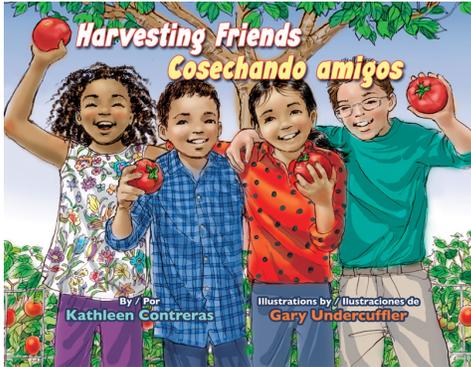


Harvesting Friends / Cosechando amigos

By Kathleen Contreras
Illustrated by Gary Undercuffler



SUMMARY

A mystery leads to a new friendship that grows from working together in a community garden in Kathleen Contreras' new bilingual picture book, *Harvesting Friends / Cosechando amigos*.

Young Lupe loves helping her mother with their salsa garden full of tomatoes, chile peppers, onions, garlic and cilantro. But one summer day, she sees that the biggest, juiciest tomatoes have disappeared! Who could have taken them?!

Two weeks later, she catches the culprit in the act! It's Antonio, the new boy at school. His family doesn't have much money and the tomatoes look so good. He offers his gold necklace from his grandmother in Mexico in exchange for the tomatoes, but Lupe has a better idea. "Let's make a deal. You help me with the garden, and I'll give back your necklace and some tomatoes." They become friends over the summer as they weed, water and pick vegetables. When the growing season ends and they have composted the leaves and stems, Lupe happily returns Antonio's necklace.

The following year, Lupe and Antonio invite their neighbors to help with the garden. Soon everyone is pitching in to grow fruit and vegetables for salsa and much more, from tomatoes to watermelon, squash, beans and corn—America's first crops.

Including easy-to-make recipes, this bilingual picture book for children ages 4-8 will have them clamoring for a garden of their own to plant and harvest. Along the way, young readers—and the adults in their lives too—will learn that coming together as a community will enable them to harvest more than just vegetables.

ABOUT THE BOOK

GENRE: Fiction

Hardcover

978-1-55885-858-9

32 pages, 11 x 8 ½

INTREST LEVEL: LG

LEXILE: AD710L

SPANISH LEXILE: AD660L

THEMES

CLUES, COMMUNITY GARDENS, COMMUNITY SPACES, COMMUNITY, COOKING, DECEPTION, EMPATHY, EXCHANGE, FAMILY, FICTION, FORGIVENESS, FRIENDSHIP, GARDENING, LATINO/HISPANIC INTEREST, MYSTERY, NATURE, PLANNING, PROCESS, TEAMWORK, VISION

VOCABULARY

Harvesting Friends / Cosechando amigos has a number of words that your students may not be familiar with. Before or after the reading, review some or all of the words listed below.

Content Specific

Salsa garden, chile peppers, cilantro, tacos, salsa

Academic

Soil, weeded, medal, caressing, crouching, exchange, valuable, fair trade, deal weeding, harvest, stems, nutrients, donations, community, fragrant, herbs, healing, crops, gathering

ELL / ESL Teaching Strategies

Encourage your Spanish-speaking students to translate the Spanish words in the English text for the class.

Act out the following words: planting, weeding, harvesting and gathering. Encourage your students to act out these words when they hear them during the reading.

Before Reading

(Pre-reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

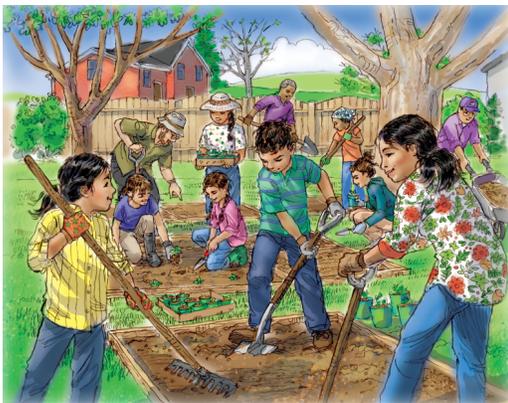
Pre-Reading Questions

1. What is a friend? How many friends do you have?
2. How do we make friends? What do we need to do to keep friends? How do we behave as a friend?



Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 1 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)



1. Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask the students what they think the title, *Harvesting Friends / Co-sechando amigos*, means. Ask what they think this book might be about and whom the book might be about. Ask students to make a prediction on where this story may take place.

2. Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, introduction, English and Spanish text, illustrations, back matter, dedications, author's and illustrator's notes.

Establishing a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3)

Ask students to read to find out:

- How we gather or “harvest” friends
- A few steps to create a community garden



Encourage students to consider why the author, Kathleen Contreras, wants to share this story with young people. Ask students to also consider why the text is presented in both English and Spanish.

After Reading

Discussion Questions

Use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension and facilitate a deeper appreciation of the story. Encourage students to refer to the text and illustrations to support their responses.

To build close reading skills, students should cite evidence to support their answers.

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 3)

1. What is a salsa garden? What kind of plants do you find in a salsa garden?
2. What steps do Lupe and her family take in planting their garden?
3. What happened to all of the red tomatoes on a summer day? What did Lupe find in place of the tomatoes?
4. Who did Lupe catch in her garden two weeks later? What was he doing?
5. What was Antonio's excuse for taking Lupe's tomatoes? Why did Antonio leave his gold necklace in the garden?
6. How did Lupe and Mamá treat Antonio? What did they do? What did they say?
7. What was Lupe's great idea for next year's garden? How did people pitch in? What did Lupe and Antonio do?
8. What happened at harvest time?
9. What did the Amigos Garden turn into?

Extension / Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft and Structure, Strand 6)

1. Why do you think Lupe decided to give Antonio his necklace back? Under what conditions? Was this a good idea or bad idea? Why?
2. Why do people take things that don't belong to them?
3. Antonio was the new boy in school and had left his home country of Mexico. How do you think it feels to be the new student in school? Do you think it's hard to leave your country to move to a place with a new language and different way of doing things? Why or why not?
4. Lupe and Mamá gave Antonio a chance to earn back his necklace and help them with the garden. What else could they have done to Antonio?
5. Examine what Kathleen Contreras means when she writes, "The new Amigos Garden grew more than just plants. It grew friendships."

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types and Purpose, Strands 1-3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3, Craft & Structure, Strand 4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9)

1. Which parts of the book do you connect to the most? Why? Describe a time when you tried to make a new friend. What did you do? Why? Are you and that person still friends?
2. Why do you think Lupe didn't punish Antonio for taking her tomatoes and instead she offered him the opportunity to help her with the garden so that he could earn back his necklace?
3. Share a personal story of when you were not punished but given an opportunity. How did you feel? Why?
4. Look up the word "empathy." Write your own definition for empathy, and share a personal story of when you were empathetic with someone. After writing the story, write a short reflection about how you felt about treating someone with empathy and why being empathetic is important.
5. Explain what the word harvest means. Then explain how Lupe "harvested" a friendship with Antonio and with other people in her neighborhood? Was this a good or bad thing? Why?

ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4-7)

Below, please find strategies that may be helpful to use with English Language Learner students.

1. Review all of the vocabulary. Ask students to make predictions about word meaning. Have students create and share an action for each word. Invite students to write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture or create a list of synonyms and antonyms.
2. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another or listen to the more fluent reader. Students who speak Spanish can help with pronunciation of the Spanish or read the Spanish alongside a student reading the English text.
3. Ask each student to write three to five questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
4. After the reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Working in pairs, ask students to retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary or opinion about what they have read.
5. One of the main topics in the story is harvesting. Invite the students to create a garden full of empathy, friendship or community. Ask them to create six to ten paper flowers and on each flower write an activity they can do that will cultivate or grow empathy, friendship or community in the classroom.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use activities below to help students integrate what they have read with other curriculum areas. These activities may also be used for extension activities, advanced readers and creating a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3)

(Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Share with the students general information about gardening. Invite students to write a short story or poem about planning, planting and/or maintaining a garden.
2. Invite students to create a garden full of empathy, friendship or community. Ask them to create six to ten paper flowers and on each flower write an activity they can do that will cultivate or grow empathy, friendship or community in the classroom.
3. Author Kathleen Contreras includes three recipes at the end of the book you can make using ingredients from Lupe's Salsa garden. Invite students to look up and share vegetarian recipes that they could make from ingredients from a vegetable garden.

Science

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Share general information and fun facts about tomatoes with the students. Ask students to work in teams/pairs to look at and share information about one of the following topics regarding tomatoes: variety, site, when to plant, planting, care, troubleshooting or harvesting. Here's a link for information about tomatoes: <https://kidsgardening.org/tomatoes-april-2017-plant-month/>
2. Ask students to work in teams/pairs to look at and share about one of the following growing guides. Their presentation should answer the following questions: Why they chose this vegetable/flower? Five fun facts about this vegetable/flower? What is the best site selection for this vegetable/flower? Here's a link to growing guides: <https://kidsgardening.org/plant-of-the-month/>
3. Invite students to read and share highlights from an article in a newsletter from KidsGarden News. KidsGarden News is a monthly e-newsletter that offers thematic lesson plans, activities ideas, seasonal gardening tips, garden program spotlights and news about grant opportunities. Here is a link to KidsGarden News here: <https://kidsgardening.org/subscribe-to-kidsgarden-news/>
4. Find additional lesson plans on nutrition, soil and plant science here: <https://kidsgardening.org/lesson-plans/>

Art, Media and Music

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3)

(Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Study the illustrations of Lupe's garden. Ask students to describe, design and draw plans for their own garden.
2. Many songs we sing celebrate friendship. Look up the lyrics to your favorite song about friendship. Then see if you and a classmate can work together to write your own friendship song.
3. Assign each pair of students one of America's first crops to research and present a collage on: squash, beans or corn.

Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4 and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Invite students to make and write down the recipes for one of their favorite dishes or snacks, and bring in a sample to share. Have a "tasting" and ask each student to share the ingredients of their recipe with the class. Make a display of all the recipes as part of a classroom recipe garden.
2. Encourage students to research community gardens. Have them present on how different communities have different types of gardens and what kinds of activities they have in their gardens.
3. Ask students to search their home for potential "super" items and bring in an item to school. Invite each student to share their "super" item and the special power that the item can give him or her.
4. Invite students to interview a family member or caregiver about their hero. As a class, generate a list of questions, such as what is a hero, what are heroic acts and how should heroes behave.

CONNECT WITH THE INTERNET

Blick Art

Festival Flowers

<https://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/festival-flowers/>

Flower Children

<https://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/flower-children/>

Kids Gardening

<https://kidsgardening.org/educator-resources/>

Kids National Geographic

Plant a Garden

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/nature/plant-a-garden/>

Teaching Kids Healthy Literacy

https://yourshot.nationalgeographic.com/tags/gardening_tools/



MEET THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

**KATHLEEN CONTRERAS**

is a bilingual educator and author of three other children's books that highlight her Mexican roots: *Pan Dulce* (Scholastic, 1995), *Braids / Trencitas* (Lectorum, 2009) and *Sweet Memories / Dulces recuerdos* (Lectorum, 2014). She lives

and works in Ventura, California.

**GARY UNDERCUFFLER**

is the illustrator of *Francisco's Kites / Las cometas de Francisco* (Piñata Books, 2015). He lives in Pennsylvania with his family.

 ABOUT PIÑATA  BOOKS

Piñata Books is an imprint of Arte Público Press, the oldest and largest publisher of contemporary and historical literature written by US Hispanics: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans and others. Piñata Books is dedicated to the publication of children's and young adult literature focusing on US Hispanic culture and has made giant strides in filling the void that exists in American publishing and literature: books that accurately reflect themes, characters and customs unique to US Latino culture. Books published under the imprint are designed to serve as a bridge from school to home and to support family literacy and elementary school education. Discover more surprises at <https://artepublicopress.com/about-pinata-books-2/>.

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