



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PROJECT  
CORNERSTONE**  
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

Dear Teachers and Support Staff:

This month the ABC Volunteers will be reading the book *I Wish You Knew* by Jackie Azúa Kramer. The story has characters sharing what they wish others knew about them. This thought-provoking book encourages students to consider their own biases and assumptions. It provides opportunities for conversations about compassion, active listening, and perspective-taking.

Active listening is an important skill for growing empathy and connecting. It allows students to:

- Better understand the situation
- Improve retention of information
- Enhance engagement
- Refine communication skills

**As follow up for this book, consider having students practice their active listening skills. Pair up students and instruct them to:**

- Actively listen by:
  - Making eye contact, smiling, and nodding.
  - Paraphrasing responses to show that you understand.
  - Asking clarifying questions.
- Practice with some simple questions:
  - What would you do, if you won the lottery?
  - If you had a magic wand, what would you change about the world?
  - What school rule would you like to change and why?
  - If you could do anything you wanted to right now, what would you do?

By giving students opportunities to practice their active listening skills, you are teaching them to gain insight into the speaker's experiences. This perspective-taking builds empathy in the listener and in the speaker.

We *wish you knew* that we value and appreciate all that you do and are filled with gratitude!