Grandparents are our Superheroes: 
Teaching Appreciation of Elders through Art

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Introduction

Images of old age tend to be based on stereotypes and are largely negative with words like wrinkled, nursing home, sick, slow, smelly, and wheelchair. Such images tend to color the way in which youth think about older adults and underlie ageism (ageism is prejudice towards individuals based on their age). The Grandparents are our Superheroes lesson offers students the opportunity to explore their perceptions of older adults and contrast the negative stereotypes with positive images of known older adults, such as their grandparents or neighbors. After reading books and participating in facilitated discussion, the youth will illustrate and write about their appreciation for senior adults. Creating and maintaining a bond with positive elder adults benefits youth in many ways. Seniors can be great mentors, consultants and disciplinarians. They can also provide a sense of cultural heritage and family history.

The goal of this lesson is to strengthen the positive experiences between youth and elders. Both the young (through their artwork and writing) and the old (through viewing the finished project) should benefit from this lesson.

Learning Objectives:

1. The students will learn about other cultures’ appreciation of senior adults.

2. The students will discuss the positive qualities of their grandparents and other senior adults in their lives.

3. The student will express themselves through art, specifically by drawing and painting, by depicting their grandparents as superheroes.

4. The students will practice writing skills by journaling about why their grandparents are super.

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