

Everyone's Hero

Just Keep Swinging!

A facilitator's guide for youth leaders, educators and families to accompany *Everyone's Hero*. Ages 6 – 10.





Dear Group Facilitator:

Everyone's Hero is a funny and touching animated film (also depicted in book form—see below) that raises a core question for children: What would you do if you had a chance to be a hero?

The story revolves around a boy with the last name Irving. When things go wrong for young Irving and his family, he sets out to make things right. Irving's make-believe journey involves two buddies – a talking baseball named Screwie, and an extremely valuable baseball bat named Darlin'. Darlin' is the famous lucky bat of baseball's biggest star at the time, Babe Ruth.

The backdrop for the story is the Great Depression in America during the 1930s. It shows a time when people had to scrape by to put food on the table and clothe their children. Everything seems a little bit more precious and also harder to hold onto.

The story is ideal for children ages 6-10 because it engages them in thinking about the boundary between real life and make believe, it uses humor and cartoon images that will appeal to this age group, and offers them ideas about ways to stand up for oneself and one's beliefs as well as ways to solve problems through perseverance and teamwork.

Over the course of the story Irving develops a sense of the "hero inside" of himself. With the help and support of several characters—imaginary and real, children and adults—Irving finds that he possesses strength and determination, and that he is able to make a big positive contribution to help others.

This activity guide, *Just Keep Swinging!*, complements the central messages found in the movie and the books. It may be used before or after viewing the movie or reading the book(s), and offers group and individual activities for youth, ages 6-10.

The guide is produced by the National Collaboration for Youth, an organization which provides a unified voice for its coalition of more than forty national, nonprofit, youth development organizations. The 30-year-old organization concentrates on improving conditions for youth in the United States and enabling youth to realize their full capabilities. As a result, youth development and youth empowerment play central roles in the activity guide for *Everyone's Hero*.

Thank you for exploring the themes of *Everyone's Hero* with young people. The story's messages and ideas are important ones for youth, your community, and our society to explore.



Steps for Youth to Take with the *Everyone's Hero: Just Keep Swinging!* Program

STEP 1: See the Film and Read the Book(s)

Everyone's Hero opens in theaters on September 15, 2006. Youth can also see the movie when it becomes available on DVD. Three related books are also available online and in book stores. Youth are encouraged to read at least one of the following:

- *Everyone's Hero: The Movie Storybook*, Tracey West, Price Stern Sloan, 2006
- *Keep on Swinging!: Everyone's Hero*, Tracey West, Price Stern Sloan, 2006
- *Screwie's Adventure: Everyone's Hero*, Tracey West, Price Stern Sloan, 2006

Go to www.youthFILMproject.org for more information on the film and books.

STEP 2: Participate

Use the activity guide to take part in various fun-filled writing, reading and community outreach activities on the following themes:

- 1) Understanding how to "just keep swinging" when times get tough
- 2) Setting and achieving goals
- 3) Creating teamwork
- 4) Developing an understanding of some of the history of baseball
- 5) Sharing stories of heroism in everyday life

STEP 3: Complete a Service Project

Refer to this guide for ideas to create a story of the hero you would like to be in your family, school or community. Share your story with younger children, or with adults in a hospital or nursing home.





Table of Contents

MODULE ONE: Become an “Everyday Hero” 5

- **Activity 1: Just Keep Swinging 6**
Emphasizes ways to bounce-back and work towards one’s goals.
- **Activity 2: Setting Things Right 8**
Helps youth to understand the value of addressing and solving problems.
- **Activity 3: Positive Self-Talk 10**
Highlights positive self-talk and making the best of a tough situation.
- **Activity 4: Better Together 13**
Keys into the value of teamwork.

MODULE TWO: Real-Life Connections to the Movie 16

- **Activity 1: History of Racial Segregation in Baseball..... 17**
Provides background reading on the history and success of African-American baseball, including the “breaking” of the color barrier in baseball.
- **Activity 2: Who Was Babe Ruth? 19**
Asks young people to look into who the superstar was featured in *Everyone’s Hero*.
- **Activity 3: A Candy Bar Named for You!..... 20**
A fun activity, based on the idea of the Baby Ruth Bar, asking participants to create an advertisement for their own candy bar.
- **Activity 4: The Legacy of Dana and Christopher Reeve..... 21**
Provides information about the Reeves and their many contributions to society.

MODULE THREE: Creating and Sharing Stories..... 23

- **Activity 1: Screwie and Darlin’ 24**
Explores the fun that happens when objects become characters and gives the kids a chance to “personify” an object.
- **Activity 2: Create Your Own Hero!..... 25**
Asks youth to design, illustrate and narrate a story for a hero in their own family, school or community life.
- **Activity 3: Share Your Hero Stories 26**
Suggests that participants take their stories developed for Activity Two (above) and share them with younger children, or adults or senior citizens who would enjoy the company and creativity.

Everyone’s Hero Post Program Evaluation..... 27

MODULE 1

Become an “Everyday Hero”



Notes for the Facilitator

The activities in this module are designed to help children understand how valuable it is to stick with activities, to take risks and to learn. They will also develop an understanding of the ways that positive self-care, self-confidence and giving positive support to others help to create better conditions for learning and achieving one’s goals.

Some children may not realize that they have the power to assert themselves, to be treated with respect and to have their ideas, their person and property treated with positive regard. Therefore, the activities in this module focus on enabling young people to recognize and exercise social problem-solving and self-advocacy skills. Therefore, youth begin to learn that they can influence how others treat them and can promote helpful connections among their peers, between youth and adults, and in their larger communities. These are critical understandings and behaviors for fending off teasing and bullying.

Importantly, please tailor the activities to the life circumstances of the children and youth in your group. Many of us have home or everyday situations that may be different from those depicted in the film or books. In some cases, being teased or bullied, as depicted in *Everyone’s Hero*, may be experiences that some children recognize as their own. In all cases, it will be essential to create a supportive atmosphere for discussion and reflection.

OBJECTIVES

Youth will gain an understanding of what it means to “just keep swinging” (to keep on trying and learning).

Youth will become aware of ways to give positive support to themselves and others.

Youth will be able to identify and reflect on elements of teamwork.

MODULE 1: Become an “Everyday Hero”

Activity 1: Just Keep Swinging –



Activity Type: Partner Role Plays

Link to the Story

Note: This may be read aloud by a group member/the facilitator for all to hear or for older children it may be individual reading before the activity.

When the main character of *Everyone’s Hero*, a 10-year-old boy, strikes out in a sand lot baseball game, he feels ashamed. Part of the reason he feels so bad is that he loves baseball and he wants to be very good at it. Yet, when he tries to play, especially when he tries to hit the ball, he plays so poorly that the other boys make fun of him. They call him names and tell him that they never want him to play with them again. Everyone picks on young Irving.

Later that evening, Irving goes to see his father to cheer himself up. Irving’s father, Stanley Irving, is a janitor at a giant ballpark, where the number one professional team at the time plays. Stanley cares about his son and senses that the boy is feeling down.

Irving does not want to tell his father how badly he played in the sand lot baseball game or about how lousy he feels. He wants to be as good as the ball players that play to the big crowds in the stadium. Irving imagines that he is a star player and that the crowd roars when he steps onto the ball field. But, young Irving still has a lot to learn.

Since Stanley works at the New York City stadium, he sees the ball players all the time—during practices and during games. He sees all of what goes on behind the scenes, as well as what the fans see. Irving’s father decides to tell him an important story:

Stanley:

You know, I was watching the team practice the other day
and it struck me...here are guys who make a livin’ playing baseball,
they play every day, and even on the day after they lose a game,
they’re still standing at the plate swinging that bat.
And do you know how they got to be so good?

Irving answers:

They just keep swinging?

And his father smiles and nods.

(c) 2006 IDT Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved

MODULE 1: Become an “Everyday Hero”

Activity 1: Just Keep Swinging –



Group Discussion

Key Questions

- What do you think Irving means when he says, “just keep swinging?”
- What are some other ways of expressing the same idea?

Examples: Never give up! Try, try, and try again!
Get right back up when you fall. It’s important to bounce back.

Key Words & Ideas



Practice (to repeat for the sake of learning, to go over again and again)

Positive Attitude (to be upbeat; to believe that you can succeed)

Support (to show good feelings, kindness and encouragement; to stand up for yourself or another person)

Just Keep Swinging! Partner Role Play Activity

Instructions

1. Brainstorm activities that are very hard to do for the first time, such as climbing a rope to the ceiling of a high gymnasium, learning to play a musical instrument, speaking in another language, diving off a high diving board.
2. Have the children pair off.
3. Ask each pair to choose an activity that is difficult to learn, where each of them will act out their attempt to do it. Tell them that they have to show what it is like to try something, but not quite be able to do it...because they are still learning and need to practice.
4. And, there is an important rule: While each child is acting out their attempt to do the difficult activity, the partner may only say encouraging things—like “don’t give up,” or “there, you almost got it” or “that was good.”
5. Have them switch so that each person gets to act out a scene.

Afterwards, ask the children to reflect on how they felt during the role plays. Talk about how we become good at doing difficult things. Being good at anything takes **practice** and patience. It also means that you have to keep on going, or to “just keep swinging” until you improve.

This sometimes takes courage because learning something new can look foolish or funny.

It also takes a **positive attitude** and **support** from other people who help you learn and help you to stay positive.

MODULE 1: Become an “Everyday Hero”

Activity 2: Setting Things Right



Activity Type: Group or Individual Art Activity

Link to the Story

Note: This may be read aloud by a group member/the facilitator for all to hear, or it may be individual reading before the activity.

In the movie *Everyone's Hero*, Irving visits his father who works as a janitor at the baseball stadium at night. Irving brings his father a boxed dinner at the big empty ballpark. Because Irving has had a bad day his father decides to give him a treat. Irving's father lets him see the lucky baseball bat used by the world famous ball player, Babe Ruth. The bat is named Darlin' and it is kept in a special locker—to make sure that no harm will come to it.

When his father steps away from the locker where Darlin' is kept, to close the stadium for the night, he leaves the locker open for a few minutes to let Irving get a closer look.

As soon as Irving's father leaves the locker room, a cheating ball player from another team comes in. It is Lefty Maginnis who wants to stop Babe Ruth from winning. He thinks that he can stop Babe if he takes away Babe's good luck charm, the bat. Lefty feels certain that if Babe does not have Darlin' to play with, he will not play well. And, if Babe Ruth does not play well, then Babe's team will lose the championship series.

Lefty acts like he is a security guard and tells Irving to leave. So Irving runs out of the locker room to find his father. But the next day when Irving hears that Darlin' has been stolen, he knows the truth - that Lefty is a thief, not a security guard.

Even though Irving has not stolen the bat and could not have known who Lefty was, he feels responsible when the bat is stolen. He knows that his father left the locker open just for him to get a close look at Darlin' and it was the perfect opportunity for Lefty to steal the bat. The situation is made worse when Irving's father loses his job for failing to keep the bat safe.

Irving feels terrible and he wants to set things right. So off he goes to look for Darlin,' to return the bat to Babe.

MODULE 1: Become an "Everyday Hero"**Activity 2: Setting Things Right****Create Your Own Storyboard**

When making a movie, the director of a film may block out ideas for action or scenes in the movie on a "storyboard." Here's your chance to make your own storyboard by drawing pictures of an important way that you would like to set things right. Like Irving, the main character in *Everyone's Hero*, you can be the star of your own story.

Think about a few examples of problems that you could solve in your story. Perhaps something is lost. How would you find it? Perhaps something is broken. How would you fix it?

By filling in the storyboard captions, you will be able to describe what is happening in each scene. Afterwards, share your idea with your friends and family.

Here I am before the problem happens.

Here's my problem.

It is _____ .

Here's how I felt.

Here's how other people felt.

Here's how I set things rights and solved the problem.

Success! Here's how we all felt afterwards.

MODULE 1: Become an “Everyday Hero”

Activity 3: Positive Self-Talk



Activity Type: Group Discussion or Individual Writing Activity

Link to the Story

Note: This may be read aloud by a group member/the facilitator for all to hear, or it may be individual reading before the activity.

Irving, the main character of *Everyone’s Hero* goes on a journey to find Darlin’—a special bat used by baseball star, Babe Ruth. Irving wants to return the bat to Babe. On the journey, Irving meets many interesting people and has many exciting experiences.

At one point, following an amazing train ride, Irving jumps off the train and ends up wandering in the woods nearby the train tracks. Irving is tired and scared. He comes across a dog that leads him to an old, abandoned factory where some men are living.

This sounds creepy, but it is not. The story takes place at a time in America (the early 1930s) when honest and good men did not have paying jobs, so they would ride on trains from town to town to look for work. These men were known as hobos.

In *Everyone’s Hero*, the hobos are very nice to Irving. They offer to share their campsite and their food with him. But, Irving is a little nervous. He has never been this far away from home and has never seen anyone living like this before, without a house, a bed, or a stove to cook on; with only the clothes they are wearing and pretty much nothing else.

As he approaches the hobos, Irving asks: “Are you guys....ummm.....?” One of them answers Irving, “Bums?” He laughs and says, “No we’re not bums... we have just fallen on hard times.”*

Irving feels a little more comfortable, but he does not know what to think. Yet, he is hungry and so he joins the men for dinner. Irving finds out that they are baseball fans—in fact, they are New York team fans—just like he is. They have hooked up a radio to listen to the championship series. They all listen carefully to the crackling old radio.

When the New York team loses the game Irving panics. He thinks that the team lost because Darlin’, the lucky bat used by the star player, Babe Ruth, is not at the game—Irving has not been able to return it yet. He cannot rest. The boy wants to get the bat back as quickly as possible.

MODULE 1: Become an “Everyday Hero”

Activity 3: Positive Self-Talk



Seeing that Irving is feeling distressed, the hobos start to share more of their positive ideas with him. Not only do the hobos have positive things to say about themselves—dreaming of better times in the future - they also have positive thoughts about the team. Two of them start to talk:

Andy:

There's always another game tomorrow.
And, the Babe...the Babe always bounces back.
Aw come on, son, Babe's got a big ol' heart, he won't let us down.
Look, when babe was a kid he had nothing.
Then he picks up a bat, he starts swingin'...
look where it got him.

Jack:

If Babe can do it, so can you!

(c) 2006 IDT Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved

MODULE 1: Become an "Everyday Hero"**Activity 3: Positive Self-Talk**

The hobos in *Everyone's Hero* might be down on their luck, but they keep their hopes up with positive ideas. They know that it is important to stay positive and upbeat even when things are not going well. They know, too, that believing in yourself and knowing that you can do great things sometimes means making the best of a tough situation.

Turning something negative into a positive takes creativity and a cheery outlook. As the saying goes, "if life gives you sour lemons, make lemonade!"

Here are few negatives (sour lemons)let's see how you can turn them into positives (delicious lemonade)!

Negative (a sour lemon!)	Positive (delicious lemonade!)
You get a huge ketchup stain on your favorite shirt and your mother is very upset.	How can you turn this into a positive experience?
You walk into a room where you don't know anyone.	
You kick the soccer ball, but miss the goal.	
Some older kids tease you and you cannot get their words out of your head.	
Think of one of your own . . .	And, now turn it into a positive!

MODULE 1: Become an “Everyday Hero”

Activity 4: Better Together



Activity Type: Group Team-Building Activity

Link to the Story

Note: This may be read aloud by a group member/the facilitator for all to hear or for older children it may be individual reading before the activity.

During his travels to bring the bat back to its rightful owner, Irving encounters many obstacles. He uses his intelligence, faith and courage to keep on going. He also has two friends to help him out with good ideas and good humor. They are a talking baseball named Screwie and Babe Ruth’s bat itself—named Darlin’.

Together, Irving, Screwie and Darlin’ make a powerful threesome as they figure out how to get Darlin’ back in time for Babe and the New York team to win the championship.

In the movie, *Everyone’s Hero*, there are several scenes where Screwie and Darlin’ do everything they can to help Irving. In one, Irving is sure that he is not going to get to the championship game on time and Darlin’ cheers him up. Through ups and downs and enormous challenges the three buddies stick together and continue on their journey to the big game.

When they get to the game wonderful events occur—miraculously, Irving, Screwie and Darlin’ score a home run that helps the New York team to win. They all feel wonderful because they accomplished great success together. They also realize that they could not have done so without each other. As the announcer says, “It’s a Home Run!” the three friends celebrate and the baseball fans in the stadium go wild with cheers:

Irving jumps for joy and shouts to Darlin’ the lucky bat, “We did it Darlin’!”

But, Darlin’ knows that she cannot hit a homerun by herself and replies, “No, you did it, Irving! I’m just real good at playing second fiddle.”

And, Screwie, the baseball, is celebrating, too: “Can you believe it? I’m a home run ball! Yahooooooo!,” he says as he lands in Irving’s hand.

And, Irving says to him, “You always were a home run ball!” as Screwie’s eyes well up with tears of pride.

(c) 2006 IDT Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved

MODULE 1: Become an “Everyday Hero”

Activity 4: Better Together



Group Discussion

Key Questions

- What are some of the ways that you and your friends help each other out?
- What are some of the key elements that make it better to do things together?

Examples:

- Everyone takes turns.
- Everyone has respect for each other and listens to each other's ideas.
- You agree to work together to meet your goal.
- You pay attention to what the other people need—instead of just doing things your own way.
- You celebrate and compliment others on the ways they helped the group.

MODULE 1: Become an “Everyday Hero”

Activity 4: Better Together



Better Together! Team-Building Activity

Instructions

1. Have all of the children sit in a circle.
2. Ask them to take off their shoes and put them in the middle of the circle.
3. Tell them that the challenge is to figure out how to make the longest possible line in the least amount of time, using all of the shoes.
4. For more fun, use a timer or stop watch.

Game Rules

- Before they start, everyone has to agree on a way to make the line of shoes.
- They need to listen to each other’s ideas and come to an agreement.
- No one can act alone.
- Everyone needs to show cooperation.

GO!

When the children are done, have them sit in a circle and reflect on what happened:

- How did they work together?
- Was the result better because they worked together? The line would be shorter if some did not participate...they could make the line faster with more people...
- How did everyone pitch in to make the line of shoes?

Measure the line. Celebrate!

MODULE 2

Real-Life Connections to the Movie



Notes for the Facilitator

The activities in this module are designed to provide children with opportunities to understand the connections between the animated fiction of *Everyone's Hero* and real people and events of significance. The activities largely emphasize reading for enjoyment and reading to expand one's base of knowledge. The reading activities may be done aloud in a group or independently.

The module also touches on the theme of overcoming adversity. The racial discrimination faced by African-American baseball players and the spinal cord injury and paralysis suffered by the filmmaker, Christopher Reeve, are discussed in the activities of this module. These real life connections help children to see that hardships and extreme challenges do not stop people from achieving their dreams—and becoming everyday heroes.

OBJECTIVES

Youth will explore some of the real-life connections to the story.

Youth will conduct research using various methods.

Youth will read from related materials and books of interest to them.

MODULE 2: Real-Life Connections to the Movie

Activity 1: History of Racial Segregation in Baseball

Activity Type: Individual or Group Reading



Reading that Takes You Behind the Scenes of *Everyone's Hero*

In *Everyone's Hero*, Irving meets up with a gutsy girl, named Marti Brewster, who helps him stand up to a bunch of bullies. Not only is she gutsy, Marti is really good at pitching a ball.

As it turns out, Marti's father is a ball player. He's so famous that Irving knows his name. But, Marti's father cannot play in the championship series with Babe Ruth. He is talented enough, but at that time in American history some players—like Marti's father—were kept out of the professional leagues, because of **racial discrimination**. African Americans, like all Americans, loved baseball. Then, as now, there were many excellent black players. In fact, some of the top baseball players of all time have been African American.

More than a hundred years ago, African Americans formed their own baseball teams and their own leagues. As long ago as 1862, a newspaper sports reporter looking for a game between two white teams stumbled upon a game between black teams and reported on the game for his paper.

Several leagues were formed for African American players over many years, owned by both white and black businessmen. There were teams in many U.S. cities and hundreds of highly skilled African American players who organized their own African American championship series. There was also an all-star team that traveled throughout the country to play.

By the 1940s, there was a lot of discussion about bringing African American players onto the same teams as white players. Because there were so many tremendously strong players among the African American teams, it was clear that the white professional teams would be improved by including them. Still there were many people who were against allowing black and white players on the same team.

In 1945, Jackie Robinson, a 26 year-old African American baseball star, was signed by a professional team in Brooklyn, New York. Then in 1946, the same team signed four more black players - Roy Campanella, Don Newcombe, John Wright and Roy Partlow.

In April 1947, when the Brooklyn team opened their season against the Boston team, Jackie Robinson was on first base. With that game's first pitch, Robinson became the first black man to play in the professional leagues, breaking the **color barrier** that had surrounded baseball. In his first season, Robinson was named Rookie of the Year. In 1949, he won the batting title and he went on to be voted the League's Most Valuable Player and to lead Brooklyn to the championship. Robinson appeared in six All-Star Games and six championship games with Brooklyn. He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

MODULE 2: Real-Life Connections to the Movie

Activity 1: History of Racial Segregation in Baseball

After the integration of the professional leagues in 1947, as marked by the appearance of Jackie Robinson with the Brooklyn team, interest in the African American baseball leagues faded away. Yet, it is clear that these teams provided inspiration and opportunity to African American ball players for many decades.

Information adapted from a range of sources, including Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, www.en.wikipedia.org

Key Words & Ideas



Racial discrimination (to prevent a person from having basic freedoms and opportunities because of hatred based on differences in race, ethnic background and/or skin color and appearance)

Color barrier (a limit or blockade based on race, skin color and/or appearance; often refers to the limits on equal rights of African Americans)

Read More!

The following books, which you can find in your local library, provide opportunities for children to learn more about the Negro Leagues and the stars of the Negro Leagues:

[African American leagues: All-Black Baseball](#) by Laura Driscoll and Tracy Mitchell, Grosset & Dunlap, 2002, for ages 5-9.

[Black Diamond](#), by Patricia and Fred McKissack, Scholastic, 1998, for ages 9-12.

[Jackie Robinson Breaks the Color Line](#) (Cornerstones of Freedom Series), by Andrew Santella, Children's Press, 1996, for ages 9-12.

[Hank Aaron](#) (Sports Heroes and Legends Series), by Serena Kappes, Lerner Publications, 2005, for ages 8-10.

MODULE 2: Real-Life Connections to the Movie

Activity 2: Who was Babe Ruth?

Activity Type: Individual Reading and Research

Investigate the Facts: Who Was the Real Babe Ruth?

In *Everyone's Hero*, Irving's hero is a famous baseball player named Babe Ruth. Throughout the entire story, Babe Ruth is mentioned often as someone that many people admire. Did you know that Babe Ruth was a real person?

Yes. George Herman "Babe" Ruth lived from 1895 to 1948. He was the most celebrated and well-liked athlete of his time. He played for a few professional baseball teams—including the New York team depicted in the movie.

Mr. Ruth was known by several nicknames, including the "Sultan of Swat" and "The Great Bambino." See if you can find out more. Where did he get his nickname, "Babe?" How many championship series winning games did he play in?

How can you find out more about Babe Ruth?

ASK AROUND!

Interview adults in your community.

Tips:

- Prepare for your interviews in advance, like a news reporter.
- Come up with questions and write them out beforehand.
- Take notes during the interviews.

LOOK AROUND!

Go to the community library to conduct research.

Tips:

- Check the catalog to see what books about Babe Ruth may be in your library's collection.
- Search the Internet (supervised by an adult). A few good sites to look at include:
 - www.baseballhistorian.com
 - www.baseballhalloffame.org
 - <http://espn.go.com/sportscentury>

TALK ABOUT IT!

Prepare for a group discussion to share what you have learned about Babe Ruth and see what others have discovered.

MODULE 2: Real-Life Connections to the Movie

Activity 3: A Candy Bar Named for You

Activity Type: Individual Reading and Art Activity

Create an Advertisement

Have you ever seen the “Baby Ruth” candy bar on store shelves?

Baby Ruth is a candy bar that is made of chocolate-covered peanuts and fudge nougat. Yum! There is also a similar ice cream bar.

Although the name of the candy bar sounds nearly identical to the name of the famous baseball player highlighted in *Everyone’s Hero*, Babe Ruth, it is not exactly clear whether the candy bar was named for him. The candy bar first appeared in 1920. One story states that it was named for the daughter of President Grover Cleveland. But, at the same time, Babe Ruth’s fame was on the rise. Nowadays, most of the advertising for the Baby Ruth candy bar shows baseball images. Hmmmmm. Given how long ago the candy was named, we may never know for sure.

- How would you like a candy bar named for you?
- What would it be like?
- How would you get people to buy it?

Create an advertisement in the box below for a candy bar named for you! Have fun! Make it colorful and inviting.



MODULE 2: Real-Life Connections to the Movie

Activity 4: The Legacy of Dana and Christopher Reeve

Activity Type: Individual or Group Reading



Reading that Takes You Behind the Scenes of *Everyone's Hero*

Everyone's Hero has a sad, but inspiring story behind it. The movie was produced and directed by two famous people who contributed much to our society, Christopher and Dana Reeve. They were husband and wife, and in addition to raising their family, they did many wonderful projects together. One such project was *Everyone's Hero*. In fact, the voice of Irving's mother, Emily Irving, is performed by Dana Reeve.

But, sadly, both of the Reeves died before the movie was completed and released.

Who were the Reeves?

Christopher Reeve initially became famous all around the world for playing the leading part of the "man of steel" himself in the 1978 movie, *Superman*, followed a few years later by the sequel *Superman II*. He was a wonderful actor who made many people very happy with the plays and movies in which he performed. In all, he appeared in more than 200 productions, including 17 feature films. Christopher Reeve was also mourned all around the world when he died in 2004 at the age of 52. People honored him as a hero.

Before he died, Christopher had lived for nearly 10 years with a severe spinal cord injury that left him unable to move his arms or legs, or even breathe on his own. He had to breathe and talk with the help of a ventilating machine. Yet, despite his devastating injuries and hardships, he worked every day to do good for other people, by calling for more research and better care for other people who are paralyzed.

Here is the way Christopher Reeve looked at his life: "What I do is based on powers we all have inside us; the ability to endure; the ability to love, to carry on, to make the best of what we have – and you don't have to be a 'Superman' to do it."

Christopher Reeve loved outdoor sports and took up horse riding and jumping as an adult. It was an unfortunate riding accident that left him injured and paralyzed. Afterwards, he said, "I felt I needed to do something, not just for myself but for everyone else in the same condition. Even if I had wanted to (which I didn't), I would never have been able to forget the other patients I had met during rehab. I had seen too much of their struggles and pain. I couldn't go home, devote my life to myself and my family, and ignore the larger picture."

So soon after returning home, Christopher delved into ways he could use his name, his celebrity and his voice to urge the scientific world to work faster and harder to find ways to help patients with spinal cord injuries and paralyzing disabilities, and to improve their quality of life. He was joined on this quest by his wife, Dana Reeve.

MODULE 2: Real-Life Connections to the Movie

Activity 4: The Legacy of Dana and Christopher Reeve

Dana Reeve was also an accomplished actress with many singing and acting credits including starring roles on *Law & Order*, *Oz*, and *All My Children*, among others. Together, Dana and Christopher founded the Christopher Reeve Foundation and the Quality of Life Grants Program to aid organizations working to enhance the quality of life for people living day-to-day with the challenges of spinal cord disabilities. They also co-founded the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Resource Center to provide information to people around the world desperate to learn about everything related to paralysis, such as updates on leading research efforts and sources for equipment and support.

After Christopher died in 2004, Dana dedicated herself to carrying on this important work. She also made plans to resume her singing career. But, in an unbelievably cruel twist of fate, less than a year after Christopher's death, Dana was diagnosed with lung cancer. She fought the disease with grace, courage and humor, but lost her battle with cancer in March of 2006. She was 44 years old.

The Reeves have left the world with many lasting contributions; a legacy of great hope and progress in addressing spinal cord injuries and disabilities; and many meaningful and happy moments with *Everyone's Hero*.

-- For more information, see www.everyoneshero.com and www.chrisreevehomepage.com

MODULE 3

Creating and Sharing Stories



Notes for the Facilitator

The theme of this module is youth empowerment and the sharing of young people's ideas of heroism. Here they get to answer the question: What would you do if you had a chance to be a hero?

As young people develop throughout childhood and into their preteen years, they benefit greatly from experiencing their own personal power, capabilities and talents. Parents, educators, youth leaders and child development specialists know that the best way for youth to learn responsibility is to take on responsibility. This process is captured beautifully in the movie, *Everyone's Hero*, by the character of 10-year-old Irving.

The activities in this module, therefore, focus on three important processes for youth empowerment: 1) developing a unique idea; 2) putting one's ideas into action (in this case into an illustrated story) and; 3) providing young people with an opportunity to share their stories as part of a service project where they provide companionship for younger children, senior citizens or others who would enjoy some company.

OBJECTIVES

Youth will express their ideas about how to be an “everyday hero.”

Youth will plan a community service project with adult guidance that allows them to share their creative ideas and provide companionship.

MODULE 3: Creating and Sharing Stories

Activity 1: Screwie and Darlin'



Activity Type: Small Group

Link to the Film

Note: This may be read aloud by a group member/the facilitator for all to hear, or it may be individual reading before the activity.

A big part of the fun in the film, *Everyone's Hero*, is that there are objects—specifically a baseball named Screwie and a bat named Darlin' that have been given human qualities. Some of their qualities include emotions, desires, physical gestures and expressions, and powers of speech, among others. This is called **personification**.

Throughout human history, personification has been widely used in poetry and all other art forms—including storytelling, drawing and painting and movie-making. In movies and TV shows, as well as in books, most of us have seen animals and objects that can talk and conduct themselves like humans.

As an added bonus, the objects in *Everyone's Hero* also have super-human qualities. They can do things that humans cannot do. For instance, Screwie can bounce very high or roll under the furniture. These are his “ball” qualities—that are added to his human qualities. This makes him more unique and funny. Darlin' can fit into a suitcase, be mistaken for a long loaf of French bread, or hit a baseball far into the outfield—these are her “baseball bat” qualities that are added in with her human qualities. They make her more interesting.

Many imaginative and creative artists and filmmakers use personification to give life to animals or objects.

Think and Share Activity

Instructions

1. Ask the children to think for a moment about some of their favorite stories or TV shows. Ask them, how many of these programs use personification? Have them share those that they think of with the group.
2. Then choose an everyday object (anything in the room, or something you have brought to the group meeting) and ask the children to help you plan how the object could act more like a person. Have them also consider the ways in which the object would also keep some of its original qualities. Personify the object!
3. Ask the children to describe or act out ways that the object would “behave.”

MODULE 3: Creating and Sharing Stories

Activity 2: Create Your Own Hero!



Activity Type: Individual Creative Activity

Encourage young people in your group to envision a goal that they care about—a goal that would produce a positive change for their family, school, youth center, neighborhood or community—something that would benefit others in addition to themselves.

Draw parallels to Irving’s achievement when he, at last, gets Babe Ruth’s lucky bat back to Babe just in time for the championship game. Irving is *Everyone’s Hero* — but he knows, too, that friends helped him on the way, such as the hobos, Marti and her dad, and, of course, Screwie and Darlin’. Even Babe Ruth himself helps Irving.

Have the children envision how they could be an everyday hero—ask:

- What would you do if you had a chance to be a hero?
- If you were able to change things in your school (youth center, group home, sports team, neighborhood) what would you like to see happen to make it absolutely great?
- If you could do something big for your family (or community), what would it be? Why?

Give everyone plenty of paper and drawing materials, and as much time as they need.

Ask the children to create a cartoon story that shows them (and their friends—including objects with human qualities) meeting a big goal that produces a positive change they would like to see.

Have them create their own hero story where they have the starring role.

MODULE 3: Creating and Sharing Stories**Activity 3: Share Your Hero Stories**

Dear Young People:

Think about younger children, people in the hospital or older adults who would enjoy your company and your “hero” stories (from Activity Two, above). Plan an occasion to go and visit, so that you can read your stories.

- ⊙ Plan and conduct your project with the guidance and support of an adult partner.
- ⊙ Think about how much time you have—you may wish to share just one or two stories with each audience.
- ⊙ Rehearse your presentation of the stories, keeping your audience in mind. It will be different reading your stories for younger children as compared with senior citizens.
- ⊙ Work all the details for transportation and scheduling.
- ⊙ Get going!

Here are a few ideas—

Take your stories to a day care center and perform them for younger children.

Visit children who are in the long-term care unit of a hospital to describe your project and share your stories.

Visit a senior center to share your stories—ask the senior citizens what they think of your ideas.

Display your illustrated stories at the community center or local library.

Have fun!

Name _____ Date _____

Everyone's Hero Post Program Evaluation

Facilitators of the Everyone's Hero: Just Keep Swinging! program - Please take a few moments to answer the questions below. It should only take about 5 minutes. One you have submitted the survey you will be entered to win a copy of the DVD, book and an activity guide. Good Luck!

Organization _____ City/State _____

Contact Name _____ Contact Email _____

Organization Website _____

Approximately how many youth does your organization serve? _____

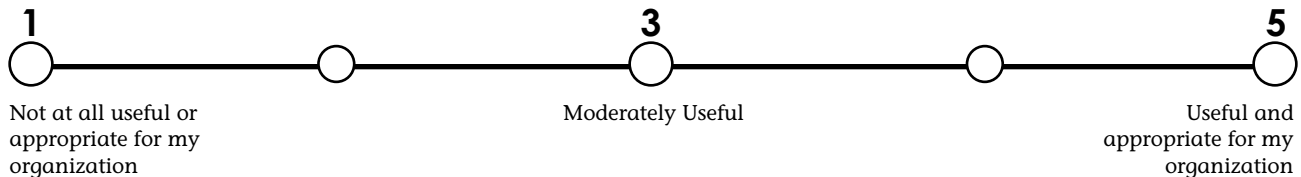
How do you classify your organization?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Based | <input type="checkbox"/> Library or Museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith Based | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After School | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Based |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Out of School | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

Approximately how many youth completed one or more steps in the *Everyone's Hero* program? Steps include: See the Movie and Read the Book (s), Participate in Activities from the Activity Guide, Complete a Service Project.

What age range participated in the program? _____

Please rate your overall impression of the activity guide.



Please give us any additional feedback and/or suggestions you have to help us improve our future F.I.L.M. programs.

May we contact you for additional information? YES NO

If yes, what is the best way to contact you?

Return to F.I.L.M. Evaluation 1319 F Street NW Suite 402, Washington, DC 20004 or fax to (202) 393-4517