Agriculture Education
Cycle Theme: Transcendence
Thematic Lesson: Group Initiative

Transcendence is defined as "existence or experience beyond the normal or physical level" (google.com).

"Watch the weather change." - Maynard James Keenan

Group initiative goals:

- Encourage community and levity within the class
- Celebrate the work the students have been doing during the cycle
- Encourage students to continue to strive for transcendence during their adolescent years
- Show students that together we are strong

Title: Hot Chocolate River

- **Adapted from:** http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activity/hot-chocolate-river.html
- **Academic/Group Skills Connections:** Team Building/Collaboration/Communication
- **Time Required:** 30 minutes
- **Group Size:** 36 students (three groups of 12 students)
- **Materials Needed:** 6 lengths of rope / 40 carpet remnants

"Lay two ropes on the ground parallel to each other, about 20 feet apart. Have the students line up on one side of the rope, and tell them that they are looking at a giant hot chocolate river. They must get their entire team across the hot chocolate river, but it is too hot to swim across, and too deep to walk across. (Obviously, they cannot walk around the river, since it does not end just because the ropes do). The only way to get across is by using the large, fluffy marshmallows that you provide (such as carpet squares, poly spots or paper plates). Give the campers about eight or nine carpet squares, so that they have enough to get across with one or two left over. Advise the group that this challenge isn't about physical abilities, but rather it is about communication. Unfortunately, the current in the river is so strong that it actually sweeps the marshmallows away if someone is not holding them down (with a hand, foot, or other safe appendage). Also, the marshmallows swell up once they are placed in the river, and they become too heavy to move again, so they must remain where they are placed."

- **Possible Variations:** add a time limit, blindfold some members, prohibit the use of certain appendages

AoP questions:

- What did we do?
- What went well?
- Could you cross the river alone? What did you need to be successful?
- What would be a focus next time?
- Did this initiative build trust? Why or why not?

Wrap up the activity by asking students to brainstorm with a partner how this game relates to the theme of transcendence. How did we work together to accomplish a common goal?