Teacher’s Guide: Helping Students Do Good Deeds

Inspired by Sir Nicholas Winton’s desire for young people to help other people

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Nicky's Family thank their hero
By Kari Rosenberg - TotallyJewish.com

He doesn’t like to talk about it much, having kept quiet about his remarkable mission for more than half a century. But to those whose lives he saved - and to many more the world over - Sir Nicholas Winton is nothing short of a legend.

Dubbed ‘Britain’s Schindler’ by Tony Blair, Winton, now 103 years old, was the brains and brawn behind the Kindertransport. Saving 669 children in the first six months of 1939, he ran his rescue operation between a hotel room in downtown Prague and a house in Hampstead Heath before the start of the war forced the abrupt end of the programme.

The part-dramatisation, part-documentary film - peppered with old black and white footage, photo album head-shots and dramatic re-enactments, cutting back to the modern day with those who know him telling their stories - Nicky’s Family is an unflinching emotional tale of tragedy, optimism and despair, of one man’s defiance against the odds, from whom many could learn from.

Recounted in part by those children he rescued - now in their 70s and 80s - it is up for consideration by BAFTA members as a possible contender for best documentary. And for good reason.

While it goes without saying that many of the stories of tragedy and hope will provoke a tear, the film has a greater message: anything is possible. This is an ethos Sir Nicholas held on to, and one the grandchildren of his saved "children" now live by.

So many of his children were able to share their stories for the film, thanks in part to Ester Rantzen, who in 1988, on her BBC1 show That’s Life, contacted many of "Nicky’s children" without his knowledge, soon after the story of his remarkable mission came to light. For 50 years he told no one of the transports he had helped organise from Prague across Nazi Germany to London.

The "Children" recount happy memories before the war - walking along promenades, attending the theatre - whereas others remember the sinister beginnings of anti-Semitic behaviour. Malka Sternberg remembers an old school friend slipping her round the face, "from left to right, left to right" because her mother "told her to"; while another "child" Kurt Storm reminisces: "We had a good life, until the Nazis took over."

Having visited refugee camps outside Prague, Sir Nicholas decided to help children secure British permits in the same way those from other countries had been rescued by kindertransports. The idea came about when a close friend and colleague, who was due to go skiing with, called to cancel their trip to remain in Czechoslovakia to help those threatened by the Germans.

Sir Nicholas joined his friend. Although it wasn’t easy - receiving a rebuff from the American embassy - he was finally granted permission to bring children into the UK, providing he could find them families: As the man himself puts it: "The rest of the world closed its eyes, its ears, its hearts and its gates."

Sir Nicholas organised a total of eight trains from Prague to London and found foster families for the refugees. A ninth transport - the largest, carrying 250 children - was prevented from leaving due to the outbreak of war. None of these children are believed to have survived. The whereabouts of many of the remaining 669 "children" who did make it are still unknown.

The stories of those he rescued - the families of whom have grown to around 5,700 people - are touching and moving, with the dramatisations effective, poignant and subtle, alongside the narration. Informative, historic and, at times, even amusing, Nicky’s Family documents not only the tales of horror and despair but the happy times too - like one man’s first taste of fish and chips.

The overall feeling is one of pride: of one man’s success, of human strength, kindness and selflessness. And how, more than half-a-century later, gratitude for Nicky’s actions has gone on to inspire the good deeds of so many. And Sir Nicholas himself is still going strong, often talking to children about his life. As the Dalai Lama eloquently said of Sir Nicholas: "We must carry his spirit, generation to generation."
Introduction to Service Learning

Too often, we see the injustices and problems in our world and feel powerless to change things. The story of Sir Nicholas Winton proves to us that one person can make a difference. Knowing that, think about what groups of people can accomplish by working together! This guide is designed to help teachers and students take action in their world to help improve and change the lives of others. By doing this kind of work, our own lives are changed and enriched. That’s why this is called Service Learning. We seek not just to act, but to learn by taking action.

Cathryn Berger Kaye, in her book *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*, says that service learning is important for the following reasons:

- It provides meaningful ways for students, teachers, administrators and community members to move together with deliberate thought toward a common purpose with reciprocal benefits.

- Students benefit academically, socially, and emotionally; develop skills; explore numerous career options; and may come to appreciate the value of civic responsibility and actively participating in their community.

- Teachers make school and education more relevant for their students, often seeing students blossom and develop previously untapped strengths in the process; collaborate with their colleagues and community partners to develop exciting curriculum; and many find themselves professionally reenergized.

- School administrators may observe a boost in staff and student morale as desired academic outcomes are achieved, and the school’s profile is raised in the community.

- Parents find new avenues for conversation with their children, and may help support service learning within the school and create family service experiences.

- Community partners receive much needed help and may find themselves learning from the students as they teach or interact with them. (Kaye, 2010, p.2).

What’s in this Guide

We created this guide to get you started, but, what follows is by no means an exhaustive list of possibilities for service learning! Teachers and students are welcome to explore additional opportunities for doing good. The issues we chose to include in this guide allow students to have a direct impact on human lives.

Information and links are provided on the following topics:
• Human Trafficking
• Fair Trade
• Homelessness
• Hunger
• Illiteracy in America
• Child Soldiers

Resources and links where teachers can learn more about service learning are included as well.

**What’s not in this guide**

What you won’t find here is a list of activities. In order for students to be fully engaged in service learning, we thought it best to leave the WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT piece to you and your students. Be creative! This is where your students’ talents, passions and abilities will come forth.

We’ve also left out a wide range of other issues, and this does not imply that those issues are not important! We encourage students to do their own research and find projects that are meaningful and important to them.

**Assessment**

It is important to allow students the opportunity to reflect on their own learning. You may do this by requiring students to keep a journal of their thoughts, feelings and experiences. You will also want to assess the effectiveness of your service learning project. Obviously, these would not be formal assessments. Please refer to any of the resources we’ve listed for ideas about how to assess your project and students.
Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings mainly for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. This industry is quickly growing and is second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable illegal industry in the world. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines human trafficking as a crime against humanity. UNODC breaks down human trafficking into three elements: act, means and purpose. The act includes “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons”. The means, or how it is done, includes force, fraud, abduction and/or deception. The purpose of these acts is exploitation of people for prostitution, sexual exploitation, forced labor or slavery.

According to the UN Global Initiative on Human Trafficking, about 2.5 million people are in some sort of forced labor or sexual exploitation at any given time. Over half of these incidences occur in Asia and the Pacific. Of those who are exploited, the majority are victims between 18 and 24 years old, in addition to the 1.2 million children who are trafficked each year.

The traffickers are both men and women, mostly unknown to their victims. The global profits exceed $31.6 billion a year. And the numbers are growing. With profits so high, there is great incentive to continue and expand the practice. Work to stop human trafficking is important not only for the psychological and personal toll it takes on its victims, but because this practice helps facilitate the illegal movement of immigrants across boarders and funnels a source of income for organized crime and even terrorists.

Finally, the life expectancy of a child prostitute is 7 years.

National organizations working to stop this practice:

Not For Sale

Not For Sale fights human trafficking and modern-day slavery around the world. Through international work on the ground and in mainstream supply chains, we proactively target the root causes of slavery while engaging and equipping the movement for freedom.

The Project to End Human Trafficking

The mission of the Project to End Human Trafficking is to work toward the elimination of trafficking in persons, especially women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Polaris Project

Polaris Project is committed to combating human trafficking and modern-day slavery, and to strengthening the anti-trafficking movement through a comprehensive approach.

Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking

CAST’s mission is to assist persons trafficked for the purpose of forced labor and slavery-like practices and to work toward ending all instances of such human rights violations.
Each of these organizations provides ways for you to get involved and affect change. All include more information on the nature of the problem and what is needed to abolish human trafficking. One of the easiest ways to make a difference is to choose to buy items with the Fair trade symbol on it, which signifies that in the making of each item, no slavery or exploitation was involved.

Other examples of action you can take include volunteering to do victim outreach, raising awareness of the issue in your school, joining or starting a grass roots organization in your area and writing a letter to your local newspaper about human trafficking in your community.

Fair Trade

Fair trade is defined as an organized social movement that aims to help producers (mostly farmers and artisans) in developing countries to make better trading conditions and promote sustainability. The movement began in the late 1970s, enabling farmers a chance out of poverty by guaranteeing fair prices. If a product has a Fair Trade Certification, buyers will recognize and support just trading policies of the producer by buying their products.

Some of the products available in the US that may be certified Fair Trade are: coffee, tea and herbs, cocoa and chocolate, fresh fruit, sugar, rice, vanilla, flowers and honey.

The consequences of unfair trade include child labor, worker exploitation and climate change. Here are some facts about unfair trade:

- Nearly half the world lives on less than $2 a day and the poorest 40% of the world's population has only 5% of the global income.
- An estimated 218 million children are engaged in child labor (UNICEF).
- At least 70% of child laborers work in agriculture (UNICEF).
- Unsustainable methods of disposing organic waste — like burning crop residue, allowing residue to flow into drainage systems, or neglecting to use farming techniques that enhance the soil — can result in air and water pollution and erosion.
- Unfair wages and working conditions also perpetuate poverty and put the health of farmers at risk.
- Agrochemicals, which are only allowed in fair trade in rare cases, are often used to cultivate crops. These can be toxic, posing health risks for farmers!
- Almost three-quarters (126 million) of children engaged in child labor work in hazardous situations or conditions, such as working in mines, working with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or working with dangerous machinery (UNICEF).
• When farmers are not guaranteed a minimum price for their crops, they often fall victim to the global economy if demand decreases. When farmers rely on few, specific crops they are left particularly vulnerable to changes in the market. Fair trade guarantees a minimum price, so that farmers won’t fall deeper into poverty if the global economy influences profits.

The Fair Trade Federation (http://www.fairtradefederation.org/) is one organization promoting Fair Trade.

Fair Trade USA (www.fairtradeusa.org)

A 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, Fair Trade USA is the leading third-party certifier of Fair Trade products in the United States. We enable you, the consumer, to make a difference with your dollar. We help people and the planet work in tandem so both are healthy and sustained. We provide farmers in developing nations the tools to thrive as international business people. Instead of creating dependency on aid, we use a market-based approach that gives farmers fair prices, workers safe conditions, and entire communities resources for fair, healthy and sustainable lives. We seek to inspire the rise of the Conscious Consumer and eliminate exploitation.

Fair Trade International (www.fairtrade.net) is the international organization that provides the standards and process for certification.

Equal Exchange http://www.equalexchange.coop/

Equal Exchange has created Big Change since 1986. Our founders envisioned a food system that empowers farmers and consumers, supports small farmer co-ops, and uses sustainable farming methods. They started with fairly traded coffee from Nicaragua and didn’t look back.

Homelessness

Homelessness is defined as the condition of people without a permanent, safe, decent, affordable place to live. There is no easy way to determine the number of homeless people in the US, let alone in the world. Homelessness can be either a temporary circumstance or a permanent condition. In 2005, it was estimated that over 100 million people world wide were homeless. On any given night in the United States there are approximately 650,000 people experiencing homelessness. Of that number, one-third are people in families and 12% are veterans. Each year over 3.5 million Americans experience homelessness.

There is not one single reason why people become homeless, the issue is much more complex. Factors that can lead to homelessness are; loss of job, high costs of housing, death
of a family member, natural disasters, family crisis, domestic violence, disability (either physical or mental), catastrophic illness, lack of transportation, lack of affordable health care.

Just like the causes of homelessness, the impact of homelessness is also complex. There are the social, economic and long term affects of this social problem. For children, homelessness often means a disruption in education, which results in difficulty in finding employment later. These children are at risk of turning to crime, being exploited and living long term in poverty.

The societal costs of homelessness include the cost of providing shelter, health care, and other services and the economic loss of wage earners. A study from Los Angeles found that placing four chronically homeless people into permanent housing saved the city more that $80,000 per year.

This last statistic shows that permanent housing is more meaningful, and cost-effective answer to this social issue than providing temporary shelter.

**National organizations working in this area:**

**National Alliance to End Homelessness**  [www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)

The Alliance works to prevent and end homelessness by improving policy, building capacity and educating opinion leaders. The website lists ways for you to take action. These suggestions include volunteering your time by working at a nearby housing organization, working at a housing organization, organizing and participating in fundraising drives for local service agencies.

**National Coalition for the Homeless**  [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)

The National Coalition for Homeless is a national network of people committed to prevent and end homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights are protected. Ideas of ways you can help include contributing clothing, books, computers, working at a shelter, participating in a Habitat for Humanity project, working with children at shelters and involving others in these activities.

**Habitat for Humanity**  [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

Habitat for Humanity is an international non-profit, non-denominational Christian housing ministry that has built over 200,000 homes for people since it was founded in 1976. The website states, “Habitat house is completed about every 24 minutes. How do they manage this remarkable accomplishment? With help. Lots and lots of help from people just like you who - regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or any other difference - help build simple, decent, affordable houses right alongside those who will actually be living in them.” Habitat has local affiliates all over the country and world.

**National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth**  [www.naehcy.org](http://www.naehcy.org)
NAEHCY’s mission is to be the voice and social conscience for the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. This mission is carried out by its work through advocacy, partnerships and education.

In addition to these national organizations, each community has a shelter for its homeless. These shelters always need volunteers.

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**Hunger**

According to the United Nations, there are 870 million undernourished people in the world today. With the world population at about 7 billion, that means that over 12% of the people living today (or one in eight people) do not get enough food to live healthy, active lives. Up until the end of WWII, it was not unusual for people to sustain hunger due to disruptions in the food supply due to war, plaques, or adverse weather changes. With increased globalization and better farming and food distribution techniques, it seemed that hunger as an issue was diminishing. What was uncovered in 1998 was that hunger was still an issue, and usually arose from problems in food distribution networks or from governmental policies in developing countries. In the last few years, world leaders have taken up the cause of ending hunger.

The financial crisis that hit the United States has had a profound effect on the number of people suffering from hunger in the US. In 2010 approximately one in seven households were food insecure, the largest number ever reported in the US. Food security refers to the ability to ensure essential nutrition. In the US over 11% of seniors experience food insecurity, with the numbers much higher for those seniors living in non-metropolitan areas.

Poverty is the leading cause of hunger. Other causes include land rights and ownership issues, diversion of land use to non-productive uses, inefficient agricultural practices, war, drought and governmental policies.

Effects of hunger are devastating. Death and illness are the most obvious. Children who have suffered from hunger at least once in their lives were more than 2 ½ times more likely to suffer overall poor health later. The psychological stress of going without food is also felt for many years. Academic performance and learning are severely limited when children are malnourished. Household food insecurity poses serious risk factors in child development.

Hungry adults miss more work and use the health care system much more than those who aren’t. It is estimated that the total cost of hunger to American society is about $90 billion a year. This cost is substantially higher that the estimated cost of $10 to $12 billion a year to end hunger in our nation.

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**Global organizations working to eradicate hunger:**

Stop Hunger Now | [www.stophungernow.org](http://www.stophungernow.org)
Every community has a local food bank. There are many opportunities to volunteer in those banks as well as local soup kitchens. Become educated about the issue and join the fight.

**Illiteracy in America**

Illiteracy is defined by the Literacy Volunteers of America as “the inability of an individual to use reading, writing, and computational skills in everyday life.” Illiteracy affects people of all nationalities, religions, ethnic groups, as well as people living in rural areas, small towns and big cities.

How big a problem is illiteracy in the US? According to the Department of Educations’ National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 20% of high school seniors can be classified as functionally illiterate when they graduate, 70% of prisoners in state and federal systems can be classified as illiterate, 85% of all juvenile offenders are either functionally or marginally illiterate and 43% of those with the lowest literacy skill live in poverty. 42 million Americans can’t read at all and 50 million can’t read above a 5th grade level. Add to this the “genetic” effect of illiteracy (children of illiterate adults often tend to continue the trend), making illiteracy a huge and growing problem.

The impact of illiteracy and the cost to the country includes factors such as limitations on a person’s ability to function in life and society, inability to handle complex thinking, a bar to career demands, and health maintenance. These factors result in continuing poverty, unemployment and incarceration. On a broader scale, lack of literacy holds back the nation from growth. Due to the lack of reading, society is denied the talent and contributions of an ever-growing segment of our population.

People are illiterate for a variety of reasons. Some dropped out of school, others came to the US from other countries, some had ineffective teachers and others were just not ready to learn to read. This problem often starts in the home, with illiterate parents, parents who don’t read to their children or otherwise neglect their children.

**An organization working to end illiteracy:**

First Book  
[www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org)
First Book distributes books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income families throughout the United States and Canada. In addition to raising money, there are local “advisory boards” in 170 locations that distribute the books to local schools, pre-schools, day care centers, after school programs and tutoring/mentoring programs.

The quickest way to get involved in the fight against illiteracy is to volunteer with local and community groups working in this area. Contact your public library or school administrations for a list of local places where you can read to children, tutor after school and participate in book drives.

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**Child Soldiers**

Child soldiers are under 18 year olds who are or have been recruited or used by a state armed force or a non-state armed group. Here is the definition of child soldiers from Child Soldiers International:

The internationally agreed definition for a child associated with an armed force or armed group (child soldier) is any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities.

Under international law, the participation of children under 18 in armed conflict is generally prohibited, and the recruitment and use of children under 15 is a war crime.

There are no exact numbers of how many child soldiers there are since the numbers continually change, but what is known is that there are child soldiers in almost all parts of the world. Boys and girls, often as young as 10, can be on the front lines or used in other roles such as human shields, spies, porters and messengers.

Children living in conflict areas are the most vulnerable to recruitment. Poverty and lack of opportunities in those areas are often factors leading to recruitment. These children have been de-sensitized to violence and are likely to suffer long-term effects that make it difficult to reintegrate into civilian life. Many of these children have been abducted from their families, and have no place to return to once released.

Child soldiers is a human rights issue needing action. Children are the innocent victims of war and violence. At the very least these children should be able to live a life free from any direct involvement in fighting.

**Organizations working to stop the use of children in armed groups and/or reintegrate these children back into society:**

Child Soldiers International  
www.child-soldiers.org
CSI seeks to end the military recruitment and the use in hostilities, in any capacity, of any person under the age of 18 by state armed forces or non-state armed groups. CSI advocates for the release of unlawfully recruited children, promote their successful reintegration into civilian life, and call for accountability for those who unlawfully recruit or use them.

Amnesty International USA  www.amnestyusa.org

Amnesty International is a global movement of people fighting injustice and promoting human rights. The issue of child soldiers is just one of the issues that this group is involved with. Among some of the other issues Amnesty International is working on are; death penalty, refugee and migrant rights, women’s rights, LGBT rights and international justice.

Child Soldier Relief  www.chlsoldierrelief.org

This organization’s mission is to advocate on behalf of former child soldiers by supporting and creating original multimedia content, maintaining an online repository of data, facilitating information-sharing and collaboration within the educational community, and nurturing coalitions to build a global network.
Resources on Service Learning


Free Spirit Publishing: (MANY books for teachers on service learning)  
http://www.freespirit.com/service-learning-service-projects/?show_all=true

National Service Learning Clearinghouse  
http://www.servicelearning.org/

National Service Knowledge Network  
http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/service-activities/service-learning

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health  
http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/servicelearningres.html

Facing the Future  

Service Learning Web Resources (A Directory)  
http://www.goodcharacter.com/SERVICE/webresources.html

AmeriCorps (resources)  
http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/highered/resources.asp