



# Personal Responsibility

## ABOUT MORNINGSIDE CENTER

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility's evidence-validated programs engage young people in learning essential social and emotional skills and help educators build productive and respectful schools. The 4Rs Program combines superior children's books with engaging SEL activities that explore community, feelings, relationships, conflict, and problem-solving, adding depth to literacy instruction.

# Community Building Machines

By: The 4Rs



## Community Building Machines

### Note to the teacher:

*Community Building Machines* is an excerpt from The 4Rs™ [Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution] *Teaching Guide for Grade 4*, Unit 1, Building Community, p. 9.

The book selection for this unit is *Alejandro's Gift* by Richard E. Albert.

**Time:** 1 or 2 45-minute periods

**Materials:** chalk board and chalk; building materials (cardboard, wood scraps, empty paper towel rolls, etc. see more comprehensive list below)

To create community in the desert, Alejandro had to build machines to create and maintain the waterhole for the animals.

To create a learning community in our classroom, we face a host of different challenges. What needs must we address to create community in the classroom? What can get in the way?

On the board, make two columns, one to list needs and the other to list things that can get in the way. Elicit ideas from the students. Your chart might look something like this:

<u>Needs</u>	<u>What can get in the way</u>
Safety	Teasing
Shelter	Fighting
Food	Bullying
Books	Put downs
Paper	Noise
Pencils	
Desks	
Chairs	
Rules	
Teachers	



## Community Building Machines

Divide the class into groups of four and ask each group to build an imaginary machine that will address the challenges to creating the kind of community we want, much as Alejandro built a well. They can use construction materials\* (cardboard, wood scraps, empty paper towel rolls, empty boxes, Popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, etc.) to create imaginary machines to take care of the problems they have identified.

For instance, a group could create a “Putdown Interceptor” that zaps put-downs out of the air before they reach the ears of their targets; or a group could create an Affirmation Button Machine, which gives you a button to wear every time you do something helpful or worthwhile.

Once their machines are done, the groups should think of names for their machines and posters to advertise them.

Have each group presents its machine to the class.

*\* If construction materials are not available, the students can simply design the machine and make a drawing of it.*

*The 4Rs™ Program combines superior children’s books with engaging SEL activities that explore community, feelings, relationships, conflict, problem-solving and diversity, and adds depth to literacy instruction.*