



COLORADO

State Patrol

Department of Public Safety

## Safety Corner

Topic: Make a Difference

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**Learning Objective:** Students will learn how George Washington Carver made a difference and how students can make a difference in their communities and/or state.

### Vocabulary:

agriculture: the science or practice of farming

botanist: an expert in the scientific study of plants

Writing a hand-written letter is almost a lost art. There was a time when that was the way most people communicated with someone who did not live close by. People wrote letters for casual reasons, like saying hello, or for important matters they wanted to memorialize in a letter. The receivers often treasured the letters and kept them to read and re-read over and over again.

Today some of the most important documents we have in museums are letters written by people that someone saved. These letters often give insight into events that were happening during the writer's lifetime. As a nation, we treasure those letters.

The following is an excerpt from a letter that was written long ago to share with you today. It was originally written in 1922 by a researcher, inventor, botanist, and college professor. He wrote the letter to his students. What do you think he wanted to say to them that was so important he chose to write it down?



His letter is below:

"I hope each of my children will rise to the full height of your possibilities, which means the possession of these eight cardinal virtues which constitutes a lady or a gentleman.

Be one who:

- Is clean on both the inside and outside.
- Neither looks up to the rich or down on the poor.
- Loses, if needs be, without squealing.
- Wins without bragging.
- Is always considerate of women, children, and old people.
- Is too brave to lie.
- Is too generous to cheat.
- Takes his share of the world and lets other people have theirs.

Peace, prosperity be yours through life.

Lovingly yours,  
G.W. Carver"

You might notice that Carver considered his students like member of his own family - his children. That is not uncommon for teachers.

Why do you think Carver thought these things were important?



G.W. Carver was George Washington Carver, an American scientist and botanist who earned a bachelor's and master's degree from Iowa State Agricultural College. George loved studying plants and soon was offered a position teaching college at Tuskegee University in Alabama.

As a citizen there, he helped all the communities surrounding the University through his research on plants. Carver helped the farmers to be more successful with their work and revolutionized agriculture through his inventions of hundreds of products using peanuts, soybeans, and sweet potatoes.

His list of inventions includes food products, cosmetics, paints, dyes, medicines, beverages, and household products. He became known throughout all the surrounding counties as "the farmer's best friend."

Many important people and dignitaries consulted Carver about agricultural matters - the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt; automaker, Henry Ford; and Mahatma Gandhi from India, to name a few. Carver was also a humble person who refused to patent his inventions because he felt they should be free to everyone.

George Washington Carver made a difference in his community using the things in which he was interested- plants, the talents he had, and the virtues he held dear. There is now a national park named after him in Missouri where he was born.

You have the ability to make a difference in your community too. It is never too early to begin to identify the talents you have, the things you are interested in, or the values you hold that can help you make a difference in your community.

There is a handout that can help you think about that and write down your ideas. Reflect on the following:

- 1) the talents and skills you have
- 2) the things or topics you are interested in
- 3) the values you believe are important.



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There are many important issues facing Coloradans that you may be able to help us solve, even starting right now. For example, if you are interested in streets, roads, or traffic, perhaps you can help with cleaning up roads or propose a new traffic pattern to the city council. Do you have an idea to solve an ongoing problem?

Maybe you should speak to your city or state legislator and elicit their help! Do you have an idea for helping people who need affordable housing or people who are currently living on the streets? Maybe you're just the person to solve the problem! Just because you are young, doesn't mean you aren't mighty! And as a Colorado citizen you have a voice.

What can you do or what would you like to do to help your community?

Sources:

<https://www.nationalpeanutboard.org/news/16-surprising-facts-about-george-washington-carver.htm>



### I Can Make A Difference Paragraph Planner

Directions: Identify your skills, interests, and values. How might you use them to make a difference in your community? Then write a letter to your classmates explaining what you believe is important and what you will do to make a difference.

#### My Talents & Skills:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### My Interests:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### My Values:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

