

6<sup>th</sup> Grades  
Lesson Plan  
Black History Month-Charles W. David, Jr.



# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grade: 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Lesson: Charles W. David, Jr., The Dorchester, and The Four Chaplains

<p><b>OBJECTIVES: National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies:</b> 1. Culture 4. Individual Development &amp; Identity 5. Individuals, Groups &amp; Institutions 6. Power, Authority &amp; Governance 10. Civic Ideals &amp; Practices</p> <p><b>CCSSI-ELA: RI 6.7.</b> Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</p>	<p><b>STRATEGIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Think/Pair/Share</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Questions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large Group</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Service-Learning Activity</li> </ul>						
<b>MATERIALS:</b>	Computer/laptop; internet (with access to YouTube); Smart Board; copies of a Brief Biography of Charles Walter David, Jr.; copies of Comprehension Questions-Brief Biography of Charles W. David, Jr.; Maze from the Hold to the Deck; copies of the Charles W. David Word Search; copy of the Grades 6-8 Action Plans						
<b>Engage:</b> Hook the students	Think/Pair/Share Activity- Pair the students with a partner. Explain the T/P/S directions. The students will think of their answer, get with their partner, and share their answer. T/P/S Question: Would you be willing to risk your life to help another person if you knew they would die without your help? What if you knew you would die if you saved their life? 4-Chaplains Go Down With the Ship - Part 1 <a href="https://youtu.be/tJIOuQh7Ab0">https://youtu.be/tJIOuQh7Ab0</a> 4-Chaplains Go Down With the Ship - Part 2 <a href="https://youtu.be/NEa5EQat-r8">https://youtu.be/NEa5EQat-r8</a> 4-Chaplains Go Down With the Ship - Part 3 <a href="https://youtu.be/GLWEZ9oRqNY">https://youtu.be/GLWEZ9oRqNY</a>						
<b>Explore:</b> Students make sense of a concept through observations.	Students will view the YouTube videos of The Four Chaplains Go Down With the Ship and read the Brief Biography of Charles W. David, Jr. Students will integrate the information from the video clips and the Brief Biography of Charles W. David, Jr. to answer the Comprehension Questions. Students will complete the Charles W. David, Jr. Word Search Puzzle and the Maze from the Hold to the Deck.						
<b>Explain:</b> Teacher introduces formal vocabulary and language to students.	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">segregated</td> <td style="width: 33%;">enlistment</td> <td style="width: 33%;">convoy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nazi</td> <td>U-boat</td> <td>hypothermia</td> </tr> </table>	segregated	enlistment	convoy	Nazi	U-boat	hypothermia
segregated	enlistment	convoy					
Nazi	U-boat	hypothermia					
<b>Elaborate:</b> Students apply what they have learned.	Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.						
<b>Evaluate:</b> assessment.	Teachers will choose which activities to use as formal assessments.						
<b>Enrichment/Service-Learning Project</b>	Students will brainstorm a way to serve their local community in honor of Charles W. David, Jr. and the Four Chaplains. See a list of potential projects on the last page.						

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### A Brief Biography of Charles Walter David, Jr.

Steward's Mate First Class Charles Walter David was an African American Coast Guardsman, responsible for saving ninety-three people from a torpedoed naval cutter. David was born on June 20, 1917, in New York, New York. Many details about his early life are unknown. By the time of his enlistment into the US Coast Guard, on March 6, 1941, David was married to a woman named Kathleen and had a three-year-old son named Neil. David started as part of the kitchen staff and worked his way up to Steward's Mate, where he was responsible for tending to officers' quarters. Late in 1942, David was assigned to the Coast Guard cutter the *Comanche* that was part of convoy SG-19, escorting two

merchant marine ships, SS *Lutz*, and SS *Biscaya*, and one troop transport, the USAT *Dorchester*. The convoy left St. John's, Newfoundland, bound for the Army Command Base at Narsarsuaq in Southern Greenland in February 1943. The *Comanche*, the *Escabana*, and the *Tampa* were three cutters ordered to assure the safety of the ships carrying men and supplies to the base. On the ship, David played the harmonica, and white shipmate Richard Swanson played the saxophone, to entertain the crew.

The path to Greenland required passing through an area known as "Torpedo Alley," due to the number of ships sunk there by German submarines.

On February 3, at 12:55 am, the *Dorchester* was hit by a torpedo by German U-boat *U-233*. The damage to the ship was severe and prevented the crew from sending a radio distress signal or rockets or flares to alert the escorts. The huge luxury liner began to sink quickly, listing heavily to one side, making access to some lifeboats and jackets impossible. The available lifeboats were quickly overcrowded, as there were 904 men aboard the ship. The waters were rough and many men were quickly pitched over the sides into frigid waters.

Sailing immediately behind the *Dorchester*, twelve men from the *Comanche* volunteered to rescue men from the frigid waters, including David, one of the lowest-ranking men. They dove into the waters, putting ropes around men's waists because most were suffering from hypothermia, and could not grab a rescue line. David rescued ninety-three of the two hundred and twenty-seven survivors, including ranking officer Lt. Robert Anderson.

The convoy continued to Greenland, and David and others were taken to the hospital. David died of pneumonia on March 29, 1943, fifty-four days after the ordeal, at the age of twenty-six. He was posthumously awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Heroism in 1943. His wife and three-year-old son received the award from RADM S.V. Parker, along with Lt. Anderson, who was rescued by David. This award was followed by the American Defense Service Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and the WWII Victory Medal. He was honored with a certificate for his heroism by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1963. The Immortal Chaplains Foundation awarded David with their prestigious Prize for Humanity in 1999, and in 2010, the USCGC Charles David Jr. was named as the seventh new Sentinel Class Cutter in his honor.

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### Comprehension Questions-Brief Biography of Charles W. David, Jr.

1. When did Charles W. David join the United States Coast Guard?
2. What job was Charles assigned in the Coast Guard?
3. When the United States entered World War II, what Coast Guard Cutter was Charles assigned to?
4. What was the mission of the cutter?
5. What was the nickname of the area the ships had to pass through to get to Greenland?
6. What happened on February 3, 1943?
7. What actions did Charles W. David, Jr. take to rescue sailors from the *Dorchester*?
8. Even though David was one of the lowest ranking men on his ship and many in his own country considered him a second-class citizen, he willingly put his life at risk to save his fellow Americans. What lessons could we all learn from the character of Charles W. David, Jr.?

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### ANSWER KEY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Comprehension Questions-Brief Biography of Charles W. David, Jr.

1. When did Charles W. David join the United States Coast Guard? **Charles joined the Coast Guard on March 6, 1941.**
2. What job was Charles assigned in the Coast Guard? **He started as part of the kitchen staff and worked his way up to Steward's Mate, where he was responsible for tending to officers' quarters.**
3. When the United States entered World War II, what Coast Guard Cutter was Charles assigned to? **When the United States entered World War II, Charles was assigned to the *USCGC Comanche*.**
4. What was the mission of the cutter? **The *Comanche* was one of three cutters escorting three transport ships, including the *USAT Dorchester* that was carrying US troops and civilian contractors from New York to a US military base in Greenland.**
5. What was the nickname of the area the ships had to pass through to get to Greenland? **The area the ships had to pass through to get to the military base in Greenland was nicknamed *Torpedo Alley*.**
6. What happened on February 3, 1943? **On February 3, 1943, a Nazi U-boat torpedoed the *USAT Dorchester* 150 miles from Greenland.**
7. What actions did Charles W. David, Jr. take to rescue sailors from the *Dorchester*? **He was one of twelve men from the *Comanche* who volunteered to rescue men from the frigid waters. They dove into the waters, putting ropes around men's waists because most were suffering from hypothermia, and could not grab a rescue line.**
8. Even though David was one of the lowest ranking men on his ship and many in his own country considered him a second-class citizen, he willingly put his life at risk to save his fellow Americans. What lessons could we all learn from the character of Charles W. David, Jr.? **Answers will vary.**

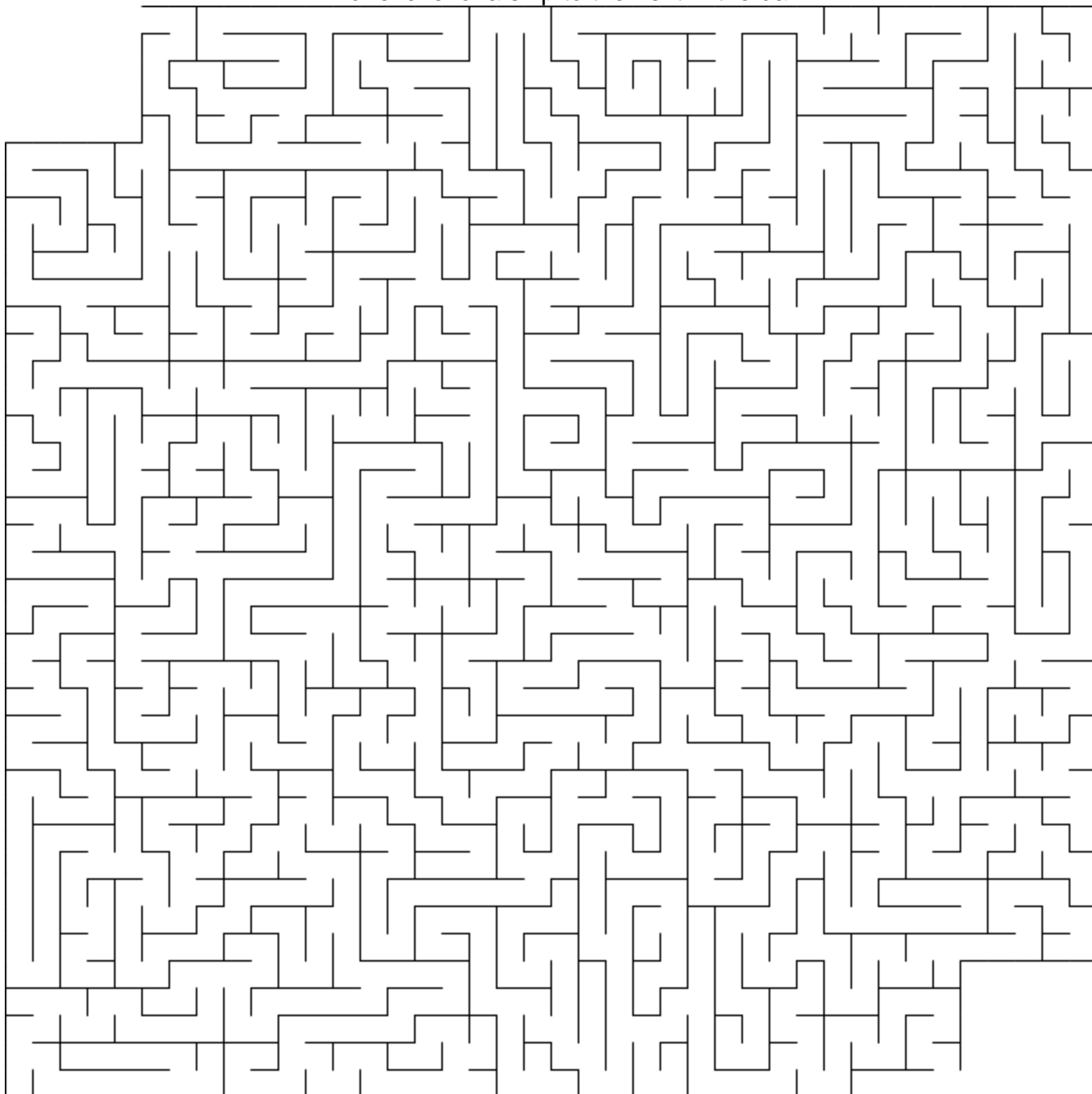
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## The Dorchester, Maze from the Hold to the Deck

When the Dorchester was torpedoed, all of the lights on the ship went out. Try to imagine getting from one level of a ship to the next in the dark.



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## Lesson Plan

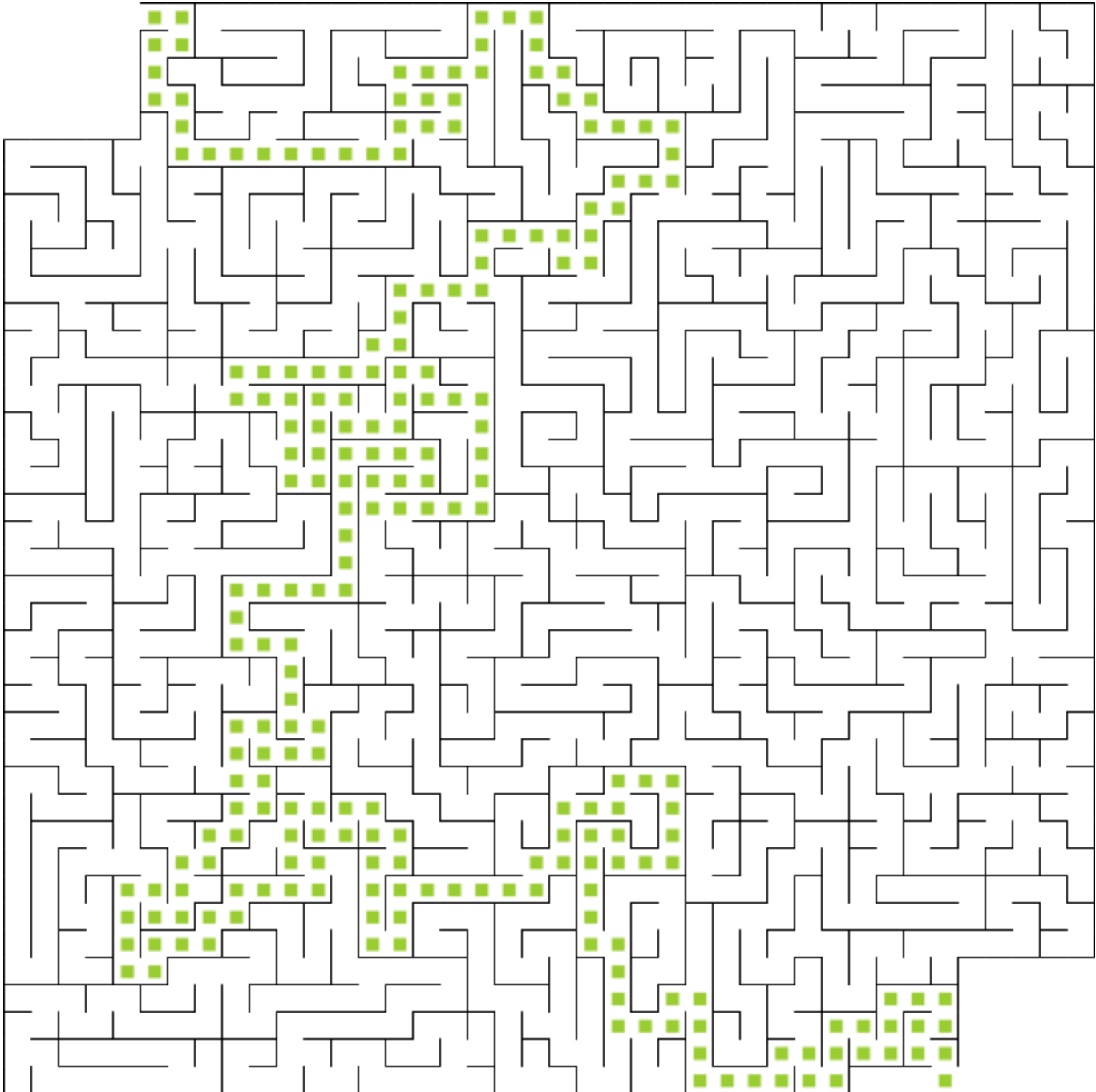
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### The Dorchester, Maze from the Hold to the Deck

When the Dorchester was torpedoed, all of the lights on the ship went out. Try to imagine getting from one level of a ship to the next in the dark.

**ANSWER KEY**



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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Charles W. David Word Search Puzzle

R	X	S	D	A	M	R	F	U	D	M	L	S	S	C
X	E	X	U	W	R	E	I	N	E	H	K	A	N	H
Q	V	T	O	B	B	M	A	R	R	N	J	X	I	A
Y	Y	F	S	R	M	L	Y	K	H	B	H	O	A	R
N	I	S	U	E	N	A	N	C	M	A	G	P	L	L
M	Y	A	F	E	H	V	R	F	F	D	F	H	P	E
A	R	N	E	T	K	C	Y	I	C	B	D	O	A	S
Y	B	R	T	Y	X	Q	R	T	N	E	S	N	H	W
A	G	F	T	A	S	U	F	O	I	E	A	E	C	D
C	I	T	N	A	L	T	A	W	D	A	Z	P	I	A
S	E	G	R	E	G	A	T	I	O	N	Y	R	O	V
A	C	I	N	O	M	R	A	H	V	N	V	T	H	I
B	Z	Q	T	O	R	P	E	D	O	E	Z	K	U	D
D	G	D	C	O	M	A	N	C	H	E	U	S	C	Q
N	O	S	N	A	W	S	D	R	A	H	C	I	R	K

Army  
Richard Swanson  
Dorchester  
torpedo  
USAT

Atlantic  
Charles W David  
February  
submarine  
harmonica

segregation  
Comanche  
Greenland  
saxophone



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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

### The Charles W. David Word Search Puzzle

R	X	S	D	A	M	R	F	U	D	M	L	S	S	C
X	E	X	U	W	R	E	I	N	E	H	K	A	N	H
Q	V	T	O	B	B	M	A	R	R	N	J	X	I	A
Y	Y	F	S	R	M	L	Y	K	H	B	H	O	A	R
N	I	S	U	E	N	A	N	C	M	A	G	P	L	L
M	Y	A	F	E	H	V	R	F	F	D	F	H	P	E
A	R	N	E	T	K	C	Y	I	C	B	D	O	A	S
Y	B	R	T	Y	X	Q	R	T	N	E	S	N	H	W
A	G	F	T	A	S	U	F	O	I	E	A	E	C	D
C	I	T	N	A	L	T	A	W	D	A	Z	P	I	A
S	E	G	R	E	G	A	T	I	O	N	Y	R	O	V
A	C	I	N	O	M	R	A	H	V	N	V	T	H	I
B	Z	Q	T	O	R	P	E	D	O	E	Z	K	U	D
D	G	D	C	O	M	A	N	C	H	E	U	S	C	Q
N	O	S	N	A	W	S	D	R	A	H	C	I	R	K

Army  
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Grades 6-8

Serve and Succeed Action Plans

- Help an elderly neighbor with yard work.
- Volunteer at your local library.
- Create “Survival Back-Packs” for the homeless with socks, caps, gloves, toothpaste, a toothbrush and other toiletries to be distributed to homeless people in your community.
- Organize a Checkers, board game or card game tournament at your local nursing home. Coordinate with the nursing home staff and plan a fun afternoon for the residents and students alike!
- Write letters to be included in soldier care packages. [Operation Gratitude](#) sends over 250,000 packages to Servicemen and Women, and First Responders annually, the link above provides guidelines for participation in their program.
- Collaborate with teachers, students, administration, and parents to create a food “Back-Pack” pantry at your school for students who may have food insecurities at home. Twenty-two million children receive free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and the National School Breakfast Program. For many of these children, school meals may be the only meals they eat during the day.
- Make a “New Student Kit” for students who are new to your school. Create a list of school clubs, a calendar of events, school lunch menus, map of the school, and something with the school mascot to help the student feel like they are welcome.
- Organize a Zoom Meeting between your class at school and local nursing home residents. Discuss what their childhoods were like growing up, what kind of classes they took in school. Did they live in town or in the country, what kinds of chores and activities did they participate in when they were your age. Document their responses and share with other classes in your school. If some of your interviewees have a talent like singing or playing the piano, maybe they could share those talents with the class the next time you Zoom. Once you have met the residents, select a “pin-pal” you can correspond with by letter every few weeks.
- Be a companion to a senior citizen in a local nursing home. Make cards, surprise them with visits around their birthday or sing carols for them around the holidays.
- Organize a coat drive in your school/community that collects new and slightly used coats as part of [ONEWARMCOAT.org](#)
- Use AARP’s [Create the Good Guide](#) to start recycling events in your community.