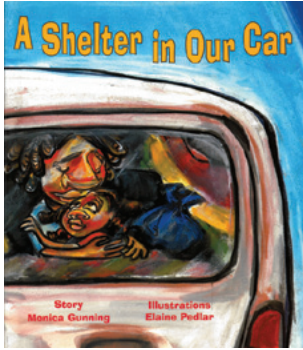


DIVISION Junior **GRADE** Five **MONTH** December **THEME** Building Supportive Communities



BOOK TITLE:
A Shelter in Our Car

AUTHOR:
Monica Gunning
ILLUSTRATOR: Elaine Pedlar
PUBLISHER: Children's Book Press, 2004
ISBN-13: 978-0892391899

Big Idea / Objective / Character Development Connection

Perseverance; Caring; Courage; Optimism; Community

Suggested Activities and Culminating Tasks

Before Reading

- ▶ Make a list of challenges that families might experience when moving to a new country. These could be ideas or students' own experiences.
- ▶ Make a list of stereotypes and slang terms related to homelessness (e.g., *bum*, *lazy*, *hobo*, *drunk*, etc.) Remind students that the exercise is not meant to reinforce these, but rather to show the pervasive, hurtful, powerful impact of words and stereotypes and to discuss why these words are so readily available in their schema.

After Reading

- ▶ Have students revisit their list of stereotypes and slang. Do any of these apply to Zettie and her mom? What does this disconnect tell us about the issue of homelessness?
- ▶ What kinds of daily challenges did Zettie and her mom face because of their not having a home? How did they feel about these challenges?
- ▶ Read aloud the "Homelessness in America" note on the last page. Have students write a reflection on what they have learned about homelessness.
- ▶ Ask students if they would want to be friends with Zettie. List characteristics of Zettie that they can infer by reading this story to support a yes and refute a no answer (challenge student perceptions and judgments).

Extensions

- ▶ Have students research community organizations that support the homeless. In pairs or small groups, have students create a report and presentation about one organization they find and its work.
- ▶ Investigate the roles that racism and gender discrimination play in unemployment and in salary inequity. How much money do women make in comparison to men? What is the situation for racialized women?

MINISTRY EXPECTATIONS
English Language
Oral Communication
5e5, 5e8, 5e10, 5e16
Reading
5e29, 5e30, 5e31, 5e34

CURRICULUM CONNECTION EXPECTATIONS
Health and Physical Education
5p33, 5p42

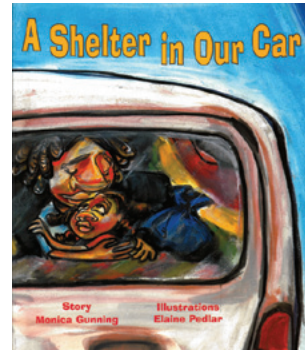
MATERIALS
- Picture book listed above
- Journals
- Internet access

Community Engagement / Related Resources

After the student presentations, hold a class vote and select one organization to support. Contact the organization to find out what kind of support it may need. Students may be able to volunteer or hold a fundraiser to support their chosen organization.

This YouTube video, entitled “Homelessness in Canada: Take Action Now”, was created to raise awareness about homelessness in Canada.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7JcnjabJwk&feature=related>



SYNOPSIS

After Zettie’s father died, she and her mother left Jamaica searching for a better life in the United States. Zettie and her mom are both going to school, and her mom tries her best to find work, but until then, they live an uncertain life in their car, dreaming of a new home. A realistic portrait of homelessness in an American city, this story brings to light the challenges of many new and established Americans in creating a better life for themselves and their families. Despite their challenges, it is their love and determination that shines through.

