



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ABOUT Community Minded Kids

Community Minded Kids Program aims to foster community wellbeing, increased community and civic participation among children aged 9 to 12 years of age. The program encourages children to expand their definition and understanding of communities and learn different ways they can influence and contribute to their communities.

In seeing how others help and care for each other and the community they live in, children are encouraged to become more proactive citizens and contributors, which from an early age will help increase their self-efficacy, which over time strengthens collective efficacy¹.

The program aims to influence children and young people to become more community-minded, turning a “me” generation to a “we” generation.

The program assists teachers to deliver community focused lessons and/or discussions as part of their education (linking it with curriculum and key learning areas where we can). Through the program, teachers will promote community minded thinking to children; helping to develop strong community values and wellbeing among their students. _

Ultimately the program aims to instil and cultivate community mindedness in children, creating a more community minded school.

Program Aims

Community Minded Kids is a primary school-based program that aims to foster community minded thinking in children. More specifically the program aims to:

- Foster community minded thinking in children by linking important community themes to their education.
- Introduce and open dialogue about important concepts such as social justice and equality, challenging limited views of community (charity vs. solidarity).
- Inspire children to be active citizens and positive contributors to their school and broader community.
- Educate children and provide them with practical tools and ideas of how they can positively impact their school, neighbourhoods and communities.
- Encourage and help forge collaborative relationships between the student, school, family and community to promote inclusion, cohesion and community well-being.

¹ Collective efficacy is the people's shared belief in their collective power to produce specific changes. Collective efficacy is based upon the social capital of a community *and* a shared expectation for action, towards social change (Sampson, 2004).

WHAT will the students be doing?

Out-of-class activities- ‘Do’ & ‘Discover’ in Community

Each week, students will “discover and do” by going out into the local community and identifying a positive aspect (assets in community²) and contributing a positive action to their community. Discovering positive attributes and strengths in the community will encourage students to realise that community-mindedness is not just an act of charity, but a way of everyday thinking and living. Doing community-minded activities will encourage students to recognise that they play an important role in contributing to community.

Students will brainstorm “discover and do” activities in class, however, they are encouraged to come up with their own ideas. Students will then record their ideas and actions in a **Community Minded Kids Passbook** and share them with the class.

In-class activities - Discussing, Sharing, Learning & Creating

The in-class program is a series of eight 30-45-minute lessons centred on themes of community development.

Lesson plans are provided to teachers with examples of topics to be discussed, activities to be undertaken and resources to support the themes explored. These lesson plans are intended as a guide/starting point and can be modified to different classes as needed.

Lesson Plans

The in-class program is a series of seven 30-45-minute lessons centred on themes of community development. Below are some of themes we are hoping to explore through the lessons.

1. What is community?	<p>Students explore the characteristics of communities, the reasons people live in communities, and different kinds of communities. Students investigate common characteristics of a community and what communities offer.</p> <p>At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• define community• outline the characteristics of communities• analyse personal membership in various communities• identify ways of contributing to the community.
2. Belonging	<p>Students explore their sense of identity and places where people feel a sense of belonging in the community. Students investigate ways of connecting with and contributing to the community to foster a sense of belonging in themselves and in others.</p> <p>At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand the interdependence of people within the community and their role in it• understand the positive elements of belonging to a community• identify ways of fostering a sense of belonging in others
3. Citizenship	<p>Students explore what it means to be a responsible citizen. Students identify ways that they are responsible in their own communities (home, school and beyond) and how these responsibilities are shared with other members of the community.</p> <p>At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen• identify ways of participating in civic action to create positive change• recognise that they are already citizens, not just future citizens.

² There are six broad types of assets 1. Skills & abilities of individuals 2. Voluntary community organisations & networks 3. Institutions (e.g. not for profits, businesses) 4. Physical environment (both natural & built) 5. Local economy; includes the informal economy (voluntary work) & traditional economy (e.g. production). 6. Stories, culture and heritage of the community.

<p>4. Diversity</p>	<p>Students explore the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their classmates. Students will be exposed to different opinions and worldviews and gain a greater sense of respect and empathy for classmates from backgrounds different to their own.</p> <p>Please note: <i>Although Diversity encapsulates a wide range of things, this lesson is focused on cultural diversity.</i></p> <p>At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify examples of diversity • identify how valuing diversity positively influences the wellbeing of the community • engage with and learn things about classmates with whom they would not usually engage.
<p>5. Volunteering</p>	<p>Students gain an understanding of how volunteering benefits members of the community, as well as themselves.</p> <p>At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the values and benefits that volunteering has for individuals and for the community • think of ways that they can contribute to their community by volunteering • identify people in the community that volunteer, e.g. parents at the canteen, lollipop ladies, fire fighters, lifeguards.
<p>6. People power</p>	<p>Students explore the power that comes from people working together to address an issue and the benefits of collective action.</p> <p>At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify differences between self-interest and community interest • identify issues of community interest that require collective action • identify the power that a community can have when its members work together
<p>7. Pay it forward</p>	<p>Students explore the concept of paying it forward and the impact of a simple act of kindness. Students identify how kindness has the power to change how people feel, think and treat others. Students explore how paying it forward can address community issues.</p> <p>At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss how the actions of people can make an impact on others • look for opportunities to pay forward acts of kindness • identify how a simple action can have a chain/ripple effect on the community.
<p>8. Social Justice</p>	<p>Students explore distinction between charity and social justice. They also learn about structural causes and acts of social justice.</p> <p>At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss the differences between equity and equality • identify the challenges and injustices that dramatically impact quality of life for certain populations (examples) • explain the benefits of creating environments of mutual respect and inclusiveness and promoting justice for all
<p>9. Graduation and reflection</p>	<p>Students reflect on what they have learned about community, their role in it, and how they can work with others to create change. Students will graduate and receive a certificate in recognition of their achievements.</p>

ABOUT Community Minds

Community Minds Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation based in South West Sydney (LGA) that works with education, community, government and corporate sectors to increase community wellbeing, build social cohesion and enhance capacity of local community organisations to deliver services and engage diverse communities. The Community Minded Kids program has expanded to Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.

Our Values

- o **Inclusion** - At Community Minds we are continuously striving to put inclusive values into action. We value and encourage participation and engagement of children and young people, senior members of our community, diverse cultural and faith-based groups, diverse geographical communities, community organisations and private enterprises.
- o **Inspiration**- Our philosophy and practices aim to inspire people to become more community minded. Our purpose is to inspire others to get involved in building and supporting their communities.
- o **Integrity** - We honour our commitments and constantly strive for veracity in the work we produce and relationships we form. People, community groups and organisations rely on and trust us because we deliver on what we promise.
- o **Innovation** - We strive to offer innovative programs and solutions to advance, develop and engage communities. We are constantly looking at new ways to build stronger communities and consult with creative minds that challenge the status quo.

If we want to create positive changes, we need to view ourselves and the world more positively. If we want to add and increase value to what is great in our communities, we need to adopt an appreciative mindset– one way to do this is to act like an explorer. Ideally, we would go on a ‘treasure hunt’ every day in our neighborhoods and communities with an open hand, heart and mind, seeking out the positives and possibilities, rather than focus on problems and deficits. This will provide a more positive lens in how we view the places we belong to and the people we are connected to.

We can help develop the efficacy in children to instigate change in their school, neighborhoods and communities with the hope that they will continue to be community minded and care for others and their community well into their adult years.

This program also inspires and guides children to discover the good, the assets and strengths of the people and places they encounter and through program activities, projects and classroom discussions can discover creative and caring ways we can nurture the assets we have discovered.

Zizi Charida, Director – Community Minds

Contact

For more information on the Community Minded Kids program inclusions, components and benefits please contact:

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