VIRTUAL SUMMER CAMP

WEEK THREE: CONNECT

Elder Connection

For Middle School and Up
Spend some time with an elder (or elders) in your community. Get to know them better by collecting details about their life and listening to them share their stories. Have them talk about a special memory of theirs, then write about or draw it in a comic. This is a great opportunity for reflection and understanding, too!

What Will You Learn?
- Ways to communicate with those who have different experiences from you
- Finding connections between the lives of elders and yourselves
- Information about the past from those who actually experienced it
- How different time periods affect behavior and actions

Materials:
- Pen or pencil.
- Something to color with, such as crayons, markers or colored pencils - you pick!
- The Elder Connections Info Sheet template.
- The blank comics template. You can also draw on blank paper if you’d like. Feel free to print out as many as you like.
- Optional: a camera or audio recorder to capture their voices. *Remember to always ask permission before taping anyone!*

Instructions:
- Pick a time and date that works best for you and your elder friend to talk. Choose a time when both of you are most likely to be alert and not tired or busy with other things.
- Take all of your materials with you. You can bring along extras just in case; you never know when you’re going to come back for more stories in the future!
- Use the Elder Connection Info Sheet to ask your new friend questions about themselves. Some question prompts are already listed for you to get started, but you can add your own, such as: “Do you/Did you have a nickname?” or “What types of movies or radio plays did you like when you were my age?”
● Ask them about a particular memory that they have that was important to them, or made them feel a certain way. Use the space in the Info Sheet to write it down. Remember to listen carefully so that you can get all the details. Make sure to give your friend enough time to speak. You may have to come back a few times so that you can get the story right.
● Use the comics panel to draw out the action from the memory. You can look at your notes, or ask your friend to clarify some information to get a complete picture. Don’t forget to show it to them and ask them what they think.

Reflection Questions:
● What are some things that you learned about your new elder friend or family member?
● What are some similarities between the two of you? Did you find that you shared the same viewpoints or ideas about anything?
● What parts of their memory and reflection story stood out the most to you? Why so?
● Has your opinion about anything changed after talking with your elder friends? Was there anything that was unexpected, or that surprised you?

Explanation:
You just created your own comic and made an impressive fact sheet for a special elder in your community. You’ve also established a great new relationship, too. In the case of a family member, we hope that you’ve made the relationship that you had even stronger. We hope that you’ll continue to spend time with them, and to think differently about how we all relate to the older people in our communities. We also hope that you’ll realize that everyone has an important story to tell, and that it’s important to give them the chance to tell them, and to share their feelings.

More to Explore at the Library:
You can continue to explore these relationships by checking out titles like Any Day with You by Mae Respicio, Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor, or Gone Crazy in Alabama by Rita Williams-Garcia.

Guide created by Annelisa Purdie.