



July 21, 2011

The ARISE curricula is an outstanding tool for at-risk kids that The Salvation Army works with on a daily basis. Our work with this population involves children who have moved from location to location, lived out of their cars, on the streets, and who have had to change schools frequently. These children have not been able to form relationships or establish roots because of the transient nature of their parent's lives. They have grown up with tremendous instability and it is reflected in their grades, and their feelings about themselves which translate many times into troubled youth who make wrong choices in life. They are some of the most vulnerable in our society because they do not have the opportunities so many others have and thus are often rejected and grow up with resentment, bitterness, and more often seek a group that will accept them. They can end up in gangs and eventually evolve into jail, or even death.

The Arise Life Skills materials are an invaluable tool for these children. Yet I would not forget those who grow up in supposedly good families, but still have not received the love and acceptance from their parents that is so necessary in formulating their self esteem. ARISE has risen to the occasion and provided a curricula that can reach and teach children of all ages and stages in their lives. There is inestimable value in the classes taught with the children being active participants throughout the class, which brings the lesson home and the principles learned. No more boring classes where they sit idly for an hour and try to stay awake listening to the teacher. There is excitement, and creative opportunities for them to use their God-given talents and to be validated for their ideas while learning the concepts that are so valuable to have the skills necessary to get through life.

In Salvation Army shelters, children might stay for only one night, yet because the ARISE lessons are made to stand on their own, the child can receive at least one complete life skill while in our shelter. These lessons were planned with all in mind and address the issues that challenge our children today. They give them the ability to cope, to build ego strength, to see value in themselves, and to escape the future that could lead to failure.

A critical component of this package involves the Master training and Group facilitator training provided by the ARISE staff. It ceases to be what it was born to be without the combination of both the training and the lessons. The lessons come alive, the children get involved and the principles are brought home in a way that has a lasting effect on a child's life. The difference between just looking at a lesson, and knowing how to bring it to life because of the training is the fundamental key to making this material so tremendously effective in reaching this special population.

In salvaging his own broken past, the dreams of a man and his wife, inspired by God, were fashioned into tools that have helped others to ARISE from the depression of hopelessness and come into the light of His sunshine through giving back what has been given to them.

May God abundantly bless the Benson's for their dedication, commitment and outreach to this vulnerable population and for tapping into the great potential that will reap great dividends for their future.

Most sincerely,

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