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WE ARE HARLEM!

Class 3-206 at P.S. 125
The Ralph Bunche School

Behind the Book  |  New York
Our mission is to develop engaged readers and writers in underserved NYC public schools by designing and delivering programs that are multi-disciplinary, culturally responsive, and promote deeper connections to books and their authors.

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We dedicate this book to the

Harlem Community

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to Barb Korein for taking beautiful pictures of our trip to Chinatown.

In the interest of honoring student voice, Behind the Book presents students’ work
as received from the teacher.

This book was made possible by a generous grant from The Korein Foundation.
Class 3-206 explored communities far from Harlem to understand what makes neighborhoods successful and ways that they can work to improve their own. They traveled to Chinatown, guided by Kam Mak, author and illustrator of My Chinatown.

Born in Hong Kong, Kam described his own experiences immigrating to the United States and finding a sense of belonging in New York City’s Chinatown. He led the class through the vibrant neighborhood where they sampled new foods and flavors, observing many of the places depicted in the book’s beautiful illustrations. Kam pointed out how much Chinatown has changed over the years and how important neighborhoods are as safe spaces for different cultures.

Inspired by Kam’s visit and their trip, students voted on areas of concern in their own neighborhood of Harlem. Behind the Book research coaches helped students investigate local issues as well as possible solutions. They explored the cultural legacy of Harlem and the many innovators and leaders who have contributed to this historic neighborhood. Writing coaches helped students take these ideas and start shaping them into speeches. Students practiced delivering speeches and supporting one another. They brainstormed ways to handle “stage fright” and further polished their speeches. Behind the Book teaching artist Candice Humphries assisted the class in making collages about their ideal neighborhood experiences. Using shape, color, and a sense of perspective, students designed lively and thoughtful neighborhood scenes.

This book demonstrates how Class 3-206 will continue using their voices, words, and art to appreciate Harlem and help make this neighborhood a better place for everyone!
Chace 9
David 10
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One thing that concerns me about my neighborhood is smoking.

Smoking is not good for you. Smoking can cause lung cancer. It can also stain your teeth. Did you know that people get lung cancer because of smoking? Each year, 150,000 people die from smoking alone or smoke.

Smoking is legal in NY state. About 2,000,000 adults smoke in NY.

Two ways to solve this problem is to follow the state policy that says the state idea as you do work in NY. You will have to go to the state government in Albany NY, to approve a bill. No smoking should be ban in NY beer.

It can kill you. Another way to solve this problem is to have more laws. People who smoke if they don’t follow the rules. It is important to follow this rule because people receive second hand smoke also causes harm. According to Center for Disease 13,000 people are harmed by second hand smoke. This is why smoking should be ban.

Smoking concerns me about my neighborhood, will you help me ban smoking too?
Did you know that people have been living in Harlem? Harlem is a neighborhood I call home and I have a concern. I worry that too many people are smoking in Harlem.

Smoking can be really hazardous and it can hurt others, people too. This is called second hand smoke. This issue is important to me because smoking can hurt kids just like me. I feel furious when I think about this.

One way we can address this issue is to suggest a lawyer to ban smoking. I plan to do this by finding some people that agree with me. I can also reach out to my family and friends to help me with this issue.

Another way to solve this issue is to put a poster to make people stop smoking. I will work with people who agrees with me.

Posers to make people stop smoking. The posters will say smoking can hurt you! The posters will have facts and pictures of how harmful smoking is. For example, more than 16 million Americans live with health issues because of smoking and 41,000 get second hand smoke each day. This makes me furious.

The third way to solve this issue is to ask stores to stop selling cigarettes. I will go from door to door and tell them how harmful it is. I will ask people to sign a petition to get stores to stop selling cigarettes. When you sign the petition to make Harlem better and feel free to do it on your own.

Smoking is a great concern for me in Harlem, and these are the ways I plan to solve the issue.

The End
there are thousands of stray dogs in New York City. Many of them are lonely, scared, and hurt. People are not caring for dogs like they care for each other and that’s not fair to them.

Another way we can solve this problem is to love and care for dogs. Dogs get lost because people let them go and we need to love them like family.

when people buy or adopt dogs, protect them so they don’t get lost. Strays can have problems for parents to help people care for their dogs. This will make people feel better and safer too.

According to ASPCA.org 6.9 million animals enter shelters. Sometimes there are too many animals and they can not be helped. We should treat dogs like family because they treat us like heroes. We should be their heroes by being sure we save them.

If someone calls me they do not care about this problem. I would try to convince them that dogs need help because dogs are sick and dying. If this issue were addressed in harlem, it would be a better place because we are saving them. I want everyone who lives in harlem to be happy that dogs are being cared for. Harlem is my big home and we can make it better.
Jeremiah Ban Smoking

I learned that people have been 

since this smoking has been a 
problem in the United States. 

Something that concerns me about 

my neighborhood is smoking. 

Smoking causes a lot of health problems. Smoking can cause cancer and 

give you diabetes and heart problems. According to the center for 

15,000 deaths occur 

each year from smoking. This 

is a problem because health 

problems. 

One way we can address this issue is to tell the President to 

ban smoking. I will go to 

the White House to tell the President to ban smoking. 

I could get a lot of people to 

call the White House and 

ask to ban smoking. 

Another way we can address 

this problem is to make posters 

that say stop smoking. In art 

class, we can make posters and 

put some posters on the bulletin board. We could ask strangers to help 

me put them up. 

Smoking causes a lot of health problems. We can fix this problem 

in my community. We can 

ask the President to ban smoking 

and we can make posters that 

say, "Bansmoking!"
Something that concerns me about my neighborhood is animal preservation. Keeping animals safe, we should set all of the animals and put them in one place, like the zoo. I can call the zoo and tell them about it. The animals will be taken away by having park workers feed animals. People to feed animals so they don’t have to move around and look for food. When animals work for food, they make less animals sometimes. Seafood from humans this will keep animals and humans safe. The animals will be taken away and taken care of. Also, from those who want to harm them. If someone loves them, they will be saved, and they will be estimated. This will keep animals safe and preserved.
Banning Smoking

Something that concerns me about my neighborhood is smoking. One way we can address this problem is by banning all smoking. When we can do this by taking down smoking signs, people could have to play if they were caught. Smoking can make people pay if they were caught. Smoking should not be allowed in public places. Another way we can address this problem is to make smoking illegal by passing a law. We can do it by making people go to court if they were caught. Studies show that smoking is already a law. People just don’t follow it. People should have to go to jail if they were caught. Smoking. A third way to address this problem is to put up no smoking signs. We can do this by arresting people who make smoking signs and hire new people who don’t like smoking. People could shake these signs in magazines and throw them in the garbage can. No smoking signs should look like a cigarette with a red circle around it and a red cross in the middle. If you have a favorite smoking, smoking can call 911 on your phone. These are safe ways we can say no to smoking. Smoking really concerns me about my neighborhood because it can make people sick as well as the people around them. We can solve this problem by banning smoking. Making a sign and making it into a law. Wouldn’t you want to help people stop smoking?
Never Cut Trees

IT seems were cutting

Harmful. 

However, if we want to keep

trees standing, we can fix this.

And many animals are losing

their homes, and I believe these are

our mistakes. I also feel bad for the

animals that have died,

When I think of this issue,

Hitting animals too much

and cutting down trees.

However, my issue is people

out there prescription.

I have an issue as-

"The trees are part of not only the earth, but the future."

Never After Removing - more than I know this.

"If people are harvesting the earth, IT seems we're cutting."

Harmful.
Milai continued...

Almost every year, we can see more air pollution in our environment. This is why trees should never be cut down. They help our environment stay clean.

In conclusion, trees are important to our community. They help us keep pollution away. By not cutting trees, we can solve this problem.

If someone were to tell me they don’t care about this problem, I will try to convince them by telling them that something bad might happen in the future. If this problem is addressed, Harlem will be a better place!
Lydia continued...

The second way we can address this problem is you can make shelters for animals. For example, if you want to save animals, you can build a little house for them. You can put food and water for animals to live in. This is the second reason you should save animals. The last way we can address this problem is leaving food out for animals. In the first place, if you leave food out for animals, they won't starve. Secondly, 10 million dogs and cats get lost each year so we should help them. In conclusion, if an animal comes to your house every day, you should leave food out so it likes you. That is the third reason you should save animals. And that is why you should help homeless animals. Won't you help me save an animal?
Something that concerns me about my neighborhood is the violence. This is important to me because people fight too much and hurt each other. We need to solve this problem.

I want violence to go away, and we can make this go away by solving the cause and sending them to jail. If I did this, they would learn their lesson. Most fighting ends when they teach them how not to fight, so they don’t do it again. I want violence to go away.

Many people choose to fight because they are upset and say mean things to each other. We should help people have better control over their emotions. When upset, we can say, “Let’s talk about it.” They can sit down and listen to each other one at a time. Stopping violence is important to me.

I want to tell people to stop fighting. I will do this by making a poster. Fighting is bad because people get hurt and can be killed. I will tell people to calm down before they choose to fight. They can ignore people who say hurtful things to them. Instead, I will help them to take a deep breath and calm down. Making violence go away is important to me.
A picture of a person throwing trash in the garbage.

A reminder to people to keep Harlem clean. This will make New York City cleaning, you know, that plastic paper can last in the street for several months. This is very dangerous. Harlem people and animals. We can solve problems by keeping clean. We need garbage bags and gloves to pick up all the trash. This will help Harlem stay clean. Another way to solve this problem is to recycle. Glass and paper. People should put glass in the right place. Don't litter on the streets. Food, are made of paper, so that's why people should recycle. Paper and glass are the main cause of everything. Keep Harlem clean, nice, and safe. For all of us, keep Harlem clean.
Harlem is my home and I learned many things about Harlem. Did you know that Harlem's home is from the Netherlands? It is also a place where African American live. In Harlem, there are many wild animals like raccoons, squirrels, and birds. I love my neighborhood but something that concerns me about my neighborhood is animal protection. This issue is important to me because I like animals and want to keep them safe.

One way to help wild animals is to call animal organizations or 911 for help. If you see a sick or wild animal, don't touch, you can get hurt! Instead, call an animal organization so that they can protect you and the animal. The animal organization will know how to care for the animal and keep it safe. They will rescue the animal. A wild animal could be a squirrel, bird, or raccoon. If you see one of these animals hurt, it is best to leave them alone but make sure to help them by calling an animal organization.
Leo continued...

If you see a lost dog or cat it is best to take them to a animal shelter where they can get help. Help animals that are hurt. We should be caring for animals. Thousands of animals get lost each year and they have no home or food. You can also call an animal organization for help if you see a lost dog or cat.

If we see a lost dog or cat don’t forget to take it to an animal shelter. We can also help people with pets by creating a place where dog and cat can be happy. If someone wants to help me they don’t have to care about this problem. I would try to convince them that animals are a cute thing and we should help them. Animal protection is a great concern for me.
I strongly believe people should start recycling and reduce the waste. Not only does it help our environment, but it also helps in preserving our natural resources. Recycling is a simple process that involves collecting and processing various materials that can be reused. By recycling, we can reduce waste and conserve natural resources.

Recycling helps in reducing pollution caused by waste disposal. By recycling, we can reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills and incinerators. This way, we can prevent harmful emissions into the atmosphere, which can have negative effects on our health and the environment.

Recycling is a way to help protect our planet. It's important for each one of us to take responsibility for our actions and make conscious choices that benefit our planet. We can start by recycling everyday items like newspapers, plastic bottles, and cans. By doing so, we can help create a more sustainable future for ourselves and future generations.

Recycling is not just about reducing waste, it's also about creating new opportunities. By recycling, we can create jobs and stimulate economic growth. It's a win-win situation for everyone involved.

In conclusion, recycling is an essential part of our daily lives. By practicing recycling, we can help protect our planet and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

Recycling is not only good for the environment, but it's also good for our economy. Every day, we produce billions of pounds of waste, and by recycling, we can reduce the amount that ends up in landfills and incinerators. This way, we can conserve natural resources and create new opportunities for growth.

Recycling is a simple process that involves collecting and processing various materials that can be reused. By recycling, we can reduce waste and conserve natural resources. It's a way to help protect our planet and create a more sustainable future for ourselves and future generations.

Recycling is not just about reducing waste, it's also about creating new opportunities. By recycling, we can create jobs and stimulate economic growth. It's a win-win situation for everyone involved.

In conclusion, recycling is an essential part of our daily lives. By practicing recycling, we can help protect our planet and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.
Pedro is the neighborhood I came home something that scared me about the neighborhood is gun violence. The only way we can address this problem is by closing gun shops. If we close down gun shops the public will not have access to guns. People can have fewer in their neighborhood and people will be safer. If gun shops are closed, gun violence will suffer.

Another way we can address this problem is we can have people sent to jail for killing. If people are sent to jail the public will be made safe from armed people. When those people get out of jail their weapons may be taken away. Some people may keep their weapons.

The third way we can address this problem is to create stricter gun laws. They can create stricter gun laws by requiring neighborhoods decide on certain gun laws. They can also decide by using past experience.

Strict gun laws will mean more safety for neighborhoods.

Gun violence is scary. Sometimes we can address this problem by leaving gun shops. Having people that say it is jail and closer stricter gun laws. This is very important to me because every day people get hurt. Therefore, you want to stop gun violence too.
Harlem is the place I call home. Something that concerns me about my neighborhood is homeless animals. This issue is important to me because I love animals.

The first way we can address this problem is to put animal food everywhere. Homeless animals don’t eat very much. You can ask stores if they sell animal food intended for their pets. We can ask the manager if they can buy the animal food for the homeless animals.

Another way to address this issue is to put dog houses in parks. The dog houses will help by being a shelter to those who need one. And a cushion and a blanket to keep the animals warm inside the dog house. Some classes of the Ralph Bunche School can try this, then the whole school will try this, then the whole country will try this, then the whole world will try this.

The third way we can address this issue is to make an animal protection law! The law will say that whenever you see a homeless animal you have to help it however you can. You can call an animal shelter, or the pound. If you see a tiny fish on the ground call the aquarium. And if you see an injured animal you have to call the zoo or the vet.

The issue in my community that concerns me is homeless animals. When I think about this issue I feel upset and sad. Feeding, putting out dog houses, and making animal protection law will make Harlem a better place.
Makayla

Recycle

Harlem is the neighborhood I call home. I learned that Harlem was named after the
neighborhood and is located between 103rd and 125th street. Some things that
concern me about my neighborhood is recycling. This issue is important to me
because it can be cleaned. When I think
about this issue, I feel sad and helpless. We
conserve the problem of garbage.

One way we can address this problem
is to remember to recycle in New York City.
We can place cans, plate, and glass to make
other things. Recycling helps keep garbage
organized. According to the guy, "Recycling
reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills
and helps keep our earth clean.

Another way to address this problem is
to build a recycling booth. The booth
will be colorful and nice to look at. The
booth will be one way to show how important
recycling is. We should recycle to keep
Harlem clean.

Harlem is the neighborhood
I call home. I want to keep
my home clean by recycling.
Something that concerns me about my neighborhood is gun violence. I can solve the problem by teaching people how gun can hurt you, we can also ask for stricter gun permits. Starting gun violence is something some people's minds people get hurt.

Do you know what gun violence is? Gun violence is when people use guns to harm people. Gun violence happens every day and lots of people are getting hurt anywhere in the country. 1000 Americans are injured each year. We need to stop this because some body you know might be next. If you do.

Wouldn't you want to stop this? How we can solve the problem is by closing down gun stores.
Harem is a place I call home.

One thing that concerns me about my neighborhood is old supermarkets being replaced by new supermarkets. This issue is important to me because some people don’t have money and the prices are higher in new supermarkets. When I think about this issue, I feel sad because I don’t like old places being replaced by new places. I have great memories in the old places. Old supermarkets have lower prices for everyone, they often have many sales, they are affordable for people who don’t have a lot of money. The new supermarkets are too expensive to afford. So people who don’t have a lot of money can’t buy their groceries. I don’t want people to starve to death. This is an important issue. We should stop supermarkets going into bankruptcy by doing a petition. I will go door to door to get their support in helping supermarkets. I will remind them of the affordable prices at old supermarkets, and we should come together to stop old supermarkets being replaced when you check old supermarkets. You know everyone who works there, they are people who live in the community. You feel welcome and special to everyone in new supermarkets. You will not know the people who work there. It will make me feel sad and scared. This is why old supermarkets should not be replaced. Harem is a neighborhood I call home. Please help me keep old supermarkets from going bankrupt.
Recycle

Recycling

Ashley

We will tidy things up in the green bins. We can teach people to do this to help recycle. We can reuse paper by putting paper in the recycling bin. We can reuse the paper for our. This will help there be less trash. If we recycle, we can keep the earth clean and save trees. Paper comes from trees, and if we don’t recycle paper, we will have to cut many trees down. People can help keep our neighborhood clean and it will be better. Those really concerns low around our neighborhood let’s keep it a safe clean place. If someone wants to help the don’t care about this problem I will try to convince them that it is important so that it can make the earth more beautiful. If this issue were addressed, our neighborhood would be a better place.
One reason I strongly believe that we should recycle is because when you litter it can kill animals. One example is the plastic rings from soda pop cans can get caught on the neck of a cat. The plastic would have to be cut off the can without hurting the cat. You can help by cutting apart all sections of plastic six pack rings before throw it out in the right garbage. Another example for litter that can harm animals is chewing gum. Chewing gum should not be throw outside on the ground because animals can step on the gum and it can get stuck to their fur or teeth. You can help by never spitting gum on the ground and wrapping it in paper and putting it into the right garbage.

A third reason why I strongly believe we should recycle is because animals mistake trash or raw. If the animals eat the trash it can choke them and they can die. You can help by bringing your own reusable bags when shopping.

One way we can solve this problem is by making programs to teach in school and at home. We can tell children to separate garbage into three bin: a blue one is for cans and a black one is for waste, the gray one bin will be used paper like cardboard, paper, and paper plate. The blue bin will be meat and good. Then the black bin will be plastic, bags, and tissue. The program will teach children to recycle. This will help our animals. Another way to solve this problem is putting garbage cans every where. People can hold garbage until they find the right garbage. For their convenience, their holding in their hand.

If we recycle we'll have a clean planet and animals will be saved! Recycle everyone!!!
PARIS

Stop Gun Violence

HARLEM IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD I CALL HOME. I LEARNED THAT GUN VIOLENCE IS FRIGHTENING EVERY DAY (WHICH IS MY TOPIC 2). THERE ARE MANY HISTORICAL SITES WITHIN THE AREA, INCLUDING MARVELLUS HISTORIC SITES. BUT THE TOPIC OF GUN VIOLENCE IS IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE THERE IS TOO MUCH UNNECESSARY DEATH WITH GUNS.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT THIS ISSUE, I FEEL POWERLESS. I WANT TO MAKE A CHANGE, BUT THERE ARE MANY FACTORS TO THIS ISSUE. STRATEGICALLY, THIS PARIS. GO TO HARRISBURG, STAND AT THE FRONT DOOR, TELL THE GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA OF THIS ISSUE. IF THEY THINK THEY ARE PROBLEMS WITH BLACK PEOPLE, THEN WE NEED TO CHANGE. IF NOT, THEN WE NEED TO CHANGE. WE NEED TO TELL THEM TO CONSIDER THEIR ACTIONS.

MAYBE NOW WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A CHANGE. THE THING WE CAN ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM IS TO GO TO CONGRESS OR TO BILLS TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE IN THE USA. EVEN THOUGH IT SOUNDS TO BE SUSPICIOUS, WE WOULD HAVE TO SET IT DOWN IN CONGRESS, REGULATION AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH (GOVERNMENT PARTY). THE FUTURE OF THE HOUSE, WHICH CONSIDERS THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, HAS A VOTE OF PAYMENT AT THE Term OF PENNSYLVANIA. FROM PENNSYLVANIA, THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, THE SITUATION OF GUN VIOLENCE, WHICH CONSIDERS THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE LAST TEN, YEARS.

WE USE THE TECHNOLOGY FROM VARIOUS STATES TO OUR CONGRESSIONAL COMMITMENTS. TO INCUR HIGH FEES, WE HAVE TO TAKE IT EASY. TAKE IT EASY, SO MANY PEOPLE GET WORRIED EVERY DAY, AND SO MANY WE SHOULD TELL IT IS WORRY FREE. IF SOMEONE WERE TO TELL THEM TO TELL THEM, I WOULD LIKE TO CONSIDER THEM AND MANY!

PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY GUN VIOLENCE EVERY YEAR. IF THIS ISSUE WAS ADDRESSED, THE ONE ON WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT HARRISBURG, IT WOULD BE A BETTER PLACE BECAUSE THERE WILL BE LESS VIOLENCE FROM NOW ON. WILL YOU HELP ME ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS?
Harlem is the place we call home. It is filled with unique people, and we just happen to be some of them! Most of us were born and raised here. We learned to ride our bikes, swim, and play sports all within our community. Harlem is a special place to us. We want to see Harlem thrive because we care about where we live. We want to revamp our environment so everyone can see why we love Harlem so much! Class 3-206 is a positive, hard-working class who enjoys reading, writing, math, music, gym, and art. We are mindful of our community and want happiness for all. We want to make Harlem a place people will never forget. We are fearless and we never give up because our voices matter. Class 3-206 are innovators, and we are proud to be from Harlem. Go Harlem!

Kam Mak was born in Hong Kong. His family moved to the United States in 1971 and settled in New York City. His interest in painting was awakened through involvement with City Art Workshop, an organization that enables inner-city youths to explore the arts. Kam continued to pursue his interest in painting while attending the School of Visual Arts on a full scholarship, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1984. Mr. Mak’s works have been exhibited at the Society of Illustrators Annual Exhibition, The Original Art show (dedicated to the best of children’s picture books) and in a one-person show at the Brooklyn Public Library. He has illustrated over 200 paintings for book covers, magazine and editorial pieces for such clients as HarperCollins, St. Martin’s Press, Random House, National Geographic, Time magazine, Newsweek, and The New York Times. Kam’s most recent art has graced the second series of the USPS Lunar New Year stamps and also a new postcard stamp for the USPS adorned with the koi fish was released in spring 2009.
Behind the Book creates intensive learning and empowering experiences for New York City public school students. Working with classes from Pre-K through the 12th grade, Behind the Book brings authors and their books into individual classrooms to build literacy skills and create a community of lifelong readers and writers. Each of a series of workshops is designed to bring books to life to inspire and engage the students. Behind the Book programs are part of the class curricula and meet the Common Core Learning Standards.

Common Core Learning Standards Addressed

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1**
Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.9**
Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2**
Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.