

Leading role

Character development program is helping older students by allowing them to teach, mentor younger ones



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TOP: Fifth-grader Aidan McLane (left) works with second-grader Casey Wachter during the "Just Bee" program Friday at Jackson Elementary School in Rockford. ABOVE: Albion Ziqiri (clockwise from lower left), Da'ron Barr, Skylar Garcia, Deszreeon Shaw, Austin Markee and Coley Carwell work on lessons Friday at the school.

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In Holly Armato's fifth-grade class at Jackson Elementary, the students aren't just the oldest in the school, they're role models.

They're mentoring second-grade students while they go through the "Just Bee" character development program — something the fifth-graders went through in their second-

grade year.

The students are taking part in the 12-week program and will celebrate the program's end Dec. 18 with a dinner at Cliff-breakers. **Please see 1B**