

# MEDIA KIT



**ARISE Foundation, Non-Profit Organization**  
Edmund and Susan Benson, Co-Founders

**Staff Training & Life Management Skills Curricula**

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**-Susan and Edmund Benson-  
Powered by Passion &  
Persistence**



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LIFE SKILLS LESSONS  
A Non-Profit Organization  
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**- LOCAL, NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL -  
"ARISE Is Guaranteed To Affect Change in Troubled Youth"**

***"We are making a dramatic impact in areas where the ARISE staff training and curricula is utilized," states Edmund F. Benson, Co-Founder of ARISE Foundation, "Troubled youth can be taught these vital life-management skills lessons – we have been doing this for over two decades in juvenile justice facilities, schools and community organizations".***

### **Founders:**

Susan and Edmund Benson created the ARISE Foundation, a non-profit program established in 1986 expressly for educating high-risk youth. Susan, a school teacher, and Edmund, a business executive, built a successful enterprise, retired and wanted to specifically help high-risk youth succeed in life. Edmund Benson was a drop-out, rebel, and later a successful entrepreneur. At 21, he started his own furniture business. When he retired at 52, he dedicated himself to rescuing high-risk youth from lives of crime. Edmund saw today's youth where he had been many years before: vulnerable, unloved, and living on the edge. He wanted to give children the benefit of his hard-won lessons and his successes. He chose the most difficult populations to help, youth behind bars, gang members and those on the verge of entering the juvenile justice system. Susan holds a masters degree in Exceptional Student Education and has worked with exceptional students for many years; she was familiar with youth that struggled to learn. Together they drew on their strengths and experiences and ARISE was born.

### **Mission:**

The ARISE Mission is to introduce valuable life-skills to youth and adults, enabling them to achieve their highest potential as successful students, employees, and citizens.

### **Impacting the Community:**

The ARISE life-skills program is proven effective with the toughest youth. To date, over 3,500,000 documented hours of the 260 ARISE life-skill lessons have been taught and more than 5,000 instructors have been certified to teach the ARISE program. ARISE reaches programs across the United States, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, England, Canada, Australia, Bahamas, Bermuda, New Zealand, Bosnia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia. ARISE life-skill lessons and staff training is being utilized to help youngsters meet the challenges they will encounter. The ARISE Life Skills program offers the most marginalized youth people a more positive future than the outcast life they may be living.

**"Life Skills are not hereditary,  
they must be taught"**

**-Susan & Edmund F. Benson  
-ARISE Founders**

## Innovation:

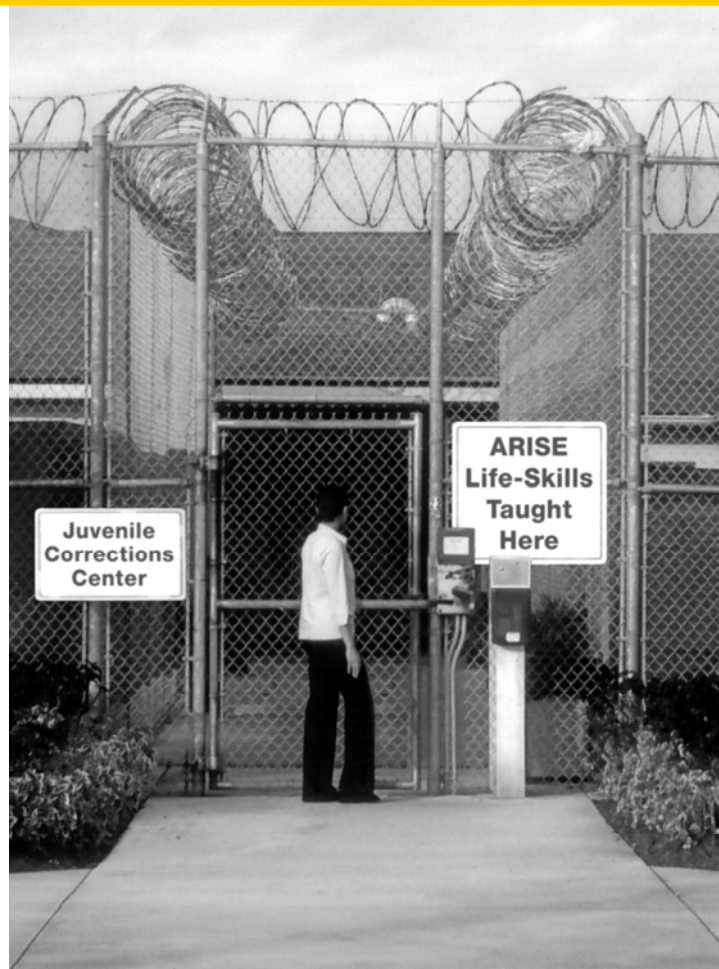
The ARISE formula uses interactive group learning with social skills curricula. It is easily understood, enjoyable and memorable. Importantly, ARISE curricula is not sequential. This means the ARISE program is ideal for transient populations because everyone starts fresh, each lesson stands alone. Designed originally to reach incarcerated youth in detention centers and secure facilities, particularly gang members, it is also utilized to educate youth with psychiatric disorders, and it is a powerful prevention tool for all ages from Pre-K to adult at any learning level.

ARISE's curricula and staff training enable instructors and youth to accomplish meaningful tasks and communicate comfortably with each other. Lessons are streamlined so that barriers are removed, while adding thoughtful, innovative elements that draw both youth and instructors into each subject matter.

The Bensons' two decades of extensive knowledge in the area of the needs and behavior of incarcerated youth and their experience working with those who oversee them, is what makes the ARISE program a leader in its field. Their hands-on dedication to this particular segment of society enables the ARISE program to remain as fresh as this morning's news. The Bensons' passion expresses itself best in their ability to identify and create life-management skills lessons and staff training that are straightforward and unforgettable.

*Arise*

## Takes the Risk Out of At-Risk Youth



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## Florida:



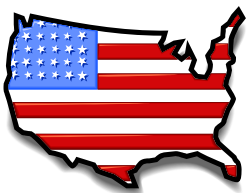
The ARISE Life-Skills program has been used in Florida Department of Juvenile Justice since 1996. Presently ARISE is active in 29 secure facilities throughout Florida. ARISE has trained juvenile officers, counselors and teachers who have gone on to teach life-skills to the youth in their charge. ARISE has previously been used in Miami-Dade County elementary schools through its Enviro-Cop Program. ARISE created 14 weekly safety events that were presented to the young people in Miami-Dade County schools teaching them about guns, drugs, graffiti, health awareness, poison prevention, auto safety, violence reduction and many more topics. The most recent safety lesson is terrorism awareness. ARISE services alternative schools such as MacArthur North and 500 Role Models Academy as part of a Title IV Department of Education Community Service Grant. ARISE is used in indoor school suspension programs in Miami Dade County for the past 20 years. Many community based organizations also utilize ARISE curricula and staff training for many years – The Village, South Florida All Stars, and Concerned African Women to name a few.

## Washington DC:



The ARISE Life-Skills Program was inaugurated in the District of Columbia in 2004. The ARISE certification of life-skill instructors takes place monthly and focuses on how to effectively educate disadvantaged youth from pre-k to adults. Currently there are over 100 facilities in the District of Columbia utilizing ARISE Life-Skill lessons and more than 650 trained instructors. After school programs, charter schools, faith-based programs, public schools, group homes and correctional facilities are among the types of facilities that receive staff training and utilize the ARISE Life-Skill curriculum. Metropolitan DC Police School Resource Officers (SRO) began with one officer in a single school and has blossomed into a full fledged program operational in over 30 schools in the District of Columbia. ARISE is particularly effective for building warm, trusting relationships with youth and police at the earliest possible age.

## United States:



ARISE staff training and curricula material is available through its website. Community based organizations, juvenile justice systems and others throughout the U.S. are using the ARISE Life-Skills and its staff training with documented results.

**Florida**  
**Georgia**  
**Ohio**  
**Maryland**  
**Texas**

**Washington DC**  
**Illinois**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**Virginia**  
**Tennessee**

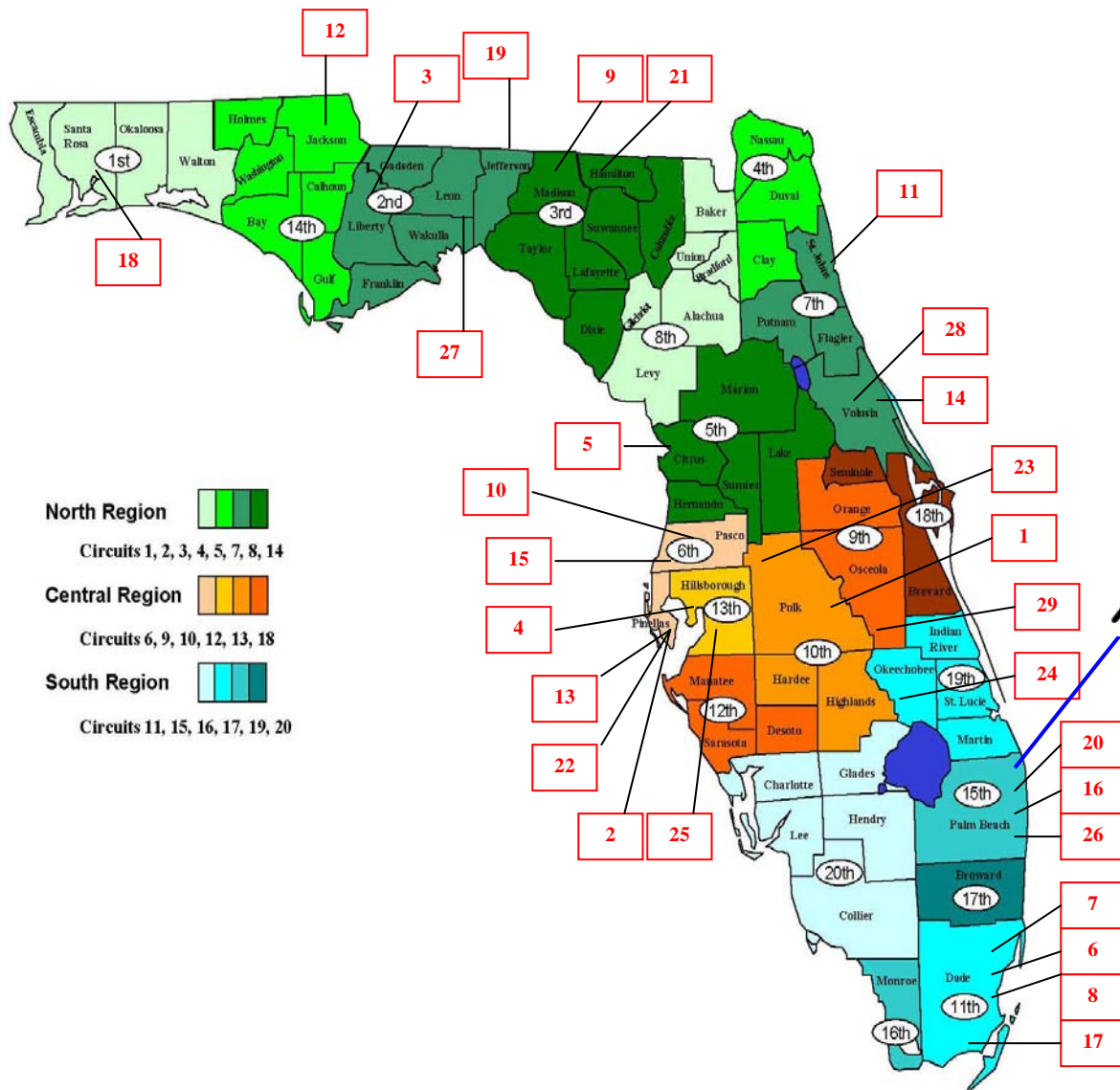
**California**  
**Oklahoma**  
**South Carolina**  
**North Dakota**  
**Nevada**

## Globally:



The Department of Education in Bermuda sent two women to Florida to participate in our Master Trainer 5-day training and they went back to Bermuda and trained other staff in an expanding program. Now the ARISE team has been invited by the ministry of Education to Train 40 teachers as ARISE Master Trainers. ARISE material is being used in Australia and New Zealand. ARISE curricula is currently being translated into Russian & Kazakh by a group in Kazakhstan teachers for use with orphans. This year the U.S. State Department sponsored seven social workers from Bosnia to attend a special ARISE training program in Washington, D.C., complete with interpreter for the express purpose of introducing ARISE in Bosnia.

# ARISE Across Florida



## ARISE Life-Management Skills Programs

### Active in 29 Secure Juvenile Justice Facilities Across Florida

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 – Avon Park Youth Academy                           | 16 – Juvenile Service Program – West Palm Beach |
| 2 – Boley Centers, Inc.                               | 17 – Miami Dade Boot Camp                       |
| 3 – Bristol Youth Academy                             | 18 – Milton Girls Residential Program           |
| 4 – Columbus Juvenile                                 | 19 – Monticello New Life                        |
| 5 – Cypress Creek Juvenile Offender Correction Center | 20 – Palm Beach Juvenile Correction Center      |
| 6 – Dade Intensive Supervision                        | 21 – Panther Success Center                     |
| 7 – Dade Juvenile Detention Center                    | 22 – Pinellas Marine Center                     |
| 8 – Dade Marine Institute Center                      | 23 – Polk Juvenile Correction Facility          |
| 9 – Greenville Hills Academy                          | 24 – Red Road Academy                           |
| 10 – Gulf & Lake Academy                              | 25 – Riverside Academy                          |
| 11 – Hastings Youth Academy                           | 26 – Sage Palm Academy                          |
| 12 – Jackson Juvenile Offender Correction Center      | 27 – Seminole Work Program                      |
| 13 – Juvenile Service Program – Chance to Change      | 28 – Stewart Marchman                           |
| 14 – Juvenile Service Program – Daytona               | 29 – Three Springs of Osceola                   |
| 15 – Juvenile Service Program – Harbinger House       |   |



## SOCIETIES RETURN ON INVESTMENT

### The Benefits of the ARISE Life-Management Skills Program for High-Risk Youth

**“The Monetary value of saving one high-risk youth from a life of crime is \$1.7-\$2.3 million”**, Owen Graduate School of Management, Vanderbilt University, (“Programs targeted at high-risk youth are designed to prevent high-school drop out, crime, drug abuse, and other forms of delinquency.”) - The Monetary Value of Saving a High-Risk Youth written by Mark A. Cohen published in the Journal of Quantitative Criminology, Vol 14, No. 1, 1998

**“A targeted program that reduces recidivism of property crimes costing approximately \$200 per participant returns benefits of \$8.18 per every one dollar invested”** - In a report for the State of Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs by Wilder Research March, 2007. *Currently the ARISE targeted high-risk life skills program returns \$13.09 per every one dollar invested.*

**“Youth who attend classes, that teach self-discipline and motivation, often are less likely to engage in crime more, likely to finish high school and earn higher wages.** This suggests, that policy makers should push schools to teach life skills, especially to disadvantaged kids who receive poor discipline or little encouragement at home.” - James Heckman, Economics Professor at the University of Chicago and Nobel Prize recipient as written in Psychology Today, March / April 2004;

### 2006-2007 Annual Cost for the ARISE Statewide Targeted High-Risk Life Skills Program is \$125 Per Youth

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#### Psychological Basis for ARISE Curricula

**Social Learning Theory and Self-Efficiency Training (Albert Bandura)** - This model stresses learning through imitation and developing self-efficiency. Self-efficiency is belief in one’s own ability to succeed. The ARISE program helps youngsters develop appropriate social behaviors and belief in their ability to succeed in school, at home, and in the community. The youth develop an “I Can” rather than “I Can’t” perspective.

**Cognitive Behavior Model (Donald Meichenbaum)** - ARISE uses a process to teach youngsters how to regulate and monitor their behavior by telling themselves what to do, asking themselves questions, and evaluating themselves. They learn how to verbalize and think through problems they encounter with other individuals in ARISE Group Sessions, at home, and in the community.

**Information Processing Model (Robert Sternberg)** - The ARISE Program also teaches disadvantaged youth how to be better problem solvers by understanding the situation before acting. They learn how to make good choices and stick by them. Additionally, they learn how to avoid bad situations and think about consequences.

## Program Teaches Juveniles to Arise

By Lynn Doan, Internet Reporter

Inside the juvenile manual of the ARISE Life-skills program is the drawing of a single penny, heads up, followed by a quote that inspired the program's name:

"I am not concerned that you have fallen; I am concerned that you arise"-**Abraham Lincoln**.

During a recent visit to the Jackson Juvenile Offender Correction Center (JJOCC) in Marianna, Fla., ARISE co-founders **Edmund** and **Susan Benson** were pleasantly surprised to learn of the impact that quote has had on those participating in the program.

"Would you believe that this kid [at JJOCC] recited the exact quote from inside one of our manuals?" asked Edmund Benson, who was a successful furniture chain owner before retiring and launching the ARISE Foundation in 1986.

The young man told the Bensons, "As long as I keep that quote in mind, as long as I have a penny in my pocket to remind me, I'm going to keep arising."

This declaration was reassuring for the founders of the ARISE Foundation, which is a non-profit organization that trains juvenile justice professionals to teach teenagers the life management skills they need for reentry.

Partially funded by a \$500,000-grant from the federal government, the foundation trains the staffs of 43 Floridian juvenile facilities.

For a single fee of about \$2,000, ARISE provides a 7-hour intensive training session for first time users of the ARISE Life-skills program. The foundation also supplies program management, certification, statistical analysis of the program and customized books-all of which are written by the Bensons.

### A Founder's Arising Story

Though Benson has never been behind bars, he knows what it's like to enter the world unprepared.

At 16, he dropped out of high school to fight in World War II. But four years later, Benson returned to the U.S. and realized that his education level was far behind the norm, making it difficult to find employment. Benson said the only thing that kept him out of trouble was the fact that "drugs had not been invented yet and crime wasn't even an option."

Now, when Benson visits juvenile justice institutions, he tells the teenagers, "Look, I'm a high school drop out. I could have been in your position, but the opportunity just wasn't around."

Instead, Benson tells the teens that he "rose up" and began a "two days a day lifestyle."

"I knew I wasn't as educated as other people out there," he said. "But I also knew that I could work twice as hard as anybody."

Apparently, Benson's strategy worked. By the time he retired in 1982, Benson was the owner of a nation-wide, furniture store chain.

Benson already had a plan to help the "most needy" people in society and was particularly drawn to young people at risk or institutionalized and he used his earlier experiences to develop a program for teens like him.

He spent six months visiting Miami's juvenile justice facilities, interviewing teenagers to find the best way he could keep them out of trouble. Then he and his wife, a school teacher, combined their experiences and created a curriculum that now reaches 5,000 at-risk youths and juveniles per week.

For the first eight years, the ARISE Foundation was a two-person show: Edmund and Susan Benson single-handedly spread their curriculum to a few juvenile institutions in the Miami area, starting with a local elementary school. When demand grew, the foundation hired more than 10 full-time members.

### **ARISE Trains the Trainers**

These 10 ARISE members are responsible for the hands-on staff training, during which participants learn to conduct group discussions using a "positive, nonjudgmental approach" with students. Trainers also review the standard topics that should be included in discussions, such as anger management, conflict resolution and self-esteem.

In addition to training, ARISE provides staff with more than 260 life-skills lessons and 100 books, posters and videos tailored to fit the needs of "underserved youth reading below average, who are accustomed to acting out in the classroom."

The foundation also offers advanced certification for those who use the ARISE Life-skills program for more than one year. Staff members receive a bronze medal after teaching the program for one year, a silver medal after two years and a gold medal after three years.

### **Research and Institution-Approved**

Staff members are not the only ones being recognized. A five-year study by the University of Miami praised the ARISE program for its success rates among various groups of ARISE learners. The study showed "significant improvement" in the knowledge of issues covered by ARISE, especially in the areas of violence reduction, goal setting, anger management, and drugs and alcohol avoidance.

Overall test scores also improved significantly among all ethnic and gender groups.

"This result suggests that the program content is sensitive to and able to reach members of various ethnic backgrounds," the study reported. "Future plans are to present [the program] to Departments of Education and Departments of Juvenile Justice around the country, targeting frustrated, bored youth who would rather be any other place than school."

Institutions in Florida that presently use the ARISE program to prepare their juveniles second the study's findings.

"The program is working out outstandingly so," said JJOCC superintendent **Richard Singleton**. "We talked to the boys and 98 percent of them think it's worthwhile."

Singleton said the staff has observed positive changes in the juveniles' attitudes and behavior after participating in the program. He first introduced the ARISE program in 1999, when JJOCC was in search of a program involving group discussions for males, ages 13-18.

"Now we have judges and parents knocking our doors down trying to get their children into JJOCC," Singleton said.

The group treatment supervisor at JJOCC, **Willie Ross**, said the program was "one of the best things that the state of Florida could institute in their facilities."

Ross, who trained for ARISE along with his staff, said he immediately saw the benefits of such group discussions and felt the boys could strongly relate to the materials that ARISE provided.

"We used an ARISE manual early on called, 'Just Rapping,' and just looking at the title of the manual was enough for us to believe that this was going to be something the boys would understand," he said.

According to Ross, the number of violent incidents at JJOCC has dramatically reduced since the program was instituted. In fact, Ross said, fights are no longer the norm, as they previously were. The juveniles are using verbal skills derived from ARISE discussions to talk problems out.

The Okaloosa Youth Academy, in Crestview, Fla., also employs ARISE for life-skills lessons. Program Director **Mike Currie** said the training has been extremely effective, meeting the needs of a diverse group of the academy's instructors. He also emphasized that the curriculum was developed on a teenage level.

"To be quite honest, it's just not a boring program," Currie said. "It's more interactive than other programs, and it captivates the kids."

Even students are surprised at how a retired couple came up with such "fresh" material. Benson said students are always asking him if he and his wife really wrote the entire curriculum.

"I tell them, 'Yes, we wrote it for you,'" Benson said.

The ARISE Foundation will be expanding to the Washington, D.C. area in the next few months. This implementation will be their first significant reach outside of Florida, but not the last. Benson said he would like to see the program operating in every state before his time is up.

"I'd even like to see the program operating internationally, if I could," said Benson, who is now 74. "But that means I have to hurry."

#### **Resources:**

To learn more about the ARISE Life-skills program, visit: [www.ariselife-skills.org](http://www.ariselife-skills.org).