOR "high-five" and smile at each other. STUDENTS unfreeze, turn upstage, and freeze briefly for the scene change.)

Scene four: At Unity Kitchen

(PROPMASTERS put up agency sign, and set up four tables - two for people to eat at, one for serving, one for the "kitchen". All AGENCY FOLKS and lunch GUESTS enter, and are in place. VOLUNTEERS: sweep, set dishes, serve. TYLER and MS. SIMON are still off stage)

MR. HILL

(Standing before the class)

Welcome to Unity Kitchen. You can join our volunteers in the kitchen,

(VOLUNTEERS wave)

serving

(VOLUNTEERS wave)

or cleaning up!

(VOLUNTEERS wave)

TRISHA

I could use some help in the kitchen!

(KEISHA and HECTOR go to help)

TONY

I need table setter-uppers!

(JOCELYN and DAVID go to help)

PRISCILLA

I could use a napkin hander-outer.

(DEE sees PRISCILLA, from the supermarket, and goes to help her)

DEE

(Speaking to PRISCILLA)

I gave the peas!

(TYLER and his mother, MS. SIMON, enter. TYLER is reluctant at first. MR. Hill greets them.)

MS. SIMON

Thank you, Mr. Hill. It's our first time at Unity Kitchen.

MR. HILL

Welcome, Tyler. We're glad you and your mother could join us.

(MR. HILL directs them to a table where they sit. TYLER notices and watches the children, all helping out. DEE walks around handing out napkins. When DEE comes to TYLER, she stops. THEY notice they have the same glasses on, and smile. Then comes a noise.)

Sound effect: CRASH.

(HECTOR falls to the ground in the “kitchen”)

KEISHA

Emergency, emergency!

(KEISHA is waving her hands frantically.)

Hector knocked over all the vegetables! Kablouey!

(DEE races over to help)

TRISHA

(TRISHA is bent over HECTOR who is dazed)

The green beans are history. DEE, get me more vegetables, fast! Over there, in the pantry.

DEE

(Moves over to pantry, taking items off the shelf.)

Carrots! Zucchini! Corn! What’s that on top? Hey, my peas!

(DEE stretches, jumps up and tries to reach the peas; she is about to give up when TYLER appears with a chair)

TYLER

Could this help?

DEE

Thanks!

(DEE gets the peas)

I’m Dee.

TYLER

I’m Tyler.

TRISHA

Dee! Everyone’s waiting!

DEE

Let’s go!

(DEE and TYLER get to work with the cans and a large bowl)

PRI SCILLA

Dee, what can be made out of this mishmash of cans?

DEE

My family specialty: Veggie Medley!

TYLER

Hey, there's one can left.

DEE

My peas!

(The yellow sticker is still on top. She adds them) Just right! (DEE and TYLER carry a pot of vegies to the table; everyone bursts into applause and cheers)

KEISHA

Hooray!

MS. ORTIZ

Marvelous!

HECTOR

Time to eat! Dig in!

MR. HILL

Please wait, my friends. Let's first give thanks for the blessings of the day.

(A moment when people join hands and some close their eyes)

HECTOR

Now can we dig in!

ALL:

And everybody did!

EPILOGUE

(In this ending of the play, students can use the information provided, or adapt to reflect what they have learned about hunger, and the value of a can food drive.)

STUDENT A

Thank you for watching our play. This is a story about kids making a difference in their community.

STUDENT B

But this is just one part of the story - the rest of our story features a group of students helping in a local food pantry called SOVA.

STUDENT C

SOVA is an agency that provides food to people in need.

STUDENT D

Sometimes the people are young like me.

STUDENT E

And sometimes they are older.

STUDENT F

Sometimes the people who get food from SOVA have a place to live, they just don't have enough income to provide food for all the members of their families.

STUDENT G

Sometimes the people are new to this country, and need help while they look for work and get settled.

STUDENT H

Everyone needs a hand sometime, so we invite YOU to help, too.

STUDENT I

Help us collect food for SOVA - not just at the holidays,

ALL STUDENTS

But all year 'round.

STUDENT J

(Provides information about the can food drive, dates and where to bring the food.)

STUDENT K

Oh yeah, when you are selecting the cans to bring in, choose a nutritious item, one that you like, too.

(STUDENTS can take turns giving suggestions of food to bring in, and any other information they have learned from SOVA and their studies)

STUDENT L

So remember - You can make a difference, and:

ALL STUDENTS

Reach out to SOVA!

An interview with **Marion Hess Pomeranc**, author of
The Can- Do Thanksgiving

How did I choose the topic of a can food drive for my book? I was bringing in a can of food to my synagogue and I thought to myself, “Where do these cans go?” I wanted to know where my food went. I realize that kids across the country are collecting cans of food, and they want to know where the cans go.

My question turned into action. I began calling different food banks and ended up at a soup kitchen in my neighborhood. It was a cold day, with people lined up outside. When the door opened, volunteers – just like in the book – handed out coffee and breakfast, while men and women huddled inside eating. From bringing in a can of food and visiting the kitchen, my story grew.

I want kids to know that whatever you are bringing to the food banks and kitchens really is going to help. Knowing where the food goes does matter, because we need to connect with the places where people can get some help, and the people who are in need. This helps us remember that whatever little thing we do can make a difference. In the story, Dee saved her own money to buy the can, and her can of peas made a difference.

I would like to see my book inspire can food drives all year round, because urban children are faced with seeing people on the street all the time. When my son was young, he wanted to help the people who were asking for food and money on the streets of New York City. We would go around giving out bagels. I wanted him to view all people, regardless of their need or situation, as part of our human family.

As you read the book, remember we are all like Dee and we are all like Tyler. We will sometimes be in the position to help others, and sometimes we are in need ourselves. Most important is to be there for each other.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
BOOKS AND VIDEO THAT ENGAGE LEARNING AND SERVING ABOUT
HUNGER and HOMELESSNESS

These two issues - hunger and homelessness - are often connected for children. These titles help young people of all ages understand the varied circumstances of people in difficult and challenging situations, and will hopefully replace stereotypes and clichés with understanding, respect and action.

NON- FICTION

Hubbard, Jim. Lives Turned Upside Down--Homeless Children in their Own Words and Photographs, New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1996. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1996. Grades 3-8.

Four children who know the reality of homelessness first hand tell their stories. The children learned photography to document their lives. Descriptions of being in a shelter, attending school, and hopes for the future are told in their own words.

PICTURE BOOKS

Barbour, Karen. Mr. Bow Tie, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991.

A family befriends a man who lives on the street near their store and helps him to join with his family.

Bunting, Eve. Fly Away Home, Clarion Books, 1991.

A boy who lives in the airport with his father gains hope when he sees a trapped bird find freedom. A moving story told with dignity. See Video section.

DiSalvo-Ryan, DyAnne. Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen, Morrow, 1991.

When Willie's nephew works at the neighborhood soup kitchen preparing and serving food, he gains admiration for people who lend a hand.

Leedy, Loreen. The Edible Pyramid. Holiday House, 1996.

A clear and colorful picture of the food pyramid and all of the elements.

Pomeranc, Marion Hess. The Can-Do Thanksgiving. A. Whitman & Co., 1998.
When Dee brings a can of peas to school for the can food drive, she keeps asking, "Where do my peas go?" Her persistent questioning results in a class project to prepare and serve food for people in need at Thanksgiving. An excellent resource for transforming the traditional canned food drive into a service learning project.

Rosen, Michael J.. Home, HarperCollins, 1992.

A collaboration of thirty authors and illustrators all celebrating the places and things that make up "home." Book sales support the *Share Our Strength* organization.

Rosen, Michael J.. Food Fight--Poets Join the Fight Against Hunger with Poems to Favorite Foods. Harcourt Brace, 1996.

This collaboration celebrates food with humor and thought-provoking poetry. Sales support *Share Our Strength*, which offers classroom materials for children's participation in hunger-relief.

NOVELS

Estes, Eleanor. The Hundred Dresses, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1944. 80 pp.
Grades 2-6.

Wanda Petronski gets teased by classmates because she lives in a poor part of town and wears the same dress every day. Maddie, a classmate is confused by the taunting and by Wanda's statement that she has one hundred dresses at home.

VIDEO

Fly Away Home, Reading Rainbow. 30 minutes. Appropriate for children in grades 3-12. Distributed by GPN (800) 228-4630. Check local libraries for availability.

In addition to hearing this moving story about a boy who lives in the airport with his dad, host LeVar Burton talks with children who are homeless. We learn about their families and circumstances. Includes two examples of young people who are working to make a difference in the fight against homelessness and hunger.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about integrating service across various curriculum areas, see: *The Service Learning Bookshelf-A Bibliography of Fiction & Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action*, by Cathryn Berger Kaye, ABCD Books, 2000. ABCDbooks.org