6th Grade Activity 9: “Community Connection”

Learning goals:
After completing this exercise students be able to:
• Connect what they learned in this unit to a real-life issue.

Organ Donation – The Gift of Life
At the beginning of this unit, you learned about a young man who received a heart transplant. The heart is an organ you cannot live without. Organ donation saves lives. Nevertheless, many people are not registered organ donors. Some people have religious or cultural objections to being organ donors, and that is OK. A person should only be an organ donor if it is something they want to do.

• On average, 63 people each day are saved by organ donation. Unfortunately, another 16 people die each day because not enough organs are available.
• In 2002, 2,154 people received heart transplants in the United States. Forty of them were in Colorado.
• Ninety-seven of the people receiving heart transplants in the United States during 2002 were between the ages of 11 and 17.
• In June, 2003 there were approximately 3,700 people on the waiting list for a heart transplant in the United States.

Finding a Match
One of the reasons that people die waiting for organ transplants is that the donor and the recipient of the organ have to be a good match. Family members are often a close match. Members of the same ethnic group are more likely to be a good match, than someone from the general population but not always.

Who Can Donate Organs?
Any healthy person can be an organ donor, but people under age 18 require permission from their parents.

What can you do?
Many more lives could be saved every year in the United States if more people became organ donors. A key to encouraging organ donation is by educating people about the process of donation and its benefits.

Assignment:
Make a poster encouraging people to become organ donors. Use the following websites as resources for information and ideas.

United States government website on organ and tissue transplants and donation
http://www.organdonor.gov
Donor Alliance – Colorado-based organization that can provide guest speakers in the Denver area [http://www.donoralliance.org/](http://www.donoralliance.org/)

Include the following things in your poster.
- Eye-catching title in large, easy to read letters that expresses your main message (Example: “Organ Donation Saves Lives!”)
- Explain why someone can’t live without a heart
- List some facts and/or statistics about organ donation and heart transplants.
- Give information about how people can find out more about organ donation.
- Include some interesting drawings and/or photos.

Remember to:
- Use neat, easy to see lettering
- Use lots of color
- Make your poster attractive and eye-catching

Sample poster layout:

- **Title**
  - Facts and /or statistics about organ donation
    - •
    - •
  - Facts and /or statistics about heart transplants
    - •
    - •

- **Picture**
  - Why a person can’t live without a heart
    - •
    - •
  - To find out more about organ donation…

**Alternative Assignment:** If you don’t want to encourage people to be organ donors, make a poster describing and showing the structure and function of the heart.