



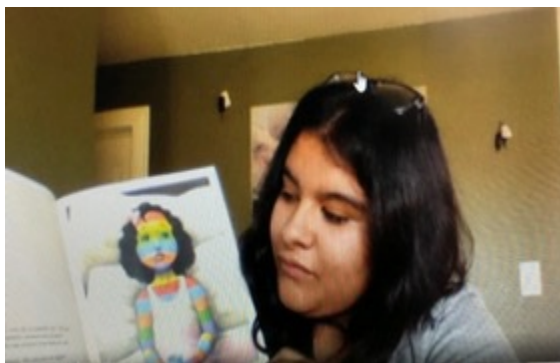
Issue 62

Urban Teens Reinforce BrainWise with Rural Elementary School Students

The pandemic's closure of schools also altered the community service activities performed by youth volunteers. When high school students at Denver's CEC Early College^[1] were offered an opportunity to read stories virtually to 4th graders attending Hoff Elementary, a school forty miles outside of Denver, Madison Hylland and Yareli Lozano-Valenzuela stepped up. As the children interpreted the stories read to them, the BrainWise-savvy children demonstrated their knowledge of the 10 Wise Ways, astonishing the teen readers. Madison said, "I wish I had learned BrainWise when I was their age!"



Madison Hylland
with *Mummies in the Morning*



Yareli Lozano-Valenzuela
reading *A Bad Case of the Stripes*

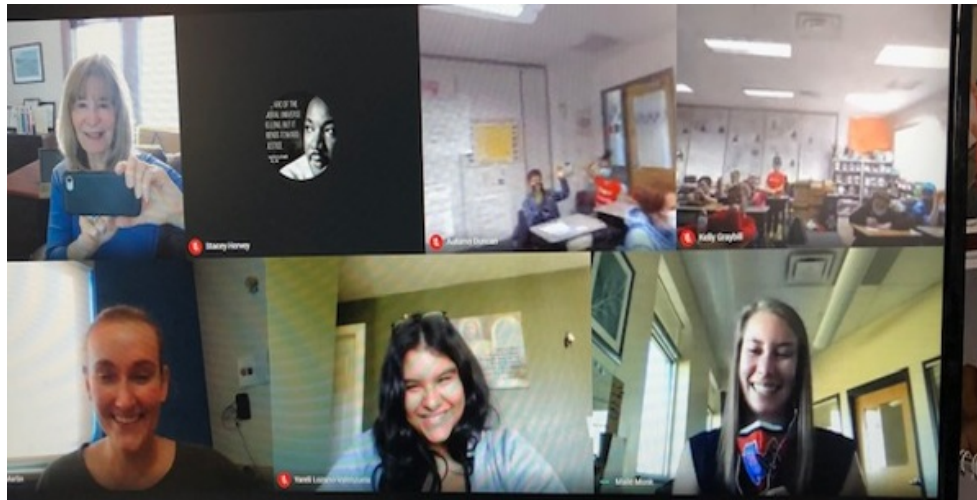
Hoff Elementary is in Keenesburg, Weld County, a rural community on the plains northeast of Denver. [Maile Monk, PhD](#), the head of psychological services for the District, is a BrainWise trainer. When Dr. Pat approached her about the reading project, Dr. Monk responded with enthusiasm and quickly recruited Hoff's school principal, Ms. Soliz, and the teachers of two fourth grade classes at



**Dr. Pat and Dr. Maile Monk
Reinforcing BrainWise is FUN!**

With low Covid outbreaks and health protocols in place, Hoff's students had already returned in person to their regular classrooms. Pat and Maile designed a hybrid teaching project: Together, the teen instructors would meet virtually with both 4th grade classes and introduce themselves, followed by breaking into two chat rooms with each teen reading a story to the class.

The classroom teachers, assisted by Ms. Martin, the school psychologist, interacted with the teen instructors and the 4th graders. They facilitated the questions when Madison and Yareli paused during the story. They also monitored the classroom computer so the teen instructors could see the students as they were reading to them.



The Zoom Screen shows the enthusiasm from all sides

The two books chosen by the teens, *Mummies in the Morning* and *A Bad Case of the Stripes*, were rich in characters and incidents that readily lent themselves to analysis using the 10 Wise Ways. The teens had practiced reading out loud and marked places in the story where they paused so the children could identify the Wise Ways and discuss behaviors and situations of the characters.

The fourth graders were paired and shared a set of BrainWise cards that they held up during the reading. When the teen reader paused, the classroom teacher called on different students to share their findings. This "back and forth" format was used throughout the story.

It was exciting to see the children identify all the ten thinking skills and apply them correctly. They discussed taking others points of view, setting goals, identifying choices, the consequences that affected others, and what to do to exit the Emotions Elevator. Some children were more articulate than others, but all participated.



Student Incentives/Rewards.

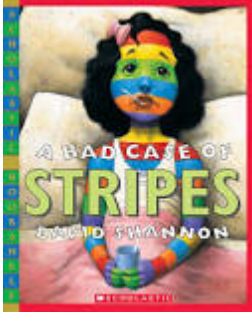
After the session, students were rewarded for their participation with Brain Punches. Zoey Martin, the school psychologist, Ronda Soliz, the school principal, and Dr. Monk created the cards. All Hoff students have Wizard Brain Punch Cards, and get holes punched in the card for showing Wizard Brain behavior. When the card is filled, they can make a purchase at the "school store."



Zoey Martin, School Psychologist and Ronda Soliz, Principal Holding BrainWise Punch Cards

Reinforcing BrainWise with age-appropriate stories has always been a valuable reinforcement activity, and access to virtual teaching methods has opened up opportunities that will have lasting benefits for everyone.

The 10 Wise Ways are a common language even



young children understand and can use to explain problem behaviors. The story about the little girl "with a bad case of the stripes" describes how she got sick because she felt she had to hide her love of lima beans in order for other kids to accept and like her. Her fear of losing friends put her high on her Emotions Elevator and caused her to get sick with stripes. When she was honest about her love of lima beans, her stripes disappeared. Applying the Wise Ways helped the students discuss her behavior and why she was able to change it.

It is rewarding to see children apply thinking skills to help them understand and make sense of problems. And while some children initially may only recognize that there is a problem, others are able to explain the thinking processes that contribute to the situation. The simple words and explanations the 10 Wise Ways use make it possible to understand and explain problems. They learn how to Stop and Think, and it begins with being aware that there is a problem.

[1] Denver Mile High Rotary sponsors a Young Rotary Club at CEC. Stacey Hervey, a forensics and criminal justice teacher at CEC, is the club's sponsor. Ms. Hervey's students have been involved in numerous community service projects affiliated with Rotary over the last several years. Madison and Yareli are her students. (see the [March 2018 Newsletter](#) on Cascading as a Teaching Method, and [Issues 38](#) and [39](#)).

Take care and be safe,



Dr. Pat

Please "like" us to help us get the 10 Wise Ways out to more people:



On a Lighter Note

Communication is the last of the 10 Wise Ways for this reason: I

believe that the preceding nine Wise Ways underlie the effective expression of emotions and feelings. Amanda Gorman demonstrates her mastery of communication with poems. She made history at President Biden's inauguration when she recited The Hill We Climb. Her words addressed difficult events with compassion, not rancor, and instilled hope, not fear.



**Poet Amanda Gorman reads
'The Hill We Climb'**



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