

## Activities

# *My Grandma's the Mayor*

By

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### ➤ **Hero Letter**

Annie loved her Grandmother and looked up to her. She was a hero in Annie's eyes. Brainstorm the qualities that make a person a hero. Invite writers to list people who they think have some of those attributes—the person can be living or dead, real or fictional. Have each share one or two from their list. Ask them to draw a line under that list. Then ask writers to think about problems or challenges they have in their lives and list at least three. Each student chooses one of the heroes/wisdom figures and one challenge from their lists. Next ask them to write a letter to their wisdom figure and include:

One reason the writer admires the hero

An explanation of one problem the writer has

A request for help

After you share some of the letters, ask the writers to take on the attribute they admired and pretend that they are that hero/wisdom figure and answer the letter.... For example, if Evan had written to Margaret Mead, Evan's second letter would begin... "Dear Evan," and end, "Sincerely, Margaret Mead." The letter should give Evan advice, suggestions and comments that Evan believes Margaret Mead might give. After sharing the letters, conclude with a short discussion on whether or not the students received good advice.

### ➤ **Community Talent/Job Quilt**

A community is made up of all kinds of people with different skills and gifts that help create the fabric of the community that makes it work. Decide on the theme of the quilt (talents, jobs). Brainstorm possibilities. As a group, decide ahead of time whether the squares should be created horizontally or vertically. Each writer takes one and illustrates it using glue and paper scraps on an 8 1/2 by 11" paper. Have the writers decide on the criteria for the caption. Hole-punch quilt "squares" and connect with 2-inch lengths of yarn. For a longer lasting quilt, slip squares into page protectors before hole punching.

### ➤ **Community Book**

Writers brainstorm different areas of their community. Review the list together. Decide on areas that could be combined into a broader heading, or separated into smaller, more distinct parts. Groups of students work on illustrating and writing about their assigned part of the community. Consider using a Folded Spiral Category Big Book format as a graphic organizer for the community book. Students can create a road running through the pages and when the book is fully opened, all the headings of the areas of the community are displayed.

### ➤ **I Can Help By....**

Discuss how Annie helped her community. Have the writers brainstorm ways they can help the communities they are a part of including their family, town, school, home, or faith communities. Each student creates a poster, a pop-up card or writes and illustrates a page for a collaborative book.

## Reversible Book

Discuss the difference between a ruler and a leader. Using the book design ([see activities for \*I Don't Have an Uncle Phil Anymore\*](#); PDF: 64KB), students create a story entitled “If I Ruled.” On the inside, (the book can be reversible) they write about the same circumstances only this time the title is “If I Led.”

## Journal Writing Springboards

- If you were the mayor of your town, what would your community be like? What things would you do if you were in charge?
- **If you were going to have a special day with someone you love or admire, describe what it would be like. What would you do together?**
- Annie thought her grandma’s job was going to be different than it turned out to be. Even her Annie-Grandma sleepover didn’t unfold the way she’d thought it would. Write a list of times in your life that your expectations weren’t met. Make another list of times your expectations were exceeded. Choose one and tell the story.
- **Annie could see that there were things that were fun about Grandma being the mayor. Make a list of things you don’t like in your life. Next to each thing on your list, think of at least one good thing about it—look at the bright side and write it down.**
- Just before going to bed at Grandma’s house, Grandma would tell Annie stories from Annie’s mom’s childhood—like when Annie’s mom kissed her dad when he had shaving cream on his face. Every family has stories ...What stories do you tell? What stories does your family tell about you?
- **Grandma was proud of the way members of her community pitched in and helped after the fire. Pride is an emotion that’s earned. What things have you accomplished so far that make you proud of yourself? That makes your family proud of you?**

## Discussion/Social Studies Integration

- Annie starts the story by saying her grandmother isn’t the same as other grandmothers. Most grandmothers aren’t mayors. Up until recently, most mayors weren’t women. Talk about stereotypes and how they apply to age, race, and gender. Discuss what impact stereotyping might have on a community.
- Annie lived in a village that was run by an elected mayor and a board of trustees. Not all places have that same governmental structure. Discuss how your community is set up. Research ones that are different from your own.

Marge Pellegrino teaches writing for schools, libraries and community settings including ArtsReach, the Pima County Public Library, KARE, and the Hopi Foundation’s Owl and Panther program. On the Artist Roster of the Arizona Commission of the Arts, Marge is also the author of [Too Nice](#), and [I Don't Have an Uncle Phil Anymore](#) published by Magination Press, an imprint of the American Psychological Association, [www.maginationpress.com](http://www.maginationpress.com). Her forthcoming young adult novel, *Journey of Dreams* is with Frances Lincoln. The teacher resource book she co-wrote with Joan Daniels, *The Folded Spiral in the Classroom*, is available at [www.exceptionalstudentstore.com](http://www.exceptionalstudentstore.com) or Antigone Books in Tucson. Marge can be reached at [margepell@comcast.net](mailto:margepell@comcast.net).