LEND A HAND

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PURPOSE
It comes naturally to most of us to help out when needed. This icebreaker sparks discussion about the importance of helping others, and how easy it can be to make helping part of our everyday lives.

GRADES
2 and up

TIME
10-15 minutes

MATERIALS
• supplies for playacting scenario (see below)
• a sample, age-appropriate “helping” story
• paper and writing utensils for each participant

SUBJECT AREAS
Language Arts and Social Studies/History

COMMON CORE STANDARDS
Common Core for grades 2-5:  http://bit.ly/1itxu5G
Common Core for grades 6-8:  http://bit.ly/19dFbDg
Common Core for grades 9-12:  http://bit.ly/1bdOpzh
PERTINENT INFORMATION

This activity makes an excellent icebreaker for inspiring others to get involved in their community and to realize that they can make a difference every day.

PREPARATION

Make sure that participants have paper and writing utensils available to them before this activity begins.

PROCEDURE

1. Begin by playacting a scenario in which you get participants to help you, without them really realizing what they’re doing (for example, you may rush in with your hands full of materials, greet the class, ask them to please do something – such as put the chairs in a circle – and “accidentally” drop your materials all over, thanking those who help you pick up the scattered items).

2. After a short period of time of participants helping, stop and point out to them what they did: helping without thinking about it. “The point is that we’re all volunteers (or helpers, if you prefer) at heart.”

3. “But, not everyone steps up to help.” Share with participants a story that exemplifies a time when many people did NOT step up to help, but one person did. (It could be a story of your own, or one that you’ve discovered elsewhere.)

4. Lead a brief discussion about concepts such as:
• “Volunteering needs to become a way of life, so that when something needs done, someone steps up.”

• The difference between people’s willingness to immediately help out without question during the scenario, and their ability/willingness to go outside their comfort zone during their daily lives.

• The fact that we don’t have to always “sign up” at some organization to volunteer; it’s a way of life to pitch in when someone needs help.

5. Ask participants to each write down 2-5 ways that they can make a difference today. Have them share their responses with a neighbor, and then ask volunteers to share with the entire group.

6. Leave participants with the following quote:

“If not me, who? And if not now, when?” ~ Mikhail Gorbachev