



# HOCKEY with HEART



PERSEVERANCE



Hockey with Heart is a three-part series in partnership with the St. Louis Blues covering character education both on and off the ice. This series features interviews with Blues players Alex Pietrangelo, Colton Parayko and Robert Thomas and classroom activities on perseverance, teamwork and courage.

Perseverance is an important trait to have in order to be successful and reach your goals. It is the determination and dedication to stick to a goal regardless of the obstacles you may face. These activities teach students about the importance of perseverance and maintaining a positive attitude to stay motivated. It is important to set goals and not give up until those goals are reached.

## Alex Pietrangelo, Defenseman

**1. What does perseverance mean to you?** Last year, our team was in last place in the league and that wasn't where we wanted to be. We had to come together as a team to make and execute a plan to succeed. We then went on to win the Stanley Cup. Our team needed to lean on each other to reach that goal. That persistence followed us into this year with the challenge of the health scare of our teammate Jay Bouwmeester. For me, I always find different ways and perspectives to get through difficult situations. A strong bond with your team and those close to you is vital to having the perseverance to reach your goals.

**2. Describe why perseverance is important as a member of a team.** I am really lucky because the Blues are like my second family and that makes it easier to pursue our dreams together. We have each other's backs both on and off the ice. It's nice to have the peace of mind that you're being supported by your teammates no matter what. The beauty about our sport is that you've got 25 or 30 guys with the same mindset and goal, so it's easy to lean on each other.

**3. Discuss a time when you had a problem and you persevered. What happened?** Our biggest challenge as a team this year was the health scare with Bo (Jay Bouwmeester) and how we were able to get through that and provide support to him and to each other. As a captain and a leader on the team, my teammates look to me in how to respond. I do my best to find the positives in each situation and highlight those while making a plan to push past the obstacles. Although we couldn't have an impact on Bo's health, we were able to change our mindset to find the best way to get through the situation as a team. Thankfully, Bo is back with our team and healthy. Another tough situation was our road to the Stanley Cup last year, but we were able to stay positive and battle together as team until we reached our goal.

**4. Have you ever felt that external pressure or negative comments prevented you from accomplishing something you wanted?** There can be a lot of noise outside of the locker room and it can be hard to ignore. Last year was tough because of the constant outside attention but it has helped us in learning to ignore that chatter this season while keeping our goal in mind. We have a long season with a lot of ups and downs throughout. We keep our mindset the same throughout the whole season, because in the long run, that's what's going to keep us moving forward.

**5. Who is your role model for perseverance?** My dad has always been an amazing role model for me. His mindset is that life inevitably has stressors, but you have to do your best to not let those things affect you. It's important to realize that each day is a new opportunity to learn from the previous day. I try to take those lessons I learned from him and instill them in my teammates because it's a positive way to keep us goal-oriented.

**6. What advice do you have regarding setting goals and achieving them?** My advice would be to stick with your goals no matter what obstacles you face and try to find the joy in the journey. As a professional hockey player, I am still learning how to work through problems. We have goals as a team and individually, and to reach those goals we have to continue to work towards them every day. Setting a goal and working with your teammates to reach those goals will make you a better person and an even better athlete.



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## WRITING PROMPTS

To Alex Pietrangelo, perseverance means never giving up and the importance of staying positive while working to accomplish your goals. Below are a few ideas to get students thinking about what perseverance means to them.

- Write about a time that you persevered even though it was difficult and you wanted to quit.
- What helps you stay motivated to reach your goals even though it might be easier to give up?
- Choose a goal that you have and the steps you are going to take in order to achieve it.

## TOSS IT

*Materials:*

- Candy coated chocolate pieces
- Plastic cups for every student
- Bowls for each team of two

*Directions:*

Begin your lesson by splitting the students into groups of two. Give each team two plastic cups, a bowl and some candy coated chocolate pieces. Explain that the student pairs should start arm's length apart, each holding a plastic cup. They must toss a chocolate piece from one plastic cup to the other. Once they successfully get the candy coated chocolate piece transferred between cups, they must put it in their team's bowl.

After that, one team member must take a step back before they toss the next chocolate piece. Once they successfully toss the candy coated chocolate piece from one cup to the next, they put it in the bowl. For every chocolate piece that hits the ground, they must remove one from their bowl.

This continues until the team is ten steps apart and has ten candy coated chocolate pieces in their bowl. If all the chocolate pieces have been removed by the time they get ten steps apart, they must continue tossing from this length until they get ten candy coated chocolate pieces in their bowl. The first team to get ten chocolate pieces in their bowl wins!

*Discussion:*

- How does this activity compare to reaching your goals?
- Did you ever feel like quitting? Why do some people quit before reaching their goals?
- Could you have completed the task quicker had you broken the rules? Would you feel as good about completing the task if you didn't follow the rules?
- How do hard work and perseverance help you achieve your goals?

## NEWSPAPER CONNECTION

Students should use the digital or print edition of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch to find a story about a person or group that has shown perseverance in reaching a goal. As students discover examples, add to chart paper, print/cut out the article, post on a bulletin board, etc. as a reminder of examples of the importance of perseverance.

## DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE THAT SHOWED TEAMWORK THIS YEAR?

Enter our Hockey with Heart contest to enter yourself or someone you know and how they positively impacted or empowered our community.

perseverance