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Chapter 1

Community Unity

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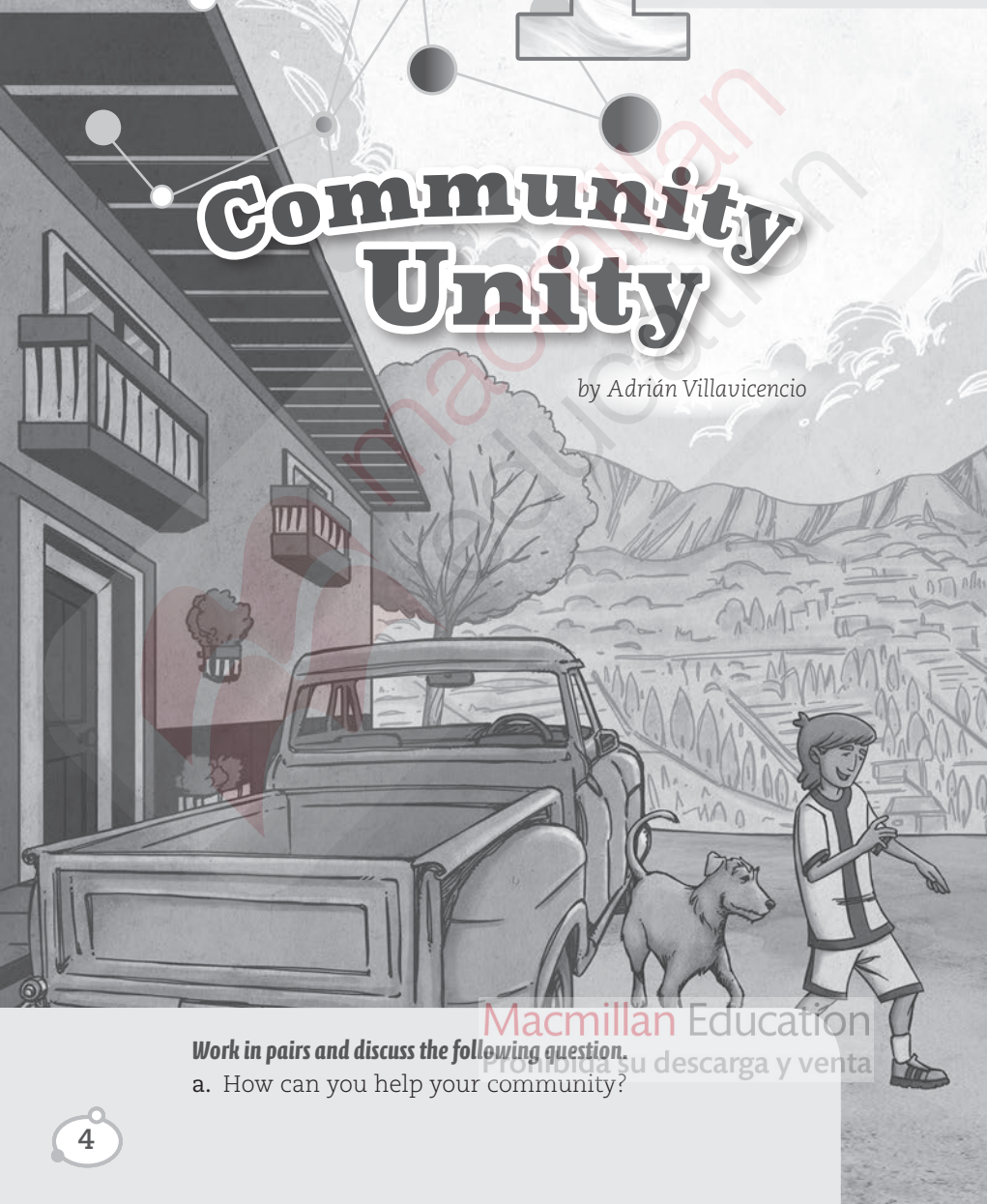

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Work in pairs and discuss the following question.

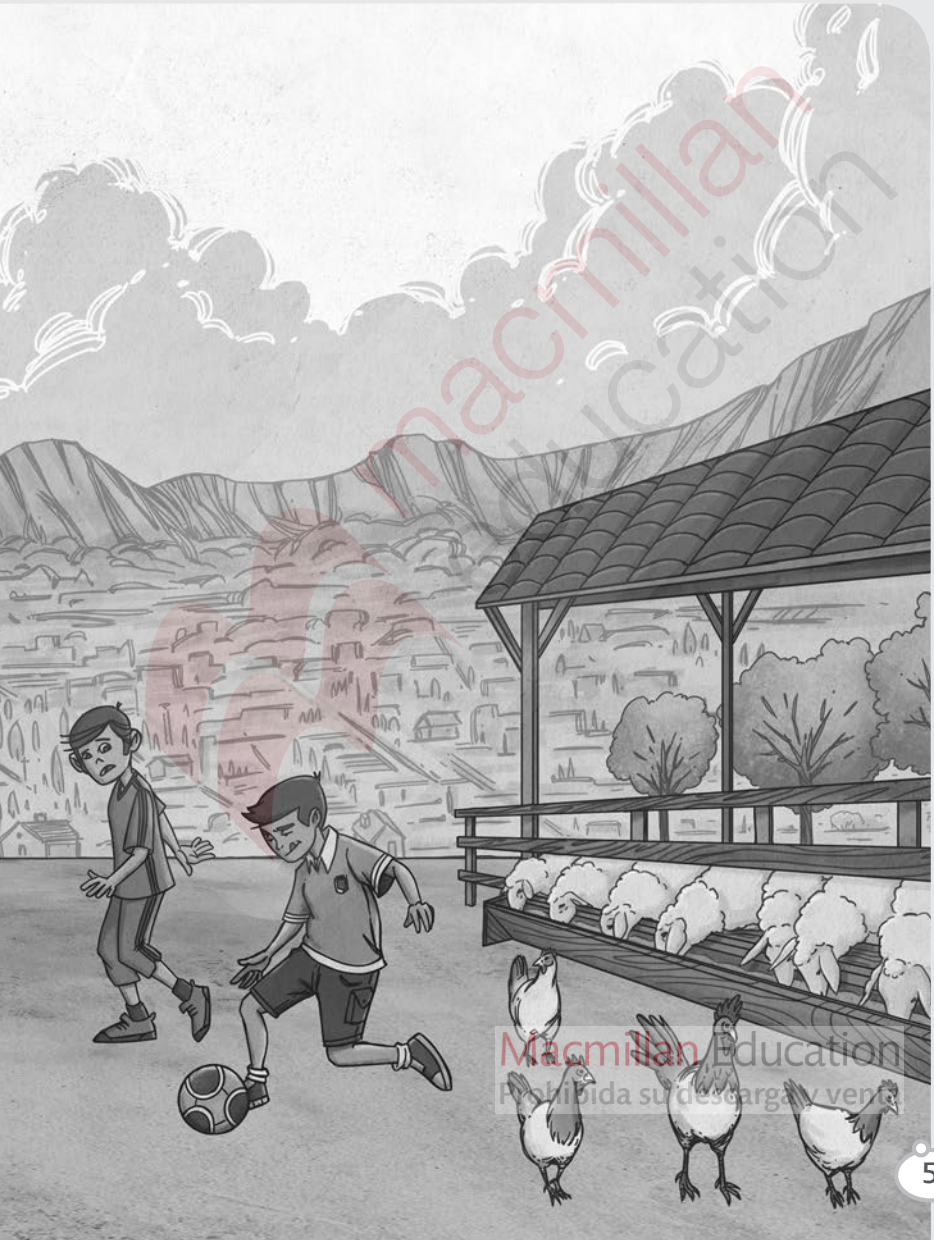
a. How can you help your community?

Social Learning Environment:

Family and community

Social Practice: Exchanges associated with specific purposes.

Communicative Activity: Exchange views of a community service.



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This is Pedro Aragón. He lives in a small town near Jardín, Antioquia, in Colombia called "Milagro". He lives with his family on a small farm in the mountains. It's a beautiful life there. Pedro has a great view of the town below where his Dad drives him to school every day.

Once a week, the mailman arrives on his motor scooter to deliver the mail for the whole mountain community. The neighbors go to Pedro's house to pick it up. There is a **well** on Pedro's farm and last year his Dad bought a generator, so now they have electricity.

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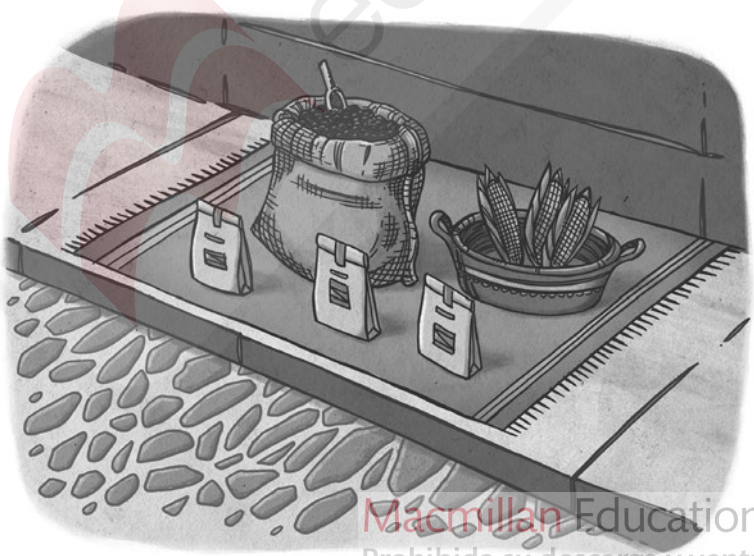
well: (n) a deep hole dug in the ground to provide a supply of water.

Pedro goes to the secondary school in Milagro. It's a good school and he has lots of friends. His best friends are Mario and José. His Mom goes to the town for medicine and things like shoes and clothes. Sometimes she takes Pedro to the local stores for a special treat.

Both his Mom and Dad take their coffee and other **crops** to sell at the market once a week while Pedro plays games with his school friends.

"Sometimes I want to live in the town", he told Mario. "There are so many things to do there."



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crop: (n) a plant grown for food, usually on a farm.

Last week, Pedro's Mom sent him to the pharmacy.

"I have a headache, get me something, please," she said. Pedro and his father ran to the pharmacy in town, and went straight to the **counter**.

"How can I help you today, Pedro?" the pharmacist asked.

"Could you give me something for my mother's headache?" he asked.

"I have these pills. How many do you need?" she asked.

"I guess a blister pack will be enough," his father answered.

They paid for the medicine and left. They bought some more things in town, and then drove back to the farm.

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counter: (n) a long, flat surface where customers are served in a shop.

That night an earthquake shook the whole community. Most of the townspeople were still on the streets, coming home from church, coming out of the movies, or just sitting in the main **square**.

The families, who were at home having dinner, ran out of their houses and stood together with their neighbors in the street. Streetlights and trees were falling down, and houses were cracking.

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square: (n) an open area of land in the shape of a square.

It was not the first time an earthquake had shaken the town, so they knew what to do, but this one was strong, very strong. People could barely walk. When it was over, the town had no electricity and the road to the next big city was **cracked.**

The police went around the town checking on people and found that some were hurt. The biggest problem was that public services such as gas, water, telephone and electricity were not working.

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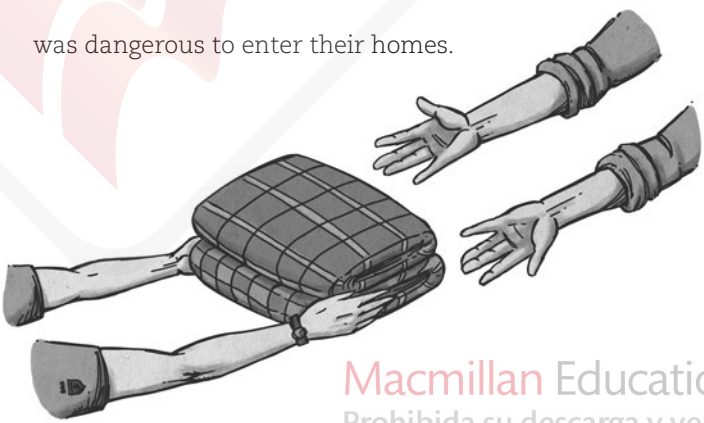
cracked: (adj) damaged or broken without separation.

Pedro and his Dad could see that the town was in complete darkness. The power had **gone off**. Pedro was afraid for his friends.

"Dad! Mario, José, and their families may be in trouble. Perhaps they're hurt. Let's check on them!"

"Wait Pedro", replied his father, "We need more help. We will also go to see if our neighbors are OK."

They went to their neighbors' farms. Luckily, they were all well. They loaded Mr. Aragón's and other farmers' trucks with food, water and medicines and drove into the town as the sun was rising. The townspeople were still on the streets. They believed it was dangerous to enter their homes.



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go off: (phr.v) when electricity or light supply does not work.

Pedro met up with all his friends from school. "My Dad said that there is no communication with the **surrounding** towns," said José. "We need to volunteer and join the adults to help!"

Many of the townspeople were volunteering to do whatever was needed. The people who knew about electricity got together in a team and went to work. Pedro and his friends were sent to distribute water and check the houses. Some boys, girls and women in the town got together to cook for all the people.

They ate and slept outside in the cold at the town square. Everybody was working to get their services back.

The people of Milagro worked tireslessly for two weeks. The mountain farmers supplied water and electricity with their generators until they could fix everything in town. The transportation services were restored three days later.

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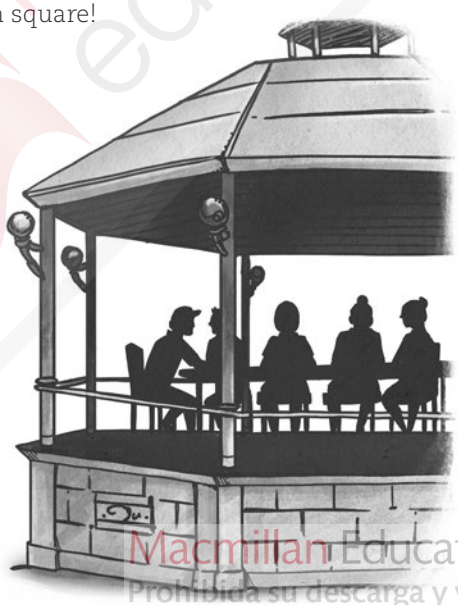
surrounding: (adj) near or all around a place.

Every man, woman and child did what they could to help. Today, one year later, Pedro and his friends still play soccer, but they have included another type of community service in their lives. After school, they take care of the younger children and help them with homework.

The girls visit the **elderly** and make sure that they are fine, and the women of Milagro gather once a month to cook for the whole town. Guess where? Yes! In the town square!



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elderly: (adj) an old person.

Activities

First Reading

1 **Check (✔) the correct option.**

a. Which sentence summarizes the story?

1. ☐ Pedro's life in a little town.
2. ☐ An earthquake shakes Milagro.
3. ☐ What to do during and after an earthquake.

b. What happened after the earthquake?

1. ☐ There were no services and it was dangerous to get to the town from other places.
2. ☐ People were afraid.
3. ☐ Both of the above mentioned.

c. After the earthquake, the people decided to…

1. ☐ wait for help from the big city.
2. ☐ get together and help each other.
3. ☐ leave the town and find another place to live.

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Second Reading

2 **Work in pairs. Read the text again and answer the questions.**

a. How did the people help each other after the earthquake?

1. The Farmers: _____

_____

2. Pedro and his friends: _____

_____

b. How do people help each other one year after the earthquake?

1. Pedro and his friends: _____

_____

2. The girls: _____

_____

3. The women: _____

_____

3 **Discuss the questions as a class.**

a. What are the most important community services in your town or city?

b. How do you support each other?

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Glossary

arrive: (v) to reach a place, after having been somewhere else.

barely: (adv) used for saying that something almost does not happen or exist, or is almost not possible.

below: (prep) in a lower place or position.

blister pack: (n) a container consisting of a flat layer and a cover of plastic that protects the product.

dangerous: (adj) likely to harm or kill someone, or to damage or destroy something.

deliver: (v) take something to a place.

farm: (n) an area of land used to growing crops and keeping animals.

gather: (v) come together.

generator: (n) a machine that produces energy.

headache: (n) a pain in your head.

in trouble: (n) an unpleasant, difficult, or dangerous situation.

load: (v) to put something into something such as a vehicle or container.

mailman: (n) a person who sends or delivers things.

motor scooter: (n) a light motorcycle with small wheels and an enclosed engine.

mountain: (n) a large natural structure like a big hill.

neighbor: (n) someone who lives near you.

pick up: (ph.v) to move something upwards.

restore: (v) to cause a particular situation to exist again, especially a positive one.

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rise: (v) if the sun, moon or a star rises, it seems to move higher in the sky.

service: (n) a system provided by a government or official organization for the needs of the public.

streetlight: (n) a light on top of a long pole on a street or road.

tirelessly: (adv) working very hard, without stopping.

town: (n) a place where people live and work that is larger than a village but smaller than a city.

treat: (n) a special and enjoyable occasion or experience.

truck: (n) a large road vehicle used for carrying goods.

view: (n) the area or place that can be seen.

younger: (adj) not as old as you are.

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