

A Kindergarten Thru Adult
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, and ARTS Project

ANDREW, A BOY CALLED HAIR, AND THE EDGEHILL POLAR BEARS USE THEIR SUPERPOWERS TO FEND OFF AGENT DESTRUCTIVE FORCES, THEREBY SOLVING THEIR COMMUNITY'S PROBLEMS:

Creating a Viable and Equitable Community, Which Includes Addressing Challenges That Render Communities of Color Disproportionately Vulnerable to Catastrophic Events

“Help me, Help me! Help me! It’s my husband, my husband, my husband. He’s not in the house. He’s not in the yard. I’ve looked everywhere. I just stepped out for a while, 40 minutes at the most, to pick up some groceries. He didn’t finish his breakfast or even drink his coffee. He loves coffee. I even put a little extra hazelnut cream in this morning. He only took a sip or two. The backdoor’s wide open. He must have just walked away. He can’t remember his phone number, so he can’t call me. Really, I wasn’t gone long. You’ve gotta come right now. Help me find him.” These words of anguish came into the Midtown Hills Police Precinct about 7:30 a.m. on a Monday morning. A concerned voice responded, “Mam, mam, I’m going to help you. What is your name and address? What is his name and describe him for me.” “My name is Alicia Smith. We live in Gernert Studio Apartments. His name is Randall Smith, and he’s 94 years old. He’s African American, tall, dark brown skinned. His cap, the cap they gave him when he retired is not here. He loves that cap; he wears it backwards. And he’s still wearing his pajamas, cause the clothes I laid out for him are still hanging in the bathroom. His cologne is strong; he must have just poured it on. He’s got dementia. Hurry. Hurry.” The report was dispatched to an officer already in the Edgehill area.

As Ms. Smith, an officer, and Ms. Prowell, a Metropolitan Housing and Development Agency (MDHA) social worker, stood at the backdoor trying to figure out the best way to search for Mr. Smith, they were unaware of the two, large, ghost-like polar bear figures, tossing glowing-like snowballs back and forth, that mysteriously emerged and slowly floated past them and onto 12th Avenue South. As the images began to turn left at Edgehill Avenue, the oncoming traffic, led by a thunderous sounding, fast-rolling 18-wheeler, came to a screeching halt. Motorists, parents walking their children to school, the crossing guard, and people out for their morning exercise watched in awe as the ghost-like polar bear figures floated down Edgehill Avenue toward Villa Place. However, no one noticed that the polar bear statues no longer stood in MDHA’s Polar Bear Plaza. The polar bears abruptly stopped at Taco Mamacita, and, then, magically floated through the restaurant’s outer wall, hovering a moment near the ceiling before seating themselves at the table where a man wearing pajamas and a cap, turned backwards, was waiting patiently for a server to take his order.

Neither the server nor the man was aware of the ghost-like figures occupying the table with him. He ordered a cup of coffee with hazelnut cream flavoring. As the server was about to walk away, the man grabbed the bib of his hat, turned it around, exposing a White Way Laundry logo, and asked the server if he could use the phone to let his wife know he had made it to work and

was waiting to clock in. Yes, the man's name was Randall Smith. The ghost-like Edgehill polar bears had found him.

Although the server was stunned for a moment, he quickly surmised that the customer was confused, because he was dressed inappropriately and seemingly thought he would begin his shift in a few minutes at an establishment that had given way to redevelopment a few years back. The server gave the phone to Mr. Smith, who had no problem remembering his home phone number. As he said hello to his wife and told her where he was, the ghost-like polar bear figures slowly floated away, but not before agreeing that Mr. Smith's unfortunate experience that day was a sign that destructive forces were about to embark upon the Edgehill community, which would, in the end, speed up recent community organization discussions about how to build a viable and equitable Edgehill community.

Andrew's excitement awoke him from his dream. His hair felt like it was vibrating and was standing straight up, stiffer than usual. Pieces of his dream surfaced, and he had questions. "How did the polar-bear ghost-like figures find Mr. Smith so quickly? Did they take clues from his retirement hat? Did they tap into his mind? Did they follow the scent of his cologne? And why, when, and how do they allow themselves to be visible? How did they stop traffic? How did Mr. Smith suddenly remember his phone number? Why didn't anyone notice that the polar bear statues at MDHA's Polar Bear Plaza were missing the same time the search for Mr. Smith was on? And what powers did their glowing snowballs have? Why do I always feel like I'm right there in the dream, what destructive forces are coming, and why is my hair vibrating?"

However, let's start at the beginning.

Once upon a time, a boy named Andrew lived in MDHA's Edgehill Apartments. Because he wore his hair so tall, his friends called him Hair. It appeared as if he combed his hair straight up and then sprayed it to keep it from moving. But that wasn't the case at all; he had no control over his hair. His hair was cut every week, but it grew back fast and stood tall on its own. It began vibrating following a dream he had about a senior citizen, suffering from dementia, walking away from his Gernert Studio Apartments home. At the time, he was nine years old, and he dreamed the same dream again and again. The hair sensations, made him believe his hair had superpowers. He never told anybody, not even his best friend, C. J., who lived next door. He thought "no one can see my hair vibrating; people will probably make fun of my dream; so, I just won't say anything."

Andrew was a fourth grader at Carter Lawrence Elementary, where Dr. Sherieta Sanders was his Executive Principal, and Dr. Andrienne Battle was his school system's superintendent. His chest swelled as he pronounced those two names, because his mother, a student in Belmont University's Master of Education program, gave him pop-up spelling quizzes about people and places that were a part of his everyday existence. He loved being quizzed. However, he, secretly, wished she wouldn't ask him how to spell anything while he was eating his favorite breakfast meal, hot steaming oatmeal topped with walnuts and blueberries. He would have chosen something else for breakfast, but his mother was trying to follow the eating healthy guidelines she heard on the Lanese Campbell Talk Show, about taking care of one's bodies and minds through regular checkups, eating healthy, and exercising. And then she'd listen to MDHA's Envision Center Financial Freedom Workshop program, featuring Ms. Lisa Booker, Ms. Sheronda Wilson, Ms. Talice Thomas, and Mr. Daryl Hill. His mother knew all of those names by heart, because she was working with them to build a better financial future. Andrew had to tip toe through the house when his mother was listening to those shows. She didn't want any noise. However, sometimes

she'd make him listen to the financial show; she'd reward him with a few dollars, but he had to save some before he could spend any of it.

Andrew and C. J. enjoyed walking to school together, because it was exciting. For instance, they always stopped by the porch of Mr. Chen, an Army veteran, to admire the comic-strip format of his stint in the U.S. Army. However, he had to compete with Mr. Tucker for Mr. Chen's time. It seemed as though Mr. Tucker, also a retired Army veteran, was always there, talking with Mr. Chen when C. J. got there. He heard that Mr. Tucker routed his morning exercise routine to include a walk past Mr. Chen's house so that he and Mr. Chen could share stories about the time they spent together in Quang Tri, a province in the north central coast region of Vietnam. They both wore caps inscribed with the words, "Quang Tri, Vietnam 1955 – 1975, proudly served". But when C. J. asked Mr. Chen to tell more of their story than what he had written, Mr. Chen would only smile, which was closely followed by a stern, maybe later, look from Mr. Tucker. "Man," C. J. thought, "Mr. Chen's drawings are so good, and in listening to them, their stories were even better than the graphics. I sure could use their help with my graphic novel." The word on the street was that Mr. Chen and Mr. Tucker suffered from PTSD, but C. J. was hopeful that some day they would be able to share their experiences in more detail; however, until then, he would ask Mr. Chen's grandchildren, who were taking art classes at their high school, for help with his graphic novel.

As they strolled along, Andrew and C. J. spoke to Mr. Johnson, tending the Edgehill Community Garden. He shouted to Ms. Thornton, the property manager, "my mom told me tell you thanks for taking care of our kitchen sink problem;" she shouted back, "no problem." Ms. King, MDHA's Envision Edghill's Community Engagement Coordinator, handed out t-shirts every morning to everyone, because she didn't think you were dressed appropriately unless you were wearing one, reminding everyone to keep looking forward to their future new housing. Upon receiving a t-shirt, Ms. Berry, MDHA's Communications Director, was capturing everyone on film. Andrew and C. J. checked *The Tennessean* daily hoping to find their pictures somewhere in that newspaper. And, oh yes, there was Ms. Bell, Gernert Studio Apartments Leasing Agent, waving from the front entrance of the complex, donning one of her many hair styles.

And every morning, just like clockwork, as Ms. Tea Cake and Ms. Evelyn shouted to them, "hello, C. J., hello, Hair." Ebony Russell, the smartest and most inquisitive student in the third grade, passed them with her head held high, walking, seemingly, sixty miles an hour, showing off the new outfit her mother, who was studying fashion and design at Tennessee State University, had designed and made for her. C. J. leaned his head close to Andrew and whispered, "I heard that Tom Morales gave NeighborH.O.O.D. an order to make 100 monogrammed aprons for one of his restaurants." Andrew replied, "yeah, NeighborH.O.O.D., that new place that helps people who don't have much money start businesses. They help with music, plays, and artwork, too." Still whispering, C. J. continued, "Ebony's mother was running the place, and they said she cut out all 100 aprons by hand; and because the organization didn't have enough money to hire more people to help her, they say she had to send the aprons across town to a company to be finished; but they said Tom thought they looked great." Still whispering, C. J. continued, "they said the company had to turn down Tom's next order because of all the things I just told you. Now, they say that NeighborH.O.O.D.'s supposed to make men's ties and pocket squares and women's scarves in honor of the late, great, country music hall of famer, harmonica player, DeFord Bailey, Sr.; so, I hope they can hire more people to help with this order." Andrew responded, "first of all why do you keep calling him Tom? He's Mr. Morales to us. Second who are they; and, third, why are you whispering"? C. J., still whispering, responded, "okay, it's Mr. Morales; and they are all the people who live around here; and I just don't want Ebony to hear us talking about her and her mother.

But Andrew had to admit he wished Ebony's mother would make him a t-shirt with a design of his hair standing tall, and he couldn't help thinking about how Mr. Morales gave NeighborH.O.O.D. a chance. "Even if people just volunteer for a while, we've got to find more people to help NeighborH.O.O.D. and a place large enough to produce more stuff. Mr. Morales did what start-up businesses need, people to stick with them until they get a good start," C. J. uttered. "And one more thing, they said," C. J. continued, "if a man were running NeighborH.O.O.D., it would probably raise more money." "Yeah," retorted Andrew, "my mom says that women and men are speaking out about that, now; so that type of thinking is changing, just not fast enough."

Right on time, immediately after Ebony scurried past them, triplets, Elena, Eduardo, and Elias nodded as they walked by in lockstep, as if they were performing in a high-school marching band. They had just accepted summer internships with an electrical wholesaler who specialized in installing vehicle-charging stations. Across the street, new neighbors from the recently constructed apartment complexes waved to Andrew and C. J. When Commander Lokey and Sergeant Coker of the Midtown Hills Police Precinct drove by in their patrol car, flashing the thumbs up sign, they saluted the police and patrol officers by high-fiving each other, all while the crossing guard was stopping traffic to usher them to the other side of the street. The Edgehill Library, Watson Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, and the former place where sculptor, William Edmondson, lived were along their route to school; and they bragged about how many library books they had checked out and the many times they had visited each church. They marveled at the day-to-day progress the construction crew made, building veteran housing on the Operation Stand Down of Tennessee grounds, right next to the newly established Green Pea Salon. He wondered if Mr. Chen and Mr. Tucker knew they could get help from OSDT.

Each morning Andrew and C. J. raced to be the first to finish reading the words on the plaque, honoring DeFord Bailey, Sr. Of course, Ebony always got there first and had finished reading before they got halfway there. Andrew thought about the time he met Mr. Bailey's grandson, Carlos DeFord Bailey, a mural unveiling of Edgehill icons, pastors, Goodwin, Turner, and Jones; Callie House; William Edmondson; and Deford Bailey. He remembered his grandmother saying she knew all of them, except Ms. House, and that NeighborH.O.O.D., the organization that provided the mural's concept, got it right about the impact their leadership had on the community, unifying the community using messages of justice, peace, unity, and diversity. His grandmother also told him that Janet King, MDHA's Envision Edgehill Community Engagement Manager, was responsible for the iconic pastors being rendered on that art piece, because she knew all of the pastors and their first ladies. He remembered that unveiling being so much fun, because 12th Avenue South was closed and Walk-Bike Nashville, a sponsor, allowed bicycle riding, walking, picnicking, playing games, and dancing in the streets. And Andrew had vivid memories of his grandfather saying he watched the mural's artist, James Threalkill grow up and that Carlos DeFord Bailey would someday become a country-western recording artist like his grandfather. He recalled his grandmother saying that MDHA and Walk Bike Nashville helped NeighborH.O.O.D. organize the mural unveiling event and that most of the funds were provided by Metro Arts THRIVE, thereby, the catalyst for the entire function.

However, the highlight of their walk to school was when they stood looking at the polar bear statues in awe and wondering how they survived in hot weather, and why their snowballs didn't melt. They loved hearing their moms tell the history of the bears roaming the city, beginning in the 1930's as advertisements for a frozen custard shop; then, in the 1940's landing in the front yard of the Rev. Zema Hill, a mortician; and, finally settling, representing the spirit of

Edgehill's perseverance and unity through its ups and downs, at 12th Avenue South and Edgehill, MDHA's Polar Bear Plaza. They also remembered their grandmothers' many stories about how the community used to be, especially the part about how neighborhood businesses sustained their segregated communities.

But Andrew experienced something no one else did. When he was close to the polar bears, his hair vibrated, like when he dreams about the senior citizen who is suffering from dementia. Sometimes, he walked slowly, attempting to find a way to send messages to the polar bears through his hair's superpowers, but nothing happened. However, this morning, he decided to try harder than ever to send a message. So, he stood very still and concentrated really hard. Suddenly he felt strong vibrations running through his hair, and then just as suddenly, he heard one loud bear roar, then two loud roars. After three load roars, the polar bears spoke, telling him they had been searching for a child whose hair, like his, had superpowers. They asked if he remembered the dreams he had about the senior citizen who was suffering from dementia. Andrew said yes. Well, they said, "we were testing you over a period of time to find out if your hair was strong enough to receive signals over a long-time basis, and your hair passed the test." At first, he was startled by the voices, but when they told him his hair had superpowers, his feelings of alarm turned into joy. "Yes, yes, yes," jumping for joy, he shouted loudly, "I knew it. I knew it. I knew my hair had superpowers!" So Andrew and the bears agreed they would communicate just as they had earlier, that is, upon receiving vibrations from his hair, they would send him one loud bear roar to let him know they were ready to listen, two loud roars to let him know they received his message, and three loud roars to let him know they were sending him a message.

Edgebear introduced herself and her brother, Hillbear, to Andrew. The bears just talked and talked and talked, while tossing those glowing snowballs back and forth, just like in the dream. Andrew wasn't able to get a word in, because they were talking so much. Edgebear said their superpowers keep their bodies cool and their glowing snowballs from melting. But most importantly Hillbear said, "we have been given a mission to use our superpowers to help Edgehill-Nashville solve its problems. And we were told that our superpowers would be even more powerful if we found a child in a community whose hair had superpowers. So, somehow, we were led to you, thereby we chose MDHA's Polar Bear Plaza as our home."

Andrew suddenly realized that C. J., who had no idea he was secretly talking with the bears, was yelling to him, "Hair, hurry up, we're going to be late for school, again," which meant they could not top the hill on their school's grounds to see their favorite summer hang out, the Easley Community Center's swimming pool, where the manager, Ms. Marlo Lavender-Smith, made sure they followed every posted safety rule.

But the bears had one more thing to tell Andrew. So, hearing the bears' roars and feeling his hair vibrating, Andrew listened intently. The bears, stopped tossing their glowing snowballs, spoke in unison, "Andrew, this evening, your parents will receive a notification from your school's call-out system, and Mayor John Cooper and Governor Bill Lee, will hold a news conference about a big problem coming to Nashville's neighborhoods, and the problem will change the daily lives of you, your classmates, and your communities for many, many months." However, they advised Andrew not to worry, that because his hair had superpowers, he would work with them to correct the problems that were coming to the Edgehill Nashville community. They also suggested that he choose two other people to work with him, because the problem would be more than they could handle. So, C. J. and Ebony immediately came to mind, because he knew they were always trying to improve something.

Andrew was astounded at what the bears had just told him, but he broke away, and ran to catch up with C. J.

The school day seemed to drag on and on, but finally it was over. C. J. couldn't understand why Andrew was so quiet and in such a hurry to get home. He even sprinted past the neighborhood's musical group, The Throwbacks, standing in their usual spot, practicing their favorite songs, Stevie Wonder's "Living for the City" and Sly & the Family Stones' "Everyday People." Andrew thought the group was really good; but he thought they had worn those songs out and needed to learn some up-to-date ones, like Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road," John Legend's "Glory," or India.Arie's "Get It Together." He also thought about the time they sang country, Braid Paisley's "When I Get Where I'm Going," and he knew they out did themselves when they sang the Winans' song, "Tomorrow." Better still, The Throwbacks could do a musical presentation using the lyrics of NeighborH.O.O.D.'s theme song, "Building Block Destinies," a song that expresses a kid's doubt about the opportunities in his or her neighborhood. C. J. yelled to them, "when are you going to Jefferson Street Sound Museum to make a record?" However, his young voice was no match for the bass singer's deep voice; so, they did not hear him. "What are you humming," C. J. asked. "You know, Smokey Robinson's song, the trails of my tears." C. J.'s words came back quickly, "No! No! No! Smokey Robinson's song is 'The Tracks of My Tears'; The Trail of Tears is about Native Americans being removed from their land. Don't you remember anything we studied last week"? Andrew kept trying to tune C. J. out and only stopped for a minute to give a "high five" to his cousin, who was autistic. Even their exercise routine, running to the corner of Wedgewood Avenue and back to take a snapshot look at Belmont University's stately buildings, was skipped. He gave a lukewarm wave to Ms. Bell, who was sporting a different hair style. He thought, "she's changed hair styles since this morning." C. J. knew this was not the day to ask Andrew about riding their bikes to the 12-South neighborhood to buy their favorite ice cream flavor, Rum Raisin, at Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams or to get their bikes checked at Halcyon Bike Shop, but decided that he would tell him something, instead. "Hey Andrew," C. J. hollered, interrupting the dead silence. "You know, JoJo, the lead singer in The Throwbacks group, was formerly incarcerated." "C. J., he's trying to turn his life around, now," Andrew annoyingly snapped back. "Yes, that's the part I was getting to," C. J. quipped.

Andrew told no one, not even his parents about his conversation with the bears, because he didn't think anyone would believe him. He wouldn't go outside to play, try to help C. J. find a way to encourage Mr. Chen to talk about his artwork, or watch his favorite streaming programs. He just sat, anxiously waiting for his parents to get a call from his school and to watch the evening news. He tried to calm himself, looking from the living room window at C. J. and their friend, who uses a wheelchair, play basketball.

Finally, the phone rang, piercing the silence in the room, but it was only Ebony trying to find out how the principal's gerbil escaped from its cage, because her mother wanted to make sure the cover she designed for the cage would be secure enough to prevent the gerbil from escaping again. Andrew gave an exasperated "I don't know," quickly ending the call. The phone rang, again. Andrew jumped to his feet. He watched in anticipation as his dad answered the phone and in a couple of minutes mutter, "Oh, my goodness, Andrew, that was your school's call-out system, a recording saying that schools will be closed until further notice due to a highly contagious disease called the COVID-19." Andrew made no comment, but quickly clicked on the television, and sure enough Governor Bill Lee and Mayor John Cooper were issuing a "Safer-at-Home" order, which meant that people should stay home unless it was absolutely necessary to go out. Standing in

close proximity to the mayor and governor were Vice Mayor, Jim Shulman; Deputy Mayor of Community Engagement Brenda Haywood; and Director of Neighborhoods, Kathy Floyd-Buggs, providing the appearance of a powerful team who appeared to be seriously concerned about this problem. Andrew switched the channel where he heard someone refer to the virus as an invisible enemy, that really scared Andrew, because it reminded him of a movie where a virus caused a lot of misery. "Hopefully," he thought, "that won't happen to Edgehill/Nashville."

Andrew had a hard time keeping to himself what the bears had told him; but so far, he thought, "the bears are absolutely right, this is a big problem. I've got to contact them." But suddenly, his hair began to vibrate; he heard three loud roars, the signal that the bears were ready to send him a message. "Andrew," they said in unison; "WE'VE GOT MORE TO TELL YOU."

They began their alarming message. "Because of COVID-19, Nashville's communities' quality of life will change in a big way. Some people will become sick and many will pass away, more so the elderly. Mental health and domestic abuse issues will increase. Businesses will have to close, so they will incur revenue losses. People will be not be able to work, so people will struggle to purchase basic necessities, like buying food and meeting housing and health care costs. The city will experience a budget crisis. School closings will delay learning, and proms and graduations will be postponed or cancelled. Many children will be taught remotely. The overall medical field will be pushed to the brink in attempts to take care of the health care needs of everyone. Occasionally, it will be necessary for doctors to push appointments forward to free up staff, space, medical equipment, and supplies to take care of COVID-19 patients, whereby avenues to health care will not be as readily available.

Now, Andrew, pay particular attention to what I'm about to say. First, covid-19 will impact communities of color harder due to disinvestment and active neglect, which is defined as the lack of dedicated, long-term, action-oriented support for business ownership, affordable housing, adequate health care, gainful employment, educational access, and poverty deconcentration. Second, all of the debilitating things I just mentioned are led by Agent Destructive Force, a mean, evil person who only exists to cause chaos. Third, when Agent Destructive Forces witnesses justice, peace, unity, and diversity, the pathway to a viable and equitable community, his powers weaken. The more unity and viability in a community, the less power he has, which both can be so successful that ADF is obliterated. He is just wiped out.

Andrew was flustered; and as his hair vibrated faster, words began rushing from his mouth. "Wow," he said, "disinvestment? Active neglect? Agent Destructive Forces causes all of this? Our Edgehill-Nashville community will be ruined. What about Ms. Tea Cake, Ms. Johnson, my school, and my friends? Oh yes, what about Chef Jim at J. Alexander's Redlands Grill, and the Daughters at Christ Church Cathedral, and our friends at Christ Presbyterian Church? Will they be okay? Their GOTHAM – Nashville program helped NeighborH.O.O.D. stay afloat. Where's the community liaison Marten Fadell when you need him? He's the one who introduced NeighborH.O.O.D to the GOTHAM program. Will the Church of the Redeemer's precious saints, you know the women's bible study group, Connections, be alright? What about their thirty-plus relationship with the Edgehill community and their Gernert Studio Apartments holiday blessings to Gernert Studio Apartments seniors? They're our neighbors. They always help. Children can't go to Salama's afterschool program? What's going to happen to all of them? We're talking about people getting sick; we must call Meharry's CEO, Dr. Hildreth; Dr. Jahangir and Dr. Schaffner at Vanderbilt; and Dr. Alicia Hall. Maybe my mother's primary care physician, Dr. Martinez, can help. They'll make sure people get well. Ms. Prowell, the social worker at Gernert, she'll know what to do. She helped

my grandmother when she was having trouble with her thinking. We need many, many, many more social workers. What about the coalitions and organizations here in Edgehill"? Edgebear tried to interrupt, "Andrew, Andrew," but Andrew didn't slow down. He couldn't control his thoughts or his talking. He didn't understand how all of these thoughts about people and resources were popping into his mind. Even though he lacked full knowledge of his ramblings, he couldn't stop thinking and talking. He continued, "Let, the spiritual leader, Ms. Senora Russell, and Mr. Pittman, an avid supporter of NeighborH.O.O.D. know what's happening. The late Rev. Bill Barnes would have come up with good advice. He helped cement the Edgehill community, back in the day, along with the other icons on the Edgehill mural. Is it too late to talk with managers of the apparel stores in the 12-South and Gulch business districts about putting some of Ebony's mother's fashions in their stores.? Brad and Kim Paisley's food establishment, The Store, is going to need more food for everyone. I see Ms. Jasmine and Ms. Brittany every time we pick up food. They run the store; I'll talk to them. And while I'm at it, I'll ask them if Mr. Paisley help The Throwbacks get a record deal. I know they can come up with some new songs, especially words and music to help us get through what's coming. We've got to call Mayor Cooper, Governor Lee, Deputy Haywood and Councilperson Sledge. What about Mr. Harbison, the MDHA's Executive Director, Emeritus. "Man, you don't even know what emeritus means and neither do I," C. J. retorted. "Well," continued Andrew, "maybe I don't know, but that's what my mother said he is. Okay, then, we'll call the Interim Executive Director, Mr. Solomon and Mr. Biggs, Director of Affordable Housing, both are attorneys, they've got to have some ideas. Why don't we call Mr. Thiltgen, the MDHA Deputy Executive Director; he knows more than anybody? We need to pray. Call my pastor, Bishop Calvin Barlow, at Second Missionary Baptist Church. Oh my, what are we going to do? What's going to happen to my school? Then there's Rose Park and the Resident Association at Edgehill Apartments and Gernert Studio Apartments. What's going to happen to my community's future? The coronavirus is here. And most of all, communities of color will suffer more than others. My mind is racing. I can't control my thoughts. Where are they coming from? I can't talk any more, I can't think any more. My brain has got to slow down."

"Andrew, Andrew, stop! Stop! Calm down," Hillbear shouted! "I know you're flustered right now, because you are concerned about your community, as we; but our keeping level heads is a must. You, Edgebear, and I will use our superpowers to help Nashville-Edgehill solve its problems. We'll include everyone you named, all the resources you mentioned, and all the ideas that popped into your head. Although C. J. and Ebony do not have superpowers, they'll be a part of our team. Together, we'll build a viable and equitable community by wiping out the source of these problems, Agent Destructive Forces. We'll obliterate him by:

1. Containing the coronavirus
2. Restoring and revitalizing the community (including factors that render communities of color disproportionately vulnerable to catastrophic events, which includes active neglect and disinvestment (health care disparities, personal and business economic deficiencies, food insecurities, housing inadequacies, under employment and unemployment, and educational inequities)
3. Creating a synergistic community relationship model (among, residents, businesses, educational institutions, schools, churches, and law enforcement)

So, hurry, Andrew, call your teammates; let's meet early tomorrow morning at our Polar Bear Plaza to come up with a plan to FEND OFF AGENT DESTRUCTIVE FORCES in order to save Edgehill-Nashville, then, we'll use our superpowers to make sure the plan works."

Andrew did not realize his hair was no longer vibrating. He hurried to the phone to call C. J. and Ebony, but he didn't know how to tell them anything, because they had no idea he had been talking to the polar bears, no idea they had been appointed to be on a problem-solving team, and no idea he and the polar bears could use their superpowers to help Edgehill-Nashville. So, he decided he would just invite them to the meeting and let Edgebear and Hillbear explain why they were asked to be there.

When Andrew, C. J., and Ebony arrived at the Polar Bear Plaza the next morning, Edgebear and Hillbear were already there. However, much to their surprise, seated around the Plaza, were many of the people Andrew mentioned during the time he was highly flustered. The bears had invited many residents and leaders. There they were, eager to help superpowerful Andrew, Edgebear, and Hillbear work with C. J., and Ebony to help Edgehill-Nashville solve its problems by FENDING OFF AGENT DESTRUCTIVE FORCES, thereby building a viable and equitable community. Everyone in attendance was assigned to work on the team: OPERATION FENDING OFF AGENT DESTRUCTIVE FORCES.

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## **YOU FINISH OR ADD TO THE STORY.**

Help Andrew, Edgebear, and Hillbear (with their glowing snowballs) use their superpowers, with help from C. J., Ebony, and the OPERATION FENDING OFF AGENT DESTRUCTIVE FORCES team solve Edgehill-Nashville problems to create a viable and equitable community?

### **HOW TO PARTICIPATE**

This opportunity is only open to people who have a direct link to Davidson County, i.e., live, attend school, own or are employed by a business. There is no fee to participate. Because access to information is often limited to people who live at or below the poverty level, extra effort will be taken to assure they are aware of this opportunity.

Please use the following rules and regulations (groups and categories) to guide your participation.

#### **GROUPS**

Kindergarten – second grades (only enter categories 1 – 3)

Third – sixth grades (only enter categories 1 – 4)

Seventh – twelfth grades (enter categories 1 – 7)

Adults – 18 plus years old (only enter categories 4 – 7)

#### **HONORARIUMS (if Selected)**

\$25 gift card, trophy, featured in comic book

\$50 gift card, trophy, featured in comic book

\$75 gift card, trophy, featured in comic book

\$100 gift card, trophy, featured in comic book

#### **CATEGORIES**

1. Story ending – (Write an ending to the story.)
2. Artwork – (Draw a picture that represents any part of the story.)
3. Poem – (Make up a poem about any part of the story.)
4. C. J.'S VOCATION, graphic novelist) – (Write/add to this part of the story. Also, draw Andrew and the polar bears, Edgebear and Hillbear, as superheroes.)

5. EBONY'S MOTHER'S DREAM, fashion, design, merchandising – (Write/add to this part of the story. Also draw three apparel design sketches.)
6. TRIPLET'S CAREER, electrical – (Write/add to this part of the story, using electrical theory as a base. For instance, the human body creating electricity.)
7. THE THROWBACK'S VOCATION – (Put NeighborH.O.O.D's theme song lyrics to music. See pulldown on website. Slight word changes will be accepted.)

## CONTENT

You may participate in any part of this art project that is within your group/category. For instance, you may choose to advance the section of the story regarding Ebony's mother's dream (how she's going to make her dream come true and/or what types of clothes she'll design and make).

You may include any aspect of your daily lives (virtual learning, classmates, school, career, family, job loss or gain; business; community redevelopment, including MDHA 's vision for new housing; recent move to the city; imagined vacations). If you use someone's real name in the story, please get his or her permission in writing. You may probably use public figures' names like your governor, mayor, councilperson, pastor, teacher, or principal without their permission.

An honorarium will be given to selected artists (via a public selection process) from each grouping for each of the eleven categories. You may only enter your designated eligibility area. For example: Kindergarten – second grades can only enter categories 1 thru 3, thereby an honorarium for the kindergarten – second grades for category 1 (story ending); an honorarium for the kindergarten – second grades for category 2 (artwork), and an honorarium for the kindergarten – second grades for category 3 (poem).

## AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Honorarium recipients will be announced at an AWARDS CELEBRATION (subject to health guidelines) on Saturday, June 5, 2021, (first part: 3 – 4 p.m., MDHA's Polar Bear Plaza, 12<sup>th</sup> at Edgehill, 1101 Edgehill Ave, Nashville, TN 37203, second part: 4 – 5 p.m. at Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, 1419 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, S, Nashville, TN 37203) and on NeighborH.O.O.D's website. View the website for updates; programming is subject to change.

All who submit an entry will:

1. Be invited to attend the *Andrew and the Edgehill Polar Bears Use Their Superpowers* graphic novel Awards Celebration.
2. Receive an *Andrew and the Edgehill Polar Bears Use Their Superpowers* graphic novel certificate of completion.
3. Be acknowledged in the *Andrew and the Edgehill Polar Bears Use Their Superpowers* graphic novel publication.
4. Receive an *Andrew and the Edgehill Polar Bears Use Their Superpowers* graphic novel publication.

Honorarium recipients (in addition to the above) will:

1. Be featured (your entry will be woven into the story and given publication credit) in the *Andrew and the Edgehill Polar Bears Use Their Superpowers* graphic novel's publication (hard copy and viewing on NeighborH.O.O.D.'s website).
2. Receive a gift card and a trophy.

3. Participate in a discussion regarding cooperative business ownership opportunities based on entry category.
  - a. C. J.'s VOCATION – to discuss graphic artist opportunities.
  - b. EBONY'S MOTHER'S DREAM – to discuss clothing design, production, and merchandising opportunities.
  - c. TRIPLET'S CAREER – to discuss opportunities in the electrical field.
  - d. THE THROWBACKS VOCATION – to discuss music production opportunities.
4. Perform in a play based on the *Andrew and the Edgehill Polar Bears Use Their Superpowers* graphic novel.

#### **HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY**

**(Entries must be submitted by 12 o'clock midnight on Friday, May 7, 2021)**

Submit your entry with the following information: submission group, category, name, date, address, age, school, grade, and telephone number in one of the following ways.

- a. Upload your entry to neighborhoodnashville.com. Use the *Andrew and the Edgehill Polar Bears* entry form and follow directions for uploading. Entry must be uploaded by 12 o'clock midnight on Friday, May 7, 2021.
- b. Mail your entry to NeighborH.O.O.D. P.O. Box 198944, Nashville, TN 37219; envelope must be date stamped by the U. S. Postal Service by 12 o'clock midnight, Friday, May 7, 2021.
- c. Call to make other arrangements for entry submissions.

All entries become the property of NeighborH.O.O.D. Entries will not be returned.

**Support from corporations, organizations, churches, groups, and individuals is welcomed: neighborhoodnashville.com.**

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