A MESSAGE FROM THE GERDA AND KURT KLEIN FOUNDATION

We know that there is nothing that teens can’t do when they are inspired and motivated. Young people have always been our hope for improving the world by tackling still unsolved problems with energy and optimism. We welcome teens’ impulses to challenge the prejudices of previous generations, and in so doing, to forge a brighter future for all people.

The Klein Foundation is named for two individuals whose youth was indelibly scarred by prejudice and hate. Gerda, a Polish Jew, was the sole survivor among her family and friends. She escaped to America but lost his parents in the Holocaust. Gerda, a Polish Jew, was the sole survivor among her family and friends.

The Kleins’ story is also one of survival and hope. As a U.S. army officer, Kurt liberated Gerda and then fell in love with her. They married and made not only a life together but a commitment to warn of the dangers of bigotry and to promote tolerance and respect.

Through education programs and service initiatives, Gerda and Kurt Klein have brought their appeals for understanding and activism to students across the United States. They went to Columbine High School after the shooting deaths in 1999. There, they made a special connection with students by their example that painful life experiences can be used for good.

Gerda’s firsthand experience with hunger during the war prompted the Kleins to make fighting hunger in America part of their mission. The Foundation’s programs urge young people to get involved through volunteerism and advocacy.

The TIME Classroom program has been developed in that spirit—to empower students to promote tolerance and respect and inspire them to take action against societal ills through service. This guide is filled with teaching suggestions for using the inTIME publication and the book and video on the Kleins.

This program comes to you with special thanks from Gerda Klein. And with it, she offers a reminder of your power to affect and guide students. During the years of darkness in the camps, lessons from her own teachers were her light. “Their words became the guidelines to what was right and what was wrong and how to hope and how to inspire,” says Gerda. “Teachers have the ability to influence in the most incredible ways.”
The tragic yet inspiring story of Gerda Weissmann and Kurt Klein is one that has special meaning for high-school students. Both Gerda and Kurt experienced the brutality of Nazi Germany as teens. In presentations before tens of thousands of students over the years, the Kleins have time and again touched a chord in young people and helped them to better understand the suffering of all victims of intolerance.

Using the Kleins’ story to enrich a study of the Second World War can have the same impact on your students. They may already be familiar with some details of the Kleins’ experiences. All But My Life, Gerda’s memoir, has been excerpted in high-school social studies and literature programs for years.

Whether your students are familiar with the Kleins or are learning about them for the first time, here are suggestions for integrating the resources on this amazing couple into a study of World War II, the Holocaust, or a service learning curriculum. Along with the article in the inTIME publication, this program includes materials provided by the Klein Foundation:

• **All But My Life**, by Gerda Weissmann Klein, first published in 1957 and revised in 1995 (Hill and Wang). Gerda takes the reader through the harrowing war years; her courtship with Kurt Klein, who is among the U.S. liberation forces; their early life together in Buffalo, New York; and the beginning of their activism. (The Hours After, published in 2000, and A Boring Evening at Home, released in 2003, continue their story to the present.)

• **One Survivor Remembers**, a 39-minute video based on Gerda’s memoir. This co-production of HBO and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum won an Oscar® for Best Documentary Short Film at the 1996 Academy Awards.® The award presentation and a speech by Gerda are included on the video.

Survival and Memory

Gerda Weissmann was an innocent girl whose life was devastated by the blind hatred of the Nazi campaign against Jews and other minorities. Expand on the summary of Gerda’s experience in the student magazine by showing the documentary One Survivor Remembers in class. It provides a chronology of the war from Gerda’s perspective and features interviews with both her and Kurt Klein.

After viewing, use questions such as these to encourage discussion:

• What makes Gerda a survivor?
• How did Gerda’s imagination help her survive?
• What factors made a difference in who lived and who did not?
• What is the “human spirit”? Are we born with it or do life’s events develop it? What role does it play in survival?
• Gerda quotes the poet Goethe when she shows Kurt the other survivors: “Noble be man, merciful and good.” What makes this an ironic statement under the circumstances?
• What purpose does memory serve—for Gerda and for those who share her memories?

Powerful Primary Sources

The resources on Gerda offer valuable primary source materials for students to analyze.

For example, Gerda describes the ordinary quality of her life before the war and how that everyday reality disappears. A vivid moment is when she sneaks into the family garden, now off-limits to her, and sees the wallpaper of her bedroom through an upstairs window. Ask students to contemplate ordinary aspects of their own lives and then to imagine those features suddenly being removed or denied. Have students...
convey their feelings in an essay, song, drawing or photograph that shows their comprehension of Gerda’s plight.

The still photos and newsreel clips in the documentary offer visual impressions of Gerda’s experiences. Guide students in using them to gather historical detail and insights by analyzing the information and emotion the visuals convey.

**Inspiring Friendship**

Gerda’s account of the slave labor camps captures both the suffering and the indomitable human spirit. Among the most powerful memories she relates is a story about Ilse Kleinzähler, a childhood friend who is with Gerda all through the war and dies just before liberation. One morning in camp, Ilse finds a bruised raspberry on the ground. She carries it with her all day and presents it to Gerda that evening. Ilse’s extraordinary gesture is immortalized in the New England Holocaust Memorial, erected along Boston’s Freedom Trail.

Ask students to comment, through discussion or in a written response. Questions to pique their thinking: Why does the raspberry have such an impact on Gerda? What makes Ilse’s act so remarkable? What does it say about friendship and what defines it? What would students be willing to do for their own friends—and is it possible to know that under everyday circumstances?

**The United States and the Holocaust**

The story of Kurt Klein’s parents, who died at Auschwitz, can personalize an investigation of American attitudes and policy toward helping Jews escape Hitler before and during the war. The information in the student article is based on a PBS documentary, *America and the Holocaust: Deceit and Indifference*. In it, Kurt Klein recounted the desperate efforts that he and his siblings made to get their parents out of Europe. The film focuses on the problem of anti-Semitism in America during this time and the charge that the State Department stalled the issuing of visas that would have brought Kurt’s parents and others to safety in the United States.

The *America and the Holocaust* Web site at www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/holocaust/ offers a place to start with research. Students can read excerpts of letters from Kurt Klein’s parents that he translated and follow the chronology of his parents’ failed attempts to secure U.S. visas. Also recommended is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Web site at www.ushmm.org.

**More Voices of History**

Build on the Kleins’ personal history of World War II by involving students in gathering oral histories from relatives and local citizens who were adolescents or young adults during World War II. Students can audiorecord or videotape recollections of former soldiers, civilians on the homefront and victims of the war’s intolerance and brutality. By comparing and analyzing the different accounts, students can look for insights on compelling questions, such as, What are keys to survival under horrific circumstances?

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**CHAMPIONS OF TOLERANCE**

**LEARNING FROM THE ACTIVISM OF GERDA AND KURT KLEIN**

**A KEY LESSON FOR STUDENTS**

From the lives of Gerda Klein and Kurt Klein, who died in 2002 at age 81, is not only what happened to them during the 20th century’s most brutal war, but their determination long after to help others learn from their own suffering. Visit the Klein Foundation Web site at [www.kleinfoundation.org](http://www.kleinfoundation.org) to find out more about the organization’s activities to promote tolerance and understanding. Discuss with students the impact of having individuals like the Kleins speaking out and educating others about the dangers of prejudice and racism through their personal tragedies.

Two profiles of “Teens Making a Difference” in the student publication offer more role models of individuals standing up to intolerance. Jacqueline Murekatete, a Tutsi victim of the genocide in Rwanda in the 1990s, recounts her brush with death and her goal to communicate to young people the importance of education and understanding to fight intolerance. Kansas teen Megan Stewart tells the story of Irena Sendler, a Polish Christian who saved Jewish children, and how Sendler’s courage compelled Megan to stand up to bullying among her peers.

**FIGHTING INTOLERANCE WHERE YOU LIVE**

The natural follow-up to discussions of intolerance in other times and places is to challenge students to evaluate the mood in your school. Use the “Tolerance Temperature” activity on page 6 to help students recognize problem behaviors. Discuss their responses and guide them in drawing conclusions about the tolerance level at school and the root of problems such as verbal abuse.

Lead students in brainstorming for solutions. The words of peers Megan Stewart and Jacqueline Murekatete offer places to start: Every student can promote tolerance by modeling acceptance, challenging harassing behavior and recognizing one’s own prejudices and then working to eliminate them.

The “5 Rules to Live and Serve By” in the student magazine are guiding principles from the Kleins. Discuss how students can apply them in their own lives. Ask students to develop their own rules to add to this list.

Challenge students to use the rules and ideas to create an action plan for improving teen-to-teen relations in your school. Discuss ways to implement the plan and support students in doing so. Check periodically on how students think the plan is working, and brainstorm with them for new approaches to fighting intolerance.
Tackle hunger through service-learning tips and strategies, plus a recommended project: Involving Your Students in Community Service

Your high school may be among an increasing number of schools around the U.S. that has a community-service requirement for graduation. For your students, the teen activists featured in inTIME can affirm anew that they are part of a broad movement of young people working to serve their communities. If service is not an integral part of your school’s mission, the issue can show students what other teens gain through service and inspire your students to consider what they can do.

Engaging Students in Service

For students who are new to service, concentrate on key points from the teen profiles and service-success tips from “The Activist’s Planner” to build kids’ interest and confidence. For example:

- **Everyone has something to give.** As Joshua Williams explains, most teens have a talent or an interest that others can learn from.

- **Give the time you can.** Eric Hsiao urges every teen to give just one hour a week . . . equating to millions of people served.

- **Get involved to have a voice.** Today’s teens are tomorrow’s civic leaders, notes David Barnes. Service helps get young people ready to take the helm.

- **Service has personal benefits.** Highlight ways students gain from service in learning about themselves and what they can do.

- **Service can be a group effort.** Many students are not comfortable volunteering on their own—and that’s okay! Students at Bala Cynwyd School demonstrate the power in numbers when a service project is a class- or school-wide endeavor.

Matching Students and Projects

Some students may know immediately the kind of volunteering or advocacy they want to do. Others will need your guidance in figuring out how they can help. Refer students to the “More Ways to Make a Difference” list in inTIME to kick off a brainstorming session on volunteer possibilities in your area. Suggest teens consider these points to help them find a type of service they will enjoy:

- **Talents, interests or skills of their own that they can apply to service**

- **Issues they care about, such as hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, disadvantaged children, environmental concerns or animal rights**

- **Settings they prefer, such as indoor or outdoor activities**

- **Age or condition they’d like to work with, such as younger children, students their own age, the elderly, disabled children or adults**

- **Situations they prefer, such as volunteering as part of a team or on their own; helping one person at a time or interacting with a group**

- **Estimated amount of time they can give to the project**

As students plan projects, help them be mindful of how they can promote tolerance, respect, understanding and inclusiveness through their particular service activity.

Monitoring and Reflecting on Service Outcomes

Monitor students’ volunteer activities. If it’s a class project, schedule time for debriefing and discussion after each service session. If students are volunteering independently, ask for a written or verbal progress report to find out how the service activity is going, what the student does each session, problems to address and opportunities for learning and enrichment that the service is providing.

Reflection is a key part of the experience, particularly at the conclusion of a service project. It prompts students to evaluate what they did, what they learned and what they accomplished. Reflection can also help students recognize how they influence others in positive ways through service. For a ready-to-use reflection sheet, see page 7 of this guide. Review students’ responses as a group, or have students hand in the reflection sheets and then comment on their insights. What you learn can help in planning additional service activities.

To reinforce the call for information in the inTIME publication, encourage students to share their service activities with the Klein Foundation. The e-mail address is kleinfoundation@usa.net.

Receive a Free Book! Tell us how this program motivated your students to get involved in community or school service. A brief description is all you need to write. The first 100 responses will receive A Boring Evening at Home, Gerda Klein’s latest book. Send to: Time Classroom, PO Box 5175, New York, NY 10185-5175 or e-mail to: neelum_chandra@timeinc.com.
TAKING ACTION TO END HUNGER THROUGH SERVICE

Involve students in investigating hunger in your community and then taking action through a food drive, a fund-raiser, volunteering with a local food charity, an advocacy project—or a unique idea of their own. Here is an array of resources to support a hunger service project.

GETTING STARTED
Use the inTIME article, “What YOU Can Do: Taking Action to End Hunger,” as a starting point for helping students understand the problem of hunger in America.

To prompt further analysis, introduce the student activity “Food for Thought” on page 8 of this guide.

GETTING INVOLVED WITH HUNGER SERVICE-LEARNING
To promote hunger activism, the Klein Foundation has developed free service-learning and curriculum materials for high-school and middle-school teachers and students.

The Hunger Service-Learning Program provides an action plan of investigations and activities to guide students in identifying specific needs and participating in food-service projects in your community. This program can be accessed online at www.kleinfoundation.org/brigade_main.htm.

“kNOw Hunger” is an education and advocacy curriculum from the Klein Foundation. It is designed to complement the “Hunger Service-Learning Program” and is available to download at www.knowhunger.org. Developed with Dr. J. Larry Brown, director of the Center on Hunger and Poverty at Brandeis University, the curriculum meets National Council on Social Studies standards and is based on current scientific research on hunger and poverty. The “kNOw Hunger” site includes a link to the Center on Hunger and Poverty, where students can find data and information for advocacy efforts.

The six units in the curriculum cover the history of hunger in the world; facts on hunger in America; the impact of hunger on victims and the nation; why people go hungry; and solutions—including the roles of charity and policy and ideas of what students can do.

MORE RESOURCES FOR HUNGER SERVICE PROJECTS
Here are ideas for other programs and projects to help the hungry.

• The Empty Bowls Project: This grass-roots effort started in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, in 1991, and has grown to become a national program involving students and potters. Participants make homemade ceramic bowls and use them to raise funds for food charities. To learn more, access the Kids Can Make a Difference Web site for information from the project co-founder, teacher John Hartom: www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/Newsletter/nss2001e.htm.

• The Food Project: This Boston-area program involves students and adults in growing vegetables—from planting to harvesting. The food is donated to homeless shelters and sold at farmers’ markets. In 1998, it was selected by the Kellogg Foundation as a national model for service-learning. To get ideas for starting a similar project and general resources, including fund-raising ideas, visit www.thefoodproject.org.

• Kids Café: This program of America’s Second Harvest, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, and ConAgra, Inc., provides places where hungry children can get free, prepared food and nutrition education. There are more than 600 Kids Cafés around the country operated by local food banks. Service possibilities for students include working with an existing Kids Café or helping to set one up. For information, go to www.secondharvest.org/childhunger/kidscafe.html. To locate a food bank in your area, click “Our Network” on the site main menu and choose your state.
Identifying Problems/Solutions

What’s the Tolerance Temperature in Your School?

Use this sheet to make an honest assessment of student-to-student relations in your school. You can extend your answers to include your community, too.

Using the scale, circle the word that most closely fits each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I see kids being verbally and/or physically harassed by others.</th>
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<td>Never</td>
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<tr>
<th>2. Kids stand up and intercede to help a student being verbally or physically harassed.</th>
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<td>Never</td>
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<tr>
<th>3. Kids ignore or encourage verbal or physical harassment by others.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
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<tr>
<th>4. Kids feel comfortable being “different”—in ideas, clothes, interests.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
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<tr>
<th>5. Kids from diverse cultures and backgrounds are welcomed and accepted.</th>
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<td>Never</td>
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<tr>
<th>6. Kids are singled out for harassment because of their race, religion or sexual orientation.</th>
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<th>7. Prejudice is a problem in our school and/or community.</th>
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<td>Never</td>
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**Hot? Cool? In between?**

Is intolerance raging in your school? Or is everybody cool with each other?

Use your answers to make an assessment:

How tolerant and accepting of others are kids in your school? _______________________________

What are the biggest problems in your school? ___________________________________________

What can you do to make your school a more tolerant place? _______________________________
Successful service is about both what you do and what you learn in the process. Use this sheet to guide your self-reflection on a recent service activity. As needed, continue your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. After learning about the activism of Gerda and Kurt Klein, how were you motivated to get involved in community service? ______________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

   ● What was your service activity and how did you prepare for it? _________________
     __________________________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________

   ● What did you learn about the problem or need from your service? _______________
     __________________________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________

   ● What did you learn about yourself from this experience? _________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________

   ● How did this service experience make you feel? _________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________

   ● Think about the issues of tolerance and respect. How did you promote those values through your service activity?
     __________________________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________

   ● What would make this a better service activity—more successful or rewarding—next time?
     __________________________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________
     __________________________________________________________________________
Food for Thought

On a separate sheet of paper, respond to these quotes as directed.

1. Analyze this quote from Gerda Klein by answering these questions: What is she saying? What do her words mean to you? What do they make you think? How do they make you feel?

“I was in a place, for six incredible years, where winning meant a slice of bread and living another day.”
—Gerda Weissmann Klein, Holocaust survivor

2. Choose one of the quotes below. Analyze it using these questions: What do you think the speaker is saying? What reaction do you have to this quote? How does it make you feel? How could you use it to take action against hunger?

“Hunger is a hidden tragedy for 13 million American children. . . .”
—Jeff Bridges, actor and chair, Entertainment Industry Foundation’s Hunger Free America

“The first duty of government is to see that people have food, fuel and clothes.”
—John Ruskin, 19th-century English critic and reformer

“And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”
—John F. Kennedy, 35th U. S. President

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”
—Anne Frank, Holocaust victim