



**PROJECT  
CORNERSTONE**  
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

# GROWING UPSTANDERS

## Asset Building Champions



### BOOK OF THE MONTH

Bellen Woodard's "More Than Peach" is a heartwarming and inspiring true story. In it, a young Bellen notices a common classroom occurrence: when asked for a "skin-color" crayon, her classmates expect the "peach" crayon. Recognizing the limitations of this narrow categorization, Bellen decides to take action. Instead of conforming, she responds with empathy and understanding, stating, "Which one? Skin can be any number of beautiful colors." This simple yet powerful statement sparks a movement in her classroom and beyond, encouraging others to embrace diversity and challenge societal norms. As the president of *Bellen's More Than Peach Project*, she's become the world's first crayon activist. Her project has sparked a global movement, leading to a wider range of skin-tone crayon options and promoting inclusivity and innovation. Bellen's story is a testament to the power of a child's voice and the potential to create positive change.

### AT HOME

To continue the learning at home, caregivers can encourage their students to participate in community service activities, such as volunteering at local organizations or donating to charities. This can help children understand the impact of their actions on others and inspire them to make a difference in their communities. Additionally, caregivers can create a home environment that values kindness, respect, and inclusivity. This can be done through simple acts like using inclusive language, celebrating differences, and encouraging open communication.

By celebrating diversity, encouraging self-expression, and practicing empathy, families can empower their students to understand and respond to the world with social responsibility, kindness, and compassion.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

The young author offers a powerful platform for social-emotional learning. By sharing her personal experience with the limited representation of skin tones in crayons, Bellen encourages readers to think critically about the impact of words and actions. The book highlights the importance of empathy, understanding, and respect for individual differences. Bellen's gentle approach to addressing the issue demonstrates the power of kindness and constructive dialogue. By celebrating diversity in all its forms, the book inspires readers to be inclusive and to challenge stereotypes. Ultimately, "More Than Peach" encourages young readers to use their voices to promote positive change and create a more equitable and compassionate world.

### RESOURCES

- Grades K-1: **"Last Stop on Market Street"** by Matt de la Peña: This heartwarming story highlights the importance of empathy, compassion, and appreciating the beauty in diversity.
- Grades 2-3: **"Frindle"** by Andrew Clements: This humorous novel teaches kids the value of the spoken word and to stand up for what they believe in.
- Grades 4-6: **"The Lemonade War"** by Jacqueline Davies: This novel tells the story of two siblings who compete to see who can raise the most money with their lemonade stands. It highlights the power of entrepreneurship and the importance of perseverance.