



HOCKEY with HEART



TEAMWORK



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.

Teamwork is the effort of a group of individuals working together to reach a common goal. Working effectively as a team is important because everyone will be a member of a team at some point. These activities teach students about the importance of teamwork and the specific role each individual may play. Students will learn about positive teamwork behavior and discover how their own conduct can impact others. The activities also discuss possible obstacles to teams working successfully and offers the opportunity to build constructive strategies for overcoming these challenges.

Colton Parayko, Defenseman

1. What does teamwork mean to you? I define teamwork as a group of individuals working together toward the same goal. Teamwork is about individuals understanding their role in reaching that goal. The end goal for our team is to win the Stanley Cup. In hockey, as in all teams, everybody has different roles, skillsets and dynamics that add to a team as a whole. Teamwork is about everybody working together, and for the Blues that means winning hockey games.

2. How do team players with different backgrounds and personalities contribute to productive and successful teamwork? We have a very diverse team with players from Europe and the United States and also French Canadians and Western Canadians. Everyone is coming from a different upbringing. Our teammates are away from their families and that can be difficult, but at the end of the day what brings us together is our common goal. We come together every day in the rink, and we have created a family together.

3. How does a team deal with conflict or challenging circumstance? I think that comes with the perseverance to stay motivated, along with strong leadership. In February we had a tough stretch of games, but we put in the work and started playing better as a team. We saw that last year too. As soon as we started working together, we started playing better. We know that sticking to our process and trusting it will allow us to be successful.

4. How do you build morale among teammates? I hold myself accountable to giving my best to the team, and that I'm doing what I can every night to try to help us win. In general, you need to make sure that you are playing your role in the team to the best of your abilities. It can be easy for teams to start deviating away from working together as a team, but we have a really tight-knit group and no matter what happens we stick together.

5. How do you support your team members? Every individual is different but it's important to stay positive and build each other up by highlighting the successes of your teammates. It can be easy for negative thoughts and comments to creep in when you are losing, but just a reassurance of how good you are and that every player belongs in this league is really helpful to keeping a positive attitude. I always reassure my teammates and help them get their confidence. It goes a long way if you can help each other be confident.

6. Why is it important for a team to build trust and respect for each other? Teamwork is like a puzzle and everybody has a piece of the puzzle. When everyone contributes and puts in their piece in it all becomes one nice image. It's also important to enjoy the process and have fun. To be successful you have to have fun with your teammates and find joy in the process of working towards your goal.

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WRITING PROMPTS

To Colton Parayko, teamwork means each individual working on their role to contribute to reach the overall goal of the team. Below are a few ideas to get students thinking about what teamwork means to them.

- Write about a time that you were part of a successful team. What was your role? What made the team successful in your view?
- What are the challenges you've faced when working with a team? How was your team able to work through those challenges?
- What role are you most comfortable taking in a team and why?

BUILD IT HIGHER

Materials:

- Multiple packs of dry spaghetti
- Marshmallows

Directions:

Begin your lesson by asking students if teamwork is always easy. Ask about some of the reasons why teams sometimes don't work or what makes teamwork so difficult at times. Record students' answers on the board for students to see.

Next, divide students into small groups. Ask each group to elect a leader for this activity. Give each group a supply of dry spaghetti and marshmallows. The groups will have 20 minutes to work together to create the tallest freestanding structure possible. Before they begin, tell the teams that their team leaders may only supervise and offer instructions but they may not physically participate in this activity.

Discussion:

After 20 minutes, ask students to evaluate each other's structures (usually the highest structure has a solid and wide foundation). Discuss with students what it means to have a solid foundation – and why laying a solid foundation is important and the core of an effective team.

NEWSPAPER CONNECTION

Students should use their digital or print edition of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch to find two examples of successful teamwork: one of a sports team and one that is another kind of team (community, school, business, etc.). How were these teams successful? How did they demonstrate good teamwork?

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.

teamwork