

# Global TeachNet Newsletter

## July-August, 1999

### Suggestions for Good Summer Reading

#### *Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Kindness and Courageous Acts of Service*

by Marianne Larned, Stone Soup Leadership Institute

Reviewed by Burton Crow

Through *Stone Soup for the World*, Marianne Larned has brought together 100 inspirational stories from the lives of young people and world leaders, all of whom have shared a courage to reach beyond themselves, to grapple with obstacles in their lives and their countries. Their determination and success both inspire and challenge young readers to face squarely the adversities within their own lives.

These stories, manageable in length and clear in message, transcend culture, ethnicity and gender, touching alike the alienated urban child and the most jaded suburban teenager. With the excellent *Educational Curriculum Leader's Guide*, *Stone Soup for the World* can be a valuable tool for middle and high school teachers of language arts and social studies seeking to enrich their lessons and the lives of their students.

The dramatic and heartening stories in *Stone Soup for the World* immediately immerse readers in other cultures and countries, and engage them in the struggles of real heroes who fight battles against violence, disease and hunger within their individual lives, their communities and nations at large. These are the stories of Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez and Gandhi. These are also the stories of boys and girls ranging from four to late teens.

Narratives come from 29 countries, includes the tale

of 15-year-old Arn Chorn, who escaped the Cambodian "Killing Fields" and traveled to America where he helped teen victims of violence in inner city schools, later returning to Cambodia to organize young people to rebuild their own nation.

In addition to the splendid collection of stories, Larned has provided exceptional supportive materials in the form of a *Educational Curriculum Leader's Guide*, which lists stimulating questions for students, values and qualities exemplified in the stories, lessons gleaned from the narratives, activities for language arts and social studies classes, and project ideas for community service. The self-paced *Educational Curriculum Leader's Guide*, which emphasizes improving young people's reading and higher-order thinking skills, ensures that the Stone Soup selections can support discussions on global interdependence, cross-cultural issues, cultural and ethnic diversity, conflict management, and universal human rights.

Ultimately, *Stone Soup for the World* may simply be viewed as an expansive array of inspirational stories about accomplished individuals, young and old, that have achieved extraordinary things against enormous challenges. But, Stone Soup is much more. Through the narratives of these individuals' intimate struggles and final successes, the young reader takes away a vision of victory and, hence, a greater willingness to engage the struggles in life. For, if these real people in their real stories can live such vibrant lives, accomplish so much, and in the end prevail, could not the young reader find comparable courage to face the inevitable challenges in his life? If Stone Soup can accomplish that feat, even for only one young mind, it would truly have been worth its place in our classroom.

Note: *Stone Soup for the World Book and Educational Curriculum Leader's Guide* are available at [soup4world@aol.com](mailto:soup4world@aol.com).