

Introduction to Makeover Challenge

The **BIG** Idea

- What is the Roads to Success Makeover Challenge?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: The Hot Potato Magic Wand Gripe Session Game (10 minutes)
- II. “The Roads to Success Makeover Challenge!” (10 minutes)
- III. Ideas, Ideas, Ideas (10 minutes)
- IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

- STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**
 - Student Handbook page 40, The Roads to Success Makeover Challenge!
- FACILITATOR PAGES:**
 - Facilitator Resource 1, Gripes, one copy per class
 - Facilitator Resource 2, Teenagers Taking Action
 - Facilitator Resource 3, Planning a Celebration Event
 - Facilitator Resource 4, Thanks, I Needed That
 - Facilitator Resource 5, The Joys of Philanthropy
- LCD projector (optional)
- One piece of paper, 8-1/2” x 11” (preferably colored)
- Tape

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Think critically about changes needed within their community.
- Recognize their individual, as well as collective, power to make a change.

OVERVIEW

Teenagers primarily live in a world where adults make the rules, and young people have very little input. Parents and authorities dictate what teens can and can't do, in their neighborhoods as well as schools. Consequently, teenagers often feel powerless, and underestimate the influence they might have on their community. In this lesson, students discover they have tremendous power as individuals, and as a group, to change their world — by identifying community problems, and using their creativity and energy to pursue positive solutions. They learn about “The Roads to Success Makeover Challenge”—a contest that gives them a real-life opportunity to make a difference.

PREPARATION

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Obtain an LCD projector in advance of teaching this lesson.
- Make a “t” shaped chart on the board, and label the left side “Gripe,” and the right side, “Fix.” Write some or all the gripes from **Facilitator Resource 1, Gripes**, onto the board under “Gripe.”
- For **Activity III, Ideas, Ideas, Ideas**, you will need to create groups of four. Lower-level learners should be grouped with academically strong students. **NOTE:** Students will work in these groups for **Activity II** in next week's lesson.
- To assist students in brainstorming project topics during **Part III, Ideas, Ideas, Ideas**, print out a class set of 15 project ideas from the websites provided on **Facilitator Resource 2, Teens Taking Action**. Follow the directions listed below each website.
- In addition, copy **Facilitator Resource 2, Teens Taking Action** (one per student). Suggest they look at the websites on their own during the week.
- Read **Facilitator Resource 3, Making the Project Happen** and begin planning with your school administration.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

This project-based learning unit can be highly rewarding to students who complete it successfully. Identifying potential problems and troubleshooting in advance will help things go more smoothly later.

| ISSUES: | TIPS: |
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| <p>Some students may not see the benefit of helping others.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team up with an organization like Penny Harvest (www.commoncents.org), which exists to teach students civic engagement. • Have representatives from “helping” organizations pitch their needs to students. • Provide students with background information on philanthropy. (See Facilitator Resource 4, Thanks, I Needed That and Facilitator Resource 5, The Joys of Philanthropy, for details.) • Provide extrinsic rewards (certificates and celebrations) for participants. • Schedule the Community Makeover early enough in the year so eighth graders will be around to see the results of their efforts. |
| <p>Many eighth grade students will have difficulty constructing realistic, long-term plans.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide examples of successful past projects. • Help students with scale and costs. For example, a new running track (proposed by students at more than one school) would cost millions of dollars; repainting the snack shack might cost hundreds of dollars. • Consider projects that involve a single fund-raising effort for a favorite cause. • Consider short-term projects that can be done during class time, for example, writing letters to servicemen and women. • Consider projects that require the donation of items found at home, for example, outgrown clothing or canned goods. |

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| <p>In many classes, the four designated committees will be too large to work together effectively.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subdivide committees and assign smaller tasks to each. • Place suggestions for next steps in each group's folder prior to the next class meeting. • Assign students specific roles within groups. • Consider splitting the class into two groups, each with its own committees, to work on two proposals simultaneously. |
| <p>Coordination between committees will be needed.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a chairperson or liaison for each committee. These designated people are the only people authorized to visit other groups during committee work. • Schedule frequent check-ins between groups, for example, at the beginning of class and 10 minutes before class ends. • Problem solve as a whole class whenever needed. |
| <p>Administrators and partner organizations will need updates on plans.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include all stakeholders from the outset, and provide frequent updates. Ask who else will need to be involved, including other faculty members (as chaperones) or custodial staff (to supervise student work). • Once administrators have been apprised of students' plans, you may wish to have students approach them directly for permission. |

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| <p>Written work will need to represent students' best efforts.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign specific people to the writing tasks. • Enlist a willing language arts teacher to help in the editing process, perhaps as a class assignment, or for extra credit. • Emphasize that students' ideas will be represented by their written work. • Provide laptops, if available, for written work. • Provide alternative means of delivering proposals, for example, PowerPoint presentations or posters. |
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If your class is older, and you don't think they'll enjoy the playfulness of a "magic wand," try the following **Warm Up** instead: cut the Facilitator Resource gripes into strips, and put them into a hat. Ask your students to jot down some complaints they have about their school or community, and put them in the hat, too. Then take turns picking gripes out of the hat, and suggesting solutions. Chart the gripes and fixes on the board in the manner as described. Assign a volunteer to keep track on a piece of paper, so the class can consider them as project ideas later.

For **Activity III, Ideas, Ideas, Ideas**, if the students are excited and full of ideas, lead them in a brainstorming session instead of perusing other people's projects. Designate one student to act as the recorder to write down any and all ideas that pop up during the discussion.

If students struggle to generate ideas, use **Facilitator Resource 4, Thanks, I Needed That** and **Facilitator Resource 5, The Joys of Philanthropy** to help them generate ideas.

In general, please note the following:

- 1) During this six-week lesson plan, you can make time adjustments as needed. If a lesson is finished more quickly, move on, or if you need more time to complete it, carry it over to the next week. Just keep an eye on the overall picture so every class finishes their project pitch on time.
- 2) If more than one class wants to address the same problem, allow them to make that choice. Tell them, during the decision-making phase, that another class is working on (or considering)

a similar topic, without giving any details about the other class's approach. If they still want to pursue the topic, let them do it.

- 3) If your students find a section of the project difficult to execute in their committees, feel free to complete any (or all) parts of the project as a class.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up: The Hot Potato Magic Wand Gripe Session Game (10 minutes)

1. [When students arrive, tell them class will start with a quick game, and you need a volunteer to record what's said during the game. Give the volunteer your copy of the **Facilitator Resource 1, Gripes**, and instruct him/her to jot down the answers students give next to the corresponding gripe. Suggest he/she use shorthand, such as one-or-two word answers, so he/she can keep up with the game's quick pace. Tell him/her you will do the same on the board, but the wording doesn't have to match. His/her job is to keep a record so the class will have a hard copy they can refer to later.]
2. [Explain that a gripe is a complaint, and the gripes on the board are some complaints teenagers have had about their schools and/or communities. Show students the wand, and explain that during this game, they will have the power to fix these gripes, just by coming up with a solution, and waving the wand. Game play is similar to "Hot Potato," but instead of passing around a potato, they will pass the wand.]
3. [Selecting gripes at random, you will read one gripe out loud, while the students pass the wand. Be a little cagey about how you read—fast, slow, mixing it up—to keep the class from anticipating whose turn it will be next. Then shout "STOP!" Whoever has possession of the wand must come up with a reasonable solution to fix the gripe you just read. You jot the answer on the board and the volunteer writes it on the paper.]
4. [Proceed until all gripes are solved, or five minutes is up.]
5. [Point to the board, where there are now fixes beside the gripes. Congratulate the class on making so many positive changes to their community, just by waving the magic wand. Now, dramatically, rip up the wand, or toss it aside. Ask the class if they know why you're destroying it. Hopefully someone will guess why, but if not, tell them "it's because you don't need magic to make any of these changes."]
6. [Refer again to the board.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: On your own, you came up with great solutions to these problems. And if you put your ideas into action, you'd improve the community. If you're thinking, *How could we? We're just a bunch of kids...* think again. Later in class

you are going to see some Community Makeover projects that previous Roads to Success students put into action. If they can do it, there is no reason why you can't, as well.

II. "The Roads to Success Makeover Challenge!" (10 minutes)

1. [Explain to the students they will spend the next five lessons working on a proposal for a project to change their community. They will enter as a class, and compete against all the other Roads to Success classes in the grade. The class that submits the best plan for a project to improve the community will put their project into action. Tell students that the local media will be notified, although you make no promises of national fame and glory. Their school will, of course, announce the winners publicly, and everyone who benefits from the change will be made aware of who is responsible.]
2. [Ask students to turn to **Student Handbook page 40, The Roads to Success Makeover Challenge!** Review the sheet, calling on different students to read aloud the various rules. Field questions as they arise, and make sure everyone has a good understanding of what's expected of them.]
3. [If you know who the judges are, announce this to the students. If you don't know, describe a few possible scenarios: an impartial team consisting of teachers, school administrators, upper classmates, and/or local community leaders.]

III. Ideas, Ideas, Ideas (10 minutes)

1. [Divide the class into groups of four (see **Preparation** section).]
2. [Tell students they will spend the rest of this class, and the beginning of the next, researching ideas and deciding on a project. Suggest they start the process by reviewing projects other teenagers are doing, or have done, to improve their communities. They can also refer to the problems and solutions they discussed during the **Warm Up**.

Each team needs one facilitator (who will solicit ideas from team members) and one reporter (who will write down team members' ideas).]

3. [If you think your students will struggle to come up with project ideas on their own, give each student a copy of the printouts describing project ideas from **Facilitator Resource**

2, Teens Taking Action, which lists websites for teens that describe community action and teen-driven projects (see **Preparation** section). Explain to the students that they should jot down ideas as they read, to share with the class next week (see **Implementation Options** for suggestions).]

IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. [Ask students to spend this next week thinking critically about their community, and ways they might improve it. Distribute **Facilitator Resource 2, Teens Taking Action** to each student. Suggest that students look into the websites on their own, before next week's class. They should come to class with two ideas to share with their classmates.]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Keep your eyes and ears open, and ask family and friends what they think, too. Listen to everyone's gripes and complaints, and see if anything strikes a chord in you. You have the chance to make a difference in your community. So think hard and dream big! And the "makeover" winner just might be YOU.

GRIPES

There's no place in town to hang out after school or on weekends.

The park's so full of trash it looks like a dump.

Crossing the street to and from school is dangerous.

Why can't we shoot hoops during the school lunch break?

Senior citizens freak out when they see teenagers.

There's never anything good to eat in the school cafeteria.

There's no safe spot in town to leave my bike.

The football/soccer scoreboard's been broken forever.

We don't have Internet at home, and there isn't any time during the day to surf the Web on the school computers.

The best ramps to skateboard are off limits.

The halls in this school are ugly and depressing.

Daycare's so expensive in this town that I have to go home every day to babysit my little brother.

Teenagers Taking Action Resources

1. <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/action>

PBS series ZOOM is “by kids, for kids.” This part of their website is a great place to “zoom into action.”

- Click on “How You Can Help.”
- You will see 10 categories with suggestions of ways to help—from animals to voting. Click on the links and print out any projects that look interesting.

2. <http://www.idealists.org/>

You will find links and information on volunteering, volunteer organizations and projects. Prepare to be inspired!

- Explore volunteer opportunities.
- Print out any projects that you’d like to consider.

3. <http://www.nationalsave.org>

Interested in violence prevention? This website tells you how to start a chapter of SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) in your school. Click on “Tools”/“Service Projects” for project ideas.

- Click on the “Tools” button, and then click on the “Service Projects” button.
- You will see a list of project ideas.
- Print this page.

4. <http://www.byggpub.com/books/tg2rw/volunteer.htm>

This is an online resource for the book *The Teenager’s Guide to the Real World* by Marshall Brain. It describes 20 ways for teens to help other people by volunteering, with links to specific projects.

- Print the whole list, or click on the links for details.

Planning a Celebration Event

The Community Makeover represents a wonderful opportunity for community involvement and recognition for your students and school. You may want to capitalize on this opportunity by hosting a judging event and announcement of the winning project, or an event to unveil the completed work on the winning proposal.

Below are some planning tips:

- Determine which event will best suit your students' projects and schedule tentative celebration dates. Coordinate the dates with your school(s) to ensure they don't conflict with planned school events. In some instances, you may want to combine the makeover celebration with a school assembly that is already scheduled. Networking in the community might provide you with resources to secure a local celebrity to make an appearance (e.g. local politician or community figure). Consider proposing several possible dates to accommodate his/her schedule.
- There may be some school organizations or community groups that have experience coordinating an event, especially if the project is related to their own work. For example, the Chamber of Commerce might be interested in helping with a community beautification project, and a school improvement team might help with a school-based project. These individuals may volunteer to assist with refreshments, media, invitations, etc. These individuals may also have recommendations for who should be invited, including school board members, district staff, community leaders, etc.
- Once the date is set and a speaker secured, begin the invitation process. Attached is a sample guest invitation form you can use when planning your event. Feel free to edit for your own needs.
- Contact the local media and/or school newspaper and make them aware of the project. You may have students within each of your classes volunteer to make statements about their projects to be included in a local news story. **NOTE: You must follow school policy re: parental permission for students whose names, images, or voices are used.**
- Take pictures of your students while they work on their proposals and projects. These can be used for a slideshow, website, or news article later on. Follow school policies re: parental permission for any public use of the photos.
- Create an agenda and consider creating a script if students will be speaking.
- If time and facilities allow, display pictures or a slide show of your students' work on the proposals or projects.
- Remember to recognize your volunteers during the celebration and follow up with thank-you notes after.



EVENT INFORMATION

Today's Date: _____

Event Name: Roads to Success Community Makeover Challenge

Date of Event: _____

Time Event Begins: _____

Reception Time: _____ Meal Time: _____

Circle all that are applicable: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Time Event Ends: _____

Detailed Description and Purpose of Event: *(Please Attach)*

Location and Address of Event: _____

Room #: _____

Directions to Location:

Primary Contact Person: _____

Phone: Day _____ Evening _____ Cell _____

Dress (Circle Appropriate): Casual Business Black Tie

PRESENTATION INFORMATION

Role of Guest Speaker (Fill in Name): _____

Example:

Present the winning eighth grade Roads to Success Community Makeover Challenge Award. Congratulate and stress the importance of community service and volunteerism.

Expected Length of Presentation: _____

Dignitaries Attending:

Expected Attendance: _____

Example:

School Officials; Student Body; Local Officials

Open to Public? _____

Open to Media? _____

News Release by Group? _____

Who Will Meet Guest Speaker (Fill in Name) Upon Arrival?

Special Issues/Topics Important to Group:

Example:

Community Service and the important role it plays in a successful community. The positive contributions our youth make and the control they have in creating a better world for themselves and others. Reiterating the purpose of Roads to Success's mission; linking education and career/life goals.

Attached to this Guest Event Planner Form are the following:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| _____ | Invitation List (if applicable) |
| <u> X </u> | Speaking Points |
| <u> X </u> | Roads to Success Background Information |
| <u> X </u> | Agenda |

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

The Guest Speaker (fill in name) will be presenting awards to students during the presentation. We will have those certificates and awards prepared and will assist during distribution to streamline the event.

Explain the type of award/certificate etc. and the format for distribution.

Example:

You will be given a list of students identified in groups by their class. Students will be recognized in the audience and asked to stand. This gives all students an opportunity to be recognized for participation.

We will provide you with the names of the winning group to be announced and brought to the stage. A large check will be presented and photos taken.

A photo session will take place immediately following the awards ceremony.

Speaking Points

Example:

Empowering students to value volunteerism and community responsibility will have far-reaching benefits for both our youth and our community.

- Importance of volunteerism and the rewards of giving back
- Important role youth play in the success of their communities
- Linking education to a successful future

Background Information

- Roads to Success helps students acquire important workplace and life skills while proactively planning to achieve their post-secondary education and career goals. Through its weekly in-class sessions, Roads to Success helps teenagers foster a sense of hope about their future, giving them tangible reasons to continue and succeed in school.
- Students in Grade 8 are competing in a Community Makeover Challenge. The students identify an issue in their school or community and brainstorm solutions to fix it. The students are putting together a proposed plan to address the identified need. They have to create a proposal, recruit volunteers, and present their ideas for funding. A committee will evaluate the presentations and select a winner.



Sample Agenda

Roads to Success Community Makeover Challenge Award

Spencer Middle School Auditorium:

9:00 am: Introductions & Welcome

A more detailed agenda delineating the responsibilities of each individual would be provided prior to the event.

Example:

Welcome - Facilitator or School Official

Introductions - An Roads to Success student gives introduction

Etc.

9:15 am: Guest Presenter

Awards Presentation

Roads to Success Community Makeover

TIFU & RAZE Student Recognition

9:45 am: Student Photos with First Lady

10:00 am: Students Return to Classes.

Spencer Middle School Library:

10:15 am: First Lady Reception

Thanks, I Needed That

Think about a time when someone did something nice for you. It could be a gift of something you always wanted, help with a problem you were trying to solve, or just an encouraging word when you needed it.

Use the space below to describe what happened, and how it made you feel. Volunteers will be asked to share their stories with the class.

The Joys of Philanthropy: Make Your Predictions

The quotes below explain how four different people feel about helping others. Next to each quote, write the name of the person you think said it. Below the speaker's name, write the project they support. You may choose from the answers at the bottom of the page.

Well, everyone has to do something, but I'm really passionate about it...

Speaker: _____
 Project: _____

Whatever success I've enjoyed in this life, I trace right back to [my mentor] and the lessons he taught me.

Speaker: _____
 Project: _____

It brings purpose to my life.

Speaker: _____
 Project: _____

It taught me the meaning of responsibility... I really think that anyone that participates... will come out as a person changed for the better.

Speaker: _____
 Project: _____

Answers:

| | |
|---|--|
| Speaker: Hannah Taylor (Canadian student, age 11) Project: Lady Bug Foundation Description: Helps homeless people. | Speaker: Abbisola (Brooklyn student, PS 398) Project: Common Cents Description: Collects money to help different organizations. |
| Speaker: Melvin Francisquini (NYC resident) Project: NY Cares Description: Provides meals and friendly visits to senior citizens and people living with HIV/AIDS. | Speaker: Denzel Washington (Actor) Project: Save Africa's Children Description: Provides support to African children affected by HIV/AIDS, poverty, and war. |

The Joys of Philanthropy: Answer Key & Explanation

The quotes below explain how four different people feel about helping others. Next to each quote, write the name of the person you think said it. Below the speaker's name, write the project they support. You may choose from the answers at the bottom of the page.

Well, everyone has to do something, but I'm really passionate about it...

Speaker: **Hannah Taylor**

Project: **Ladybug Foundation**

Whatever success I've enjoyed in this life, I trace right back to [my mentor] and the lessons he taught me.

Speaker: **Denzel Washington**

Project: **Save Africa's Children**

It brings purpose to my life.

Speaker: **Melvin Francisquini**

Project: **NY Cares**

It taught me the meaning of responsibility... I really think that anyone that participates... will come out as a person changed for the better.

Speaker: **Abbisola**

Project: **Common Cents**

Answers:

| | |
|---|--|
| Speaker: Hannah Taylor (Canadian student, age 11) Project: Lady Bug Foundation Description: Helps homeless people. | Speaker: Abbisola (Brooklyn student, PS 398) Project: Common Cents Description: Collects money to help different organizations. |
| Speaker: Melvin Francisquini (NYC resident) Project: NY Cares Description: Provides meals and friendly visits to senior citizens and people living with HIV/AIDS. | Speaker: Denzel Washington (Actor) Project: Save Africa's Children Description: Provides support to African children affected by HIV/AIDS, poverty, and war. |

The Joys of Philanthropy: Answer Key and Explanation

What do the people featured on The Joys of Philanthropy page have in common?

Only one of them is rich. Two of them are kids. Three of them have helped donate one million dollars to charity.

Here are their stories:

DENZEL WASHINGTON

Quote: Whatever success I've enjoyed in this life, I trace right back to [my mentor] and the lessons he taught me. (Denzel is speaking about the influence of the Boys and Girls Clubs when he was a young person.)

Project: Save Africa's Children

Save Africa's Children (SAC) is an African-American-founded organization, providing direct support to children affected by HIV/AIDS, poverty, and war throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. SAC partners with American and African churches, individuals, grassroots organizations, government and corporate sectors to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable; endeavoring to build a dynamic, diverse movement to restore hope and to create a future for Africa's children. Denzel Washington has donated a million dollars to this cause.

HANNAH TAYLOR

Quote: Well, everyone has to do something, but I'm really passionate about it...

Project: The Ladybug Foundation, feeding the homeless

Hannah got her start raising money to help the homeless at age six. She and her classmates had a bake sale and art sale, and donated clothing and money to a local mission. Today, her Ladybug Foundation has raised one million dollars to help homeless people in Canada. Hannah is 11 years old.

MELVIN FRANCISQUINI

Quote: It brings purpose to my life.

Project: NY Cares, volunteering as a caring companion

Melvin is a New Yorker who's spent 80 hours as a volunteer, so far. His projects include visiting people with HIV/AIDS and playing bingo with senior citizens.

ABBISOLA

Quote: It taught me the meaning of responsibility... I really think that anyone that participates... will come out as a person changed for the better.

Project: Penny Harvest, collects pennies for charity

Abbisola is a student at PS 398 in Brooklyn, New York, one of 850 schools in New York City that collects pennies for charity. Together, NYC students ages four to 14 collected 100 million pennies (a million dollars). These pennies were on display in Rockefeller Center in December, 2007. Students decide how the money they've collected will be used to help others.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFO ABOUT PHILANTHROPY:

- For more information on celebrity philanthropy, visit www.looktothestars.org.
- For information on volunteer opportunities in New York City and elsewhere, check out these sites: www.nycares.org and www.volunteermatch.org.
- For information on Penny Harvest and Common Cents, visit www.commoncents.org.
- For Hannah Taylor's story, see www.dosomething.org. (Use the search tool to find her story.)

The Roads to Success Makeover Challenge!

Want to improve your community? Here's your chance!

Wherever you live, learn, work, or play—that's your community. And whether you're eight, 18, or 80, you've got the power to make it great. So, what does your community need? How can you improve your world? What can your class of creative, energetic students do to make your community a better place?

Look around, think, plan, and pitch. One class will be selected to put their Roads to Success Makeover Challenge plan into action!

Rules

- You must enter as a class. No individual projects will be considered.
- Projects may focus on one group in the community, but they must, in some way, benefit everyone.
- Projects must be realistic, well planned, and reasonable to accomplish with funds raised by the students.
- Projects must include student service. Students may paint, plant, build, create, or fundraise.
- Projects must have an adult advisor who will help the winning class see the project through to completion.
- Classes must enter a “project pitch” that consists of the following:
 1. **Introduction.** Approximately four to six paragraphs describing the targeted community, what your class thinks it needs, your project idea, and how your project will address the community's need.
 2. **Plan of Action.** A step-by-step description of how you will accomplish your project, with details about who will do what, when, where, and how.
 3. **Budget.** A realistic accounting of what you'll need for the project, and how every penny will be spent.
 4. **Inspiration and Evidence.** Statistics, stories, and artwork. Anything that will help convince your readers that your project is needed. Up to three additional pages.
 5. **Advisor Agreement:** A written document that outlines what adult will help the winning class complete the project.
 6. **Your signatures.** A final page, which every class member will sign, pledging your commitment to this project.