

# Fly Away Home

(GPN #116/PBS #1111)

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## Program Description:

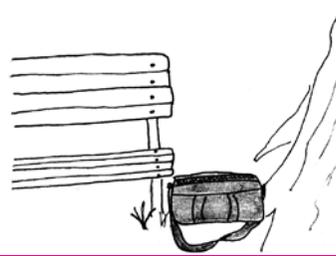
The feature book is a touching story of a homeless boy and his father who move from terminal to terminal in an airport, trying not to be noticed and discovered. The boy expresses frustration about being homeless, yet he has hope for the future. Children whose families have been homeless share how this happens and how they feel when they have no place to call home. LeVar encourages us to make a difference in our communities. We meet a boy who volunteers at City Harvest, an organization which gathers prepared food for distribution to the homeless, and the girl who began Common Sense, an organization whose members collect pennies and use them to buy items for homeless shelters.

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## Social Studies Concepts:

- communities
- homes
- families
- relationships



Teachers should consider the maturity level and life experiences of their students when viewing this program. Discussion of issues related to homelessness might be sensitive for some students, depending on their past and present home situations. Impressionable younger children might find the issues frightening. It is a good idea to inform parents of your intention to address this topic. Invite them to come into the classroom and view the program with the class, loan them a copy of the video, or inform them of the date and time it will be shown by your local PBS station.

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## Classroom Activities:

### Homes

Each student in your class comes from a different home. Discuss how every home is different and special because of the family who lives inside. Have students re-create a favorite room in their home by making a diorama of it. Urge them to include the people who make the room a special place. Provide time for sharing, by inviting each student to explain why the room they've chosen is special.



## Homes/homelessness

In the story, Fly Away Home, the boy and his father don't have a home so they are living in an airport. They make themselves as inconspicuous as possible so no one will discover their secret. Have students form small groups or work in pairs to talk about other places besides an airport that could be used by a homeless person for shelter. It should be someplace where large groups of people pass through and are so preoccupied that they do not notice someone like the boy and his father. After the students have discussed this in their small groups, bring the class together and make one comprehensive list of the possibilities. Talk about how the boy and his father would need to act so they wouldn't be noticed and how they would get food, clean up and sleep in these various places.

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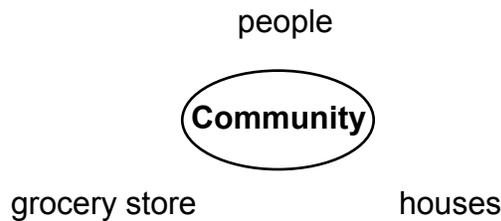
## Families

This story and video provides background for a discussion of why a family may find themselves without a home. Explore with students the various reasons for homelessness – loss of a job, illness, not enough money for a house payment or rent, loss of a home due to a fire, tornado, earthquake, flood, or other disaster, etc. (Note: This is a very sensitive issue and should only be discussed if you feel your class is mature enough to handle the topic.)

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## Communities

Introduce the idea that every community is a special place. Brainstorm what students have in mind when they think of a community. Record their responses in an idea web with the word "Community" as the center. Example:



After students have completed the idea web, have them explain to a partner how each topic relates to the other. For example: The family lives in the community so this makes them a part of the community. The grocery store is where people buy food they need in order to live in the community, and so on. Then have each student make an idea web to show their own personal community. Have them put their name in the center and draw lines to people or places who make up their world, for example a student will have lines out to one block that would be family, one that is school, and so on.

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—cont.

## Relationships

Once the class has discussed relationships within the community, provide them with a problem to solve. For example: What would happen if the job a family depends on suddenly no longer exists? What would happen if a disaster such as a flood destroys the homes and businesses within a community? Discuss possible solutions. Relationships. Have students think of ways they could help people who don't have all of the basics that are needed to live. Perhaps there is a food pantry in town that students can collect for, or a mission that needs clothing.

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## Do-At-Home Activities:

### Lend A Helping Hand

Most communities plan special food pantry or shelter drives to help people who are homeless or in need. Invite your students' families to take part in one of these. (Check with your city's Human Services, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, or churches to find out about current drives or needy families. Many communities have a food pantry.) Copy the "Lend a Helping Hand" letter to send home so families aware of your efforts.

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### Send-A-Hug

Encourage students to think of others who are alone, sad or who would appreciate a friendly hello by creating a greeting card to send. Reproduce the directions for "Send-a-Hug" so the cards can be made at home.



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## Suggested Reading:

### Review Books:

**Home: A Collaboration Of Thirty Distinguished Authors And Illustrators Of Children's Books To Aid The Homeless** edited by *Michael J. Rosen*

**The Homeless Hibernating Bear** by *Kids Livin' Life*

**Uncle Willie And The Soup Kitchen** by *DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan*

### Other Suggestions:

**Erik Is Homeless** by *Keith Elliot Greenberg*

**This Home We Have Made** by *Anna Hammond and Jo Matunis*

**Way Home** by *Libby Hathorn*

**Shooting Back: A Photographic View Of Life By Homeless Children** selected by *Jim Hubbard*

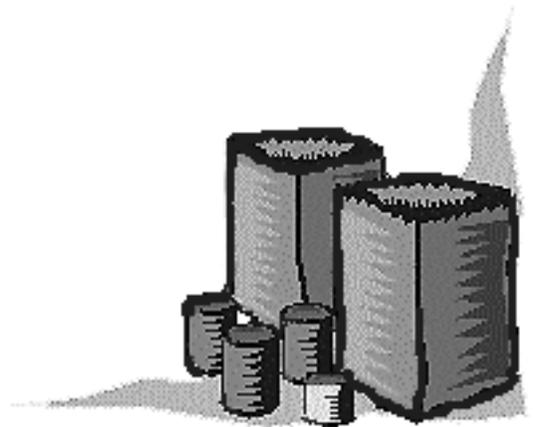
**Someplace To Go** by *Maria Testa*

# Lend a Helping Hand

Dear Parents,

In learning about communities we've discovered that helping others is important. Our class has decided to collect canned goods for the local food pantry. Will you please participate by helping your child pick out a nonperishable food item to bring to school by \_\_\_\_\_? We will box the food and deliver it to the pantry.

Thank you for helping us to contribute to the community and help others!



## Send - a - Hug

Can your family think of a person who could use a hug today? Perhaps it's a relative or friend who lives alone. Work with your child to create a special hug-in-a-card and mail it today.

- ♥ Fold a sheet of drawing paper in thirds.
- ♥ Have your child draw an arm on the front side of each of the two outside flaps.
- ♥ On another sheet of paper, have your child draw and cut out a face that looks like theirs. Glue this to the top of the card.
- ♥ Open the two flaps (the two arms) and write a special message inside.
- ♥ Address and stamp an envelope, place the hug-in-a-card inside, and mail it.

