

A Note for Facilitators

A quick word before you dive into *The Community Quest*.

Please ensure that every student has a personal copy of *The Community Quest* to take home to read, revisit, and share with their friends and family.

Most young people aren't aware of the vital role economic development plays in their lives and in the cities where they live. It's easy to overlook because it works so well when it's working: the jobs people do, the roads they drive, the arrival of new businesses, the shops on Main Street, the parks where everyone gathers. All of it takes coordination, and all of it takes people. *The Community Quest* pulls back the curtain on that everyday work through Ethan and Maya's story—a journey of self-discovery that shows how much of a community's future depends on the people living there.

This is a conversation about how young people are already part of economic development. You can connect this story to your own community and share who drives economic development there and how they do it.

To make these connections, you can:

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- Tell a story about how you got involved in economic development. What inspired or moved you?
 - Explain how a major community project happened. Who was involved, and why did it succeed? What impact has it had on the economic health of the community?
 - Highlight areas or projects that young people enjoy. How are those things part of an economic development strategy?
 - What aspect of your role as an economic developer do you enjoy the most?
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Use as much of this guide as fits your time and your group. It isn't meant to be prescriptive, just a starting point for helping young people see themselves as part of what makes a community thrive.

Quick Conversation Starters

For sessions where there isn't time to read the book together, use these questions to pique students' interest in the copy of *The Community Quest* that they will be taking home.

- 1** What do you think economic development is or does?
- 2** Think of one thing in your community (like a store, a park, or a job) that didn't just happen on its own. Who do you think helped make it happen?
- 3** If you could help build or improve one thing where you live, what would it be?

(cont.)

If You Read Together

Before You Read

In a few pages, Ethan and Maya get pulled into a broken, glitching version of their own town that they have to fix before time runs out. As you read, notice everything that has to work for a community to run and everyone who plays a part in making it happen.

- 1 Before you start: what do you think economic development is or does?

After You Read

Now that you've seen how it plays out, let's talk about it.

- 1 What stood out to you most in the story?
- 2 How would you describe economic development now, after reading this?
- 3 Jobs, training, roads, parks, and housing all had to work together to fix the town. Which of those pieces did you perhaps never think about before as an important part of a community?
- 4 Maya realizes people don't just go where the jobs are; they go where they can build a great life. What kind of life do you want to live someday? What would make a place worth building your future in?
- 5 In the end, the missing piece wasn't a building or a system. It was Ethan and Maya themselves. What's a skill, idea, or interest you have that could help your community, today or someday in the future?
- 6 Could you ever see yourself doing the work of an economic developer? Why or why not?



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The Community Quest,
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