The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom. In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. The activity is structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Students are encouraged to further reflect on the issues.

Core Skill Sets:
These icons identify the most relevant core skills students will develop using this resource. Learn more about the WE Learning Framework at www.WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/learning-framework/.

YOUNG CARERS FACE FAMILY BURDEN WITH FEW RESOURCES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- As of 2012, there were 1.9 million young carers, aged 15 to 29, in Canada; that is roughly one in four young Canadians. (Statistics Canada)
- The majority of young carers in Canada provide care for grandparents; 28 percent care for two people, while 19 percent care for three or more. (Statistics Canada)
- Housework and transportation are the most common types of care offered by young carers. (Statistics Canada)
- Statistics Canada only collects data on caregivers over the age of 15, which means we know almost nothing about children and young adolescents who provide care to others. (Vanier Institute)
- The effects of being a young carer is greatly dependent on how much time is dedicated to care each week. 37 percent of carers who offer 10 or more hours of care a week report a negative impact on their education compared with one in five who do less than three hours a week. Higher intensity care givers also report feeling more anxious (54 percent), overwhelmed (47 percent), sleep-deprived (41 percent) and tired (58 percent). (Statistics Canada)
- The prevalence of young carers varies regionally, with Newfoundland and Labrador having the lowest rates at 20 percent, (Statistics Canada) compared with 46 percent in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. (Vanier Institute)
- Young carers also derive positive lessons and experiences from care giving. Compared with non-carer peers, they often report heightened sensitivity to the needs of others, increased levels of altruism and compassion, strengthened relationships with their family and loved ones and satisfaction from the caregiving. (Vanier Institute study)
- In Canada, only one in 1,000 young carers receives support services—including counselling and skill building workshops. Ontario only has two programs to support young carers: the Young Carers Program in Toronto, and the Powerhouse Project in Niagara). (TVO)
- Other countries, including the UK, Australia, New Zealand and several states in the United States, have begun addressing young carers needs with specific legislation and national strategies for support. (Action Canada)

NOTE TO EDUCATORS
The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom. In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. The activity is structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Students are encouraged to further reflect on the issues.

KEY TERMS
Young carer—Young adults who contribute to the well-being of those with long-term health conditions, disabilities or age related problems. Young Canadians assist family and friends with the tasks of daily living, transportation, home maintenance and other caregiving activities. (Photo credit: BSIP, Getty Images)
THEMES AND COURSE CONNECTIONS

- **Themes**: Health, Local Issues, Values and Ethics
- **Course Connections**: Social Sciences and the Humanities, Health and Physical Education

MATERIALS

- Front board
- Paper and writing utensils
- Computer/tablet with Internet access

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS AND LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Explore the daily lives and experiences of young carers
- Identify the physical and mental health implications of being a young carer

DISCUSS

1. How does being a “young carer” differ from helping around the house or doing chores?
2. What does Vivan Stamatopoulus mean when she says, “these kids undergo trauma”?
3. What are the benefits of being a young carer? What are the consequences?
4. Why is the percentage of young carers in Indigenous families and families living in northern territories significantly higher than in other populations?
5. How can an increase in support help the physical and emotional well-being of young carers?
6. Why is so little known about young carers, especially those under the age of 15?

DIVE DEEPER

Show students the first ten minutes of “Young Carers Brighton—Documentary—September 2012” www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuN6CboN18s (15:02). Ask students to make a list of the responsibilities the young people in the video have at home while they watch the documentary clip. After watching the video, ask students to highlight the responsibilities from the list that they also have at home (e.g., washing the dishes) in one colour and the responsibilities they don’t have (e.g., administering medication) in another colour.

Discuss the following questions:

- Why do these young people have so many responsibilities at home?
- Do you share any of the same responsibilities? How are your responsibilities similar or different?
- How does having these responsibilities affect the lives of the young people in the video? Consider their education, their physical and mental health, their social relationships etc.
- What types of support can help young carers maintain their well-being?

As a class, read the **Global Voices** article “Young carers carry the burden” and discuss the questions in the Discuss section.

Tell students they will continue to investigate the stories and experiences of young carers and then write a series of five diary entries from the perspective of a young carer. Provide students with a variety of articles, books and videos from the Resource section for their investigation. Students may draw on their research to create diary entries that describe the daily life of a young carer, the emotions they might feel and the worries or concerns they might have. They may use personal experiences as well, but are not required to disclose that information.

Give students the opportunity to share their diaries and reflect on what they have learned about young carers and the physical and mental struggles they may face.

RESOURCES

- “A Day in the Life of a Young Carer” www.youtube.com/watch?v=offAtYywBh-g (2:01)
- **Daughter** by Ishbel Moore, Kids Can Press, September 1, 1999
- “I’m a child carer” www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/jan/03/im-a-child-carer
- “Meet Samuel, a nine-year-old young carer” www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IHQqrCs1s (4:21)
- “Young caregivers give away much of their youth” www.vancouversun.com/Video+Young+caregivers+give+away+much+their+youth/7603031/story.html