



**GLOBAL EMPATHY EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM**

**Letter  
from The Lunch Project's Founder  
REBECCA WOFFORD**



In March 2011, I visited a primary school at the base of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, East Africa. I learned that there were many similarities between this school and my children's elementary school in Charlotte, North Carolina. For example, the children attended school for the same amount of time as my children, learned many of the same subjects, and had a loving community supporting them. Yet, there were many differences. There were not many classroom books, chalk was so precious it was kept in a locked box, and there was no lunch program. The children in the Tanzanian school attended school all day with no food - no fuel to learn. We started The Lunch Project's first lunch program at this school, Lemanyata Primary School, in September, 2011.

Upon returning to the U.S. from Tanzania, my son's second grade teacher asked me to give a presentation to the second graders about what I had learned and observed. I did not want them to feel sad for the children in Tanzania - I wanted them to experience the joy and hope I had felt when I was embraced by the Lemanyata school community. The focus of the presentation became how this community was working together to solve a problem; i.e., how the community-sourced lunch program needed everyone's help, including the children's, to make sure lunch was served every day. I included some cute animal photos, with the animal names in Swahili, and showed photos of the beautiful geography of this region.

Our education director brought this simple presentation to another level by adding elements of the culture of the Maasai tribe while emphasizing similarities and differences between the culture of their tribe and our communities. She connected all aspects of the presentation together with the theme that different is not bad; different is just different. Differences are something to celebrate.

After reading several research studies from prestigious universities, we had a better understanding of why our presentations were having such an impact on local kids. We were using what the studies called a "zoomed out" approach to teaching empathy. We were connecting children here to children on the other side of the globe, helping them to better understand their world by cultivating a feeling of "walking in their shoes" without feeling sorry for them. Empathy is the counter to apathy, self-centeredness, and the desire to bully another. Studies also show that it is best to nurture empathy in children before middle school begins.

What started as a presentation in the classroom has grown into a Global Empathy Education Program. Our presentation along with this Empathy Education Curriculum has taken learning empathy to a new level. Thousands of children have experienced global empathy through The Lunch Project's Empathy Education program, and as a result, have expressed a desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves. And, to think, it all started from a simple lunch program.

# The Importance of Empathy

Empathy is increasingly being regarded as a critical skillset in school and in the workplace where diversity is becoming more commonplace in the growing global economy. Empathy is essential for collaboration, leadership, and relationships, as well as emotional and social wellbeing. The benefits of empathy education not only improve classroom culture, but also the culture of our communities.

The Lunch Project's Empathy Education Program uniquely fosters empathy and cultivates compassion in children by connecting them to their peers in Africa. The students learn about Tanzania, the Maasai culture, and The Lunch Project's Lunch Program through an engaging and interactive classroom presentation. The Lunch Project's literacy focused Global Empathy Education Curriculum takes learning empathy to a new level by integrating common-core subjects into lessons that foster empathy.

**“Empathy is the soul of democracy. It is an acknowledgment that each life is unique, unalienable, and deserving of equal consideration in the public square.”**

**Jeremy Rifkin, author of The Empathetic Civilization.**

**For additional reading on the benefits of Empathy Education, please see the following articles:**

- Empathy is the Future Trend in Education, <https://hundred.org/en/media/empathy-is-the-future-trend-in-education>
- How Empathy Affects Learning, And How To Cultivate It In Your Students, By Saga Briggs, <https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/empathy-and-learning/>
- Empathy in the Classroom: Why Should I Care, by Lauren Owen, <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/empathy-classroom-why-should-i-care-lauren-owen>
- Building Empathy In Classrooms and Schools, By Brianna Crowley & Barry Saide, <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2016/01/20/building-empathy-in-classrooms-and-schools.html>

## GOAL 1: Increase Empathy

- 1A-Consider the perspective of others and share own perspective
- 1B-Demonstrate a concern for others locally and globally
- 1C-Acknowledge similarities and differences of other cultures and find connections
- 1D-Develop a curiosity about cultural differences by generating questions
- 1E-Participate in experiential empathy by interacting with cultural artifacts
- 1F-Define empathy in own words and give a relevant example

## GOAL 2: Understand The Benefits Of Sustainable Community Development

- 2A-Use compassion as a tool to build sustainable change
- 2B-Recognize the importance of cultural respect in the context of sustainable community development
- 2C-Explain how problem solving is most effective when members of the affected community find their own solutions
- 2D-Acknowledge and appreciate the importance and value of education
- 2E-Summarize the TLP approach to empowering communities

## GOAL 3: Develop Confidence In An Individual's Ability To Make Change

- 3A-Describe TLP's approach of ways that individuals can help make changes locally and globally
- 3B-Make a connection to TLP's approach to the classroom and community
- 3C-Demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges
- 3D-Express ways that individuals can change THEIR WORLD and THE WORLD
- 3E-Express ways that they feel personally empowered for making changes in their daily life

## GOAL 4: Develop Cultural Competence

- 4A-Share awareness of own culture, acknowledge and respect differences, and examine attitudes about differences
- 4B-Show increased knowledge of Maasai Culture
- 4C-Compare and contrast cultural differences in language (Swahili vs. English vs. Maa)
- 4D-Recognize and describe facts about: geography, biodiversity, climate, ecology and environmentalism in Tanzania

The Curriculum Design information was written by The Lunch Project's Global Empathy Education Curriculum Author, Tosha Arriola, M.Ed., Director of Teaching Fellows Program at Queen University.



## Curriculum Design

Universal Design for Learning, or UDL, and Differentiated Instruction give an engaging alternative to a standardized, “one size fits all” model of education. I created this empathy education curriculum using these methods so that the curriculum would be able to be used in a variety of educational settings. It is based on the premise that teachers need to “teach every student” where they are. UDL and differentiation encourage instructors to provide all learners with multiple pathways to success.

In the context of education, we define differentiation as a teacher's responsiveness to a learner's needs. When differentiating, teachers understand that a student's need to express themselves, sometimes work with a group and sometime on their own, and occasionally have additional teaching on a particular skill all play a role in their lesson planning. Differentiation provides a variety of activities, assessments, and strategies for meeting the diverse learning needs of the students rather than teaching the class as though all individuals in it were alike.

Students come from multiple cultures, have different strengths, interests, and learning preferences. Students with very advanced learning skills need a challenge while students who struggle need extra support. All these students have the right to expect teachers who are ready to meet the students as they are and I wrote this curriculum with this framework and methodology in mind. I wanted to give the teachers a variety of activities and integration ideas so that they can adapt the lessons to meet their students' needs and interests. I included activities that meet multiple intelligences, kinesthetic, visual and auditory learning styles, project based learning, and experiential learning activities throughout the curriculum. By designing the content of the curriculum to align with literacy and social studies, it gives teachers the flexibility to use the lessons during their literacy block or social studies class. When it was appropriate, I integrated the lessons into the other subject areas like math, science, and art.

Differentiation of the content, products, and processes were incorporated in the lessons so that teachers can select the activities that align with their learners' interests, skills, and learning styles. By giving students autonomy in selecting the activities that they do, it can increase their motivation and willingness to complete the activities with creativity and passion. It also allows teachers to scaffold their learning by assigning higher level thinking activities to students that may be identified as gifted or talented and easier activities for struggling students.

For more information:

<https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2014/fall/kelly>

<http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesDI/Brochures/DIBrochureOct08.pdf>

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100216/chapters/Understanding-Differentiated-Instruction@-Building-a-Foundation-for-Leadership.aspx>

em·pa·thy: (ˈempəTHē/) *noun*

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

## Instructional Implementation of The Lunch Project's Empathy Education Curriculum

Welcome to our innovative and impactful way to teach the important life-skill of empathy.

This curriculum was formulated to be used in conjunction with ***The Lunch Project's*** empathy education classroom presentation which is the catalyst for this work and will be used as an introductory "hook" to get the students excited about the curriculum. Teachers can use this curriculum as an interdisciplinary method to **integrate character and values** while interweaving them with **common core literacy standards and social studies content**.

Empathy education is a transformative tool that can be used in classrooms to not only improve the classroom climate and civility but to also incorporate cultural knowledge in the content areas. By learning about others and making global connections, we allow our students to read, write, learn, and work collaboratively across disciplinary boundaries.

This empathy education curriculum is literacy based which allows teachers the flexibility to use the read aloud book from each lesson in any part of their literacy block. Special care was taken to make sure that a **variety of learning styles and multiple intelligences** were addressed in the lessons so that teachers have multiple options to differentiate their instruction. This curriculum **also highlights 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including communication, collaboration, and critical thinking**. The **culminating project-based learning component** allows students to collaborate in small groups while solving a real-world problem with a service learning lens.

Some teachers teach one lesson a week for five weeks during their literacy block and allow the differentiation or multiple intelligence activities to expand the options during centers. Other teachers allow their students to choose which activities in the extension or connection portion of the lesson they would like to complete to add more depth and rigor to their learning. Many teachers wait until their social studies time to teach the cultural components of the social studies curriculum with these lessons. Some may choose to reserve this curriculum towards the end of the year after end of grade testing is complete to keep students engaged, attentive, and motivated to continue learning. Students feel empowered as they learn about how they can make a difference in the world through the activities presented in the lessons. This curriculum does not need to be taught in any specific order and each lesson can be a standalone lesson which allows teachers the flexibility to teach this when they have time.

We would love to hear about how you taught this curriculum and opened the minds and hearts of your students. We will send teacher and student surveys for you to complete and return to [education@thelunchproject.org](mailto:education@thelunchproject.org).

Sincerely,  
**The Lunch Project**

[www.thelunchproject.org](http://www.thelunchproject.org)

The Lunch Project's Global Empathy Education Curriculum ©  
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North Carolina  
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## Topic: Empathy (3-5)

Students will be able to understand and share the concerns and feelings of others on a local and global level while demonstrating compassion.



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## Essential Learning Targets:

### GOAL 1: Increase Empathy

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### GOAL 4: Develop Cultural Competence

- 4A-Share awareness of own culture, acknowledge and respect differences, and examine attitudes about differences
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### Essential Question(s):

What cultural facts did you learn about the Maasai warriors?  
What impact did their act of compassion have in the world?  
How can you show empathy and be empowered?

### Materials:

Book, Technology for videos, Copies of worksheets and activities from online resources

## Standards:

### SOCIAL STUDIES:

- 3. C.1.1 Compare languages, foods and traditions of various groups living in local and regional communities.
- 4. C.1.1 Explain how the settlement of people from various cultures affected the development of regions in North Carolina (languages, foods and traditions).
- 5. C.1.4 Understand how cultural narratives (legends, songs, ballads, games, folk tales and art forms) reflect the lifestyles, beliefs and struggles of diverse ethnic groups.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7

Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7

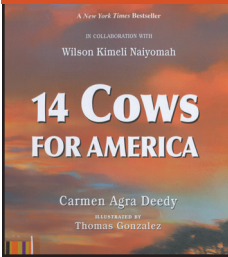
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7

Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.



## Synopsis

The Maasai people give the American people a gift that comes from their heart to help them heal after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. This book shares a story of how empathy can cross borders and cultures and is a testament to how interconnected we all are.

## 14 Cows for America

Author: **Carmen Agra Deedy**

Illustrated by: **Thomas Gonzalez**

**Theme:** African Serengeti, Tanzania, Maasai warriors, terrorism, compassion, & culture

### Lesson Procedures: (45 minutes not including extension activities)

1. Ask the students to define the word **empathy** in their own words. Then watch the following short video to give the students some additional ways to think about the concept:” Empathy Can Change the World” [2:23] <http://bit.ly/EmpathyCanChangeTheWorld>
2. Before reading the story, have students look at the cover, think about the title, and make a prediction about what they think the book is about.
3. Read aloud 14 Cows for America. Afterwards ask students: What does the author tell us about how the Maasai treat their cows (give 3 examples)? Why are cows so valuable in their culture? What is the theme of this story? Have students answer the comprehension questions. (Resource A)
4. Ask students to make a connection between how the Maasai showed empathy and the way that **The Lunch Project** shows empathy. Have the class create a list of ways that they can show empathy and compassion in their home, school, and community. Choose one way to show empathy from the list generated and draw a picture to show what it would look like, feel like, and sound like to show empathy in that way. Create a caption for the picture. Create a class compassion Bulletin Board. (Resource B)
5. Explain that putting yourself in someone else’s shoes (situation) is called empathy. Learning about Maasai kids just like you helps to develop your empathy, or your ability to identify what another person is feeling. Ask students to give examples of how they show empathy in their family and in the classroom. How does **The Lunch Project** show empathy? Ask students to make a connection between how the students show empathy and the way that **The Lunch Project** shows empathy. Have the class create a list of ways that they can show empathy in their home, school, and community.
6. What is the difference between empathy and sympathy? Watch this video to find out: “The Difference between Empathy and Sympathy” - Brené Brown [1:05] <http://bit.ly/EmpathyvsSympathy>. Think about how you can empathize instead of sympathize in situations. Turn and talk to a partner to share your idea.



### Heart of the Matter/ Presentation Tie-in

In The Lunch Project’s presentation we saw that the Maasai have a unique culture that is very old and very different than ours. Women dress in beads and brightly colored kangas. Maasai men are called Warriors, but their culture believes deeply in peace.

The culture of the Maasai is respected and preserved by 1-3 million Maasai in East Africa who live a traditional lifestyle, including no running water or electricity. At the same time, there are some Maasai who incorporate Western ways into their lifestyle. Going to school brings new ideas into an ancient culture.

**In 14 Cows For America we will read about a Warrior who brings a story of the West into his village and how the Maasai react with empathy, but within the context of their own culture.**

### Empathy Development Discussion

Empathy is different than sympathy, or feeling sorry for someone.

Empathy is feeling **with** someone, understanding how they feel by thinking about times you’ve felt the same. Empathy creates a connection, while sympathy sets us apart.

The kids who are helped by The Lunch Project have a lot less than we do, but giving them sympathy sets us apart. Having empathy for them shows we care by finding the ways we are the same.

Discuss:  
How can more empathy help the world? How can more empathy help your classroom?

### Empathy Education Exercise

Count off by 6. Assign each numbered group a feeling – delighted, upset, intrigued, alarmed, playful, curious. Feel free to add your own feelings, especially those seen frequently in your class.

Have each student imagine themselves as a Maasai child their own age. Draw a picture of a situation where they would feel their assigned feeling if they were Maasai. Suggest they add details from things learned in The Lunch Project’s presentation (round houses, brightly colored clothes, tire shoes, cooking fires).

If time allows, get in random groups. Have students show and describe their picture. Have others guess what the assigned feeling was.

## Differentiation/Multiple Intelligences:

Students can choose one of the following activities:

- Write a script as if you were a news reporter covering this event. Have someone videotape you reading your script using the iPad.
- Paired Text Activity : Note-teachers will need to create a FREE account to use these materials

<http://bit.ly/readworksactivity>

## Assessments:

### Formative Assessment:

Students can accurately answer discussion questions and the essential questions. Make connections between cultures.

### Summative Assessments:

Multiple Choice Questions

### Worksheet Answers:

1-B, 2-B, 3-C, 4-A, 5-D.  
(6-12) answers may vary.

## Extensions/Connections:

### Social Studies Integration:

Complete the Africa Map Activity, Cinquain Poem, and Cow is Life Activity from the link below:  
<http://bit.ly/TeacherGuide14Cows>

Listen to Kimeli pronounce words and phrases in the Maasai 's native language Ma:  
<http://bit.ly/PronounceMa>

Practice repeating the words.

### Art Integration:

Create your own cattle brand or symbol to represent your city, school, family and you. (Activity 4 from link below)  
<http://bit.ly/TeacherGuide14Cows>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Questions

Choose the best answer for each question about 14 Cows for America.

1. What could be another title for this book?
  - a. The Maasai Need Cows
  - b. How the Maasai Shared Their Heart Across the Globe
  - c. The Boy Came Home
  - d. What Cows Need to Live
  
2. What does the phrase “The Cow is Life” mean?
  - a. Living life with cows can be fun.
  - b. Without cattle, the Maasai would not survive.
  - c. He read about it in a book.
  - d. He gives up.
  
3. Who is telling the story?
  - a. Kimeli
  - b. The elders
  - c. The narrator
  - d. U.S. diplomat
  
4. Which best describes the setting of the story?
  - a. A small village in Kenya
  - b. A beach town
  - c. A busy city
  - d. A rural community in Ireland
  
5. What word best describes the Maasai people?
  - a. Selfish
  - b. Stressed
  - c. Feared
  - d. Peaceful

6. Why did the Maasai decide to give cows to America?

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7. How do you think the United States would have responded if an event like 9/11 happened in Kenya?

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8. How do the Maasai greet the American diplomat?

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11. At the end of the story, there is a note from Kimeli. What caused the ambassador to cry?

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12. How has the Maasai's gift been symbolized in the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center in New York City?

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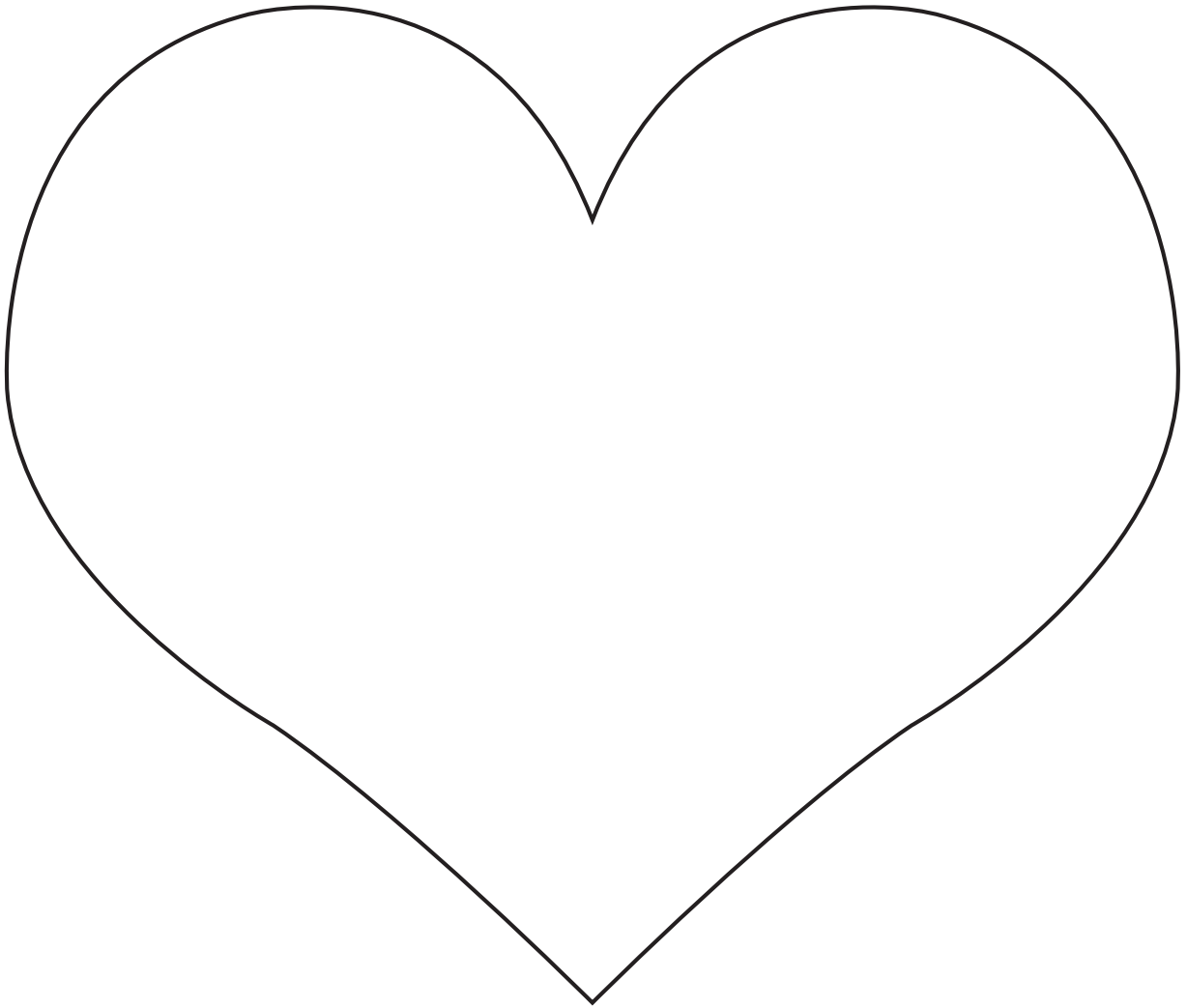
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Resource B: Empathy Activity

Discuss the difference between empathy and sympathy with a partner. Choose one way that you can show empathy and draw a picture inside the heart to show what it would look like, feel like, and sound like to show empathy and compassion in that way. Create a caption for the picture below.



**Caption:**

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# Glossary

## Working Definitions for Empathy Education Curriculum

- **Empathy** – The ability to imagine and connect with what another person is experiencing and feeling.
- **Sustainable Community Development** - Empowering community groups to problem-solve within their own cultural context with long-term solutions as the end goal.
- **TLP Model for Sustainable Community Development**

The TLP model has 4 equal parts

Farmers selling locally grown food to <b>The Lunch Project</b>	Mamas earning a living wage to cook healthy, traditional lunches for students
Kids in Tanzania contributing wood and water for the kitchen and working to be successful students	Kids in America raising funds and awareness for their peers in Tanzania to have the fuel to learn

The Lunch Project recognizes that each of these parts is vital. Each person - children and adults alike - understanding their equal significance in the process develops empathy and empowers everyone involved to be culturally-sensitive change-makers.

# Acknowledgments

The Lunch Project's Global Empathy Education Curriculum was created thanks to numerous people including Tosha Arriola, Sarah Morgan, Lecia Shockley, and others.


**Tosha Arriola** is an instructor at the Cato School of Education at Queens University of Charlotte. She is also the Director of the Teaching Fellows Program, where she supervises leadership and community service projects to enrich the students' educational experiences.

Tosha taught for fifteen years in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district and also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Costa Rica early in her career. She received her B.A. in Spanish and Education from SUNY Cortland and her M. Ed. in Literacy from Queens University. She has a certificate in Executive Coaching and has recently completed a Master's in Science in Organization Development at Queens University of Charlotte.


Tosha's most recent awards include:

- Leadership in Education Award: Queens University of Charlotte, 2016
- Outstanding Female Faculty Award: Black Student Union, Queens University, 2016
- Excellence in Teaching Award: National Society of Leadership and Success, 2015
- MeckEd Teacher of Excellence: Charlotte Mecklenburg, 2014

We are so grateful for Tosha's contributions of time, expertise, and dedication to The Lunch Project's Empathy Education program.



A special thank you to **Sarah Morgan** whose experience and expertise with the initial experiential classroom presentation was the springboard and foundation for this curriculum. Her Heart of the Matter tie-ins are an integral part of bringing empathy into the classroom through this curriculum.



We would also like to thank **Lecia Shockley**, CMS Teacher of the Year, whose real-world approach to education at Selwyn Elementary School provided an invaluable perspective that ensured this curriculum would easily resonate with teachers and students and have a lasting effect.



The Lunch Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and could not exist without the generous support of donors. **We would especially like to thank the Reemprise Fund** for its contributions to the creation of this curriculum.

Have additional curriculum ideas?

We would love to hear from you. Please email [education@thelunchproject.org](mailto:education@thelunchproject.org)

**TheLunchProject.org**