ACTIVITIES FOR "ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE"

THEME: *Can the planet feed us? Or are there just too many people? Tom Chapin's song "Enough For Everyone" tells us that we can feed everyone. So why are so many people in the United States and around the world going hungry?*

THE PROBLEM: Enough food is grown to feed the population. But the food is often in the wrong place, or unaffordable, or can't be stored long enough. So making sure everyone has enough to eat is more about politics than science. There's not one simple answer that will solve the problem; this will require the participation and cooperation of governments around the world. Meanwhile, there's a lot that each of us can do to help.

HAVE A FOOD DRIVE: Find a local soup kitchen or food pantry, and see what items they especially need. Print out sheets with this information, and hand them out. Talk to your local supermarket, and see if they will let you set up a table outside their door. Or do the same at a local sports event - anyplace where a big crowd will gather. Set up a date and time for your food drive, and get the word out. Tell the newspaper and radio station that your school will be collecting food.

PLANT A GARDEN: Fresh vegetables are very expensive to buy in the supermarket, but it's relatively inexpensive to start a vegetable garden. Plant some seeds or seedlings, water them and take care of them until they are ready to harvest. You will probably find you grow more than you can eat before it gets rotten. Perhaps you can find a family in need that you can share your excess crop with. If not, contact a local soup kitchen who will be glad to receive your donation of fresh food. If enough people or communities get involved with a project like this, it can make a big difference right in your own neighborhood.

CONTACT LOCAL BUSINESSES: A lot of perfectly good food gets thrown away. Contact or visit your local restaurants, bakeries, supermarkets and farmer's markets. What do they do with leftover or perishable food? You will be very surprised to discover that much of that food is thrown away (the current estimate is that 40 percent of the world's food is thrown out each year). Write a letter or visit to suggest to them that they donate food with a limited shelf life to a local food pantry, or to individual families.

SUPPORT NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS: There are non-profit organizations like Heifer International that provide animals to families which allow them to feed their families and support themselves. Visit their website at www.heifer.org for downloadable resources. Read Beatrice's Goat to your class. Talk about how the gift of various animals could help an impoverished family. Groups such as ActionAid (www.actionaid.org) work on long term solutions to the hunger problem, while providing immediate assistance to people in need. Some groups teach families to farm and help them start local gardens. Other organizations like Unicef help bring water to areas suffering from drought or unsanitary conditions. Your class can research various groups, organize a fundraiser, and donate the proceeds to their favorite group.

CONTACT THE POLITICIANS: Write to your local representatives. Let them know that kids care about people having enough food to eat. Ask them what they are doing to address this issue.

MATHEMATICS - CORNY GAME: Put corn kernels in a covered jar. Have the students examine the jar and guess how many kernels are in the jar. Spill out the kernels and count them into groups of ten. How many groups of ten are in the jar? How many total kernels were in the jar, and who had the closest guess? If the kernels were divided equally, how many would each child get? For a special treat, pop the kernels and share a big bowl of popcorn at snack time.

RELATED LITERATURE:
Beatrice's Goat / Page McBrier
The Good Garden: How One Family Went from Hunger to Having Enough / Katie Smith Milway
Mama Panya's Pancakes / Mary Chamberlin

MATH GAME - PIE PUZZLES: Print nine copies of this blueberry pie on plain paper. Cut out each pie and paste onto a paper plate. Divide each pie into a different number of equal slices, from two to ten, and cut out the slices. Write the corresponding fraction on the back of each slice. Have the class experiment with the puzzles, and see how many ways they can create a full pie by mixing the puzzles. Write down the results. Six sixths will make a whole pie, but so does three sixths and [plus] one half, two sixths plus two thirds, and so on. Introduce the concept of prime numbers in higher grades.