

Unit 8

Jahkil Naeem Jackson

Inspired to Help

Jahkil Naeem Jackson went with his family to downtown Chicago. He remembers that cold winter day well. His auntie had made a huge batch of chili. It was for people living on the streets. Jahkil and his cousins handed out warm bowls of chili.

Jahkil was only five years old, but he knew that the people were hurting. He wondered why they were hungry. He saw them sleeping outside in the cold. He wanted to help. He asked his parents if they could buy homes for everyone.

For three years, Jahkil thought about how he could help. He brainstormed ideas with his parents. He talked to them about the things that his family had. He knew people without homes did not always have these things.

Many people take for granted things like toothpaste, toothbrushes, socks, and tissues. People who live on the streets can't always get these things. Jahkil decided to fill bags with supplies to hand out to people.



"Almost every time I see a man in the street, a family in a shelter, a kid in a line waiting for food, I think to myself, that could be me, that could be us. Thinking about folks that way makes it really personal and it's impossible NOT to help."

Blessing Bags

Jahkil decided to fill the bags with basic items. He called them "blessing bags" because he felt that he had been blessed. He had a home and a family. He planned to **distribute** the bags to those who needed them. He wanted to share his blessings with those who were not as lucky.

First, Jahkil asked friends and family to meet him at a local game arcade. He asked them to bring items to put in the blessing bags. He collected wipes, deodorant, granola bars, first-aid items, hand sanitizer, and other **necessities**. Then, Jahkil's family treated everyone to pizza and games. They filled 88 blessing bags that day! Jahkil and his family delivered those bags to people living on the streets in Chicago.



► **necessities**—items that are needed to live

Jahkil Naeem Jackson (cont.)**Spreading the Word**

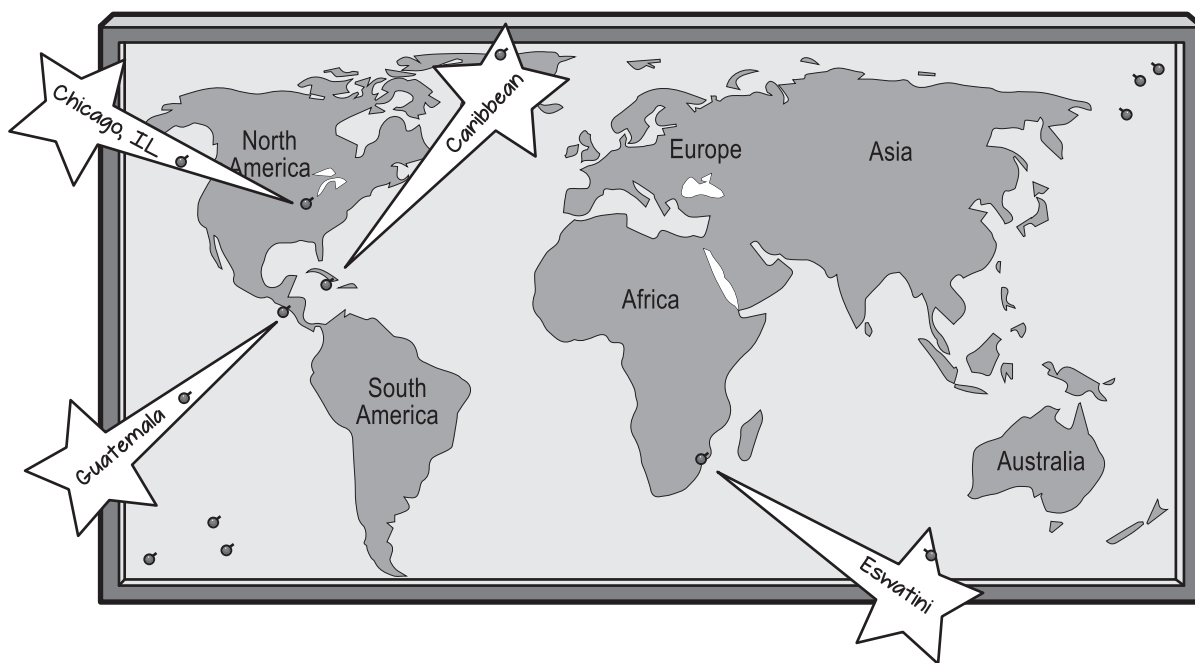
"I don't have the words to describe how it felt to look someone in the eye, give them blessings, and wish them well."

Over time, Jahkil's project grew. His parents helped him create a website. They collected **donations** to buy items for more blessing bags. Jahkil appeared on TV and in newspapers. He asked people to help one another. More donations came in. Schools invited him to speak about his project. Each time he spoke at a school, the students donated items for blessing bags.

➡ **donations**—gifts of money, food, clothes, or time to help people

Today, Jahkil's blessing bags have been distributed in many cities across America. He has also provided blessing bags for:

- orphans in Africa
- volcano victims in Guatemala
- hurricane survivors in the Caribbean islands

**Don't Wait to Be Great!**

Jahkil's work has helped over 50,000 people. He speaks to young people all over the United States. He tells his story. He asks them to look around and see who is in need. He knows that they don't have to wait until they are adults to start helping others. He inspires them with his motto, "Don't wait to be great!"

Unit 8

Name: _____

Date: _____

Key Ideas and Details

Directions: Answer the questions below about Jahkil Naeem Jackson. Use complete sentences.

1. What is the main idea of this text?

2. What inspired Jahkil to help people who live on the streets?

3. Who helped Jahkil with his project?

What are two ways they helped him?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Craft and Structure

Directions: Answer the questions below. Use complete sentences.

1. What does *distribute* mean? Use context clues to help you understand this word.

2. Why do you think the author began the text with the story of Jahkil's family handing out chili?

3. What does the phrase "take for granted" mean?

4. What did the map show you?

Unit 8

Name: _____

Date: _____

Integration of Knowledge and Meaning

Directions: Answer the questions below. Use complete sentences.

1. Jahkil feels that having a home and a family who loves him are blessings. Some people call this good fortune. What do you think are your blessings?

2. Why do you think Jahkil chose to give people necessities like socks and soap instead of food and blankets?

3. If you were filling a blessing bag, what items would you put in it? Why?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Group Discussion



Brainstorming: Think about the problems in your community.

⌘ What problems do you know about?

⌘ How do you know about the problems?

⌘ How could you find out more?

Taking Action

Think about problems you have noticed in your community. Is there trash on the street? Do younger kids need help with homework? Choose a problem and make a plan to help.

Directions: Use this graphic organizer to do research and plan a project.

What is the problem? _____

What is already being done? _____

What can I do to help? _____

What challenges might I face?

What kinds of help might I need?

Who might be able to help?
