

Youth Seeking Wisdom About Life on Earth!

Dear Community Residents:

My name is Jessica McCallum, and I am a teacher in Durango, CO studying philosophy and the “meaning of life” with my 11th grade Humanities students. We are grappling with such big questions as:

- *What is the purpose of human life? (Why are we here?!?)*
- *What is the difference between a happy life and a meaningful life? Which is more important?*
 - *Or as Aristotle might ask: What is a “life well-lived”?*
- *What are we supposed to be learning in our time here on Earth?*

We read a lot of literature and philosophy and have a lot of mind-bending discussion on these topics; it’s a life-changing project for many of my students! This year, I am trying to add a dimension to the project that gives them an opportunity to seek out wisdom from people who have more perspective on these questions than the students currently have in their young lives.

The pandemic has kept them pretty isolated, as I imagine it has for many of you. I am motivated to help my students find human connection and gain insights on these topics from folks who might enjoy sharing their wisdom. So I am seeking to set up small groups of students to interview folks from older generations that are interested in talking to young people about these big life questions. The following is a sample of the types of questions my students might ask. You would not need to answer every single one, and there would certainly be freedom for you to guide the conversation and share the wisdom that you feel most appropriate to our project.

❖ Possible Interview Questions:

- What do you think is the purpose of human life on Earth? How do you answer the question: *Why are we here?*
- How do you define a “life well-lived”?
- Which is more important to seek in this life: happiness or meaningfulness?
- What in your life has brought you the most happiness?
- What has given your life the most meaning?
- What are the greatest lessons about life on Earth that you have learned?
- What are the experiences that have taught you the most?
- Is there a story you might share that illuminates one of these important lessons?
- If you could give your 17-year-old self some advice, what would it be?
- If you could go back in time and change something about your path, what might it be?
- What do you wish my generation understood about life on Earth?

If this is something you might be interested in, please let Mary or Dan know, and we will be in touch in the near future! Many thanks for your consideration and your time!