

It Starts with Character: Inspiring Kids & Teens to Volunteer



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It Starts with Character: Inspiring Kids & Teens to Volunteer

Now, more than ever, character education and civic engagement are vital to catalyzing change in local communities. Scholastic Media, a division of Scholastic Inc., and HandsOn Network, the volunteer enterprise of Points of Light, recognize the importance of both – especially as these areas relate to parents, teachers, kids, and teens.

In order to examine the role of the national, ongoing ‘Clifford BE BIG™’ initiative, more than 1,000 parents, teachers, kids, and teens were engaged in a study to take a closer look at the importance of character education, its role in service and volunteerism, and the roles that media and recognizable characters play in communicating messaging about both.

An overwhelming **majority of survey respondents agree that to be successful in life, character-building skills are among the most important skills to develop**, along with academic skills. The more that kids and teens are exposed to these skills, which inform Clifford’s BIG Ideas (*Share, Help Others, Be Kind, Be Responsible, Play Fair, Be a Good Friend, Believe in Yourself, Respect Others, Work Together, and Be Truthful*), the more interested they are in volunteering.

Eighty-eight percent of parents and 93 percent of teachers believe that volunteering provides an opportunity to develop character-building skills. Ninety-six percent of kids and teens also agree.

Showing interest in volunteering is crucial – but taking action is even more important. The study shows **kids and teens who are exposed more to character-building skills volunteer more often than their peers**.

Ninety-four percent of parents and 98 percent of teachers believe media (TV, film, books, magazines, games, apps, and Internet) **can play an important role in teaching children the value of character education**. Parents and teachers also believe kids would benefit from more media exposure to lessons about character education.

Survey results affirmed the need for Scholastic’s Clifford BE BIG program. **A vast majority** – 96 percent of parents, 98 percent of teachers, 91 percent of kids, and 81 percent of teens – **think Clifford’s BIG Ideas are valuable and reinforce the importance of character-building skills**. The study showed that teachers, kids, and teens identified **Clifford as the character most associated with teaching character-building skills**. Hearing about Scholastic’s Clifford BE BIG program motivates the majority of all respondents to participate in community activities.

Scholastic and HandsOn Network hope this survey, and Scholastic’s Clifford BE BIG program, will reinvigorate the dialogue in this country about character education, civic engagement, and volunteerism. Commitment to the program’s mission remains to recognize and reward others for their BIG actions, to catalyze change in local communities, and to provide resources for everyone to share BIG ideas.

“In this age of 'all about me' and electronic communication I think character-building social skills and service-oriented projects are very important.”

— **2nd-grade teacher, Iowa**

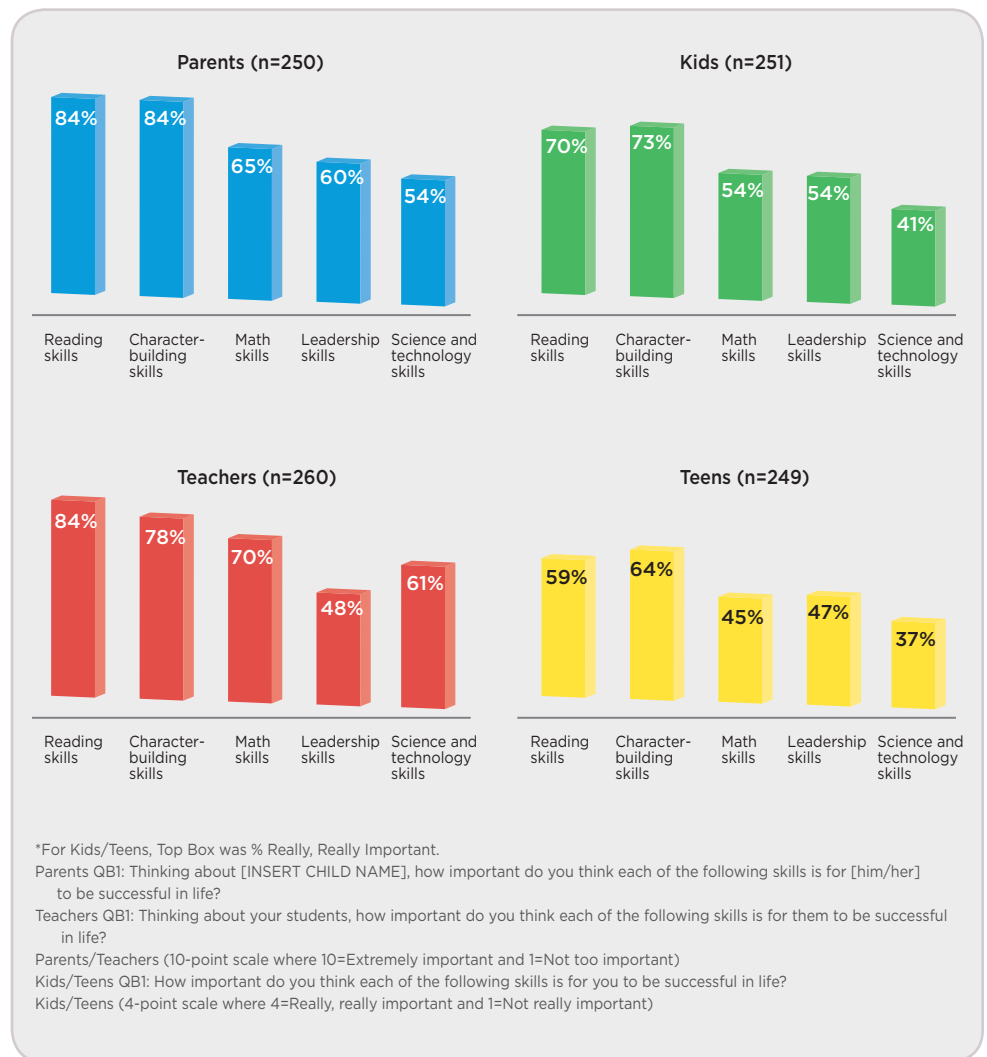
“These are very important life skills that we will continue to learn about and improve and try to find opportunities to volunteer and help out.”

— **Mother, 9 year-old boy, New York**

Parents (84%), teachers (78%), kids (73%), and teens (64%) all say character-building skills are among the most important skills to develop along with academic skills in order to be successful in life.

Importance of Skills to Be Successful in Life

% Extremely Important* (% Top Box)



The more kids and teens are exposed to character-building skills* such as sharing, being kind, and caring about others, the greater the level of interest in volunteering.

Interest in Volunteering Related to Exposure to Character-Building Skills*

% Extremely/Very Interested (Top 2 Box)



Additionally, the more exposure to character-building skills, specifically through media*, the more kids and teens are interested in volunteering.**

“I had to drop off a bag of clothes for tornado victims. A few days later, I saw a little girl wearing my sister's dress and shoes. It made me feel great that I was able to help someone.”

— 12 year-old girl, Alabama

“By being part of a classroom culture in which giving of oneself is valued and experienced daily students are more likely to develop as people who continue to demonstrate a service way of life as adults.”

— 1st-grade teacher, Michigan

*Character-building skills: sharing with others, playing fair, having respect, working together, being responsible, being truthful, being kind, believing in yourself, being a good friend, helping others

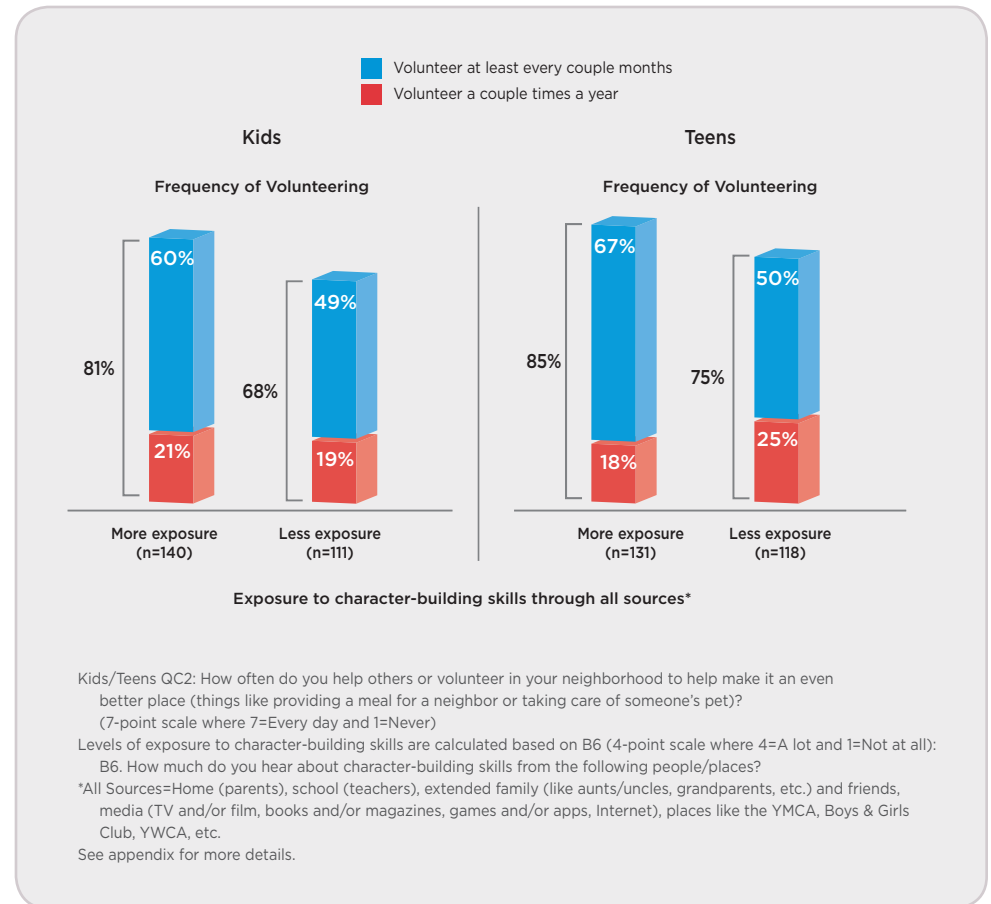
***Media (TV and/or film, books and/or magazines, games and/or apps, Internet)

“I know that everything that the child is exposed to affects how that child believes, feels, and behaves. If we all unite and focus to help the children they can all succeed.”

— **Mother, 3 year-old girl, Oregon**

Kids and teens who are more exposed to character-building skills volunteer more frequently than their peers.

Frequency of Volunteering Related to Exposure to Character-Building Skills



Also, the more exposure to character-building skills through media, the more frequently teens volunteer.

The majority of parents (88%) and teachers (93%) believe that volunteering provides an opportunity for children to build character. Kids and teens (96% each) agree that volunteering teaches them character-building skills.

Agreement with Opportunity Volunteering Provides

% Strongly Agree/Agree* (% Top 2 Box)



“I always feel good when I help out in my community. My mom says you get out of the world what you put into it and I think she's right!”

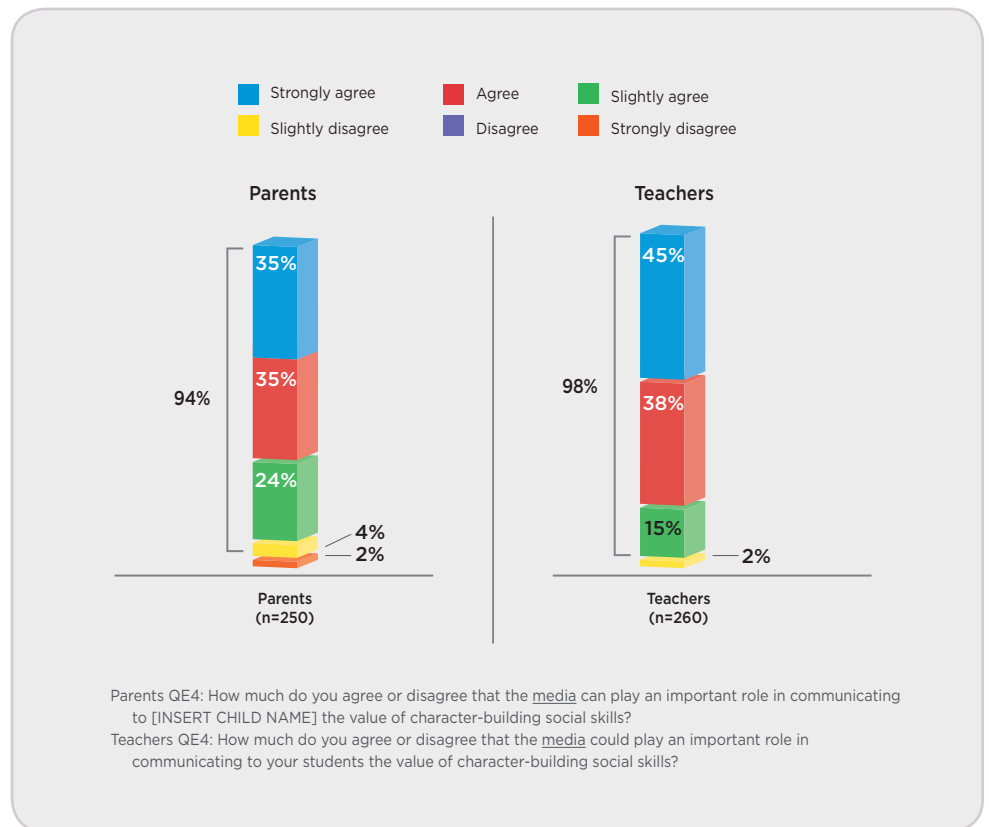
– 12 year-old girl, Virginia

“My son... definitely learns responsibility, respect, helping others, and confidence in his abilities when we give him the opportunity to do these things.”

– Mother, 8 year-old boy, Texas

The majority of parents (94%) and teachers (98%) agree that media can play an important role in communicating the value of character-building skills.

Agreement with Media Playing an Important Role in Communicating Value of Character-Building Skills



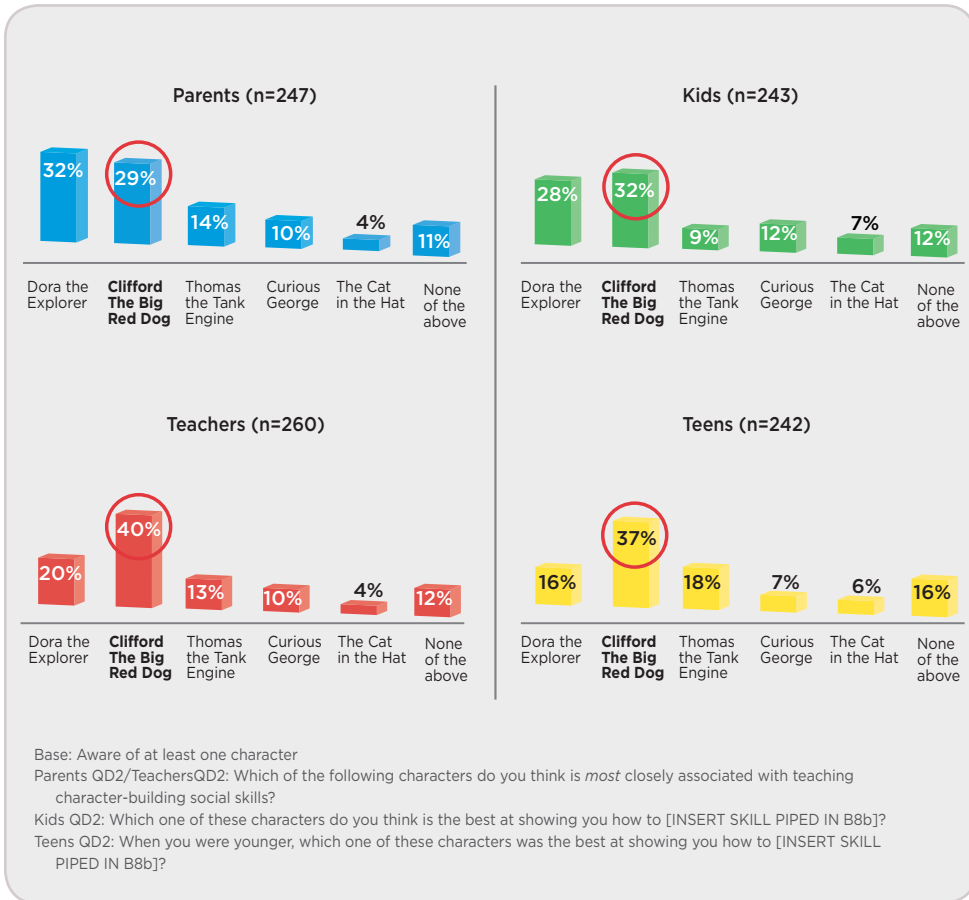
Further, parents (49%)* and teachers (63%) believe children would benefit from more media exposure to lessons about character-building skills.**

*B7 Parents: And, to what extent would [INSERT CHILD NAME] benefit from more exposure to lessons about character-building social skills through the following people/ organizations/environments?

**B7 Teachers: And, to what extent would your students benefit from more exposure to lessons about character-building social skills through the following environments/ organizations?

Clifford The Big Red Dog® is one of the characters most associated with teaching character-building skills.

Character Most Closely Associated with Teaching Character-Building Skills



“I think Clifford is great for kids to learn how to share.”

— 11 year-old girl, Virginia

“Encouraging young people to volunteer, help their communities, and link with reading, Clifford develops lifelong volunteer spirit.”

— 1st- through 4th-grade teacher, Washington

“If everyone sees Clifford’s BIG ideas and does them, then everywhere you look you would always see people helping others.”

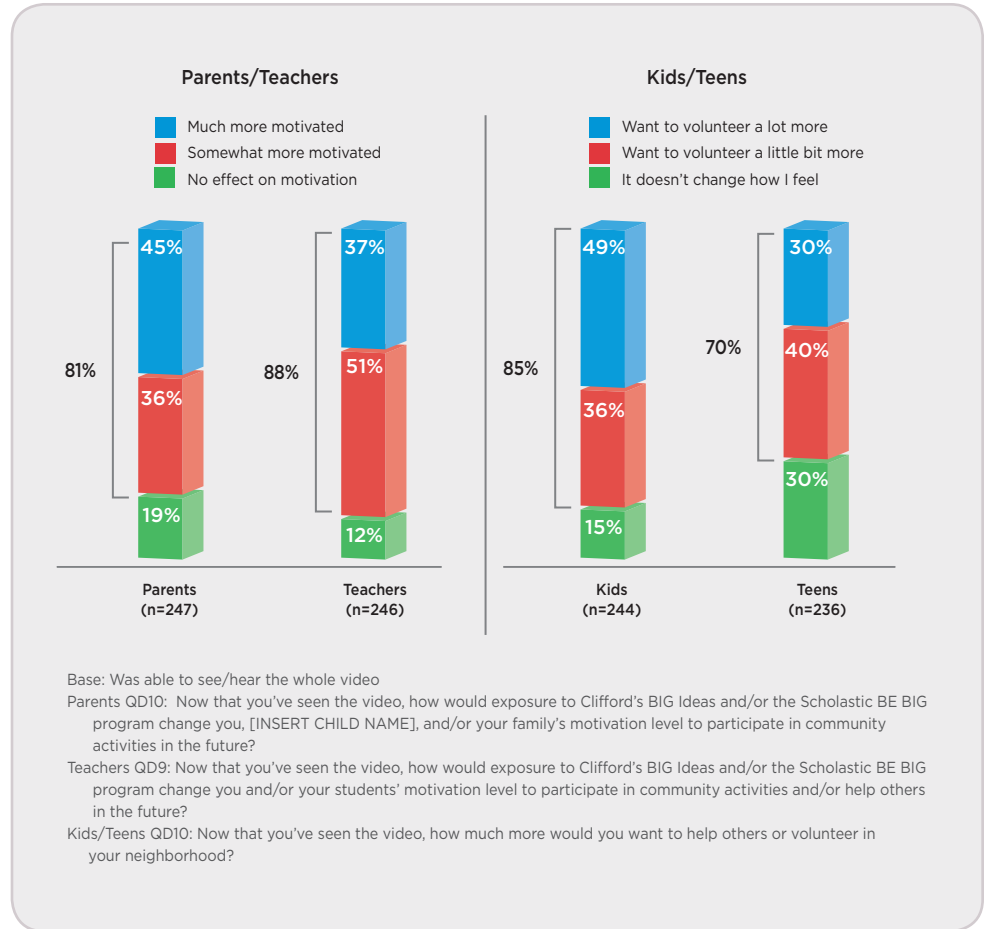
– 11 year-old girl,
Alabama

“I think the program is excellent. I like the creative ideas for community action. I liked seeing the students working outside of the school environment. I'd like to be a part of this.”

– 1st-grade teacher,
Oklahoma

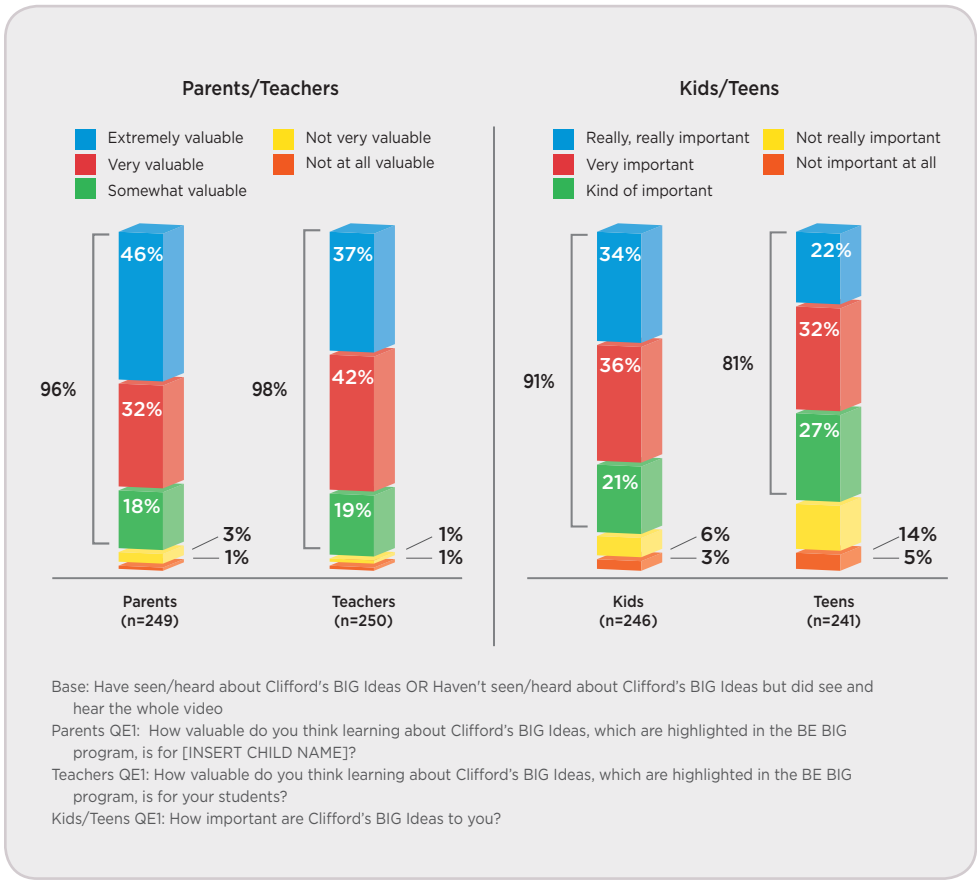
Hearing about Scholastic's Clifford BE BIG™ program motivates the majority of all groups to participate in community activities in the future.

Impact of Hearing about the Clifford BE BIG Program on Motivation to Participate in Community Activities



Most parents (96%), teachers (98%), kids (91%), and teens (81%) think Clifford's BIG Ideas are valuable/important. Further, the majority of all groups think Scholastic's Clifford BE BIG program reinforces the importance of character education.

Perceived Value/Importance of Learning about the Clifford BE BIG Program



“It [The Clifford BE BIG program] really gave me a lot more ideas to think about to help others! It gives you good examples on how to be nice!”

– 7 year-old boy, Ohio

“I love the idea of a long-loved character from my own childhood as well as my children's being the model for social and community support.”

– 2nd-grade teacher, Texas

"Clifford thinks it's good to be truthful, kind, caring, and able to share. It's a good lesson for kids of any age, especially in these hard times."

—12 year-old girl, Ohio

APPENDIX

Methodology



PARENT AND KID/TEEN SURVEY

- The fieldwork for the parent and kid/teen portion of this study was conducted by C+R Research using their U.S. proprietary ParentSpeak, KidzEyes, and TeensEyes online panels.
 - The ParentSpeak panel has approximately 27,000 parents of kids up to 18 years old.
 - The KidzEyes panel (6-12 year olds) and TeensEyes panel (13-18 year olds) has approximately 40,000 kids.
- The parent sample consisted of parents of kids 2-11 years old.
 - 250 parents completed the survey.
- The kid sample consisted of kids 6-11 years old, while the teen sample consisted of teens 12-17 years old.
 - 251 kids completed the survey.
 - 249 teens completed the survey.
- The parent survey was fielded October 11, 2011, through October 23, 2011. The kid and teen surveys were fielded October 14, 2011, through October 25, 2011.
- The margin of error is +/- 5.2% at a 90% confidence interval.

TEACHER SURVEY

- The fieldwork for the teachers portion of this survey was conducted by MDR, using their Online Educator Panel. The panel consists of educators around the nation and was recruited through MDR's comprehensive database of K-12 educators.
- The sample consisted of full-time kindergarten, 1st-, and 2nd-grade teachers. In addition, qualifying respondents taught at least one of the core subjects (reading, math, science, or social studies).
- 260 teachers completed the survey.
- The survey was fielded October 10, 2011, through October 24, 2011.
- Final data were weighted to ensure a more demographic representation of elementary teachers by years of experience. Information for these weights was obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics.
- The margin of error is +/- 5.2% at a 90% confidence interval.

APPENDIX

Parent Sample Demographic Profile (n=250)



Gender	
Male	8%
Female	92%

Employment Status	
Employed	54%
Not employed	46%

Age	
18-39 years	63%
40-60 years or older	37%
Average age:	37.9

Education	
High school graduate or less	20%
Trade school/some college	37%
College graduate	32%
Postgraduate work	11%

Marital Status	
Single	12%
Married	78%
Widowed/Separated/ Divorced	10%

Income	
Less than \$49,999	48%
\$50,000-79,999	34%
\$100,000+	16%
Average income:	\$64,600

Ethnicity	
Caucasian/White	84%
Hispanic/Latino	20%
African American/Black	9%
Other	8%

Region	
Northeast	17%
Midwest	23%
South	36%
West	24%

Kids in Household	
Younger than 3 years old	22%
3-5 years old	39%
6-8 years old	52%
9-11 years old	65%
12-14 years old	42%
15-18 years old	26%

Metro Status	
Urban	19%
Suburban	57%
Rural	24%

APPENDIX

Teacher Sample Demographic Profile (n=260)



Gender

Male	7%
Female	93%

Age

25-39 years	32%
40-60 years or older	68%
Average age	46

Region as per National Center for Education Statistics

Northeast	16%
Midwest	17%
South	41%
West	26%

Grade Level Taught

Kindergarten	46%
1	42%
2	43%
3	17%
4	16%
5	14%

Type of School

Public	93%
Private	1%
Religious/parochial	6%

Subject Taught

Art	24%
English language arts/reading	94%
Math	96%
Music	15%
Physical education	17%
Science	92%
Social studies	89%
Special education	16%
Other	16%

Years of Experience

1 or less	0%
2-3	0%
4-5	5%
6-10	38%
11-19	30%
20 or more	27%

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Kid/Teen Sample Demographic Profile (n=500)



Gender		Ethnicity	
Boys	50%	Caucasian/White	66%
Girls	50%	Hispanic/Latino	20%
		African American/Black	11%
		Other	3%
Age		Household Income	
6-8 years old	25%	Less than \$49,999	39%
9-11 years old	25%	\$50,000-79,999	41%
12-14 years old	25%	\$100,000+	19%
15-17 years old	25%	Average household income:	\$67,700
Average age:	11.5		
Grade Level		Region	
Kids (net)	50%	Northeast	17%
K-3	27%	Midwest	23%
4-6	23%	South	38%
Teens (net)	50%	West	22%
6-8	18%		
9-12	32%		

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Description of Kid/Teen Segments by Level of Exposure to Character-Building Skills



- To gauge whether there was a relationship between level of exposure to character-building skills and interest in and frequency of volunteering, kids and teens were segmented as follows:
 - An overall average score for frequency of exposure to the ten character-building skills* through all sources** (kid average score=23.0; teen average score=22.6) and through media*** (kid average score=9.7; teen average score=9.8) was calculated.
 - Question B6 used: How much do you hear about character-building skills from the following people/places? (4-point scale where 4=A lot and 1=Not at all)
 - Respondents were grouped into More and Less exposure defined as follows:

	Through All Sources **	Through Media ***
More exposure	Combined score for frequency of exposure= 23 or higher (above average) Kids n=140 Teens n=131	Combined score for frequency of exposure= 10 or higher (above average) Kids n=129 Teens n=131
Less exposure	Combined score for frequency of exposure= 22 or lower (below average) Kids n=111 Teens n=118	Combined score for frequency of exposure= 9 or lower (below average) Kids n=122 Teens n=118

- *Character-building skills: sharing with others, playing fair, having respect, working together, being responsible, being truthful, being kind, believing in yourself, being a good friend, helping others
- **All Sources=Home (parents), school (teachers), extended family (aunts/uncles, grandparents, etc.) and friends, media (TV and/or film, books and/or magazines, games and/or apps, Internet), places like the YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, YWCA, etc.
- ***Media=TV and/or film, books and/or magazines, games and/or apps, Internet

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