

April 10-16, 2005

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*National Youth Service Day offers teens and adults the opportunity to contribute to their communities.*

► This Week's Focus:

## National Youth Service Day

In this week's guide, we celebrate National Youth Service Day (April 15-17). It's not too late for your students to volunteer for projects that help your community. Visit the NYSD Web site ([www.ysa.org/nysd](http://www.ysa.org/nysd) or [www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org)) to find programs in your area. Also this week, we give suggestions for students trying to cope with college rejection. And finally, as April 15 approaches, we look at what the government actually does with all of our tax money.

### Everyday Newspaper Activity

**Activity #32: Teen Power.** Ask your students to search your paper for positive stories about young people. Cut out all the stories for the rest of the school year to make a display on your bulletin board. Which teens do class members admire most? Why?

### Coming Up Next Week

- Celebrating Earth Day
- The Birthplace of Religious Freedom
- Global Warming

► **In the News: Coping with College Rejection; National Youth Service Day** p.2

► **In PARADE: Where Does All the Tax Money Go?** p.3

► **Skills Sheets: How to Volunteer** p.4;  
**What's the Main Idea?** p.5

## Getting Past College Rejection

**Curriculum links:** College prep, family and consumer science, personal development, psychology

**Briefing:** Most high school seniors find out whether they've been admitted to college in April. Although many will be rejected by their first-choice schools, they can cope by staying positive, not taking rejection personally, venting emotions, exploring alternatives and trying again. Students can appeal a rejection by contacting the admissions officer. This tactic only works occasionally, but students can often find out the reasons for a rejection. Then they can try to improve particular areas and reapply for admission later as a transfer student. Students who are not accepted by any schools can work with counselors to find good colleges with late application deadlines. Wait-listed students should also contact colleges to find out how to strengthen their applications.

**Newspaper activity:** Being prepared for college admissions interviews can help prevent rejection. Colleges like well-informed applicants, so encourage students to read the paper daily. Then ask students to give short reports on important issues, or have them give each other mock college interviews.

**Resources:** Books: Barbara Moe's *Coping with Rejection* (Rosen, 2001) and *A is for Admission* (Warner, 1997) by Michele Hernández. Web sites: Find advice on handling rejection from CNN and others.\*

### Classroom Debates

• **Have you ever been rejected—by a college, an employer, a club, a team or a friend?** How did you handle it? Did you learn anything from it? Has rejection ever helped you? What advice would you give to someone who has been rejected? Most college rejection letters are brief and nonspecific. Should colleges be obligated to tell applicants exactly why they were rejected? Should you apply to the very best colleges—even if you think you will be rejected? How important is it to have “safety schools”? If you were rejected by all your choices, what other options could you pursue?

## National Youth Service Day

**Curriculum links:** Citizenship, service learning, social studies, family and consumer science

**Briefing:** On one weekend each year, millions of American teens take time to help their communities. They do everything from tutoring children, to registering voters to teaching about good nutrition to AIDS prevention. This year, you can join them. The 17th annual National Youth Service Day will take place April 15-17. Get your friends together, find a cause you support, and pitch in. What excites you? Would you like to plant trees, visit nursing homes, clean up beaches, help set up a library or start a peer mediation group? Volunteers are happy to see the changes they make in people's lives. And they are likely to find their own lives transformed by the challenges they meet. So be part of the next generation of volunteers, and let others know how young people contribute to their communities and the world.

**Newspaper activity:** Ask students to imagine that they want to publicize a National Youth Service Day event. How would they go about it? What role would the newspaper play? Would they involve other media? Also ask students to look through the paper for possible volunteering opportunities. Are there groups looking for new volunteers? Are there local problems for which they can brainstorm solutions? As individuals? As part of a group? (See the related skills sheet on p. 5.)

**Resources:** Books: Elizabeth Rusch's *Generation Fix* (Beyond Words, 2002), Susan Perry's *Catch the Spirit* (Franklin Watts, 2000), Danny Seo's *Be the Difference* (New Society, 2001), and Barbara Lewis' *The Kid's Guide to Social Action* (Free Spirit, 1998). Web sites: Find National Youth Service Day and Global Youth Service Day resources as well as volunteer opportunities by zip code.\*

### Classroom Debates

• **One function of National Youth Service Day (NYSD) is to get publicity for different volunteer efforts.** Why is this important? What other functions does NYSD serve? How can volunteering help you? Can it help you explore possible careers? What other benefits might it have? How can it help your community? What experiences have you had with volunteering? Is there any downside?

• **Some schools require students to perform community service in order to graduate.** Do you support this idea? If your school had this requirement, what would you choose to do? What activities best fit your interests and skills?

# Where Does Our Tax Money Go?

**Curriculum links:** Civics and government, social studies, current events, economics

**Briefing:** April 15 is America's yearly tax deadline. In this week's PARADE, David Wallechinsky describes where all that money goes. Income taxes (\$894 billion) cover only a third of government spending, he says. The rest comes from payroll and related taxes (\$774 billion) and corporate taxes (\$226 billion). Even this doesn't cover everything: The government will also borrow \$427 billion. This year, total government spending will be about \$2.5 trillion. That's about \$8454 for every man, woman and child in the country—or about \$4.72 million a minute. More than half of the total budget is spent on just four things: the military (\$527 billion), health care benefits (\$521 billion), Social Security (\$519 billion), and interest on the national debt (\$321 billion). Because the U.S. spends more than it takes in, it has borrowed \$7.7 trillion, or more than \$25,000 per person. Just like an individual, the government must make interest payments on its debt, which has increased dramatically in the past three years. Revenues have gone down 5.6 % while spending has increased 23%, leaving a lot of debt for future generations. It is also interesting to see where the government places its priorities. The National Science Foundation gets \$5.47 billion, while the National Endowment for the Arts gets \$121 million. The Office of Nuclear Energy Science has a budget of \$503 million, while we will spend just \$85 million on solar energy research. Read more about government priorities in the PARADE article. See whether you agree with them.

## Classroom Debates

- **Are you happy with the way our tax dollars are spent?** Why or why not? What do they say about U.S. priorities? Do you agree with these priorities? Why or why not? How could tax money be spent differently? If you were in charge, what would be your top priorities? Which programs would you cut back or eliminate? Which would you expand? How can you make your opinions heard? Is the war in Iraq a good way to spend tax money? Should paying down the national debt be a priority? Should more money be spent on education or the environment? Explain.

**Newspaper activity:** Read through the paper to see how the federal budget affects programs in your community and in the country as a whole. Can you find stories that show cutbacks in particular programs? Can you find others where tax money is fueling growth? How does the federal budget affect your family?

**Resources:** Books: Sarah De Capua's *Paying Taxes* (Sagebrush, 2002) and Ernestine Giesecke's *Your Money at Work: Taxes* (Heinemann-Raintree, 2003). Web sites: Visit the National Priorities Project and read news accounts about Bush's 2005 budget.\*

## ASK MARILYN

### Brainteaser

**Question:** At a reverse raffle, everyone buys a number. Numbered balls are then drawn out of a bin one at a time, and the last number is the winner. When the organizers get down to the last couple of dozen balls, they notice some balls that were overlooked and add them to the bin. Don't the added balls have a much better chance of winning?

**Answer:** Yes. But since everyone had an equal chance of his or her ball being one of those overlooked, the addition makes no difference to anyone's chance of winning. The raffle was still fair.

## FRESH VOICES

### Bridging Two Worlds Through Service

**For class discussion or writing assignment:** Faduma Guhad, 17, an immigrant from Somalia, had some trouble adapting to life in America. Once she did, however, she began volunteering at a refugee center to help others learn the ropes here. She also became involved in a photo project that helped American students understand those who came from elsewhere. While Faduma continues that work, she's giving a party at a nursing home for National Youth Service Day. "I live in two worlds that are slowly coming together," she says. "And I am glad to be able to give back to both of them." What can you do to give back to your community?

**Interact:** Ask students to send their stories about volunteering to Fresh Voices, Box 5103 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-5103, or e-mail [freshvoices@parade.com](mailto:freshvoices@parade.com). Students whose letters are published will receive a Fresh Voices T-shirt.

## Answer Key:

**Volunteer Mania p. 4: Answers will vary. What's the Main Idea? p. 5: Answers will vary.**

## Volunteer Mania

The newspaper is a great place to begin looking for volunteer opportunities. To get started, try this:

1. Look through your local newspaper and find three stories—one local, one national and one international—that reveal social problems. Write the names and dates of the stories here.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Briefly describe the problem identified in each article.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. For each problem, list three things you could do as an individual—or as part of a group—to help.

a. 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

b. 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

c. 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Brainstorm a little more. Meet with others in small groups of four or five. Discuss the problems each of you has identified. Choose just one to investigate and then make a presentation to the class about it.

a. Which problem did you choose?

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b. Why?

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c. What ways did you find to help?

\_\_\_\_\_

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## What's the Big Idea?

Newspaper articles always have a main point—and so does each paragraph within the piece. This point is known as the main idea. For example, what is the main idea in the paragraph below?

**Vent.** It's OK to be upset, angry and depressed when your top college choice rejects you. "Cry if you feel like it," says Dr. Owen Lewis, associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Columbia University. "Let people know how you feel. Talk to your parents, a teacher or friends."

- a. Being angry can be depressing.
- b. Dr. Lewis is a professor at Columbia.
- c. It's good to express how you feel.
- d. Your parents are important.

In this case, the correct answer is c.

**Now do the same thing, using your newspaper.** First, find an article that interests you.

In one sentence, write the main idea of the article: \_\_\_\_\_

**Next, write the main idea of each paragraph:**

Paragraph one:

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Paragraph six:

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Paragraph two:

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Paragraph seven:

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Paragraph three:

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Paragraph eight:

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Paragraph four:

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Paragraph nine:

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Paragraph five:

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Paragraph ten:

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