

HANNAH'S STORY

Teacher's Guide written by **Maureen Baron, M.A.**

Target Audience: Senior Elementary School
Middle School
High School
Community Groups
Church Groups

Curriculum Areas: Social Justice and Policies
Personal Growth
Moral and Ethics Studies
Social Studies
Economics
Media Education

Curriculum Topics: Public Awareness Campaigns
Charitable Donations and Private Enterprises - Corporate Social Responsibility
Homelessness
Community responses to social issues and problems
What is my role?" - Community Service

Description: "**Hannah's Story**" is the story of Hannah Taylor, a young child who asked a question, didn't like the answer, and then did something positive to change the answer. She wanted to know about homelessness, who helped the homeless and where the homeless people went to eat, bathe and sleep. While she did receive answers to her questions, she thought that these answers did not represent "good" solutions and so she decided to improve the solutions. This is the story of a young girl's determination to make her world a better place for homeless people, the people she enlisted in her efforts, how she did it, and the results that were achieved through Hannah's vision and leadership.



Hannah's Story



Activity #1:

Homeless people and your community. "If you don't ask the question, you will never know the answer." Lead the students through the following questions to determine the status of, and supports for, homeless people in your community. The students will have to research the answers through interviews, traditional research avenues, and possibly through site visits. The information should then be collated to create a class presentation for the school or for Parent's Night in order to raise awareness of the issue. As a result of the research and presentation, the students may decide if and how they would like to help homeless people in their community.

1. Are there homeless people in your community?
2. Where do these homeless people go during the day? Students can mark these locations on a street map and then ask why they gravitate to these specific locations.
3. Where do these homeless people go during the night? Students can mark these locations on a street map and then ask why they gravitate to these specific locations.
4. Where do these homeless people go in bad weather? Students can mark these locations on a street map and then ask why they gravitate to these specific locations.
5. Where do these homeless people find organizations and facilities that offer them food, shelter, clothing, bathing facilities? Students can mark these locations on a street map and then ask why these facilities are located there.
6. What specific groups, institutions and organizations fund and provide services for the homeless?
7. What services do they provide and to whom (e.g. homeless families, teens, men, women, disabled)?
8. How much does it cost to provide these services for the homeless?
9. Where does this money come from, e.g. taxes, private funding, church or community groups?
10. Who (specific professions and the people who occupy them) helps the homeless people get off the streets and into permanent housing where they can be self-sustaining?
11. What do these homeless people need in order to become self-sustaining?
12. In your community, what has caused the people, and or families, to become homeless?
13. Would your students like to help the homeless people?
14. What could they do to help the homeless people?



Activity #2:

Taking action to help people in your community. "Caring will change the world". The students should be asked to survey their community to determine what social, social justice, or environmental issue, problem or situation could be improved through local positive actions and solutions. The students should then choose one specific action, resource, support service or program that requires financial and, or, human resource support in order to further help specific people, or a specific community, or improve a situation in your community. They should decide what they can do to make a difference, whether that is volunteering, raising money, or lobbying those who can make a difference to do so. Once the students have chosen a specific goal, and a course of action they will need to create a time line. Some suggested activities include:

1. Creation of an awareness campaign to sensitize the public or the school community, about the issues, plight and problems around the issue or situation they wish to improve, and the community resources that need financial and human resources support.
2. Running of an event to raise funds for an existing or new program, organization or resource that helps in the community.
3. Lobbying of politicians - local, provincial and federal - to provide increased or new financial support for an existing or new program, organization or resource that helps in the community.

Activity #3:

Hannah Taylor started helping the homeless through specific activities at a very young age. While she is certainly the driving force behind the Ladybug Foundation, she could not have done everything on her own. Through her commitment, vision, leadership and persuasiveness she was able to enlist the help and participation of many people in order to realize her dreams. Foundations and other charitable organizations do not run on their own. They require people to do the work and funds to support the work. Divide the students into groups and ask each group to research the success of a specific charity or charitable foundation of their own choosing using the following questions as guidelines.

1. How and why did the organization come into existence?
2. How does the mission and vision of the organization translate into specific goals, programs and activities?
3. Where is the group's headquarters located and how many branch offices do they operate?
4. What are the costs of running their offices (rent, computers, paper, mailings, printing, utilities etc.)?
5. How many paid staff members do they have?
6. How many volunteer positions are supported?
7. Do they have a Board of Directors? How many people are on this board and who are they? Where and when does this board meet? How much does it cost to host these Board of Directors meetings?
8. Does the group have corporate sponsorship? What form does that take - money, services or in-kind donations?
9. Does the group have a celebrity spokesperson, or, is the group endorsed by a celebrity? Is the celebrity a volunteer, are they paid either in money, paid travel expenses or with gifts?
10. What are the group's primary fundraising activities during a year?



11. What other profit streams does the group have - e.g. product tie-ins, sale of materials with their logo, loyalty programs such as points or discounts at stores, bequests, tax deductions, royalties, merchandizing etc.
12. What does it cost to run each fundraising activity (rentals, publicity, printing, catering, insurance etc.)?
13. What percentage of the money raised actually goes to the clients of the group through the provision of programs, resources, facilities or supports?
14. Is this the norm or is it higher or lower than the norm?
15. Does all of this information affect the students' perceptions about, and evaluation of, the effectiveness and worthiness of the group?

Activity #4:

Hannah has chosen the ladybug as a name and symbol for her foundation because it is a symbol of good luck. Where did this belief originate and why? Why is the ladybug a good logo / icon for the foundation in terms of its use in the media and in increasing the visibility of the foundation?

Activity #5:

Is a job's value only reflected in its salary? One of the homeless men, Rick, that Hannah befriends, gets a job picking garbage off the street. While Rick considers it a menial job, he is most grateful for it. He appreciates the opportunity to give back to the community by helping keep its streets clean. He acknowledges that holding this job and doing it well contributes to the development of his self-esteem, something that is necessary if he is to stay out of the ranks of the homeless. What other unskilled or low skilled jobs, and low paying jobs exist in your communities that are very necessary for the functioning, security, safety, health or prosperity of your community? If no one did the following jobs in your community, what would happen? How would your community, your family and or you, be affected if no one did these jobs?

garbage collector,
sewer worker,
street cleaner,
vermin exterminator,
grass cutter
pothole filler
snow remover.

Are these jobs, and the people who do them, valuable to your community? How should this value be expressed and communicated to those who do these jobs?



Activity #6:

There are many causes of homelessness and most often there is no single cause but rather a convergence of many different events and factors that unlimitedly lead someone to become homeless. Some of these events or factors may be:

- natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes or earthquakes
- mental health problems
- illnesses that impact on financial resources or the ability to take care of oneself
- job loss
- non supportive or abusive family relationships
- personal finances
- inability to find affordable housing

Invite a representative from an agency that works with the homeless to speak to the class, or group, about the causes of homelessness in your community. How does the agency help the homeless find an affordable home and maintain it? How do they determine what caused the client's homelessness and therefore what services or supports the client needs to successfully leave the streets? Ask the representative to use concrete examples or (anonymous) stories about real people who became homeless so that the students can begin to understand how people become homeless.



Hannah's Story

