

ANIMATING THE NEIGHBORHOOD



INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten students at Chase Elementary School embark on an investigation of community by touring the surrounding neighborhood. To prepare for the investigation, classroom teacher Kim Anderson meets with teaching artist Kitty Conde to review the Illinois Learning Standards. They begin to identify social studies and art standards addressing community. Kim expresses a desire to include her students' parents in the learning process. "Going out into the community and having the community come into the school could present a very special learning experience for these young children," says Kim. The departure point and central tenet of the unit is a piece of American art. Both members of the teaching team have decided that Romare Bearden's *The Dove*, 1964 will speak well to the theme of community. They use a high-quality reproduction of *The Dove* from the National Endowment for the Humanities' "Picturing America" series. Bearden's collage technique becomes an inspiration for the teaching team to develop a unit based on the idea of making a community come alive like a bustling Harlem neighborhood of the 1960s.

NATIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS THAT ARE BEING MET INCLUDE:

Geography

Understand the physical and human characteristics of places.

Visual Art

Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.