

Onionhead[©]

The Earth Traveler



Table of Contents

Chapter One: Onionhead - <i>No Parents or Family</i>	7
Chapter Two: Garlic Bud - <i>No Home</i>	11
Chapter Three: Broccoli Stem - <i>No Food</i>	16
Chapter Four: Cauliflower Bunch - <i>No Water</i>	20
Chapter Five: Carrot Stick - <i>No Safety</i>	24
Chapter Six: Summary	29

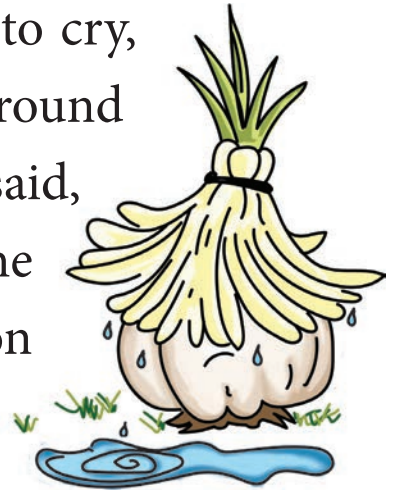
Hi, my name is **Onionhead** and I want to tell you something wonderful. I live in a garden with other vegetables that, though we are not a blood family, we feel like a family, and a really good one at that. Though there are other veggies, there are five of us who stick together all the time. Their names are **Garlic Bud**, **Broccoli Stem**, **Carrot Stick**, and **Cauliflower Bunch**.

It was such a beautiful day and everyone was lazing around in the garden. We all started to talk about how lucky we were, just being fed, watered, and extremely well taken care of.

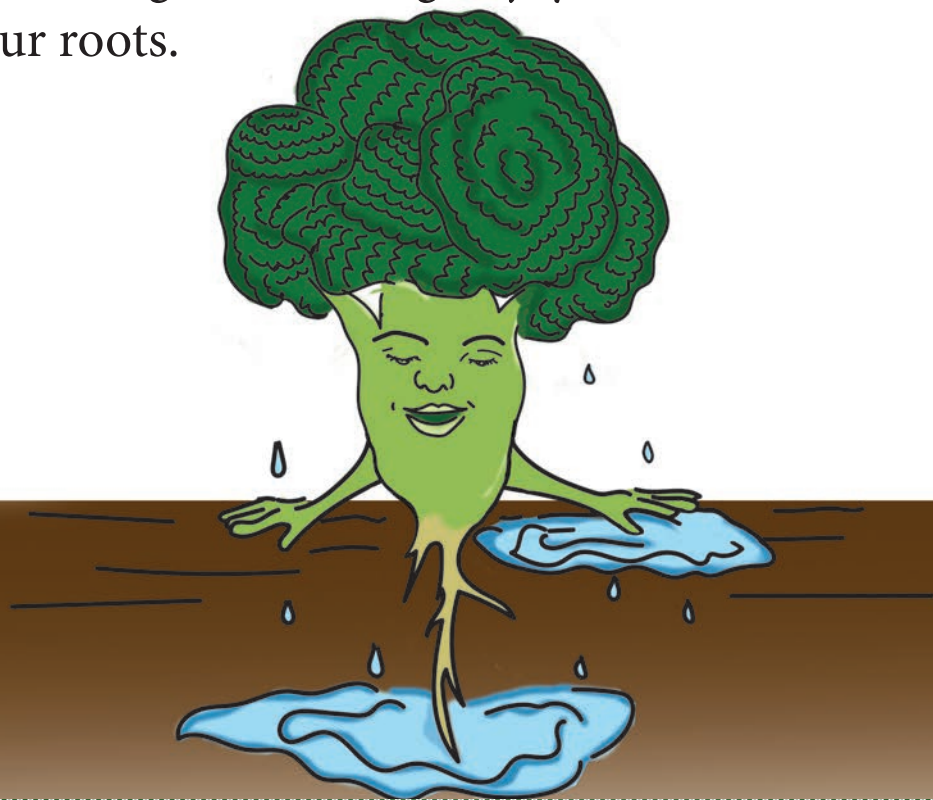
We call our home The Grateful Garden because we all have great gratitude in our hearts.



Then all of a sudden, **Garlic Bud** started to cry, and I mean really cry. We all gathered around her and when asked what was wrong, she said, “I feel all the pain of the children in the world – it just came over me like a mop on my head.” We were all so upset that we all started to cry and the mop came over all our heads as well.



Then I got an idea. “I know what we should do. Let’s be like the C.I.A. – but instead of the Central Intelligence Agency, it will stand for - Compassion In Action. Then let’s go out as earth travellers and help the children of the world.” **Carrot Stick** answered by saying that we should make a list of all the problems the children were facing, and then we should each take on one problem. **Broccoli Stem** and the others started twisting and turning in joy and we used our tears to water our roots.



Cauliflower BunCh went and got paper and pencil to write down some of the hardest problems we heard kids were having. I said, “Because onion backward spells no-I-no, let’s handle the problems where kids have “NO” and we’ll call it the No project.”

Broccoli Stem jumped up and had already made the list. There were kids with:

- No home
- No water
- No food
- No parents or family
- No safety

Garlic Bud declared that she wanted to take on kids with no home, street kids she thought they were referred to.

Cauliflower Bunch declared that he wanted to take on kids with no water. She thought this was perfect because everyone needs water to grow, just like vegetables do.

Broccoli Stem was clear that he wanted to take on kids with no food, and he knew exactly where to go and what to do. He would make sure to get the facts and spread the word.



Carrot Stick was deep in thought and made the announcement that she would take on kids who had no safety. She smiled and said ‘I will get big trucks and bring them to safety’.

I knew then, that I would take on kids with no parents or family. This was good because I know how much better we do in family and connections. People rarely eat onions alone without anything else.

Oh my gosh, did we ever have a lot to do to get ready for this huge mission? We had to make certain who would take care of what, so we made the list.



Garlic Bud

No Home



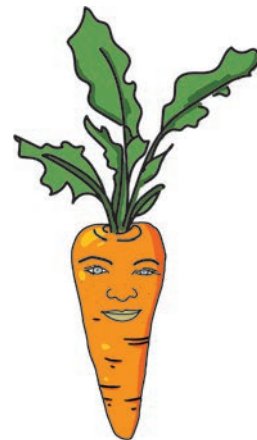
Cauliflower Bunch

No Water



Broccoli Stem

No Food



Carrot Stick

No Safety



Onionhead

No Parents or Family

Chapter One

Onionhead

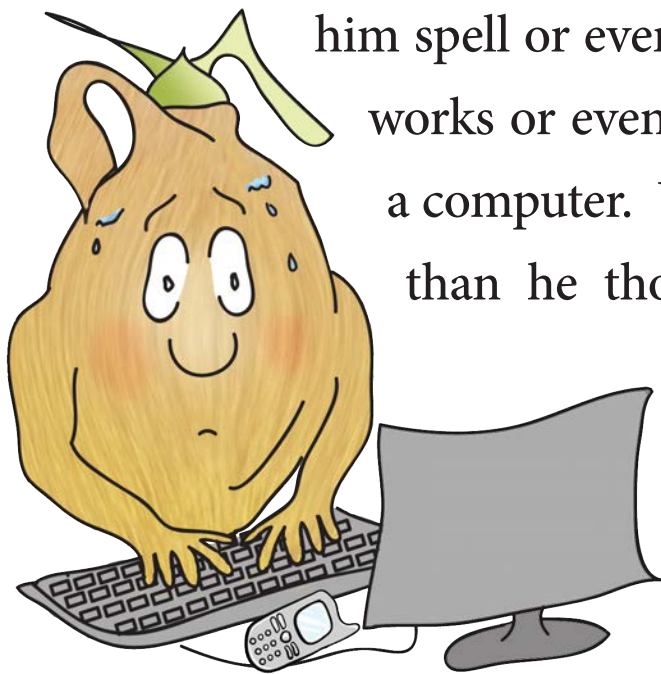


NO PARENTS OR FAMILY

Onionhead was the first to go out on the mission. He knew that kids with no parents are called orphans, and this was his first clue. He made a list of all the orphanages he could find.

He contacted every one of them, whether by phone, letter, or email. He even borrowed a cell phone and computer from his human friend Fred, who watered him daily, in order to be able to email and text. Of course, he needed Fred to help

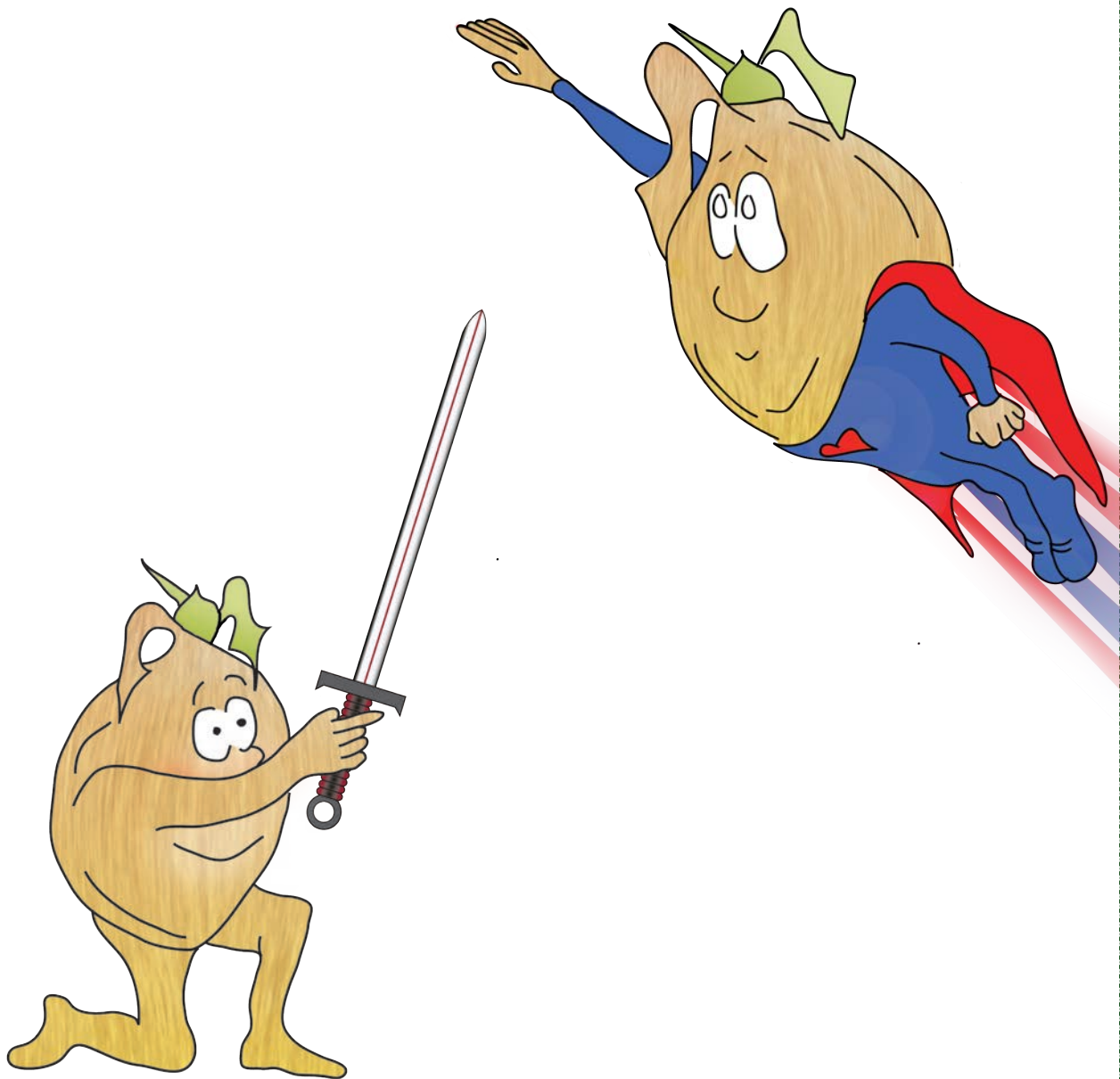
him spell or even figure out how a cell phone works or even email, as he never had used a computer. Yikes - this was a little harder than he thought it would be. But he persevered. His Mother told him to never give up trying... boy was she ever right!



He wrote to all the agencies, telling them all about these companies that could possibly find kids' families and even parents. He knew that many of the children had been adopted, but they should know about this as well. **Onionhead** had heard that many people had found their families from these agencies and this excited him immensely.

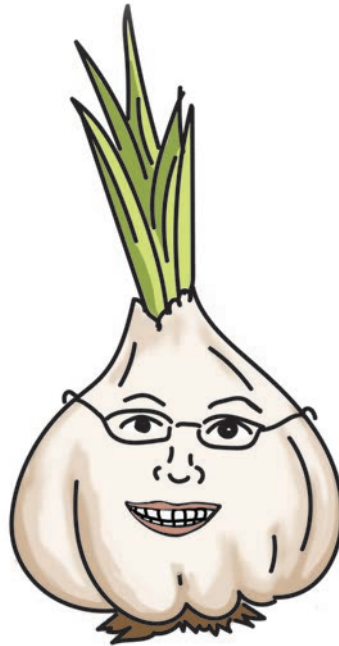
Most of the agencies wrote him back and said that they would gladly share this information with the adoptive parents. As well, when the children would come of age, at 18, they could also receive this important information.

It took six months to cover all the places that took in orphans. However, when **Onionhead** had completed his task, he felt like Super-onion, or a Jedi-onion.



Chapter Two

Garlic Bud



NO HOME

Oh gosh, this was much harder than Garlic Bud thought it would be. Street kids they are called and streets are all over the place. How would she find them, but bigger yet, how could she help them?

She decided to start with the biggest city on every continent. There are seven continents, so there would be seven big cities. She made her list and figured that this would be a great place to start. She chose two cities in North America because Antarctica did not have any cities or homeless children.



Continent North America

biggest city: Mexico City, Mexico 8,855,000 people

biggest city: New York City, the United States
8,399,000 people



Continent South America

biggest city: Sao Paulo, Brazil 12,325,232 people



Continent Africa

biggest city: Lagos, Nigeria 14,368,000 people



Continent Asia

biggest city: Tokyo, Japan 13,960,000 people



Continent Europe

biggest city: Istanbul, Turkey 5,462,452 people



Continent Australia

biggest city: New South Wales, 8,157,735 people



Continent Antarctica

Had no cities, only stations and no homeless children. Yeah for them!

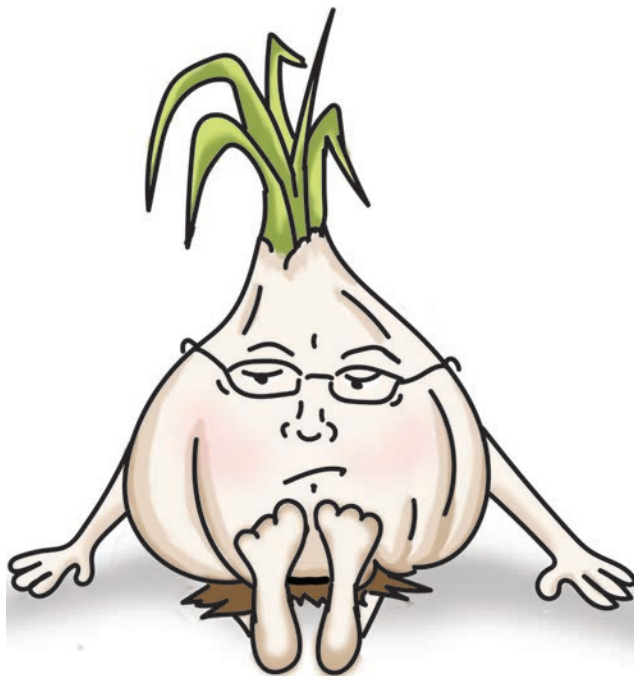
Garlic Bud asked **Onionhead** if Fred would help her as well, with the computer, cell phone, and spelling. Fred said he would be thrilled to assist in such a great cause.

She wrote to the Mayor of each of the seven cities with her suggestion. She said that she felt terrible that kids were living on the streets, and that could they please put together a budget to have some homes for them. These homes should supply food, water, bathrooms, and beds. Then the Mayor should get a team together to make sure that they all receive an education. Maybe, even they could find their parents or foster parents. I found out that there are grown-ups who take in children in order to home them until they can find their parents or a better place to live.

I did not get the response I had hoped for but I knew I had planted a seed of hope for these children. If I could gather

them all up and make a garden, like we have for them, I would be really happy. But like my father told me, “Do the best you can and leave the rest to heaven.”

I certainly felt I had done my best. I also grew a lot because I never knew there were cities that had so many people living in them. I did not even know that Antarctica did not have any cities at all. Wow, what an educational experience!



Chapter Three

Broccoli Stem

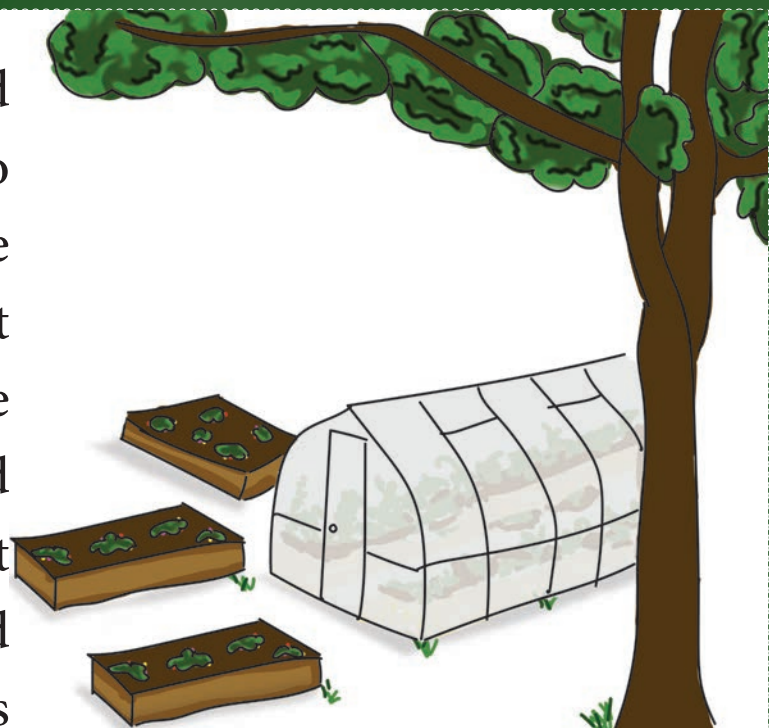


NO FOOD

Oh, **Broccoli Stem** was just full of himself. He knew exactly what he was going to do and it seemed like it would be very easy. However, when he went to use the cell phone or the computer, he was completely overwhelmed. As well, he realized that he too, did not know how to spell. Of course, he asked Fred for help. Fred was completely overjoyed to be of assistance because he just loved what the Gratitude Garden veggie-folks were doing.

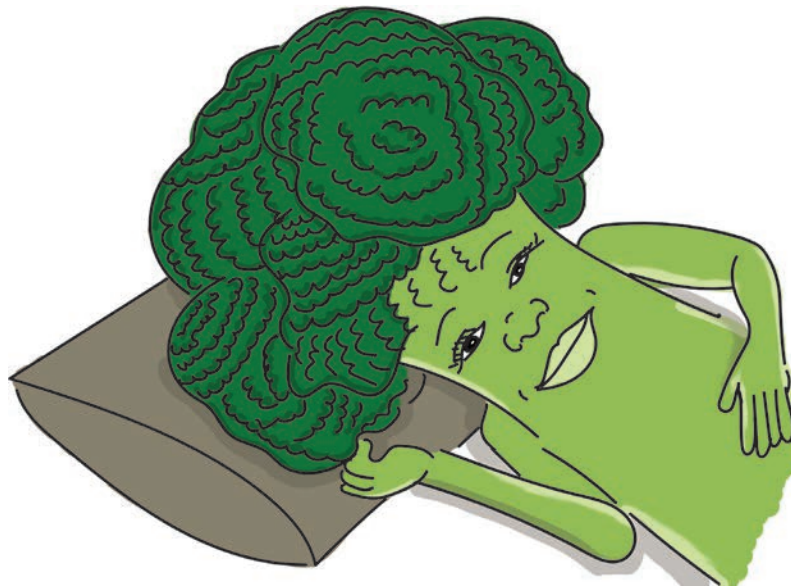
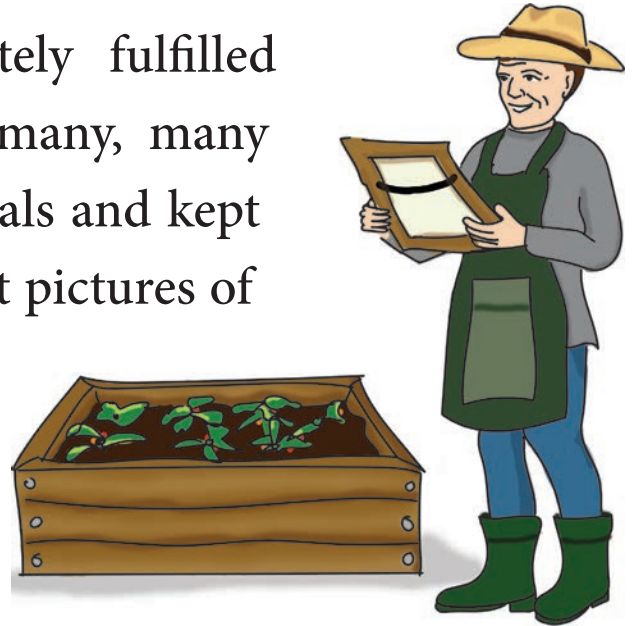
Broccoli Stem made a list of places that had food shelters or non-profits. Non-profits he found out were companies that dedicated their lives to helping other people, the environment, or animals. They take in donations and spend the money being of service to others, rather than themselves.

He wrote to them and said that he wanted to know if they needed more food. Though he did not have money to send, he knew where they could get veggies that were not being used. He also said that maybe restaurants could help out a little more with food that they do not use.



Then **Broccoli Stem** wrote to places that had warmer weather. He told them how to make gardens and greenhouses in order to grow vegetables. Seeds are very inexpensive and grow very easily. They can be a full meal for a hungry person.

Broccoli Stem was completely fulfilled when he heard back from many, many places. He even made pen pals and kept writing them. They even sent pictures of their gardens to Fred, which he shared with Broccoli Stem....and with such a happy grin on his face.



Broccoli Stem went to bed with a grin from stem to stem.

Chapter Four

Cauliflower Bunch

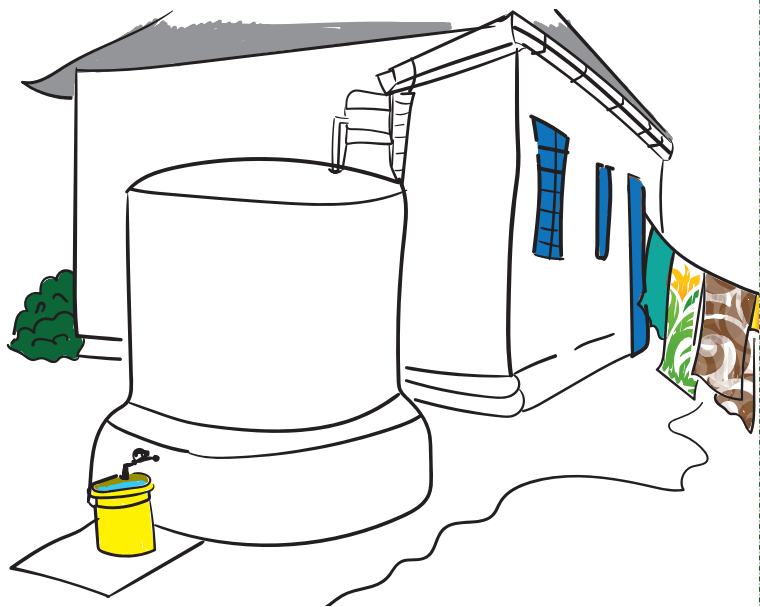


NO WATER

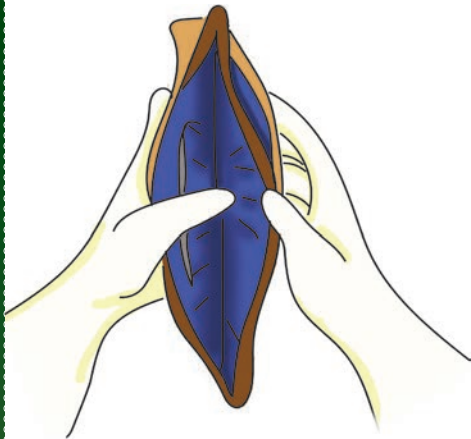
Cauliflower Bunch had done her homework and she knew exactly what she was called to do. She found out that many countries in Africa, India, Australia, and others did not have enough rain, so there was a great shortage of water.

However, she also found out about non-profits that handled this problem. They taught people how to build rain catchment systems.

She learned that when one inch of rain falls on a 1000-square-foot roof, it will harvest 600 gallons of water. And 600 gallons of water can fill many glasses of water, which can help many thirsty children.



Cauliflower Bunch wrote to all the non-profits that she could find and told them that though she was just a cauliflower,



who had no money, she sure knew how to grow a garden, while not using too much water. She also thanked them for what they were doing, because she was not aware of how many children were sick because of the water shortage.

All the non-profits wrote her back....thank goodness for Fred and his reading and writing abilities. They thanked me for caring and sharing. They said if everyone would care and share, we would have a very different world. I, like **Broccoli Stem**, made many new friends from the gardens that they grew.

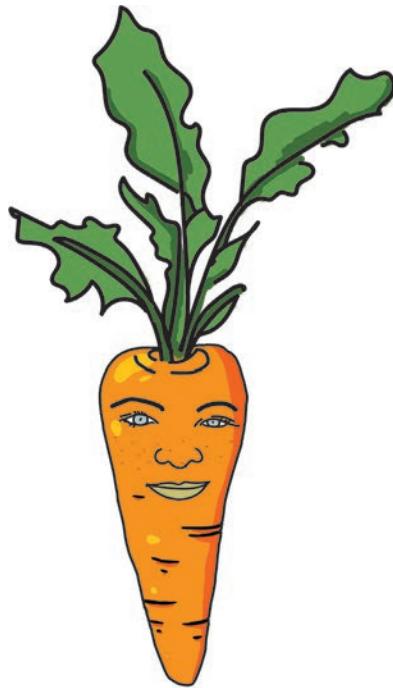
Different color cauliflowers, like red and pink.....what fun!!!!!! Through my efforts, I expanded my awareness and explored many different countries, that I never even knew existed.

When I went to sleep, I said, “**Cauliflower Bunch**, you sure flowered into being a better and kinder vegetable, with a bunch of new friends!”



Chapter Five

Carrot Stick



NO SAFETY

Oh, **Carrot Stick** did not know what she was going to do. She was completely overwhelmed by the number of children there were in the world who did not feel safe.

They had problems at home, problems in the street, problems in school, or problems online, and before this, she never knew about 'online'...she only knew about clotheslines. Where should I even begin was my question? Bullying had become such a problem and was growing every day.

Yikes, I thought...thank goodness I am a vegetable and live in the Grateful Garden.

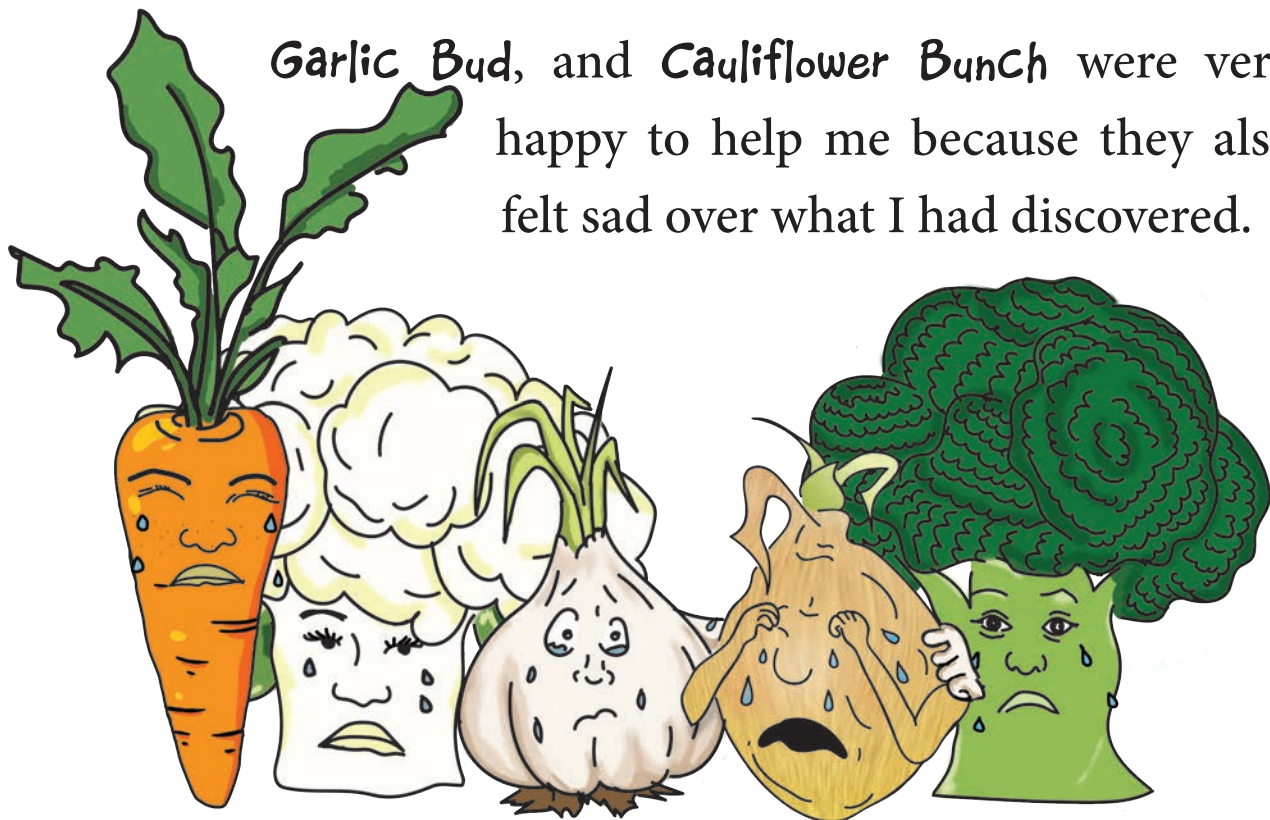


I could not understand all this anger and negativity. I went to Fred and asked if I could, with his help, start an “online” website that would put out good news. It would be filled with peaceful ideas, loving thoughts, kind deeds, and wonderful suggestions. Like I said, I did not know what ‘online’ meant at first, but I had learned from **Onionhead** about this. He seems to know everything.

Now that I knew how big the problem was, I felt I could not tow that many kids to safety, but I could from an online website that would plant positive seeds, as a way to transform hate into love, anger into peace, and sadness into happiness.

I got everyone together and told them my problem and my solution. My Grandmother told me that to every problem, there is indeed a solution. Now I was really beginning to understand what she meant. **Onionhead, Broccoli Stem,**

Garlic Bud, and **Cauliflower Bunch** were very happy to help me because they also felt sad over what I had discovered.



Fred got his friend Kelly to help because she knew how to do websites. She then got Caitlin, who knew how to put it all together. **Onionhead** said that children have to know how to help themselves feel better and safer. **Broccoli Stem** said that children have to be stronger and learn how to defend themselves. **Garlic Bud** said that children have to learn

how to feel happier and more childlike. **Cauliflower BunCh** said that children had to learn how to place themselves in better situations with kinder people. Together we designed the most incredible website. I did not feel bad at all that I was the only one who needed help from the others. In fact, everyone was very excited to help and, we made a great team. My Grandfather told me that team means **T**ogether **E**ach **A**ccomplishes **M**ore...now I really believe that. Anyway, I have always loved team. I would be very lonely without **O**nionhead, **G**arlic Bud, **B**roccoli Stem, and **C**auliflower BunCh.

When the website was finished and up and running, we got thousands of children coming to the site. This made our hearts sing and dance. We were very grateful to Kelly, Caitlin, and Fred, as we could not have done this without their help. After all, we are just vegetables!

Chapter Six

Summary

After a good week's sleep, we got together to discuss the outcome of our efforts. We realized that though we could not save all the children of the world, we surely made a dent in their sorrows, despair, and sadness. We decided that each and every day we would make an effort to help some child that was part of the NO problem.

Our website made it much easier because we could just ask Fred, Kelly, or Caitlin to help us find out where they were asking for help and from what country they were from. Oh, it is so good to know that this online stuff can be powerful and useful.



We got together with the rest of our garden to brainstorm ideas to put on the website. They loved what we did and wanted to be part of it, so we wrote the following....

Planting A Garden for a Good Life

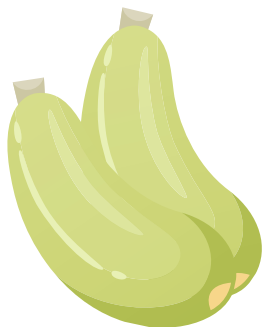
Plant four rows of peas



Peace-ful mind
Peace-ful heart
Peace-ful thoughts
Peace-ful life



Plant four rows of squash



Squash gossip
Squash meanness
Squash selfishness
Squash trouble



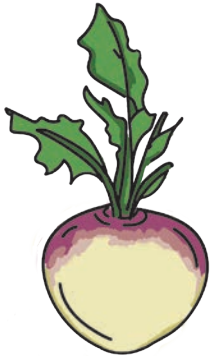
Plant four rows of lettuce



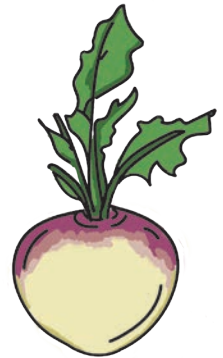
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be giving
Lettuce be patient
Lettuce be loving



Plant four rows of turnips



Turnip when people need you
Turnip for friends and family
Turnip for responsibilities
Turnip for yourself



Plant four rows of thyme



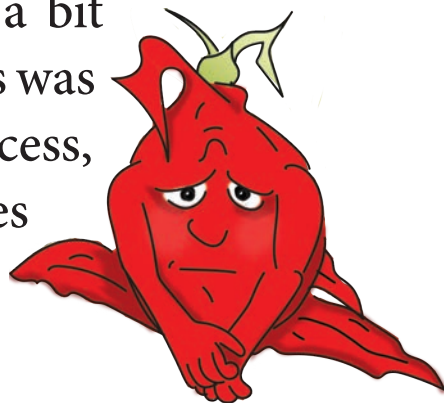
Make thyme for people you love
Make thyme for fun
Make thyme for studying or working
Make thyme for yourself



Also, we made so many new friends. We made their life less lonely and they made our lives much more fulfilled. We have so much gratitude for our beautiful life and now we feel we have shared it with those less fortunate.

Broccoli Stem's aunt told him that if we are going to take on these problems, we need to have tenacity. But we did not know what tenacity meant. Now that we know how to work a computer, we looked it up. It means being determined and persistent, where you don't give up. Well, we sure had that, traveling the earth, and tenaciously taking on the children's troubles of the world.

My uncle noticed that I was strutting a bit with my success. He warned me that this was not good. He said, "When you have success, don't brag, be humble. Bragging takes away from the victories." Wow, did my peel get red!



ConClusion

As we all sat together in our beautiful Grateful Garden, we felt a little sad because we wanted to do more. So we wrote this poem, hoping all the children in the world would read it and feel our love and compassion going from our hearts to theirs.



In The Grateful Garden, we live as The Grateful Five
And we constantly and continually strive
To be the best vegetables we can be
And for each and every kid in the world to see
That they can have a better and happier life
With much less trouble, hurt, sadness, and strife.
We truly wish for children globally to learn
That we'll always be there when they have nowhere else to turn.

Know you are our heroes

LOVE

Garlic Bud, Carrot Stick, Broccoli Stem,
Cauliflower Bunch, and Onionhead

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