

Anti-Gang/ Anti-Bullying Lesson Plans  
From:

## *Testimony*

*Exhibit by Deneen Coleman-Ruff*

*The Parthenon – West Gallery*  
*November 20, 2010 – March 5, 2011*  
DeeGee Lester, Education Director



Self-taught Nashville artist Deneen Coleman-Ruff uses her own experience of domestic abuse, cancer, homelessness, divorce, and single parenting to create powerful works of art. As she has overcome immense obstacles, Coleman-Ruff's faith and art have been her salvation. On display are nine works on paper and a quilt entitled *The Choice is Yours*. The quilt is an expression of her hurt and anger concerning gang violence and is divided into three sections:

**The Quilt Center** section depicts the consequences of violence associated with gang life, featuring a mourning mother, dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief that the artist incorporated into the quilt.

**The Second Section** bordering the grieving mother's image is composed of bandanas representing gang colors.

**The Outer Section** is comprised of blocks featuring Bible verses and words of encouragement to young people.

Coleman-Ruff's use of textile for commentary not only provides a powerful and memorable image, but also suggests the protection of a child through the warmth and safety of a quilt.

### *How teachers can use this exhibit as a powerful teaching tool.*

In their efforts to create caring school climates, school districts around the country have joined forces with neighborhoods, Juvenile Justice Departments, Police Departments, and non-profits to counter bullying and gang activity. For example, the Elementary Oversight Committee of Metro/Davidson County Schools' Alignment Nashville created the *Character Education Resource Guide* which ties teachers/students to community resources in helping students to build the character traits of respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, honesty, trustworthiness, and citizenship. On-line copies of the resource guide can be downloaded at <http://alignmentnashville.org/results> and scrolling down to the Character Education Resource Guide.

Likewise, exhibits such as *Testimony* at the Parthenon, can have dramatic, visual impact and provide teachers an opportunity to address the topics of gangs and bullying through post-visit class discussion and activities:

***Bullying defined:  
Exposing another person to either verbal  
or physical harm; or threatening to harm  
another person with the purpose of  
controlling the other person's thoughts  
and/or actions***

- ***What Doc Holliday said: (Middle School level)***

Thinking about the center section of the exhibit quilt and the impact of gang activity upon families and communities, ask the class to reflect upon the following conversation from the 1993 movie, *Tombstone*, between Wyatt Earp (played by Kurt Russell) and Doc Holliday (played by Val Kilmer) about cowboy gang leader Johnny Ringo:

**Wyatt Earp:** What makes a man like Ringo, Doc? What makes him do the things he does?

**Doc Holliday:** A man like Ringo has got a great big hole, right in the middle of him. He can never kill enough, or steal enough, or inflict enough pain to ever fill it.

**Wyatt:** What does he need?

**Doc:** Revenge.

**Wyatt:** For what?

**Doc:** Being born.

What do students see as the root cause of bullying and violence? What is the role of the school and students in creating a positive, caring environment for all students?

### ***Class Discussion – “Making a Choice” (Elementary and Middle School level)***

We all make choices. The choices we make steer the course of our life, and each choice, big and small, moves us closer to or further from our goals. Often, it is a small, seemingly insignificant move or a one moment decision that alters our life forever. What is it that bullies or gang members are looking for?

- respect
- a sense of belonging
- the chance to be a leader
- the feeling of being “in control” of the world in which they live
- a sense of “belonging” and “family”
- the security that someone “has your back”
- a desire for something “bigger than themselves”
- ties to heritage
- being “cool”

Taking these words and phrases, ask students to brainstorm and describe other “choices” or directions in life that supply these same needs.

### ***Making a Statement: (Elementary and Middle School level)***

#### ***Suggested class activities include:***

- **Create a statement quilt.** Students in a class or at a grade level, each create a 6” x 6” square for construction of their own anti-bullying, anti-gang quilt. For historical information about quilts as well as detailed lesson plans for constructing a quilt, visit [www.museums.state.ak.us/QuiltExhibit/quiltspdf/Crazy.pdf](http://www.museums.state.ak.us/QuiltExhibit/quiltspdf/Crazy.pdf). This site provides historical context, a discussion on design elements, an opportunity for kids to compare designs, and instructions for making a quilt.
- ***Other artistic options include:*** making posters or a wall mural.
- ***Language Arts: consider the problems from another perspective:*** Compose a “letter to my son or daughter” from the viewpoint of a mother grieving over her fears that her child is involved in bullying or gang activity.

***Resources:***

- **Metro Police Gang Unit, Lt. Gordon Howey – 615-782-3301**
- [www.nationalgangcenter.gov](http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov) provides resources, publications, statistics, etc.
- [www.ojjdp.gov/](http://www.ojjdp.gov/) . Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention's comprehensive anti-gang initiative provides great resources and information.
- [www.theoceancountylibrary.org/Link2Topic/gangs.htm](http://www.theoceancountylibrary.org/Link2Topic/gangs.htm). Site for NJ/NY which includes resources for parents such as a Quick Reference Card in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
- Day of Kindness, San Francisco United School District:  
[http://portal.sfusd.edu/data/school\\_health/ES\\_Lesson\\_Plan.pdf](http://portal.sfusd.edu/data/school_health/ES_Lesson_Plan.pdf). Includes 5 page lesson plan.
- [http://pathwayscourse.samhsa.gov/bully/bully\\_intro\\_pg1.htm](http://pathwayscourse.samhsa.gov/bully/bully_intro_pg1.htm). On-line training course by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Includes the ABCs of Bullying: Addressing, Blocking, and Curbing School Aggression.
- [www.drthrockmorton.com/respectthefacts/documents/bullyingprevention.pdf](http://www.drthrockmorton.com/respectthefacts/documents/bullyingprevention.pdf). 24 page document addressing Middle School bullying, use of children's literature as teaching tool, etc.
- **Additional information is available from your local police or sheriff's office or your School Resource Officer about the GREAT (Gang Resistance Education And Training) program.**

***Important Note on Internet Searches:***

**Be aware that that entering gang names in an Internet search engine may bring you to a gang's recruitment site.**

