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# THE TIN FOREST

Author: Helen Ward

Illustrator: Wayne Anderson

Publisher: Dutton

## THEME:

With caring and support from friends near and far, from people we know and people we don't know, hope and determination can lead us to incredible resiliency even in our darkest moments.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

In this book a lonely, old man who lives in a gray place, surrounded by other people's discards, builds the forest of his dreams. Deeply affected by the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, LeVar spends time with students of P.S. 234, an elementary school just blocks away from Ground Zero. Challenged by tremendous upheaval, students share how they have endured their situation better than anyone would imagine. Together with Reading Rainbow the entire school creates a music video to share their powerful message of gratitude and hope.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

After students have viewed the program, allow some time for talk about what happened on September 11, 2001, and how they feel about the accomplishments of the young people in the episode since that day. Keep the discussion focused on the rebuilding and renewal of both the physical aspects of the environment and of the human spirit, rather than on the tragedy of the events.

Discuss with students what it means to "have hope" or "be hopeful."

Obtain a copy of the book to read to students. Discuss the emotions they experienced as they listened to the story. List their feelings on the board and have them identify parts of the story that made them feel that way. How did they feel at the end of the book? The details in the illustrations are essential to understanding the story. Make the book available to students so they have the opportunity to study the illustrations.

Explore the concept of "dreams" with students—nighttime dreams, day-dreams, and dreams that are hopes for the future. Discuss actions that people might take as a result of having a dream.

Invite students to share experiences they have had with creating something with their own hands.

Discuss ways in which people, animals, and plants are connected to and dependent upon each other.

## CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

At the top of a chart, write the phrase, "Peace is..." and brainstorm ways to complete the definition. Encourage students to think of settings that are very familiar, such as peace at home and at school, and to consider peace more globally. Leave the chart on display for several days so that they have some "think time" for ideas. When the chart is completed, make a "Peace Book" by having each student select an idea from the chart and illustrate it.

The students at P.S. 234 in the program show how important it is to them to be back at their school after the events of September 11. Discuss what it means to have pride in one's school. Ask students what makes their school a great place to be. Write their ideas on the board or on a chart. Have students choose one idea from the list and make an illustrated poster that tells something good about their school. Display the posters around the building.

Have the class collect cardboard product packaging discards in all shapes and sizes (everything from small Jello boxes to larger cereal boxes and soft drink "cubes"), including cardboard rolls. Using a variety of boxes and construction paper, have students make three-dimensional animals. (Encourage them to experiment with their ideas before they begin to glue, staple, or tape parts in place.) Spray the final products with silver paint (a light coating of paint will create the desired effect). Display the class's "tin forest" animals.

For students who have never visited New York City, have them research the city. Enlist the help of the library media specialist in locating books about New York and its landmarks. (Especially useful are *My New York* by Kathy Jakobsen and *The Inside-Outside Book of New York City* by Roxie Munro.) Allow them to browse the books looking for topics to research. (Possible topics include: the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the Empire State Building, Central Park, subways, the United Nations, Broadway, the World Trade Center, the George Washington Bridge, various museums, and others.) Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a topic. The group's task is to locate key facts and a picture. Scan the pictures and display them on a bulletin board along with the facts the students write about their topic. A number of **Reading Rainbow** programs are set, in part, in New York or contain footage of New York locales. Among these programs are the following: *Tar Beach*, *Watch the Stars Come Out*, *The Purple Coat*, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, *The Adventures of Taxi Dog*, *Berlioz the Bear*, and *The Sign Painter's Dream*. (Consult a **Reading Rainbow** video catalog or go online at [readingrainbow.org](http://readingrainbow.org) for additional selections.) View pertinent segments to help student visualize this amazing city.

Extend the discussion of the "Peace is..." definition and have students think about specific ways that people, including children, can promote peace. Have them draw pictures of their bodies (using the full vertical length of 9 x 12-inch

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drawing paper), cut them out, and display them on a wall or in a corridor. Photocopy an enlargement of each student's school picture, and have individuals cut out their faces and place them on the pictures of their bodies. Give students word bubbles on which they can write something they, and others, can do to foster peace. Place the word bubbles above their heads. Label the display, "In a peaceful world,..."

The students at P.S. 234 made a large three-dimensional world map. Use this segment of the video as a springboard for research on continents of the world. Divide the class into seven groups and assign each group one of the continents. Make available several world atlases, globes, and a wall map of the world. Give each group a different color of paper cut in 3 x 5-inch size for students to record facts on. Attach the world map to a bulletin board, and have students tack their fact cards as close to their continent on the map as possible. Because of the size and diversity of the continents, limit the fact-finding to key facts (e.g., Antarctica is covered with ice.) or superlatives (Africa has the world's longest river, the Nile).

**RELATED THEMES:**

ecology  
forest habitats  
perseverance  
memorials  
skyscrapers

**RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:**

Program #82 The Wall  
Program #105 Appelemando's Dream  
Program #116 Fly Away Home  
Program #129 Giving Thanks

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Artist Helen Ward is well known for her illustrations of Mother Goose rhymes and retellings of fables and folktales for young children. About her inspiration for *The Tin Forest*, she stated, "As long as human beings aren't getting in the way, plants and animals seem to take over an environment." Helen makes her home in England.

**ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:**

Wayne Anderson attended Leicester College of Art in England, studying graphic design. He has worked as a freelance illustrator in the field of advertising, animated films, greeting card design, magazine illustration, and poster design. Although he is best known for his illustrations, he has also written several books for children. He and his family reside in England.

**BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:**

MOLE MUSIC  
by David McPhail (Henry Holt)

ON THAT DAY  
by Andrea Patel (Tricycle Press)

THE WONDERFUL HAPPENS  
by Cynthia Rylant, illus. by Coco Dowley (Simon & Schuster)

**SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

SPINNING TALES, WEAVING HOPE: STORIES, STORYTELLING, AND  
ACTIVITIES FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
edited by Ed Brody, et al (New Society)

GLEAM AND GLOW  
by Eve Bunting, illus. by Peter Sylvada (Harcourt)

SADAKO  
by Eleanor Coerr, illus. by Ed Young (Putnam)

FRANKIE WONDERS...WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?  
by Yvonne Conte (Amsterdam-Berwick)

PEACE CRANE  
by Sheila Hamanaka (Morrow)

PEACE TALES: WORLD FOLKTALES TO TALK ABOUT  
by Margaret Read MacDonald (Linnet)

GOIN' SOMEPLACE SPECIAL  
by Patricia McKissick, illus. by Jerry Pinkney (Atheneum)

BASEBALL SAVED US  
by Ken Mochizuki, illus. by Dom Lee (Lee & Low)

MARTIN'S BIG WORDS: THE LIFE OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
by Doreen Rappaport, illus. by Bryan Collier (Jump at the Sun/Hyperion)

WORDS WITH WINGS: A TREASURY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN POETRY  
AND ART  
selected by Belinda Rochelle (HarperCollins)

THE GARDENER  
by Sarah Stewart, illus. by David Small (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

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