

The Little Girl Who Spoke with Trees

A story of stewardship:

When we take care of nature, it will take care of us

*SEL 5 and Character Strengths of
Citizenship and Ethical, Responsible, Decision Making*

This story has 3 main points:

- **Connect to Earth Day with a culturally responsive story based on Native American and other indigenous people's view of Nature and their model of citizenship.**
- **Learn that engaged citizens make responsible, ethical decisions.**
- **Understand what servant leadership means, and specifically recognize and nurture the leadership abilities of girls (not excluding boys – just highlighting our girls!)**

Through the story, we learn that all life is connected.

We can close our eyes and feel the world around us, the breeze on our cheeks, the warmth or coolness, rain and snow. We can hear the sounds of nature, of birds, trees rustling in the wind, animals (even our pets) and learn to be in tune with nature.

Explore how we make ethical, responsible decisions leading to engaged citizenship.

The basis of good Citizenship is feeling connected to everyone and all nature, feeling responsible for those around us, then accepting the rules/laws of the school, community, country, and world you live in. Decisions made with "7 generations" in mind is a key example and grows out of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Understand the importance of servant leadership, specifically recognizing and nurturing the leadership abilities of girls. The essence of servant leadership is being able to listen to the stories around you, and then direct your community members so everyone benefits. Having a girl as the protagonist should serve to inspire our young ladies to reach for the stars.

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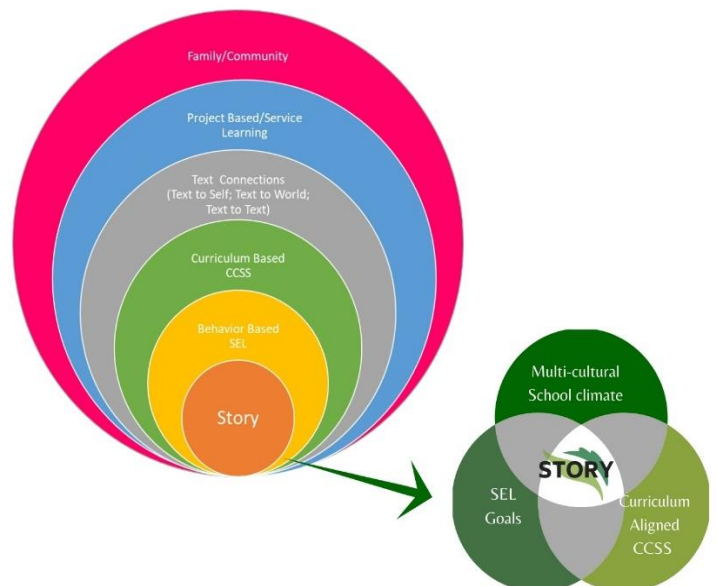
Ralph Singh, our Founder, Chair and Chief Story-teller is an author, educator, and community builder who believes the modern world has lost its stories. As a recognized partner of the Fetzer Institute (the original funder of Daniel Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence research, and convener and funder of CASEL) Wisdom Thinkers helps children find their story, then go out and change the story of the world, using his award-winning multi-cultural wisdom stories for k-8 and “Change the Story, a game to Alter Reality,” enquiry based projects, endorsed by Harvard’s Dr. Richard Weissbourd. To help build more welcoming, inclusive communities, he leads “Changing the Story, from Intolerance to Inclusion”. Ralph has presented at Character.org (CEP), and the Association for Moral Education in including their joint conference with Harvard and the Tisch School on “Civic engagement: A cultural revolution?” He has authored or edited five books, including his own stories at Baba Virsa Singh Ji’s feet, *A Path to Follow*, *A Life to Lead*. His blogs and articles have been featured in Character.org, CSEE.org, Huffington Post, on social media, and in local papers. He is a graduate of The Gunnery, received his degree in Japanese Area Studies from the University of Rochester, and maintains a lifelong study/practice of meditation and spiritual traditions. A proud 4th generation Central New Yorker. [Full bio.](#)



Elizabeth (Betsy) Conners served as an educator in the Fulton City School District for 34 years. She taught Kindergarten for 13 years, was an elementary principal for 5 years, and was the Executive Director of Instruction and Assessment for just over 15 years. She also serves as an adjunct professor in the Education Administration Program at LeMoyne College in Syracuse. She also works as a consultant for PLC Associates, Inc.. Currently, Betsy works as the professional development specialist and program implementation coordinator for Wisdom Thinkers. Betsy has worked with Ralph for many years to implement the stories throughout central New York. In 2017, she received the Academy for Character Education - Champion of Character – Character Education Youth Advocate Award. Betsy resides in Central New York with her husband Mike and son Tim.

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