Operation I Respect You

In this project, students will identify a person they respect (could be a person in school, in the community, or someone at the state or national level, well-known or not; or, share some of these 15 young prodigies who are already changing the world from *Insider*). Students will either write a letter or record a video to this person, expressing what they respect, and encouraging them to keep up the good work.

Respect Sub-Concept(s)
Self-care, Kindness

Project Timeframe
20-30 minutes, depending on the project medium; if recording videos, this could take longer.

Required Materials
❏ Letter-writing materials
❏ Computers (if applicable)
❏ Video equipment (if applicable)

Background:
This project helps students tap into their gratitude center by identifying not only a person they respect but also what about that person they respect. This goes beyond "liking" someone or appreciating a person's prestige or celebrity; students should think about someone who has done something (or who does something) that helps others or is working toward making a positive change in the world. The aim is to help students call up positive role models (whom they either know or admire from afar) and think critically about what they do that is worthy of respect. This will also give students an opportunity to say thanks and to offer encouragement to this person, which is a way to show respect and kindness and bolster a sense of positive self-perception.

Project Details:
Ask students to think of someone they respect (for reasons mentioned above); consider sharing the link above that highlights what ordinary kids are doing to bring about positive change.

Students, at a base level, should write a short letter to this person, highlighting what they respect about the person and offering words of encouragement to continue the good work that is being done.

If students are tech-savvy and you have access to video equipment, you could record these "'letters" and email them to the recipient. Similarly, students could send emails instead of letters.

Encourage students to personalize their message (if in writing) with pictures or other drawings. The aim is to actually mail these letters so be prepared to find mailing information or invite students into this search, which could also double as a computer lesson for internet research. If mailing the letters is not feasible, have students pick local individuals (could be school staff, teachers, family members, friends, community members) that make letter delivery possible.

Wrap Up
Ask students how they felt identifying specific individuals they respected as well as why they respected that person. Clue in on how we feel good when we are cheering on the good work of another person. Ask students if any of them felt compelled to join their person in their work (if students wrote to someone doing something to help others). If so, consider sharing this with parents so they might help their student partner with the cause they are interested in.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
FOUNDATION®

Proposed Lesson Outcomes:

Students will:
- Identify individuals they respect and why.
- Practice personal acknowledgement of good works by others.
- Practice either writing or presentation skills.

Optional Extension Discussion Activity

- Highlight a cause that a student identified as important in their letter.
- Send information home to parents if students express interest in learning more about what their respected person is doing.

DESIGNATED BY CASEL AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SELect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/