



**The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's
Pilot Program with book & curriculum
Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes
in partnership with The Children's Village**

Pilot Program Impact

When students read Stand for Children about Marian Wright Edelman, they had many creative ideas from students. "I could teach survival skills to children in my community," said one. "I could volunteer to teach baseball to boys and girls and organize teams and games," said another. One youngster said, "We could avoid lots of problems if we tried to get along with others." Another said, "Money isn't everything. Stay in school and be yourself," adding "When I get older, I'm going to help other kids so they will be successful."

After reading Tree People, one class asked their teacher if they could be helped with an environmental project. "He (15-year-old Andy Lipkis) gave the Earth what it needed and fed it with new trees," said one student. He knew the best thing of all is the Earth." One boy said, "He made more and more friends by asking more people to volunteer." "This showed me that people can work together," another remarked. "If you try hard enough you can do anything," said another. On April 24, these boys made their own wish come true -by participating in an Earth Day ecology program and collecting litter in their neighborhoods

In January, the entire school focused its curriculum activities on the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. While students couldn't imagine being like him, through the story, Fulfilling Martin's Dream they could see how one man, Frank Carr was inspired by Dr. King to give inner city kids opportunities to work in corporate America.

Inspired by discovering how others have made a difference in the world, students are now participating in various community service projects like Midnight Run, a food distribution program for the homeless and a dog-assistance training program for physically challenged children and adults.

They are also involved with conflict management, peer mediation and trust initiatives. They have even been asked to speak on conflict resolution - seeking thoughtful, peaceful solutions - at county and regional conferences.

There is a wonderful culture being created at the Children's Village with these young people. The entire school atmosphere is becoming alive with the Stone Soup message. Students and teachers have developed a common language that is being used in their social interactions as well as their academic lessons.

Other classroom teachers are now incorporating the Stone Soup stories into regular lesson plans. The school halls now feature art displays with the "value" words describing a new way to live their lives. In January, they created an Acts of Kindness, Acts of Justice Tree -by observing students and teachers and writing each act on a leaf and placing it on the tree. By learning about real heroes like those in this book, these students have planted seeds of hope for their future.

Stone Soup for the World provides positive snapshots of the good things that go on in this world, something our students have not experienced often in their lives. These stories have served as springboards for thought-provoking discussions and heart-felt actions. Our boys now have a common experience -- and an opportunity to develop a concern for humanity. While we have just begun to mesh these stories into our curriculum, we can see that these positive messages are seeping into their thoughts. Our students can make the World a better place ... If we help them to see the way.

Kate Farrell, Principal, Fletcher J. Hairston Middle School, the Children's Village

Pilot Program Results
In partnership with The Children's Village
April 1998

The Children's Village is the nation's largest residential treatment center for children and teens. Based in New York, this 100 year-old center serves the seriously troubled inner-city students in residence, many who have never been in school before. Many have lived a life that would give most adults pause. They have experienced physical and sexual abuse; witnessed parental substance abuse, violence and incarceration; and engaged in acts of delinquency or violence.

They are angry - and sad. They do not trust. They do not love. They do not believe in themselves - or others. They do not dare to want, to need, to hurt any more. Few have had an exposure to ordinary people who want to make a difference.

Few of them believe that one person can do much. Most have no hope for change.

Pilot Program Design

The Greenburgh Eleven Union Free School District Middle School at the Children's Village developed a 12-week pilot program in partnership with the Stone Soup Leadership Institute. Students read stories from Stone Soup for the World about other African American and Hispanic teens who had experienced similar challenges in their short lives.

- Will Morales, a 14-year-old illiterate, imprisoned gang member who is now a 27-year old law student, homeowner and founder of Urban Edge's Youth Police Partnership in Boston.

- Nane Alejandrez, a former drug user in Santa Cruz who would lost 13 family members to drug-related crime, now leads Barrios Unidos, transforming Latino youth across the country

- George Sarabia and Gil Espinoza, former youth gang members in East Los Angeles who turned their lives around by first acting in Edward James Olmos' anti-gang film, American Me and then speaking in his Lives of Hazard program to teens asking them to stop the violence. **"If I'm not able to forgive, when will it ever stop?"**

- Dexter Wellman, a 12-year-old African-American who created a make-shift school for the children in the homeless shelter where he was living.

- Chantay Henderson Jones, a 14-year-old girl who helped rebuild abandoned buildings and provide homes for homeless teens in her East Harlem neighborhood with Youth Build

These *Stone Soup for the World* stories were integrated into the school's Skill streaming Social Skills Program, a structured learning approach that teaches students prosocial skills in weekly counseling sessions. Teachers used these inspiring stories to connect storytelling, writing and language arts projects with discussions about sharing, caring and giving. This interactive learning experience led to many creative activities. After reading the stories, students created a list of "value" words that exemplified prosocial behaviors. Teachers focused on lessons learned that enabled people to work together. Students came to see how one person could make a difference - and when we work together, we can change the world.