

COMMUNITY
ACTIVITY PACK

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Being part of a community is important for all of us, and a sense of community is critical for middle schoolers to continue to develop and understand their identity. Use these books and activities to celebrate all the ways community is built by families, neighbors, and other people in our lives.

This activity packet includes a selection of resources for educators, families, and students.

BOOKLIST: A list of books about community recommended by RIF

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: An activity about community for the classroom

HOME ACTIVITY: An activity about community designed to help students continue learning at home

STUDENT ACTIVITY: An activity about community for students to complete independently

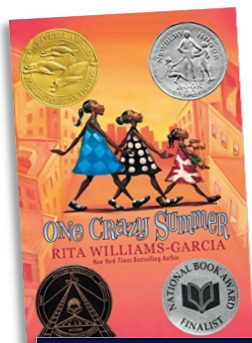
We suggest you print and copy the **Home Activity, Student Activity, and Booklist** pages and send them home to extend the learning.

For more reading resources, visit

www.RIF.org/literacy-central/collections/middle-school-family-literacy-initiative-community

COMMUNITY BOOKLIST

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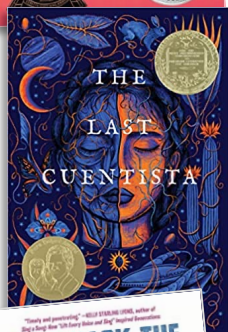
One Crazy Summer

Author: Rita Williams-Garcia
Adventure, Grades 4-7



Hide and Seek

Author: Daka Hermon
Horror, Grades 3-7



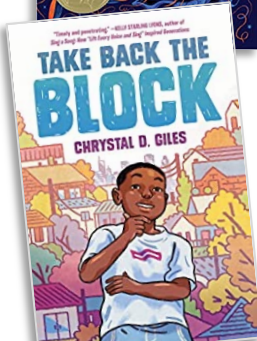
The Last Cuentista

Author: Donna Barba Higuera
Fantasy/Sci-Fi, Grades 5-8



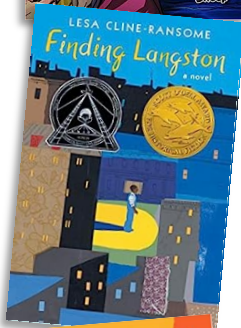
The Mothman Sightings

Author: Chris Bowman,
Mystery, Grades 3-4



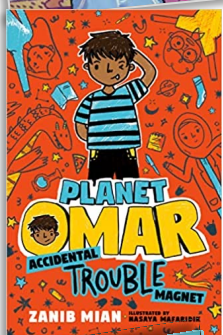
Take Back the Block

Author: Chrystal D. Giles
Friendship, Grades 3-7



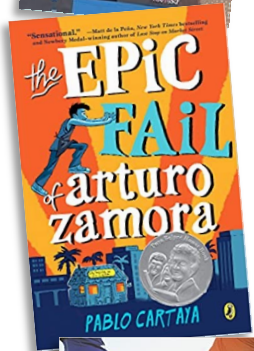
Finding Langston

Author: Lesa Cline-Ransome,
The Arts,
Grades 3-7



Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet

Author: Zanib Miam
Funny, Grades 2-5



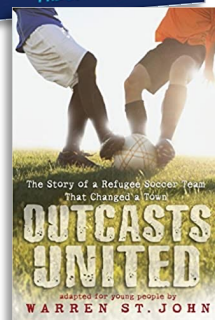
The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora

Author: Pablo Cartaya
Relationships, Grades 5-8



Amal Unbound

Author: Aisha Saeed,
History, Grades 5-9



Outcasts United

Author: Warren St. John
Sports/Gaming, Grades 7-9

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

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COMMUNITY CIRCLE

No matter the size or closeness of relationships, your class is a community. Perhaps your class has already gelled or perhaps your relationships are still forming. Either way, this activity provides the time and space for in-class community connections to be made.

STEPS

1. Read something about community, e.g., books from our list, an article, a poem.
2. Lead a discussion about the piece, including how it represents or relates to community and what the students think about the importance of community.
3. Invite students to have a community meeting. Let them know that everyone will have a chance to talk (use a popcorn structure, pass around an object to indicate whose turn it is to speak, or go around the circle in order), but it is fine to pass. If you have regular class meetings (or another structure where students check in), try using the reading to anchor a new discussion.
4. Have students share their thoughts on their classroom community. Structure the discussion in a way that supports safety and respect and offer prompts that will guide the discussion towards analysis, constructive criticism, and celebration.
Example prompts:
 - What have you noticed (in your readings or in your life) when you see a group of people working really well together?
 - What is working well in our class?
 - What could we do (or do more of) that would strengthen our class as a community?
5. After the discussion, ask students to complete exit cards that include one idea they heard during the discussion that they would support.
6. (Optional) If your class structure permits, consider a weekly community circle. If you already do something similar, ask your students for ideas to strengthen it.

HOME ACTIVITY

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LOOK FOR -- AND BE -- THE HELPERS

Your middle schooler has been learning about community at school and this activity is designed to extend the learning at home.

Help your child expand their understanding of community by recognizing the people who make your community stronger and extending yourselves in a new way within your community.

STEPS

1. Talk with your middle schooler about your family's community. Who do you consider to be a part of it?
2. It's likely that your middle schooler has been reading books about community in school. Talk with them about specific communities they've read about and how characters interact and contribute in those communities.
3. Next, talk about what kind of community members you are. How do you participate? What kinds of community involvement do you value? What effect do you have on your community?
4. With your middle schooler, brainstorm one new way you can connect to your community. It could be simple (e.g., introducing yourself to your mail carrier, new neighbor, or a cashier you see regularly) or more involved (e.g., researching a community garden plot, organizing a block party, helping a neighbor with a household task).
5. Carry out your plan, invite others to join you to build even more community connections, and track the ripple effects on you and/or your community.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

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WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY

Based on your recent focus on community, this activity will challenge you to identify the very special parts of your own community. Make a flyer or create a social media post to let newcomers know about the best parts of their new neighborhood.

STEPS

1. Think about everything you've learned and are learning about community. What makes a community great?
2. Now, consider your own community. What are the pieces – people, places, and things – that make your community special? What would you include in a brochure to advertise it? What might the casual tourist miss?
3. Now, imagine you are the welcoming committee for your community. You've been tasked with creating an information piece for newcomers.
4. Create the piece.
 - It can be in any format you want.
 - It can feature whatever special aspects of the community you think are most important.
 - You might consider including things like reviews, a star system, a map, testimonials, etc.
5. Consider asking your teacher and/or classmates if anyone wants to present or swap finished products – you may discover something new about your own community!