

TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY MUST START EARLY

“Responsibility for one’s actions, choices, and decisions must be taught at the age of awareness,” explains Chet Emerson, Executive Director of Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Virginia. “That time,” he adds, “is early childhood.”

For more than 40 years, through his work with Boys & Girls Clubs, Emerson has been helping to teach thousands of youngsters the importance of responsibility and how to become responsible adults.

“If done properly, teaching responsibility should have a positive affect on the children who haven’t yet locked in their values, and should be retained through adulthood,” said Emerson who worked at Boys & Girls Clubs in Minnesota, South Carolina, Alabama and North Carolina before assuming



his current role.

Responsibility is a core value of the Boys & Girls Clubs that is being taught to youngsters in a trial of the Values in Alignment Process now underway in clubs in Southeastern Virginia. More than 100 members participate in the classroom phase of the Southeastern Virginia pilot, and hundreds more are being exposed to the core values through related activities in the Clubs there as well as in Richmond and Harrisonburg.

The key to teaching responsibility is to identify behaviors that show responsibility and then getting youngsters to practice skills that allow them to learn what it means to be a responsible person. Among the behaviors emphasized are: showing accountability for their words and actions; accepting consequences for what they say and do; maintaining order in their personal lives, and

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BEING RESPONSIBLE IS A WAY OF LIFE FOR BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS STAFF MEMBER

Karen White and her husband, Julius, raise their three youngsters enrolled in 8th, 9th, and 12th grades in the Henrico County school system. Mrs. White talks about the values the couple tries to pass on to their children at home. “We nurture them and provide a safe haven.



I’ve told them time and again the motto I learned from my basketball coach at St. Paul’s where I met my husband.” She introduced her younger daughter to an interviewer at the Capital One Boys and Girls Club on Branch Road on Richmond’s north side and

helped the girl voice the family saying ;

“Excuses are tools of incompetencies, that build monuments of nothing; those that specialize in them, often amount to nothing.”

Mrs. White asserts that she is responsible to God. Each morning she devotes 15 minutes in silence “to commune with Him. I thank him. Doing so makes me feel better.” She and Julius each spend 15 minutes alone at the end of the day to unwind. “I just sit.” On some evenings she takes college courses.

For her, “responsibility means sticking to something you say you’re going to do.” She has applied that philosophy for the last five years to her job as day-to-day leader of operations at the Boys and Girls Club.

“I’m responsible for implementing various programs, getting agencies and volunteers for tutorial programs, and securing people from churches to educate the youth here.” Her three children see her carry out those responsibilities as they participate with their mother in the life of the club.

(Mrs. White coordinated the Values in Alignment curriculum trial held earlier this year at the Capital One Unit of the Boys & Girls Club of Metro Richmond.) ■



The Values Institute of America

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VALUES INSTITUTE SEEKS TO RAISE \$65,000

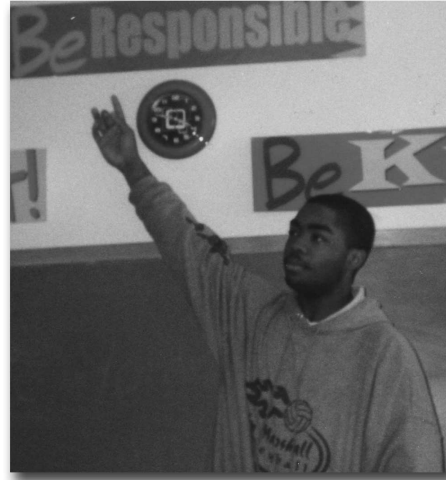
This Fall, The Values Institute is appealing to individuals and corporations for financial support of its Values in Alignment process for youth organizations. At the beginning of December 45% of the \$65,000 goal had been raised. The Institute hopes to complete this effort before the end of the year. Many thanks go to those who have responded to the call for support.



To make a gift, send checks payable to: The Values Institute of America, 6802 Paragon Place, Suite 300, Richmond, Virginia 23230-1655. Your support is appreciated. ■

JOHN GATES SAYS, “BE RESPONSIBLE”

John Gates aspires to join his sister at George Mason College when he graduates from John Marshall High School. When he reads the section on responsibility in the Values in Alignment Activity Book he agrees with the prescription charging him to “maintain order in my



personal life.” He arises at 4:30 each weekday morning to catch a bus from his near West End residence to go downtown to connect with another taking him to school. The arduous schedule stems from his decision to spend his senior year at

John Marshall after moving last summer.

A sense of responsibility impels him to apply himself to his four high school classes and a course at the technical center providing him with a background as an electrician. He thinks such skills will help him underwrite a college education.

Young Gates plays sports. He represents John Marshall in the 800-yard race and plays shortstop for the baseball team in the spring. At the Capitol One Boys and Girls Club in Northside, he coaches the volleyball teams.

From 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Wednesdays you will find John working at the Bill’s Barbecue on the Boulevard. He is a utility player serving as cashier and helper in the kitchen. On weekends he puts in 16 hours at Bill’s with the intent to build a reserve for college. His savings account now totals \$1,500.

Turning back to the Activity Book, Gates agrees the idea that he should “accept the consequences of what I do and say.” He says, “It is not wise to tell what you can’t back up.” As a helper with the younger boys and girls at his Club, he claims, “It disappoints the youngster when there is no follow-through. And, yes, be careful about what you say.” In his case he can refer to an experience as a third grader when “he fussed at a teacher.” The teacher called his mother, who gave him instructions. “I

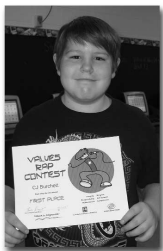
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ur Values in Alignment Rap Contest brought a flood of responses from Harrisonburg and Rockingham County Boys & Girls Clubs, so it is no surprise that the winning entries came from those clubs. They are shown below.

Compassion

by CJ Burchett (age 10)



CJ Burchett of Harrisonburg was awarded a \$50 U.S. Savings for his winning Rap entitled Compassion.

*I am kind to others, I am helpful too,
I am com-pass-ion-ate, how about you?*

*When others are hurt I feel their pain,
Day or night, I never complain;*

*I always think before I act,
I have compassion, that's a fact;*

*Compassion is not just a word it's a way to be,
And compassionate is the way for me!*

Values

by Lexie Holloway (age 10)



Lexie Holloway was one of a dozen youngsters at the South River Club in Rockingham County who under the guidance of Tasha Jones, Unit Program Director, submitted entries in the Values in Alignment Rap Contest.

I'm accountable in what I say and what I do...and thats cool. Yeah

I set goals encouraging others to work towards achieving them. Yeah

I help those who include others I care about people who are different from some of us.

*Responsibility, Integrity, Compassion Yeah
Achievement and Ambition Yeah*

Honesty is Real

Grace Guthrie (age 9)



Grace Guthrie of the South River Club earned a second place award for her Rap.

Honesty is real so you should find that you should not steal.

You know you can't judge a book by its cover...be real, don't steal.

For ever and ever and ever be truthful to one another

Be kind, be nice be honest, be truthful... but never steal.

“BE RESPONSIBLE”

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had to apologize before the whole class. Yes, I did wrong.”

At the Boys and Girls Club he knows the staff and children need and expect things from him. Because of his size and a muscular frame they look to him to do the “heavy lifting.” “After a while,” he said, “they rely on me.”

When the Values in Alignment™ process came to the Club he helped the instructor, Mr. Wallace. “It was awesome,” to quote the vernacular for those reading this column. John said, “I helped him break down what he said to a level anyone could understand.”

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finishing what they start, even if they have to overcome obstacles.

Emerson, who as a youngster was a Boys Club member in St. Paul, Minnesota, sees this training as being beneficial to members as well as the staff responsible for implementing the curriculum at their clubs. “It’s important to get everyone on the same page when it comes to passing along values that we feel our children need to embrace,” he said.

“Values are important and are not being addressed by other groups. I believe our Boys & Girls Clubs families as well as our staff and members would benefit from the values training, because when we get parents reinforcing what we’re teaching at the clubs, we’ll find that kids will make better choices and will become responsible citizens.”

To date more than 30 full-time staff members in Emerson’s organization have participated in a day-long Values in Alignment orientation program and a like number have attended additional training to equip them to teach fellow staff members, volunteers and the youth members they serve. ■

VALUES IN ALIGNMENT PILOT PROJECT: FACT SHEET

Pilot Participation: 19 Virginia Boys & Girls clubs

- Metro Richmond: clubs – 12 leaders trained; youth component to be completed Jan. 2006.
- Southeastern Virginia: 7 clubs – 7 leaders trained; youth component to be completed early Jan. 2006.
- Harrisonburg and Rockingham County: 6 clubs – 7 leaders trained; youth component to be completed Dec. 2005.

Numbers of Youth Impacted through Pilot

- Directly involving more than 300 youth, ages 8 to 16 in a focused, 10-session (1-hour each) character education curriculum designed especially for them.
- Positively affecting approximately 5,000, mostly at-risk youth through daily mini-lessons on values, and related teaching aids including posters, wallet cards, songs, and games.

Measurement of Impact

- 1,000-2,000 youth will complete pre-pilot (November) and post-pilot (December- January) surveys ■



At the Pleasant Valley Club in Harrisonburg, youngsters from diverse backgrounds are learning about values during the Values in Alignment Pilot.



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