

Project Discovery: A Word About Our Youth Programs

We see it on the internet, the news and in the headlines, we hear about it from friends, co-workers and our own kids. Chances are we may even know some young people who are in trouble, kids who have made some very poor decisions. And whether its reflected in the statistics of poor academic performance, drop-out, rising gang and school violence, alcohol and drug abuse, teen pregnancy, suicide or in the face of some child you know, most of us realize that there is a crisis among our young people.

The crisis may take the form of abusing drugs at ten or eleven, shoplifting at twelve, pregnancy at thirteen, failing in school or something less mundane like gunning down fellow students or family members in high school. Whatever the headline, the implication is that our young people need help now before they develop a lifestyle that necessitates intervention by society for perhaps the rest of their lives. The research demonstrates that the earlier we muster our prevention efforts, the more likely we are to empower young people to make good decisions and succeed in turning a young person around. Most juvenile and adult probation officers would agree. When the expense of a lifetime of law enforcement and incarceration is considered, it would be much wiser to spend a dollar now than thousands of dollars later on.

After working with youth groups for twenty-five plus years, we recognize the importance of developing leadership skills in young people's lives. Without support, proper parental guidance, positive role-models, good solid coaching and a connection to healthy people and activities, many young people adopt lifestyles which put them at risk in a number of ways. Whether its gang involvement, drugs and/or alcohol abuse or other illegal behavior, there are a large number of good people in detention facilities who have simply made very poor decision in their lives. Many of these young people run a good chance of spending a large portion of their lives behind bars. That is where we come in.

At Project Discovery we strongly believe our program makes a serious positive impact on young people. We have worked with school-based programs, probation departments, treatment facilities, social service agencies, health and human services, mental health agencies, foster care programs, Friday Night Live Programs, scouts, youth clubs, adoption agencies and a whole host of other youth programs. We do good work. Returning clients represent the largest part of our income.

The Project Discovery Leadership Challenge Program allows children and young adults to challenge themselves physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. The root of the challenge has remained perennially the same, to improve, to be better tomorrow than we were today, to challenge old dysfunctional behaviors with new ones, to become a person that earns respect from others and more importantly for oneself. To become a person that can boast of a positive "can do" attitude, who demonstrates good judgment and behaves in a way consistent with personal excellence. In an impactful, yet also supportive and enjoyable environment, we coach participants and gently nudge them toward their personal best. Our goal is to have every participant feel like a hero at some point in the day and to make sure that he or she is not allowed to forget it.

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Toward the end of the program, we attempt to have each one of our participants discuss what leadership “tools” worked well for them and how they might be able to integrate use of these tools into their home, school, work or institutional arenas. If there is a follow-up on your end as the sponsoring group leader, empirical research has shown that the value of the challenge course extends far into the future in terms of the young person’s leadership and decision-making skills. In essence, our Leadership Challenge Program is a positive touch-stone for both the young person, his peers and his group leaders. It provides an arena where young people can “try out” more productive Attitudes, Behaviors, Cognitions and Communications and dramatically demonstrates how these leadership “tools” might be life changing. These A, B & C’s are the cornerstones of self-leadership and we have been assisting youth in this “self discovery” for dozens of years.

For more information on Project Discovery Youth Programs please contact us directly or check out our website: <http://www.projectdiscovery.com>

