

## TEACHING KINDNESS & COMPASSION

### **A SAMPLE LESSON FROM *LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE UNCOMMON FRIENDS*\***

#### **Read the following story to students:**

Thomas Edison did not work alone when he was working on his inventions. He often had assistants helping him set up and run his experiments.

The electric light bulb was one of the inventions that Thomas Edison worked on in the late 1870s. He once worked all night to make the first element for the electric light bulb. When Edison was ready to test the element, he gave it to a young boy who was working with him in the lab. The boy dropped the element, causing it to be useless. Edison and his assistants had to spend hours making another element. When it was time to test the element, Edison let the same young boy carry the element.

When Edison's assistants gasped at this selection, Edison said, "Think what would have happened to that boy if he carried with him his entire life the sense of failure from dropping the first element without being given the chance to make good."

Thomas Edison encouraged young people. When he saw something special in a young person, he would always try to bring out the best.

#### **Suggested Activities:**

- Interview your friends or family members to see if they have ever been given a second chance to do something. If so, how did it make them feel?
- In groups of 3- 4, share a time when you didn't do something right the first time but succeeded later. How were you treated when you failed the first time? How did it feel?
- Role play this scene as it happened or when the young boy is much older telling his grandchildren about the incident.
- Discuss/Debate: Should Edison have given the young boy the element to carry in the first place? Why or why not?
- Writing prompts:
  - Point of view: You are Thomas Edison or the young boy. Write about this incident.
  - Write a thank you letter: You were the young boy given a second chance. Thank Mr. Edison for that chance.
  - Why was Edison's decision to give the boy a second chance an example of kindness and compassion?

*\*This sample lesson can be adapted for any grade level/content area including ESOL and ESE. It is correlated with the Sunshine State Standards in Language Arts (L.A.A. 1.2.1, L.A.B.1.2.1. and Social Studies (SS.A 12.1, B.2.2) as well as many other SSS. This is an abbreviated version of this lesson. The complete lesson is available in the curriculum notebook.*

### **THE UNCOMMON FRIENDS FOUNDATION CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The entire notebook of 20 character education lessons/activities is available for purchase (\$35 each) on the Uncommon Friends Foundation website: [uncommonfriends.org](http://uncommonfriends.org)

For more information about the Uncommon Friends Foundation's Character Education Program or training session details, go to: [www.uncommonfriends.org](http://www.uncommonfriends.org) or contact Dr. Patricia Archambault at 337-9504 or [charactered@uncommonfriends.org](mailto:charactered@uncommonfriends.org)