



Issue 98

BRAINWISE TEENS REINFORCE THE 10 WISE WAYS WITH 3RD GRADERS 800 MILES AWAY

Shelia Nicholson is a double line in the Constellation of Support for students, teachers and families in the Ferguson, Missouri community. Last March, she took on a new mission: helping a class of low-performing third graders finish the year strong. She turned to BrainWise for guidance—and brought a powerful coalition with her.

Joining a class of 29 students who had already cycled through six teachers, Shelia [sprang into action](#) to help her friend, the seventh teacher. With only three months left before summer break, she recruited nine volunteers (retired educators and community members) who shared her vision. She organized a BrainWise Zoom training for them, met with the students twice-a-week, and made plans to follow the cohort for three years.

Teaching the 10 Wise Ways. Under the volunteers' guidance, the children learned the 10 Wise Ways and how to identify them in their own behaviors as well as in other people, including characters in stories and videos. The teaching window was short, but the instructors covered all the concepts by year's end. To cap off the semester, the students participated in a virtual reinforcement session taught by high school students in Denver, Colorado -- 800 miles away.



Bridging States, Building Minds - Colorado CEC Interactors on Zoom.

While Shelia's team worked in Missouri, sophomores from Denver's Career Education Center (CEC) high school were preparing to join the effort. Led by educator Stacey Hervey, the students—members of the school's Interact Club (a Rotary-affiliated community service group)—collaborated with Rotarian and BrainWise board member Debra Flick to prepare a virtual lesson.



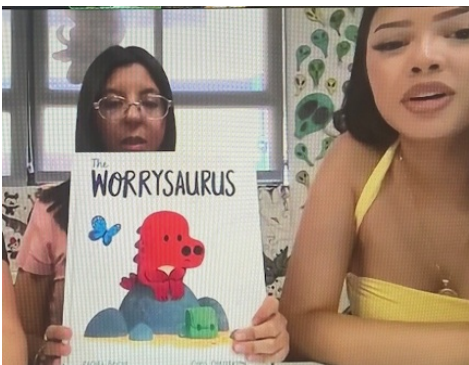
Stacey Hervey with Interactors



Debra Flick BrainWise Board Member

The high-schoolers read *Worrysaurus*, a story of a young dinosaur dealing with anxiety. For the third-graders, it was their first time learning from teens; for the Colorado students, it was their first time teaching in a classroom setting. And the classroom? A Zoom session that transcended geography.

Colorado CEC Interactors Reinforce BrainWise on Zoom to Missouri Third Graders



Kindness in Action. The teens displayed kindness and patience as their young learners forgot what they were going to say. They praised their efforts and gently reminded them to Stop and Think. The moment was more than symbolic—it was a demonstration of the Wise Ways in real time.

Expanding the Reinforcement Model: What's Next

Past newsletters have showcased a range of examples showing high school students teaching and reinforcing BrainWise with elementary and middle school students. Shelia Nicholson's plan to follow the featured cohort of third-

graders for three more years opens up opportunities to continue joint BrainWise projects with high school students.

Future lessons will include not only Colorado Interactors, but also Navajo teens using BrainWise in Window Rock, Arizona and Interactors from Ireland.

This cross-cultural, cross-age model works: Teens reinforce their own learning while nurturing younger children's growth. A 2018 BrainWise newsletter featured Stacey's students teaching third and fourth graders the 10 Wise Ways, and the model continues, creating a ripple effect. ([See Cascading as a Teaching Method.](#))

Watching CEC students Mika, Vanessa, and Angie teach with such compassion and poise—especially during the last week of the year and the children's first-ever Zoom class—was a moving experience. They handled every unexpected reaction with grace and demonstrated their own mastery of BrainWise and leadership skills.

The virtual visit sparked excitement, and the teens' friendly and approachable story-reading helped the children look for ways the anxious *Worrysaurus* could use the 10 Wise Ways. This peer-led project shows that age doesn't limit impact when it comes to sharing brain-building tools. The session didn't just empower the third graders—it also gave the Colorado students an opportunity to grow as leaders and role models, all while spreading the BrainWise message to Stop and Think.

I will share the progression of the project after it starts again in September 2025.



**Take Care,
Dr. Pat**

On a Lighter Note

The attached short Pharrell Williams' video has racked up over 1.2 billion views on YouTube. It features everyday people and celebrities dancing and radiating joy – a wonderful complement to this happy newsletter. If you have already seen it, it is worth a repeat watch.



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