



Christmas in April

Patricia Johnson

Washington D.C., U.S.

★ Values

- **Brotherly/ Sisterly Love**
- **Optimism**
- **Teamwork**
- **Vision**
- **Organization**
- **Social Emotional Learning**

★ Reflection Questions

How would you feel if a group of strangers came to fix up a home in your neighborhood?

Do you know any elderly or disabled people in your neighborhood who need extra help?

What skills and gifts do you have that could help fix up someone's home?

What do you think Patty Johnson means by "We are love in action."?

★ Lessons Learned

Helping elderly people can make a world of difference in their lives.

Just one person, like Patty can start something that can one day help thousands of people.

When we work together, we can have fun and accomplish a lot, too.

Volunteer organizations like Christmas in April have a tremendous impact on the people in a community.

One person's life can be changed with the help of others.

Since 1989, Patty Johnson has been organizing volunteers and rekindling the tradition of neighbors helping neighbors. Christmas in April's specialty is repairing low-income homes for the elderly. On the last Saturday in April, thousands of volunteers in 207 chapters join together to "build miracle, one house at a time." This story tells how tough inner-city teenagers work side-by-side with Junior League housewives to restore 72-year-old Frances Vaughn's Washington D.C. home. "They tore my house up and put it back together again, like it was brand new!" says Frances, grateful that her number one dream, to stay in her own house as she grew old, had become a reality. "We are love in action," says Patty.

★ Language Arts: SEL & Diversity

Create a Pennies from Heaven project. Students collect pennies throughout the year, count them weekly, calculate the money they raise, graph the income and hold a "roundtable" discussion to decide how to spend the funds: paints or materials to fix a home.

Invite a Junior League representative to speak to your class about how they help your city. Create a talent show with ticket sales going to your own class Christmas in April project.

★ Social Studies: Diversity

Research the impact that Christmas in April has had on the 207 communities. Join or create a Christmas in April chapter in your community. Develop a list of elderly people's homes that need repairs. Make a list of people to invite to help your class fix it up.

★ Community Service: Service Learning

Invite people in your community to participate in National Rebuilding Day (late April). Hold a Cleaning Supply Dance with an entrance fee of cleaning supplies for a project. Sponsor a tool drive inviting people to donate hammers, paint brushes, cleaners etc. Create a fundraising Run-a-thon for a Christmas in April project. Sponsor students for every lap they run around the school/track or hold a Dance/Bowl/Bike-a-thon.