



## **This is My Home: A Minnesota Human Rights Education Experience K-12 Tool Kit**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*This Is My Home* is a joint initiative with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and the University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center. The goal of the Tool Kit is to integrate and simplify human rights education in K-12 schools statewide. The three primary objectives are:

- (1) To provide a K-12 Human Rights Education Framework and Human Rights Process Model for educators to engage students and their families in **creating a school community where all members can grow** to their full potential with their human dignity and human rights upheld;
- (2) To engage all students in the promotion and protection of human rights, enabling **student achievement, development, and performance to thrive**;
- (3) To develop **new tools for sharing and monitoring effective practices** in human rights education throughout Minnesota.

**This Tool Kit is a work in progress forever!** If we are successful, the Tool Kit will continue to develop as our human rights and responsibilities evolve. Human Rights Education is organic in nature. Each one of us brings our own creativity and passion into our teaching and learning, and each one of us wants to be fully engaged in this process. It takes you to make *This is My Home* a success!

*This is My Home* calls for a creative compilation of searching out and extracting from the excellent materials and effective practices from many educators throughout Minnesota. Although different lenses may be used – citizenship, democracy, diversity, environmental, equity, experiential, global, international, literacy, multi-cultural, peace, service learning, social justice – to best describe our individual connections and work in the field of education, we share a universal value of respecting human rights for all human beings.

**The Human Rights Education Framework** provides a developmental scope and sequence for learning universal human rights language and principles and putting these concepts into practice through new skills and community actions.

**The Human Rights and Educational Standards** have been integrated into this learning process, which have set expectations for cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral performance. These standards include:

- Minnesota Academic Standards
- The Minnesota Human Rights Act
- The United States Bill of Rights
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child

**The Human Rights Process Model** is a student-centered learning circle. Seven steps are addressed at all age levels: (1) Observe and identify a human rights issue, problem or concern; (2) Describe and compare the human rights issue on a local, national, and global level; (3) Generate responses or formulate positions and make predictions; (4) Select a response or position, practice skill, and take action; (5) Observe and collect information; (6) Reflect and draw conclusions; and (7) Communicate learning with others. The Human Rights Process Model is flexible so teachers can use any content area and apply this learning circle. *This Is My Home* has some curriculum models for different grade groupings. These lessons can be implemented as a stand-alone unit or woven through an existing unit.

- The K-2 Lessons look at “Caring School Climate.”
- The 3-5 Lessons center on “Migration.”
- The 6-8 Lessons focus on “Justice or Injustice.”
- The 9-12 Lessons take on “U.S. History.”

Starting Fall 2004, *This is My Home* was piloted by educators in various schools throughout the state. Teachers can use this Tool Kit:

- To teach about *human rights* within the **Minnesota state academic standards**.
- To promote *social justice, democracy, and human rights education* by linking to **Minnesota, U.S., and international human rights standards**.
- To *integrate HRE into any course topic* through **new skills and community actions**, like service learning projects.
- To *engage families* by having students have **school and community performances or oral history projects on human rights**.
- To address **underlying principals of Human Rights** – *Equality, Human Dignity, Inalienability, Indivisibility, Interdependency, Non-Discrimination, Responsibility, and Universality*.
- To bring **current affairs and news** into the classroom and *teach critical thinking and resolution skills*.

*This Is My Home* is part of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights program called **“Educate to Eliminate”**. Educate to Eliminate has three major components: Community Forums (“The Right Focus on...”), Public Service Announcements (“Don’t Go There”), and a K-12 Learning Resource Kit (“This is My Home”), including a video documentary highlighting Minnesota’s diversity with emphasis on the day-to-day challenges, within the human rights framework, of some Minnesota children.

The Tool Kit is being distributed to K-12 Human Rights School representatives throughout Minnesota and provides model units, a resource guide, an interactive on-line community action and lesson planning tool, suggestions for implementation, and ways to share emerging practices. The development of a program of this magnitude will ensure that teachers throughout Minnesota are provided with a competent framework that follows developmental scope and sequence to ensure their students receive human rights education, thus, contributing significantly to a child's educational, cultural, and social development.

*This Is My Home* is unique because students use higher order thinking skills to address issues in their community while challenging assumptions. It is also easy to use regardless of whether the teacher is a veteran human rights educator or a newcomer to teaching human rights. Most educators discover that they have already been teaching about human rights and responsibilities, but haven't used the language or framework. This Resource Kit will allow for a common language for teachers and students throughout the state. It also addresses a K-12 scope and sequence.

The Human Rights Framework, Human Rights and Education Standards, and the Human Rights Process Model attempt to share a common language and lens for our work, while encouraging our creativity and innovation to improve the quality of our teaching and learning. *This Is My Home* challenges schools to welcome families back into the classroom and school community and provides avenues for students to share their learning with others in the larger community. Most important it's effective, free, and fun!!

*Where, after all, do universal rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the worlds of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.*

-Eleanor Roosevelt,  
*The Great Question*, 1958

