The Friendship Makers

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Introduction

The Friendship Makers is part of the Star Collection developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control for young American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) readers. The Star Collection features and celebrates factors, such as feeling connected to culture and community and having positive relationships with others, that help create safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for AI/AN children.

We recognize that AI/AN communities are diverse. ***The Friendship Makers*** utilizes that diversity to incorporate varying cultures, traditions, and customs within the story. This book aims to respectfully reflect, honor, and celebrate some of the shared characteristics across many AI/AN communities and allow opportunities for conversation about a child's specific tribal traditions. We hope children will be able to see themselves and their tribal community reflected in the story and illustrations. We also encourage parents, caregivers and educators to help children further connect the story to their own tribal culture. We have included a short guide at the end (see pages 33-35) with ideas for educators, parents, and caregivers to help children talk about and learn from this book.

Marisa Erven (Siren Cove Studios), a member of the Coquille Tribe of Oregon, wrote and illustrated ***The Friendship Makers***. She is an artist and author with over a decade of experience in storytelling. Her experience includes creating illustrations and cover art for books, as well as designing company visuals for AI/AN businesses. She also brings story into focus with her art direction of emergent cinematic-driven technologies, including contributions to award-winning and narrative-focused videogames.

Representatives from tribal nations across the United States, including tribal leaders, Elders, parents, teachers and others, also provided input during the development of this book to help make it relevant and engaging to diverse young AI/AN readers. We would like to express our gratitude to all the individuals and groups who contributed to the development of this book, with special acknowledgment to the CDC/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's Tribal Advisory Committee.

Many thanks also go to the Indian Health Service (IHS) for their partnership and support. We would also like to express our gratitude to Dr. Vivian García López, from the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona, for her contributions to the development of the educator's guide for this book. Last, we acknowledge our great partners on this project: FHI 360 and Siren Cove Studios.

We hope you enjoy the book and will share it with others!

The Star Collection Team

The Friendship Makers

NAVAJO LANGUAGE VERSION

This e-book version has select words translated in Navajo language. If a direct translation of a word was not available, similar alternatives have been included.

We would like to thank Lamont Yazzie, Ed.D., from the Navajo Nation in Arizona, for providing the translations.

The Friendship Makers was inspired by the Eagle Books, a series of books for young AI/AN readers that highlight the wisdom of healthy eating, physical activity, and diabetes awareness. CDC, IHS, and the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee debuted the Eagle Books for K–4th readers in 2006—*Through the Eyes of the Eagle, Knees Lifted High, Plate Full of Color,* and *Tricky Treats*. Georgia Perez, the Community Health Representative for Nambe Pueblo for 19 years, wrote the Eagle Books and Patrick Rollo (Bad River Band of Ojibwe, Wisconsin) and Lisa A. Fifield (Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, Black Bear Clan) illustrated them. The series now includes a trilogy of youth novels and a graphic novel for readers in grades 5–9.

You can download or order the free Eagle Books at:
https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndwp/eagle-books

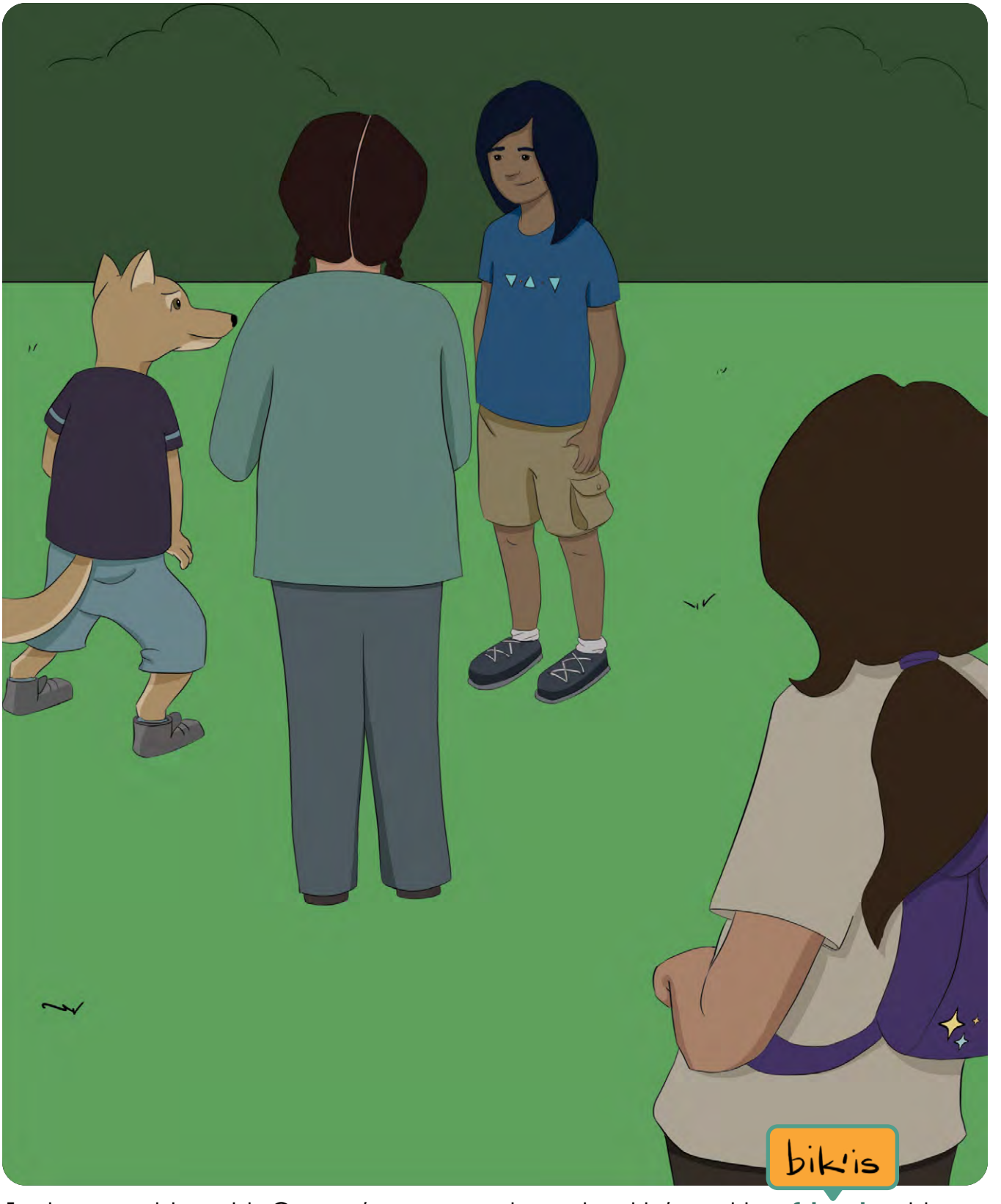
Siren Cove Studios

Written and Illustrated by
Marisa Erven

Janine is excited to join **friends** for a game of ball. As she walks over to play, she sees Desmond sitting alone. Coyote sees him too and grins.

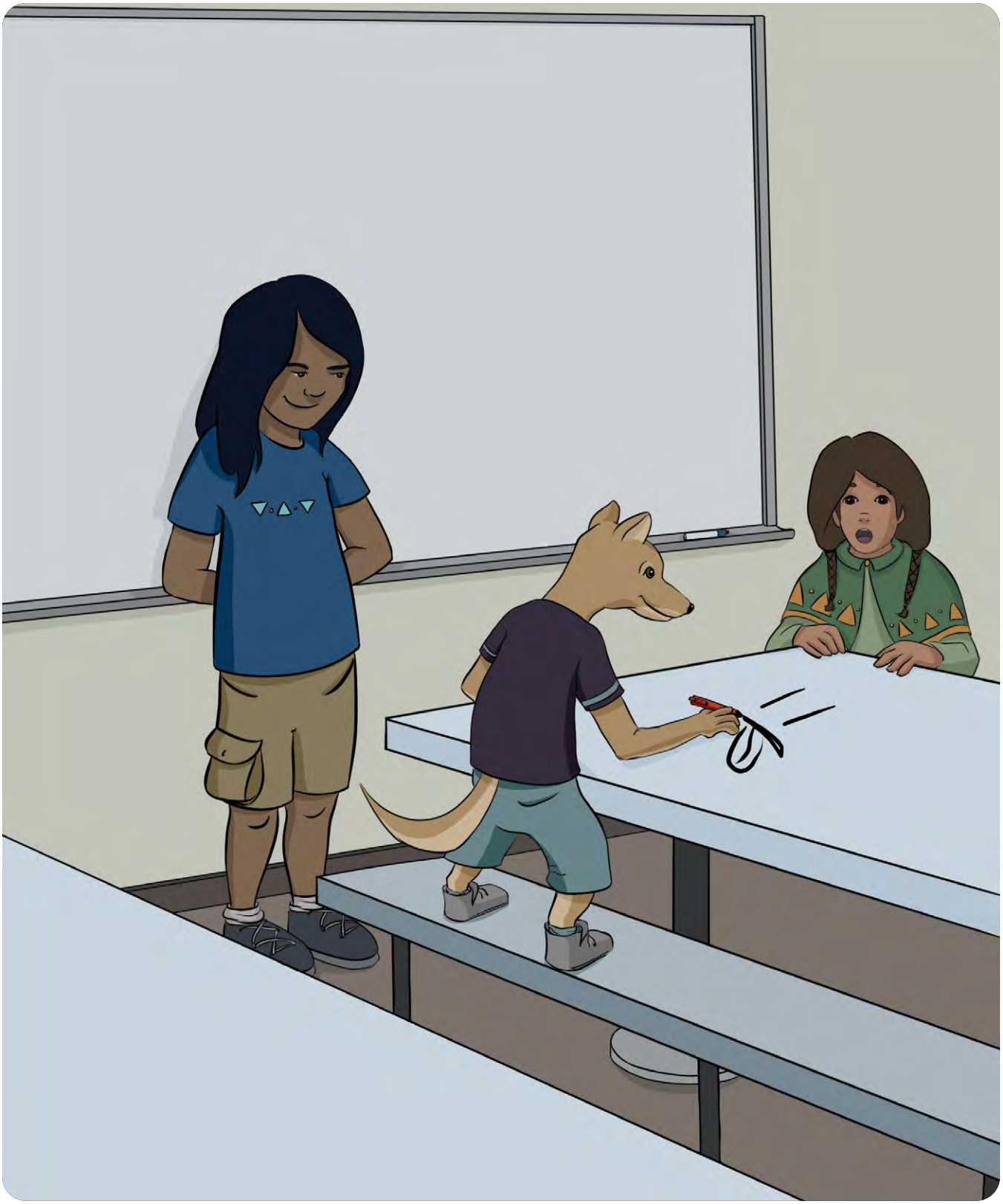
"Desmond, come play with us," Coyote howls. Desmond looks up to see Coyote and his **friends** nearby. "Oh, ok!" Desmond says.

bik'is



Janine sees him with Coyote's group and worries. He's making **friends** with a rough group. They play jokes on kids and are rude to **Elders**.

nihastóí dóó záanii



Coyote is a trickster and he can cause hurt feelings. Once Janine saw him draw with a permanent marker on a desk.

Coyote is sneaky and blamed someone else for it. Janine wants to **help** Desmond but is not sure what to do. She decides to ask Elder Anne for advice.

"I'm worried. My **friend** is spending time with a trickster. It's changing him. What can I do?"

Elder Anne says, "Show you" **care** for him. Be kind to him. **Help** him make **friends** with others you know will be kind to him."

bik'is

Days later, Desmond and Coyote's group are sitting outside again. They all start laughing when a kid trips and falls on the ground.

Elder Rob sees them. He waves for them to come over to him. Rob says, "You are all **special**. Worthy of love."

Íloo baa nitsískees

'aijéí bił dahajooba'

"I know you all have **good hearts**. Show it to others. Remember what your **community** has taught you about **kindness**."

nił dah nidahaz'ánęęgi

dajooba'

Desmond and the Coyote group are confused by the **Elder's** comment and why he **cares**. He shrugs with them as they walk into the community center.

nihaa 'ádahojilyą

Later that day, a kid makes a mistake and takes Desmond's marker during an activity. Desmond calls the kid names and grabs the marker back.

Janine sees him do this. It makes Janine sad to see how Desmond has changed since he joined Coyote's group. He is mean to other kids now.

She then remembers what Elder Anne said to her about how she can **help** him.

The next day, Janine sees Coyote wave at Desmond. Coyote says, “Come on, Desmond. We’re going to go spray paint on a wall. It’ll be cool.”

Desmond says, “Where?” Coyote responds, “The community mural wall. No big deal, it already has paint on it. We’re just adding to it.”

Desmond doesn't want to cover up the community murals. He loves the beautiful murals that his **family**, **community**, and the Elders painted.

nihi k'éí

nił dah nidahaz'ánęęgi

Coyote waves at Desmond again impatiently. Coyote yips, “Desmond, what is up with you? Come with us.”

Janine hears this. It's her time to **help**. She waves for him to join her. "Desmond, hey! Over here! Snack time!"

Desmond looks at Coyote, who is glaring at him. Desmond is tired of Coyote. He doesn't want to destroy things or trick others.

Desmond joins Janine. She says happily, “Everyone! Desmond’s here. Let’s get some snacks. Say hi!”

Her **friends** smile at Desmond. They give him a snack plate. Desmond smiles shyly. “Thanks,” he says and sits down. Janine’s heart is full.

Janine says, “Desmond! We’re making beaded **gifts** to give to the **Elders**. Join us!” Desmond looks over with relief and joy. Coyote never wanted to do that.

He nods and smiles. A feeling of happiness is in his heart. Janine says, “Make room for Desmond. He wants to make one too!”

They break out in laughter together. Smiles of friendship spread around the table as everyone works on their **gifts** for community **Elders**.

hala k'e'oolyá

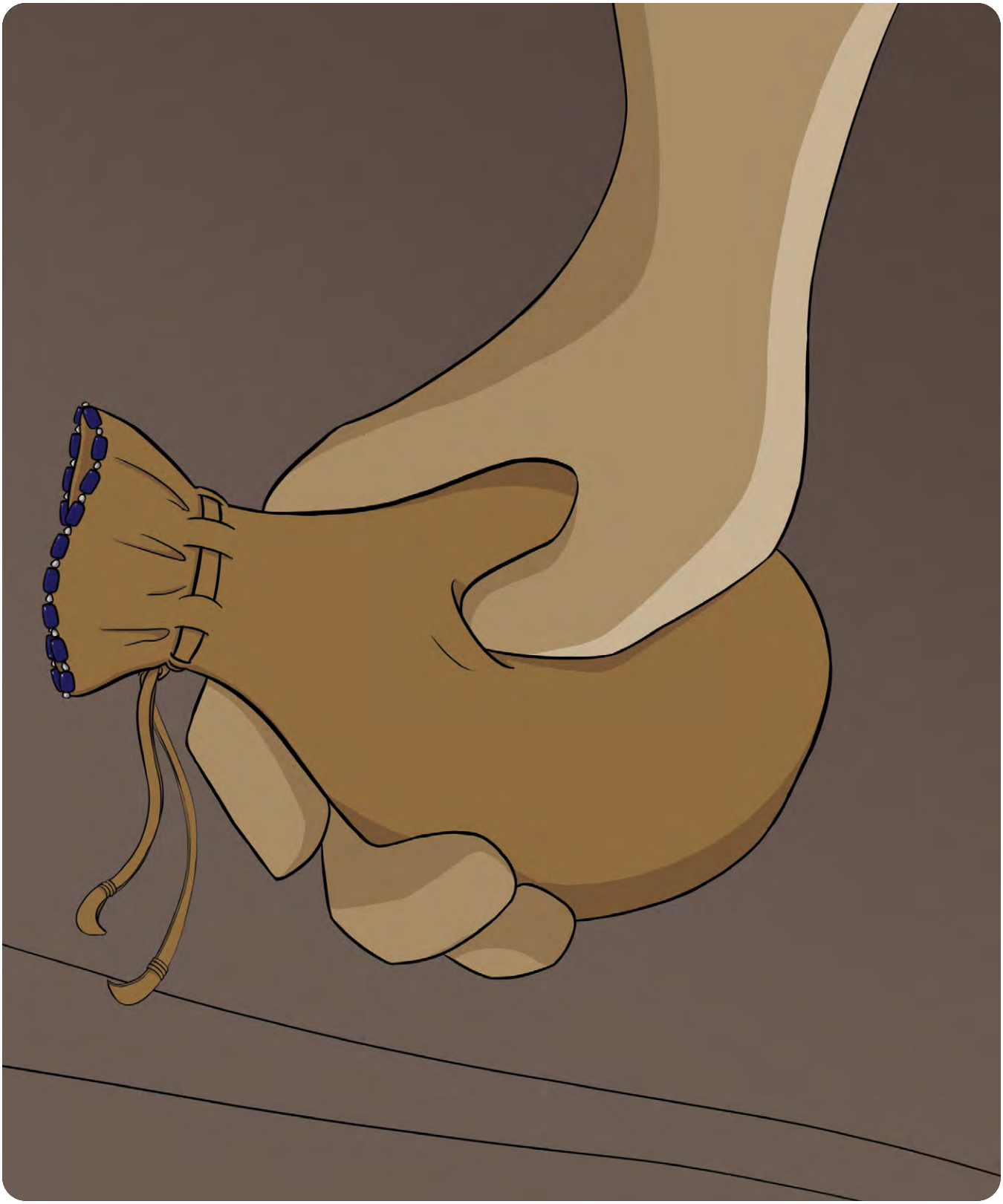
nihastóí dóó záanii

Janine and her **friends** tell **stories** while making their **Elder gifts**. Coyote looks over their way longingly.

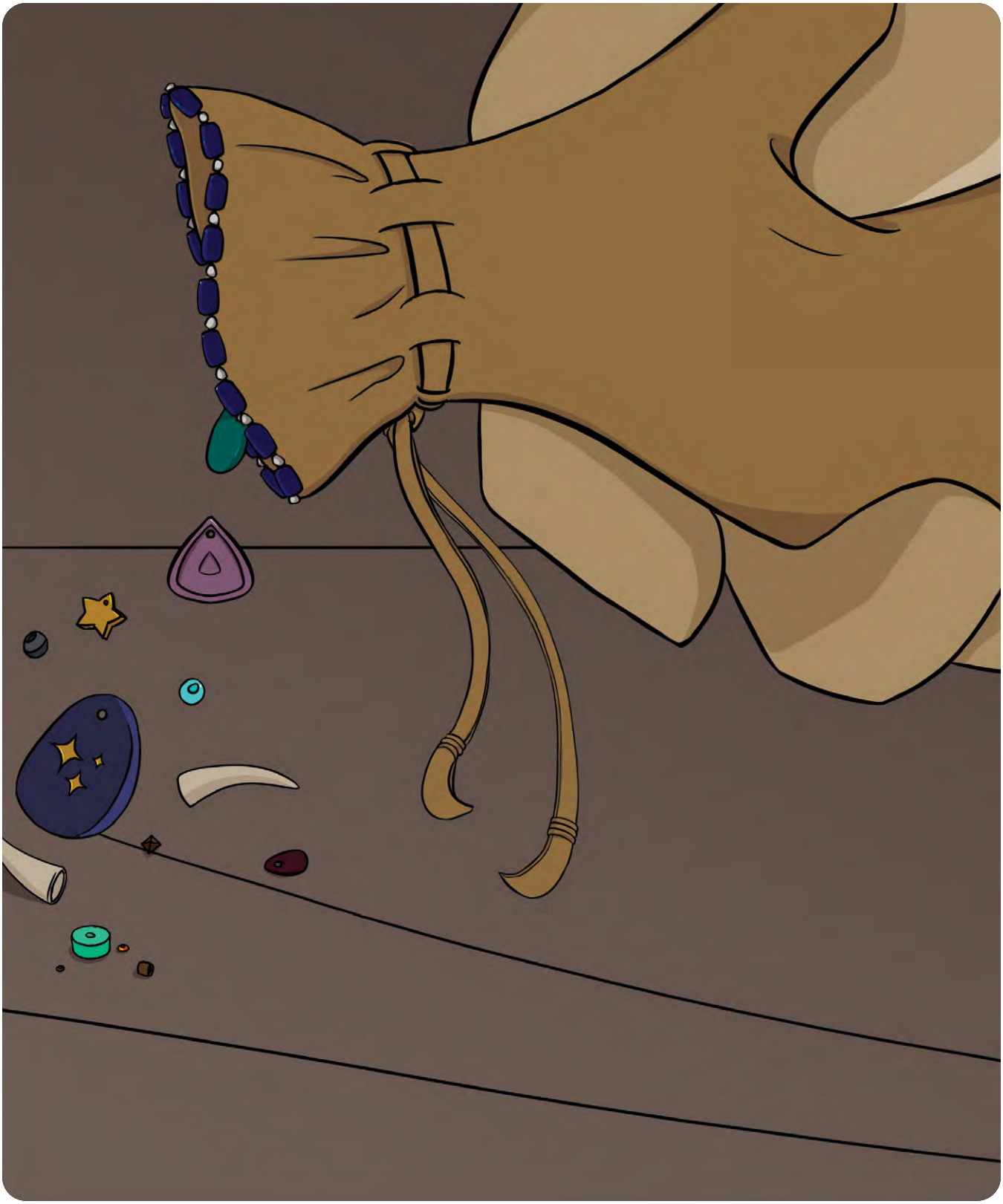
hani'

hala k'e'oolyá

Hearing their laughter, jokes, and joy make Coyote want to join in on the fun. He signals to the Coyote group to follow him.



Janine looks up from beading nervously as Coyote walks over to Desmond. Coyote takes a small pouch out of his pocket and sets it on the table.



Out of it pour small, beautiful stone beads. He shyly looks down and asks if they can join. Coyote even offers to share his favorite beads with the group.

Janine smiles emphatically. “Yes, welcome!” They all sit beading at the table. Elder Rob and Elder Anne stand nearby, faces shining with joy.

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR

The Friendship Makers

This guide offers ideas and suggestions to begin a dialogue with children about the story. We recognize the diversity among American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) cultures, traditions and understandings and encourage you to modify or expand on the ideas based on the children's specific culture(s), lived experiences, and age group.

Overview of Upstander Behaviors in the Book

The Friendship Makers is a story that aims to model and encourage age-appropriate ways of being a good friend, bystander or upstander for children in K–3rd grades. An **upstander** is a bystander who engages in positive actions (e.g., provides a distraction, delegates the situation to someone else, and directly addresses the bullying). For example, an upstander speaks or acts in support of someone who is being bullied or experiencing other unwanted negative behaviors, whether verbal, physical, social, or digital in nature. Such behaviors typically cause the victim to feel hurt, humiliated, or intimidated, and can have other negative personal and emotional effects.

In the book, Janine's actions serve as examples of how children can be upstanders. First, an upstander must recognize when someone is experiencing negative peer pressure or bullying—such as name-calling, exclusion from activities, hitting, and gossiping.

After recognizing the behavior, Janine became an upstander by:

- **Seeking guidance from a trusted adult or Bright One (see *Stars that Connect Us* book)** in their life, such as an Elder, parent, caregiver, teacher, or program leader.
- **Practicing inclusion and kindness and building connections,** such as befriending and being kind to those experiencing the unwanted behaviors and to children who are socially isolated.
- **Redirecting or distracting from the situation,** such as by interrupting the conversation and asking those experiencing the unwanted behavior to join in a different and positive activity, like having a snack or making beaded gifts.

Other age-appropriate ways to be an upstander include:

- Choosing not to put negative peer pressure on or bully others
- Not becoming an audience for the child who bullies by laughing or encouraging the behavior in any way

Overview of Cultural Protective Factors in the Book

The Friendship Makers also highlights and celebrates cultural protective factors. This refers to cultural factors among AI/AN children and their communities that may protect them from violence and injury and promote their health and wellbeing, such as:

- Feeling connected to their culture
- Having positive relationships and interactions with others, such as with friends, family, and Elders
- Feeling supported and nurtured
- Experiencing positive social norms

Some ways in which cultural protective factors are reflected in the book include highlighting community Elders as a source of wisdom and guidance for the community and sharing cultural activities and traditions (such as beading and creating items for gifting to show gratefulness).

By incorporating the trickster figure (Coyote) as a character, the book also reflects the use of cultural stories for teaching lessons. Trickster figures are commonly associated with unintended mischief. While in the book the trickster is represented as a coyote, trickster representations vary across AI/AN cultures. Instead of a coyote, it is possible the children may instead associate the trickster figure with a raven, rabbit, or in other ways. We encourage you to discuss with children if and how the trickster figure is represented in their own AI/AN culture.

Sample Discussion Topics

Use the sample topics and questions below to help you talk with children about the book.

- **Topic 1: Recognizing Bullying and Negative Peer Pressure,** such as when they or others may be experiencing unwanted aggressive or negative behaviors.

LEARNING AND BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

After reading this book and taking part in supplemental discussion and activities, children will be able to:

- Identify at least one way to encourage age-appropriate ways of being a good friend, bystander, or upstander for children.
- Identify a trusted family or community member to discuss and seek advice from on how to be a good friend.
- Recognize negative peer pressure and bullying.
- Engage in activities that celebrate and honor their culture and, at the same time, protect and promote their health and well-being.

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

Create an inclusive environment that promotes a culture of acceptance, provides children with a sense of safety, caring and belonging, and offers positive reinforcement and opportunities to strengthen children's sense of hope, self-respect and self-worth.

Prepare to discuss emotions children might express—either verbally or non-verbally—when reading or talking about the book. Help children identify and discuss feelings related to being bullied, bullying others, witnessing or standing up against bullying. Some feelings that may be shared are:

> *Compassion, Confidence, Kindness, Thoughtfulness, Honor, Gratitude, Self-worth, Friendship, Safety, Support, Sense of belonging, Strength/resilience, Humor, Anger, Peer pressure, Sadness, Fear or worry, Danger, Loneliness/feeling excluded, or Feeling unsure*

Familiarize yourself with your school or program's bullying policy and be prepared to act accordingly. As appropriate, help children identify and understand the policies and systems in place for them to report bullying and other unwanted behaviors that they or others may be experiencing.

Identify and share local resources with parents/caregivers that can help promote children's self-esteem, self-worth, sense of belonging, and safety and wellness. Resources include family members, school resources, counselors, health services, social services, spiritual/medicine leaders, Clan members, Elders, or cultural knowledge holders.

Prepare to share culturally relevant tribal stories, songs, language, and activities, including ones that highlight topics and information related to the story (e.g., friendship, compassion, kindness). Consider checking with cultural knowledge holders from the children's own AI/AN community(ies) about appropriate and relevant information to share with the children. You may invite cultural knowledge holders to share traditional stories, songs, and other cultural experiences with the children, including ones related to being an upstander.

- Talk with children about what bullying and peer pressure mean—including the difference between positive and negative peer pressure. As appropriate, share examples such as unwanted physical actions—like hitting, spitting, or tripping; verbal actions—such as name-calling, threats, or hurtful comments; or relational/social actions—such as gossip, rumors, or exclusion. Depending on the children's age and access, some of these verbal and social actions may occur in a digital space (e.g., social media, texting).
- Discuss Coyote's behaviors and relationships with peers, and how Desmond's behavior changed as a result of Coyote's negative peer pressure.

- **Topic 2: Being an Upstander.** Talk with children about age-appropriate ways to be an upstander (e.g., reporting to and seeking advice from trusted adults, practicing inclusion and kindness, redirecting or distracting from the situation). Acknowledge that being an upstander takes courage. Discuss the roles of Janine, Elder Rob, and Elder Anne and their different approaches to helping Desmond and Coyote make better choices. For instance, talk about how Janine sought guidance from Elder Anne, and how Janine asked Desmond to join her and her group in making beaded gifts.
- **Topic 3: Resilience.** Explain what it means to be resilient. Share examples of personal strengths, self-confidence, cultural pride, identity, and/or situations when people live through something difficult, like bullying or negative peer pressure. Discuss different ways the characters demonstrated resilience. For instance, Desmond chose to go make beadwork with Janine instead of destroying a community mural, and Janine persisted in finding ways to help Desmond. Coyote also joined the beading activity and learned about being a good friend through Janine's example.

Connect the discussion back to specific moments in the story and to the children's own AI/AN culture and experiences. Talk about cultural activities that the characters engage in and help children identify similar activities in their own community.

Sample Discussion Questions by Topic

Recognizing Bullying and Negative Peer Pressure

1. At the start of the story, Desmond begins to spend time with Coyote. Why do you think Desmond starts spending time with Coyote?
2. Janine said Desmond changed after spending time with Coyote. In what ways did Desmond change? Do you think the way he was acting was hurtful to others? How?
3. Have you ever heard the word peer pressure? What do you think it means? Is peer pressure always a bad thing? What are some examples of good and bad peer pressure?
4. Have you ever experienced peer pressure? How? [*Ask for examples of both good and bad peer pressure*]. What did you do about it?
5. Have you ever felt like you had to do something unkind because others were doing it? What did you do about it?

Being an Upstander

1. What did Janine do when she saw Desmond starting to behave like Coyote? If someone you care about starts to be unkind to others, what would you do?
2. Would you say that Janine is Desmond's friend? How do you describe a "friend"? How did Janine show that she cares for Desmond?
3. In the story, some of the children's feelings get hurt. What can you do if someone is hurtful or mean to you? What can you do if you see someone being mean or hurting someone else?
4. Janine asked Elder Anne for advice when she noticed Desmond was spending time with Coyote. What did Elder Anne tell Janine she could do?
5. If you saw someone being hurtful or unkind to someone else, or to you, to whom could you go for advice on what to do? What would you tell them?

6. In the story, Elder Rob reminds the children that they all have a good heart and are worthy of love. In what ways can you show that you have a good heart?
7. What are some examples of kindness you see or hear about within your own community?
8. In the story, Janine shows different things you can do if you see someone being unkind or hurtful to someone else. Do you think you would do the same as Janine if you saw that happening to someone else? What could you do?
9. The book talks about everyone being worthy of love. What do you think that means?

Resilience

1. In the book, there is a mural of a bear on a wall and it reminds everyone about strength and power. What do you think it means to be strong?
2. Have you ever heard the word "resilient"? What does that mean to you? Can you describe a time when you or another person were resilient or strong?
3. What are some positive ways to deal with bad (or negative) peer pressure?
4. What are some good things that Desmond could learn from spending time with Janine and Coyote that could help him be stronger?

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Here are some activities you can consider to help children better understand and learn from the story.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Have Circle Time

- At the end of each day, ask the children to sit in a circle. Each child will let the person sitting on their left know they are appreciated and for what reason. For instance, "I appreciate that Lonna helped Gina get up when she fell at recess today."
- Discuss what bullying and negative peer pressure are and ask children how that makes people feel.
- Reinforce classroom and school rules and norms, including that bullying is not acceptable or tolerated. Connect AI/AN local cultural values about community and positive relationships.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Role play

- Enhance children's confidence, knowledge, and comfort levels with being an upstander. Talk with them about how to be a good friend, discuss examples from the story, and model behaviors through role play and/or short theatrical skits.
- Use stuffed animals or puppets to role-play behaviors that model being a good friend.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Host kindness promotion events or activities

- Plan and host events and activities that promote showing kindness to other people and to natural living beings (e.g., Kindness Counts) or that address anti-bullying behaviors and being an upstander.
- For example, events and activities may include having a mailbox where everyone can drop nice notes and comments for others throughout a designated week, having a picnic or potluck where everyone brings a favorite food or dish to share, planting a flower patch and having children regularly water it, or preparing and presenting gifts to others (such as beaded or woven gifts or seeds for planting).

ACTIVITY IDEA: Teach heritage language(s) words or phrases

- Identify some key words in the book and discuss similar ideas, perspectives, practices, or cultural understandings in the children's heritage language(s). Sample key words from the book may include *gifts, community, care(s), friends, or family*.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Have storytelling and cultural gatherings or activities

- Invite AI/AN cultural knowledge holders to share traditional or cultural stories with the children that promote positive relationships, caring for one another, helping others when in need, demonstrating compassion, and demonstrating courage to stop or prevent bullying.
- Additional shared cultural stories may include cultural expectations and values with regards to building and sustaining positive healthy relationships.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Do cultural arts/craft projects

- Make beadwork or other crafts which demonstrate unity, harmony, and community.
- Create a collage about respecting others, being an upstander, or the effects of bullying.
- Have children draw examples from their culture(s) that demonstrate strength and resilience.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Create story or picture books

- Write/draw a story of their favorite memory of related story topics (friendship, kindness, asking for help).
- Ask children to draw an example that shows being an upstander. For instance, you could prompt them to create a superhero that is an upstander and ask them to give their superhero a name and powers (such as teaching others how to play games so they do not feel left out, helping people cross the street, helping keep an area clean so others can enjoy it).
- Write/draw a story, poem, or song that includes a trickster. It could be a trickster that is representative of their own AI/AN culture.

For more information go to https://www.cdc.gov/injury/tribal/starcollection/

LET'S BE FRIENDS!

The Friendship Makers

Desmond feels lost. He has no friends at the community center.
Watch as he meets tricky Coyote.

Coyote is not being a good friend,
so Janine introduces Desmond to her friends to help.

Desmond likes his new circle of friends, and grows alongside
others at the community center.

Be Kind. Care for others.
Everyone is worthy of love.

See the kids learn what true friendship means.
How caring for others provides support to everyone, including Coyote.

Be a part of their joy and smiles
as they change and grow in ***The Friendship Makers***.

The Friendship Makers is a contemporary story for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children that celebrates some of the shared values and traditions across many AI/AN communities which help create safe, stable, and nurturing environments and relationships for AI/AN children.

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A short educator's guide is included at the end of the book.

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