

# Character Education Initiative



## Discovering the Real Me



## The Character Education Initiative

The UPF Character Education Initiative is a multi-pronged approach to building character. It includes a focus on school, family, and community. Studies have shown that a character education program is most effective when it is a comprehensive, intentional effort of these three components working together, thereby creating a support system that will reinforce the lessons learned. Good individuals form and are formed by good families; good families make up vibrant communities; vibrant communities comprise a healthy nation, and healthy nations make for a peaceful world.

Leadership of the UPF Character Education Initiative

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In addition, the UPF Character Education Initiative contains a strong service learning emphasis in keeping with its motto:

“LIVING FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS”

Or

“ALTRUISTIC LOVE”

The key virtues initially emphasized in the program are citizenship, commitment, compassion, gratitude, honesty, integrity, perseverance, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, and others. Altruistic love—love for the benefit of others—is considered the core virtue from which these other virtues emanate.

The UPF Character Education Initiative is designed to provide opportunities for participants to work toward these basic life goals:

- 1) to grow and become a person of mature character
- 2) to build healthy relationships and a loving family
- 3) to make a positive contribution to society



# UPF's Character Education Initiative and Life Goals

## A. What are Life Goals?

The concept of life goals provides a larger perspective for conceptualizing character education. It provides a theoretical scaffolding that encompasses the diverse aims and methods of character education and shows their inter-relatedness. Appealing to youth's imagination with attractive images of growth, relationships, and creativity, a life goals framework allows teachers to fully articulate the "why" of good behavior. Moral ideas and goals point youth toward activities inherently worthy and rewarding. They provide long-range, meaningful motivation for character educators and students alike.

### Life Goals

Inner circle: grades K-6	Second Circle: grades 7&8	Outer Circle: grades 9-12
Life Goal #1	Life Goal #2	Life Goal #3
"Person of Character"	"Healthy Families"	"Contribute to Society"
K-6: Becoming a good son/daughter	Loving my parents, siblings friends; learning basic responsibility at home	Loving my school Transcending excessive egoism
7-8: Respecting others Developing conscience and honesty	Being a good friend Understanding sexuality Conflict resolution	Loving my community Becoming a good citizen Becoming more responsible
9-12: Learning self-control Maintaining sexual purity	Relationship skill building Healthy friendships	Loving my nation Developing leadership Becoming a global citizen

While each life goal can be developed to varying degrees in each age grouping, each age group has a particular focus to master. Therefore, an elementary-age child should primarily focus on life goal 1 with some limited focus on life goal 2 and life goal 3. This particular aspect of the life goal then becomes foundational for the subsequent life goals.



## B. How the Life Goals Fit in the Schools

Elementary, middle school, and high school students have different tasks and responsibilities as they grow.

- An elementary-aged child needs to focus on becoming a good filial son/daughter. This means loving parents/family, then friends, and ultimately a higher group or community such as their school.



- Then, as children become young teens, the peer group and friends become more influential. The basis of good friendship is respecting oneself and others and being honest. At this age, growth moves to include developing good friends and understanding one's identity as a son or daughter/male or female and how one can contribute to the wider community.



- Finally, the high school-aged or older teen needs self-control and marriage preparation as well as genuinely learning to love those in the world.

The lessons spiral through the different age groups, weaving the knowledge and experiences gained at one age level with development and application of advanced concepts at higher age levels.

## UPF Internship Program

The Universal Peace Federation has developed an internship program for college-age youth to volunteer as peer educators from countries such as the U.S., Australia, and Canada, to travel to developing countries and teach character education, relationship skills training, and character-based sexuality education. Programs are for three to six weeks and can be held in schools, community centers, church centers or in summer camps coordinated by the Ministry of Education in each country. Longer internships for up to one year will be made available some time in the coming months. The youth stay with Ambassadors for Peace or in Peace Embassies.



### **The countries where UPF trained and sent Peer Counselor/Interns in 2007 were:**

The Gambia, West Africa, Pohnpei, Belize, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago.

### **The countries where UPF held Teacher Training Workshops in 2007 were:**

The Philippines, Pohnpei, Federation of Micronesian States, Slovenia, Croatia, The Gambia, West Africa, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Thailand.

### **Some of the organizations that have co-sponsored trainings with UPF are:**

The World Bank: HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Project, Ministry of Education and Culture, St. Lucia.

Ministry of Education and Curriculum Development Unit, St. Vincent, Digicell, CARICOM, The Rose Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago, The University of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, *Side by Side*, Gambia, Department of Education, Pohnpei, Philippine Teachers' Association for the Research of Principles, Department of Education (DEPED) National Capitol Region, Philippines.

Contact Information for the UPF Character Education Intern Program:

If you would like to participate in the UPF Peer Counselor/Internship program in 2008, please contact Sally Sayre at [interns@upf.org](mailto:interns@upf.org)

If you would like to host or sponsor a program in your country in 2008, please contact Alan Saunders at [asaunders@upf.org](mailto:asaunders@upf.org)

## Teacher Training Workshops

The Universal Peace Federation offers educator training workshops for teachers, administrators, parents, community leaders, civic leaders, and student leaders in the areas of character education, relationship skills training, character-based sexuality education and parenting education. The workshops focus on the universality of the three life goals, which are achieved on the foundation of virtues. The training workshops are offered both in the U.S. and internationally.



# Impact of the Discovering the Real Me Series

The UPF character education initiative is being implemented around the world with training workshops and use of the *Discovering the Real Me* curriculum series.

## Here are some comments about from teachers about *Discovering the Real Me*:

"With their well-chosen stories, these manuals give me confidence I can help my students build good character."

"These manuals are easy and practical to use."

## Comments from peer educator who volunteered their services as part of the UPF character education internship program:

"The youth could actually see a group of young people, not that much older than themselves, trying to live out good character." Gina Standard, peer educator in summer camps in St. Lucia and St. Vincent.

"I would definitely recommend this program to others. It is a wonderful experience to teach and influence the minds of young people positively. It also gives you tools to use for other times in your life." Hithia Shibuya, peer educator in summer camps in St. Lucia.

## The following is a comment from an administrator concerning the training workshop:

"Well-organized, informative, and excellent presentations. I highly recommend that the character education program be fully implemented into our Pohnpei public school system curriculum from pre-school to secondary school." Swaiper Eliam, Social Studies teacher, PICS High School, Pohnpei, Federation of Micronesia States.

## These comments come from students who experienced *Discovering the Real Me* during summer training camps:

"I really had fun and enjoyed myself at this five day summer camp. I liked everyone at this camp; they were very friendly and fun to be around. They taught us lots of new stuff, and I will never forget them and what they taught everyone at the camp.

"The most important point that I have learned during the camp is that life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent what you do about it."

"This was a fun experience, and I appreciate all that I've learned. I am anxious to put what I've learned to use."

"This workshop has been the most different one I've ever attended. This one has been very meaningful, very clear, and understandable, and it touched areas that I didn't think we would discuss. I discovered a lot of explanations to things, like why things are the way they are, and why people do things the way they do."



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