



# CONQUEST 7TH & 8TH GRADE ACTIVITY

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Print out the Teamwork Tales and questions for each group.

## STORY #1: KRISTEN FROM NC

### DRIVING FORCE

IN 2008, KRISTEN'S BIOLOGY TEACHER AND ECO-CLUB ADVISER MENTIONED THE UGLY EMPTY LOT NEXT TO THE SCHOOL'S TENNIS COURT. THE 50 X 70-FOOT AREA WAS OVERGROWN WITH GRASS AND WEEDS; ON IT STOOD AN ABANDONED GREENHOUSE COVERED WITH VINES AND DIRT. IT WAS THE PERFECT SPOT FOR A GARDEN, THE TEACHER SAID, BUT WHO HAD THE TIME AND MOTIVATION TO CLEAN UP THE MESS? "IT BUGGED ME TO SEE A PROBLEM WHEN I KNEW THERE WAS A SOLUTION," SAYS KRISTEN, WHO WAS THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL'S ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB, THE GREEN TIGERS. WITH SIX INITIAL MEMBERS, TACKLING THE GARDEN SEEMED LIKE A DOABLE FIRST PROJECT. "WE REALIZED WE COULD HAVE A DISCERNIBLE IMPACT," SHE SAYS.

### CALL TO ACTION

LUCKILY, GROWING SEASON WAS THREE MONTHS AWAY. "IT WAS JUST ENOUGH TIME TO GET THE PLOT READY," SAYS KRISTEN. BUT THERE WAS A BIT OF A LEARNING CURVE. "WE WERE GREEN TIGERS WITHOUT GREEN THUMBS," SHE ADMITS. THE STUDENTS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO GROW, AND PREPARING THE YARD FOR PLANTING WAS MORE INVOLVED THAN THEY'D ANTICIPATED. "INITIALLY I THOUGHT WE SHOULD MAKE THE GARDEN PRODUCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE," KRISTEN SAYS. "BUT A MORE SENSIBLE SHORT-TERM GOAL WAS TO CLEAN IT UP BEFORE RESEARCHING WHICH CROPS WOULD FLOURISH." SOON ENOUGH, THE GARDEN'S VISIBLE CHANGES INSPIRED OTHER KIDS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS TO PITCH IN AND RECLAIM THE LAND. STUDENTS RECEIVED SERVICE CREDITS FOR TASKS LIKE CLEANING OUT THE GREENHOUSE, PLANTING FLOWERS AND CREATING WOOD-CHIP WALKWAYS, BUT SOON THEY WERE STOPPING BY THE GARDEN SIMPLY TO HANG OUT. LOCAL GARDENERS SUGGESTED GROWING TECHNIQUES. "WE TILLED, MOVED MULCH AND ADDED COMPOST TO BEDS," SAYS KRISTEN, WHO ALSO LED A FUNDRAISING DRIVE THAT BROUGHT IN \$3,000. IN SPRING 2010, THE GREEN TIGERS HAD THEIR FIRST SUCCESSFUL HARVEST: KALE, MUSTARD GREENS, ARUGULA, POTATOES AND ONIONS. IT WAS ENOUGH TO FILL 50 BAGS WITH PRODUCE FOR AN INFORMAL SALAD FEST FOR THE 100 VOLUNTEERS-THE MAJORITY OF THEM STUDENTS. THE GREEN TIGERS HAVE SINCE DONATED 135 BAGS OF ORGANIC PRODUCE TO THE COMMUNITY.

TEAMWORK!



TALES

ANSWER THESE  
QUESTIONS:

WHAT DID THESE  
TEENS DO?

HOW DID AN  
ADULT INSPIRE  
THEM?

HOW DOES IT  
SHOW THAT THE  
WISDOM AND  
EXPERIENCE OF  
ADULTS WORK  
WELL WITH THE  
ENTHUSIASM OF  
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WHAT WOULD  
HAVE HAPPENED  
IF THE ADULTS  
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## STORY #2: JORDAN FROM NJ

### DRIVING FORCE

IN 2007 AND 2008, JORDAN WAS THE VOICE OF TYRONE THE MOOSE ON THE CARTOON SHOW *THE BACKYARDIGANS*. THE GIG EARNED HIM SOME EXTRA MONEY. "AT FIRST I WANTED TO SPEND IT ON CLOTHES AND SNEAKERS," HE ADMITS. "BUT MY PARENTS CHALLENGED ME TO DO SOMETHING GOOD FOR THE COMMUNITY INSTEAD." SO, USING HIS CASH, HIS HOLLYWOOD CONNECTIONS AND HIS MOM CHRISENA'S RESOURCES AS A REPORTER, HE DECIDED TO MAKE A MOVIE WITH A MESSAGE. "WHILE I ALWAYS LOVED SCHOOL, I NOTICED A LOT OF MY FRIENDS DIDN'T DO SO WELL," HE SAYS. "BY THE TIME I WAS IN THE SIXTH GRADE, I WAS ONE OF ONLY THREE BOYS IN ADVANCED CLASSES. OTHER BOYS SEEMED TO BE MORE INTERESTED IN BEING THE NEXT SPORTS HERO OR SUPERSTAR."

### CALL TO ACTION

SAY IT LOUD EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING IN SCHOOL—A CRITICAL ISSUE IN HIS COMMUNITY, SINCE LESS THAN HALF OF BOYS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL. CHRISENA HELPED JORDAN CONTACT THE AGENTS OF INFLUENTIAL ENTERTAINERS, ATHLETES AND POLITICIANS. THOSE PEOPLE INTERESTED IN HIS CAUSE AGREED TO ON-CAMERA INTERVIEWS. JORDAN SPOKE WITH NBA STARS KOBE BRYANT AND VINCE CARTER, FORMER NFL GREAT MICHAEL STRAHAN, RAPPER LUDACRIS AND POLITICIAN AND TALK-SHOW HOST REVEREND AL SHARPTON. ("DID YOU DO WELL IN SCHOOL?" JORDAN ASKED KOBE. "I GOT MOSTLY A'S AND B'S," THE BASKETBALL PLAYER SAID. JORDAN ASKED LUDACRIS, "WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR BOYS?" HIS RESPONSE: "EDUCATION IS FIRST AND FOREMOST.") AMC THEATERS SPONSORED A SEVEN-CITY TOUR OF THE FILM. HE SHOT ANOTHER FILM USING THE \$10,000 HE RECEIVED FOR PARTICIPATING IN MTV'S *AMERICA'S BEST DANCE CREW*. "I WANT EVERYONE TO UNDERSTAND HOW SERIOUS SOME ISSUES ARE."

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## STORY #3: AIDIN FROM IL

### DRIVING FORCE

ADIN'S PROJECT MARRIES TWO OF HIS PASSIONS: ANIMALS (HE GREW UP WITH ONE CAT BUT HIS GRANDPARENTS OWNED THREE DOGS AND THREE CATS) AND RUNNING (HE WAS CAPTAIN OF HIS HIGH SCHOOL CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM). HE ALWAYS KNEW THAT HE WANTED TO SUPPORT A SOCIAL CAUSE BUT DIDN'T KNOW WHICH ONE UNTIL HE VISITED AN ANIMAL SHELTER, DUPAGE COUNTY ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL. "IT WAS SAD TO SEE DOGS AND CATS BEING ABANDONED," ADIN SAYS. "BUT I ALSO REALIZED MANY OTHERS WERE BEING ADOPTED, WHICH GAVE ME HOPE." SO HE CREATED WOOFIN' & HOOFIN', A CHARITY BUILT AROUND A FUNDRAISING RACE. "INSTEAD OF ASKING MY PARENTS FOR MONEY, I APPLIED FOR GRANTS," HE SAYS. "I COULDN'T BELIEVE ORGANIZATIONS WOULD GIVE MONEY TO TEENAGERS ON GOOD FAITH!" INITIALLY HE RECEIVED TWO \$500 GRANTS FROM DOSOMETHING; ONCE THE EVENT WAS ESTABLISHED, HE WON A \$5,000 BEST BUY @15 AWARD FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN 2007.

### CALL TO ACTION

"I STARTED BY GATHERING A GROUP OF SIX PEOPLE I COULD TRUST," ADIN RECALLS. "ALL WERE ACHIEVERS WHO COULD WORK INDEPENDENTLY." ON MONDAYS AFTER SCHOOL THE FRIENDS HELD 45-MINUTE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS TO THROW AROUND IDEAS. EVENTUALLY THEY AGREED ON RAISING MONEY FOR THE SHELTER BY ORGANIZING WOOFIN' & HOOFIN', A 5K FOR PEOPLE, AS WELL AS A DOGGIE DASH 1-MILER (WOOFINHOOFIN.ORG). ENTRY FEES ARE \$25 PER PERSON RUNNING THE 5K, \$20 FOR PET OWNERS JOGGING ALONGSIDE THEIR DOGS. IN JUNE 2009 ABOUT 70 RUNNERS COMPETED IN THE FIRST 5K AT AND THERE WERE 15 DOGGIE DASH PARTICIPANTS. "EVERYONE WHO COMPETES GETS SOMETHING-EITHER A MEDAL OR A DOGGIE TREAT," SAYS ADIN. THE FOLLOWING YEAR THERE WERE 75 FINISHERS IN THE 5K AND 40 DOGGIE DASHERS. THE EVENT HAS RAISED \$16,000 FOR FRIENDS OF ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL, THE ORGANIZATION THAT STAFFS THE SHELTER. "THIS EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT LIFE IS ABOUT PASSION AND DEDICATION, NOT MERELY TEST SCORES AND GPAS," SAYS ADIN, WHO IS NOW A SOPHOMORE AT YALE, MAJORING IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS. "WHEN I NEEDED SOMEONE TO TAKE CARE OF A LAST-MINUTE EMERGENCY, I DIDN'T TURN TO THE PERSON WITH THE HIGHEST GRADES, BUT THE ONE WITH THE GREATEST COMMITMENT."

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