

SUMMARY

In this lesson, students examine the stories of people who have been inspirational in making differences in the cancer community.

NATIONAL ACADEMIC STANDARDS (DEVELOPED BY THE MID-CONTINENT REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY – MCREL)

HEALTH:

- > knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- > demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the reading process
- > demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning

CIVICS:

- > understands the roles of voluntarism and organized groups in American social and political life

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- > describe what people in the cancer community have done to make a difference and to influence others to do the same

RESOURCES

ON THE SITE:

- > Teacher Sheet, “Survivor Stories”
- > Teacher Sheet, “Rubric for Survivor Presentation”
- > Video, “Advocacy (Grades 7-9)”

ON YOUR OWN:

- > video player

PREPARATION

1. Think about someone who has inspired you.
2. Read the teacher sheet, “**Survivor Stories.**” Make copies of the stories so that everyone in the class has one. If you wish, consult the website of the Lance Armstrong Foundation, livestrong.org, for more survivor stories.
3. Read the teacher sheet, “**Rubric for Survivor Presentation.**” Adapt it so that you have a way of checking that students understood the assignment.
4. Determine criteria for students’ presentations, e.g., how long they should be, how creative they need to be, and what specifically they should contain.
5. Download the video “**Advocacy Grades 7–9**” and set up on a computer or TV for viewing by the students. (If you have trouble downloading the video, make sure you have the latest version of QuickTime.)

VARIATION

If you want to incorporate more **language arts** into this lesson, have students prepare written reports to supplement their oral presentations.

THE LESSON

1. Ask students, “What does it mean to be inspirational? Who inspires you?” Get students’ ideas; reach a consensus that people are inspirations when as a result of their actions they encourage others to emulate them. Share with students who has inspired you, and what you’ve done as a result.

2. Tell students that today they're going to examine the stories of people who have been inspirational in the cancer community—people who have shown courage, persistence and optimism in improving the world of those living with cancer. Say that you're going to start the examination with a video.
3. Show the video, "**Advocacy (Grades 7-9)**." Focus discussion on the following questions:
 - > "What do you think were the obstacles in the way of Alex—the boy in the video—becoming an advocate?"
 - > "If you were to attempt to do something like this, what do you think your challenges would be?"
 - > "What are the payoffs for doing something like this?"
 - > "What could you tell someone who doesn't think that an individual has any chance to influence government?"
4. Now tell students that they're going to read some stories about other people who have been inspirational. Distribute the stories from the teacher sheet, "**Survivor Stories**," and arrange students in groups so that everyone in each group is reading the same story.
5. Give students the following instructions (consider writing them on the board as well):
 - > "First, I'd like you to read the story.
 - > "Second, talk in your group about what's inspirational about what you read—if you think it is at all. Ask yourselves what challenges the people faced, how they overcame them, and how what they did might apply to people living with cancer, people who know someone living with cancer, and people who are concerned about the issue of cancer and health care.
 - > "Finally, prepare a presentation for the rest of the class on the person you read about. Everyone should participate. Decide who will talk about what and how you'll make the presentation.
 - > "Any questions?"
6. Give students time to read their stories and plan their presentations.
7. When students are finished, ask each group to come up and make their presentation. Focus on what it is that students themselves could do to emulate the people in the stories.

Check for Understanding

8. Use the teacher sheet, "**Rubric for Survivor Presentation**," to assess students' understanding.
9. Ask students to write down one important thing that was common to all the people they've discussed. When they've finished, ask for volunteers to read what they wrote.

ADVOCACY

Ask students to go to a bookstore or library and read a book that addresses an experience with cancer, possibly written by someone who has or who had cancer. Consider any of the following:

- > **LIVESTRONG: Inspirational Stories from Cancer Survivors from Diagnosis to Treatment and Beyond**, by the Lance Armstrong Foundation
- > *It's Not about the Bike*, by Lance Armstrong and Sally Jenkins
- > *Every Second Counts*, by Lance Armstrong and Sally Jenkins
- > *Keep Climbing: How I Beat Cancer and Reached the Top of the World*, by Sean Swarner and Rusty Fischer
- > *Here and Now: Inspiring Stories of Cancer Survivors*, by Elena Dorfman and Heidi Schultz Adams

- > *No Boundaries: A Cancer Surgeon's Odyssey*, by LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., MD
- > *Voices from the Edge*, by Michael Hays Samuelson
- > *The Link to Beating Cancer: The Real-Life Story of a Teenage Cancer Survivor*, by John Link

When students have finished reading their books, have them give either written or oral reports.

Extension Activities: If you would like to emphasize this lesson with students, you can review the "Get Involved" booklet to learn more about how your students and your school can become advocates for people affected by cancer by participating in **LIVESTRONG** events in your community, raising funds for cancer research, accessing information about people living with cancer, or increasing cancer awareness.