**Shining a Light on Invisible People – Video**

Mark Horvath, producer of “Shining a Light on Invisible People,” is a former drug addict and survivor of homelessness who now uses social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, to raise awareness about homelessness and poverty in America. In this video, Mark explains his mission to give “a face and a voice to homelessness,” a mission that he accomplishes by traveling around the United States and filming/interviewing the homeless. As Mark says at the end of “Shining a Light…”, “Every time I try to quit, I hear this voice… that says ‘if not you, who?” is video lends itself to dialogue about creative ways to address poverty and how to best tell the stories of those in need. Finally, it encourages us all to reflect upon Mark's question, “If not you, who?”

* Work and Vocation
* Justice and Equality
* Motives and Values
* Poverty and Need
* Social and Political Change

**Gate A-4 – Reading**

Poet and novelist Naomi Shihab Nye was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1952 to an American mother and a Palestinian father. She lived in Jordan and Jerusalem before settling in San Antonio, Texas. Nye often writes of her experiences as an Arab American woman and the ways people navigate cross-cultural differences. In this post-9/11 prose poem set in an airport, the Arab American narrator befriends an older Palestinian woman whose inability to communicate with those around her has left her weeping and frightened. Able to speak a little halting Arabic, the narrator becomes this woman’s connection both to their shared Palestinian community and the impromptu English-speaking one that forms around them at the gate. As the mood of the weary travelers changes, the narrator concludes, "This is the world I want to live in." Is the Palestinian woman’s fear and confusion something you recognize? What about the sense of kinship that forms among the strangers at the gate? Is the "shared world" the poem describes the world that we live in now, or an ideal?

* Connection and Relationships
* Exclusion and Belonging
* Diversity and Difference
* Identity and Community
* Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

**Okay – Poem**

Lowell Jaeger's poem “Okay” is told from the perspective of a man driving home from a trip with his wife and children to Hot Springs. As they are driving, the family encounters a man waving them down in the middle of the road, later described by the speaker as drunk, smelly, and blubbering. Yet, when his children see that the man is holding a bleeding dog in his hands, they ask their father to stop, triggering an interaction between the two men that explores the nature of shame, fear, and discomfort in interactions with those who are different from us. “Okay” evokes questions about poverty, service, and how/why we choose to stop – or not to stop when we see someone in need.

* Connection and Relationships
* Roles and Boundaries
* Diversity and Difference
* Identity and Community
* Justice and Equality
* Knowledge and Uncertainty
* Leadership and Responsibility
* Money and Wealth
* Motives and Power
* Poverty and Need
* Power and Privilege
* Service and Volunteering

**The Circuit – Reading**

The story's main character, Panchito. Born in Mexico, he worked in the United States as an illegal immigrant migrant worker. Eventually, he became a naturalized citizen and earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University, after which he began writing about his life experiences in stories for younger readers. "The Circuit" focuses on Panchito's conflicting desires for an education and for helping his family earn a living by working alongside them in the fields. The story looks with a sympathetic eye on the effects of constant migration on a child's life and identity, as well as the effects of poverty and the language barrier. What is the "circuit?" How does it promote or prevent community, and is it keeping Panchito's family from achieving the American dream?

* Connection and Relationships
* Roles and Boundaries
* Teaching and Learning
* Justice and Equality
* Poverty and Need
* Race, Ethnicity, and Culture
* Service and Volunteering

**The Three Questions – Short Story**

What if there were a way to be certain so one would "never stray in any matter"? Leo Tolstoy—one of the giants of 19th century Russian literature—begins his story with three questions that occur to a certain king, who is certain that the answers will provide him all the guidance he needs for the rest of his reign and the rest of his life. Eager for such guidance, the king offers a reward to any wise teacher in the land who can answer his three questions. Many come for the reward—but each gives different advice. Finally, the king resolves to ask a mountain-dwelling hermit who is "said to be an enlightened man." The hermit will not answer the king directly; but one day and many toils later, he is able to show the king the answers to his questions in a surprising and unexpected way.

* Impacts and Outcomes
* Knowledge and Uncertainty
* Motives and Values
* Service and Volunteering

**Lovers of the Poor – Poetry**

Renowned for her "small... terse portraits of the Black urban poor" (Richard K. Barksdale), the Pulitzer Prize-winning Gwendolyn Brooks here presents a less than flattering portrait of a few representatives from the Ladies Betterment League who leave the comfort of their homes to "allot largesse to the lost." Brooks' razor-sharp perceptions of the human mind invite us to look past ourselves and into the eyes, hearts, and circumstances of others, evoking questions about the way(s) we view, think about, and aim to help those in need. Published in 1963, the poem also gives us the opportunity to explore the nature of charity vs. service, the “horror” of poverty, and how or why we, in Brooks' words, might “avoid inhaling the laden air.”

* Roles and Boundaries
* Diversity and Difference
* Giving and Receiving
* Money and Wealth
* Motives and Values
* Poverty and Need
* Power and Privilege
* Service and Volunteering

**The Lunch Date – Short Film**

This Oscar-winning short film from 1989 tells the story of a wealthy white woman whose goal is to catch a train.

The story is simple and done with very little dialogue. As the woman hurries toward her train, misses her train, and deals with the aftermath, viewers discover much about her character, including her relationship with the many homeless people in the station and with an African-American man who bumps into her and causes her purse to fall to the ground.

“The Lunch Date” offers an opportunity to discuss fear of difference, race, social class and status, and the power of unexamined privilege.

* Giving and Receiving
* Justice and Equality
* Knowledge and Uncertainty
* Money and Wealth
* Poverty and Need
* Power and Privilege
* Race, Ethnicity, and Culture
* Service and Volunteering

**President Johnson’s State of the Union Address - Speech**

In his 1964 State of the Union Address, President Lyndon B. Johnson declares an “unconditional war on poverty in America,” recommending the most federal support in American history for education, health, retraining the unemployed, and helping the economically and physically handicapped. Johnson also makes it clear that this support is for all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or background, and that the war against poverty must be won not in Washington, but “in the field, in every private home” and “in every public office.” This powerful speech offers an opportunity to critically examine the last 50 years and our progress in the “war against poverty.” It also brings up ideas about the symptoms of poverty, the causes of poverty, where the war on poverty should be fought, and how the war on poverty can be won, that remain poignant and relevant today.

* Justice and Equality
* Leadership and Responsibility
* Money and Wealth
* Poverty and Need
* Race, Ethnicity, and Culture
* Social and Political Change

**What We Don’t Talk About When We Don’t Talk About Service – Essay**

Adam Davis is the Director of Project on Civic Reflection. He also directs Justice Talking, a social justice seminar series for AmeriCorps members, as well as the Camp of Dreams, a non-profit organization that provides programs for Chicago young people. With Elizabeth M. Lynn, he co-edited The Civically Engaged Reader (Great Books Foundation, 2006), from which this essay is taken. Davis begins the essay by commenting on the recent "vogue for service" that is sweeping the nation, but notes that we seem reluctant to reflect on that service. "It seems to be so clear that Service is Good (SIG) that we do not need to question service or to talk about it; we only need to do it." Davis goes on to question the assumption that service is good, as well as the assumption that we need not reflect on it, asking why we serve, whether service is always good, and why we are so reluctant to talk about it. Davis's piece also brings up questions about motives and values in relation to service and how these impact why we serve.

* Identity and Community
* Justice and Equality
* Knowledge and Uncertainty
* Motives and Values
* Serving and Volunteering

**What I Didn’t Know Then – Essay**

In her essay, “What I Didn't Know Then,” Kelli Covey, the Associate Director of the Center for Civic Reflection, uses her personal experience as an AmeriCorps VISTA member to examine three questions: What impact does national service have? Is it truly a strategy for change? And if it is, what kind of change does it result in? Covey's story of her year of service on a North Dakota Native American reservation inspires discussion about the value of service, the motives that drive people to serve, the relationship between service and self-interest, and the value of following the questions that shape our lives, instead of racing to their answers.

* Identity and Community
* Impact and Outcomes
* Knowledge and Uncertainty
* Motives and Values
* Power and Privilege
* Roles and Boundaries
* Serving and Volunteering
* Social and Political Change
* Work and Vocation

**Imagine the Angels of Bread - Poem**

“Imagine the Angels of Bread” was written in 1996 by Latino poet and professor at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Martin Espada. Repeating the phrase “this is the year,” Espada helps readers to reflect on oppression and power imbalances in our society, and to think critically about when these things are going to change and/or how change has already come about. Espada's poem offers an opportunity to discuss social change, power and if/how it can be reversed, poverty, justice, vision, and imagination.

* Impact and Outcomes
* Justice and Equality
* Poverty and Need
* Power and Privilege
* Race, Ethnicity, and Culture
* Social and Political Change

**The Drum Major Instinct - Speech**

In this famous sermon, delivered only two months before his death in 1968 and considered by some to be his eulogy, King explains that we all have in us "a kind of drum major instinct, a desire to be out front" leading the parade. Instead of saying that we should squelch this selfish impulse he instead attempts to wed it to the idea of service: "If you want to be important--wonderful. If you want to be recognized--wonderful. If you want to be great--wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That's a new definition of greatness." In this same sermon, King also claims that everyone can serve, an assertion that brings into question what it means to be a servant leader, who service most benefits, and what it means to have an inclusive definition of “who can serve.”

* Exclusion and Belonging
* Justice and Equality
* Leadership and Responsibility
* Money and Wealth
* Motives and Values
* Power and Privilege
* Race, Ethnicity and Culture
* Serving and Volunteering
* Social and Political Change

**Bed for the Night**

Bertolt Brecht was an influential German poet and playwright whose most famous works are Mother Courage and Her Children and, in collaboration with composer Kurt Weill, The Three Penny Opera. Brecht insisted that a playwright should both make his audience aware of social problems and move them to bring about change. Brecht's simple poem, "A Bed for the Night" tells of a man who procures beds for the homeless by standing on a corner and "appealing to passersby." This seems like a good deed, so why does the narrator tell us that "it won't change the world"? Are we to be glad that "a few men have a bed for the night" or despair that "it will not shorten the age of exploitation"? The poem marks a rich beginning for conversation about the relation between philanthropic giving and social change.

* Impact and Outcomes
* Justice and Equality
* Leadership and Responsibility
* Motives and Values
* Poverty and Need
* Roles and Boundaries
* Serving and Volunteering
* Social and Political Change

**September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance – Image and Documentary**

This civic reflection opportunity involves 1 image and 1 “11 minute” documentary called Boatlift and is ideally used on the actual National Day of Service and Remembrance or close to that day.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service**

First Day of Segregation Photograph

“First day of school desegregation” was taken on September 9, 1957 outside of Buena Vista School in Nashville, Tennessee. The photograph shows three African-American women walking a young African-American boy toward the entrance of the school. Meanwhile, a single white woman and three white children stand and sit on its steps. This photograph offers an opportunity to discuss justice and equality in America, as well as space, body language, prejudice and perceived difference.