

## What is Learning for Life?

### Purpose and Rationale

The Learning for Life Corporation offers seven programs designed to support schools and community-based organizations in their efforts to prepare youth to successfully handle the complexities of contemporary society and to enhance their self-confidence, motivation, and self-esteem. The seven programs focus on character education and career education. Learning for Life programs help youth develop social and life skills, assist in character development, and help youth formulate positive personal values. It prepares youth to make ethical decisions that will help them achieve their full potential. There are two program methods. We have six school based programs and one worksite based program.

Adults involved in Learning for Life are selected by the organization in which they work (i.e., schools, local businesses, community organizations, etc.). Race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, economic status and citizenship are not criteria for participation in Learning for Life.

At a time when drugs and gangs are ravaging many of our schools and communities, Learning for Life programs can be a catalyst to help stop this trend. The program uses age-appropriate, grade-specific lesson plans to give youth skills and information that will help them cope with the complexities of today's society.


Learning for Life makes academic learning fun and relevant to real-life situations in age appropriate and grade specific material. As a result, the positive character traits and skills learned by participation in Learning for Life not only make students more confident and capable, but also give them an invaluable understanding of how things work in the real world. School and community demands for character education and career education programs have greatly influenced the dramatic growth of Learning for Life. Learning for Life has been adopted by more than 17,000 schools and organizations nationwide, serving over 1.5 million youth.

### Programs in Learning for Life

#### Learning for Life has seven program components:


##### School Based Programs:

#### 1. Seekers Program (Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> Grades)

The logo for the Seekers Program is a circular emblem with a globe in the center, surrounded by the words "LEARNING FOR LIFE" at the top and "SEEKERS" at the bottom.

The *Seekers' Program* offers an integrated approach to character development designed for kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade youth. The program blends character development, life skills, academic learning, and outdoor experiences into a comprehensive program geared to help students successfully handle the complexities of contemporary society, reinforce social skills, critical and creative thinking, ethical decision making, conflict resolution, and build their self-esteem. The core character traits promoted in the *Seekers Program* are: 1) Respect, 2) Responsibility, 3) Honesty/Trust, 4) Caring/ Fairness, 5) Perseverance, 6) Self-Discipline, 7) Courage, 8) Citizenship. In addition a series of Life Skills is offered. Curricula books for each grade level consist of 61 lesson plans, all age-appropriate and grade specific. Lessons focus on themes such as "Accepting Consequences", "Gangs", "Meeting Deadlines", "Respecting Differences", and "Sticking to What's Right". Through reflection activities in each lesson, students engage in analyzing their behaviors. Lessons are easily integrated into core curricula subjects. Each lesson plan also includes a "Home Activity Worksheet" which teachers send to the student's parent/guardian as an extension activity to reinforce concepts taught in the lesson plan. The Seekers program features a teacher's edition for each grade with the 61 lesson plans, activity sheets and home/family activity sheets. A student workbook, that has all the activity and home/family activities printed on perforated paper is available for each grade Spanish translations are available for both the teacher's edition and student workbook in the Seekers program. The program is supplemented by a recognition component. Other value-added features of the *Seekers Program* includes: outdoor experiences, community speakers, field trips and teacher training.

#### 2. Discoverers Program (3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> Grades)

The logo for the Discoverers Program is a circular emblem with a stylized green and yellow sun or flower shape in the center, surrounded by the words "LEARNING FOR LIFE" at the top and "DISCOVERERS" at the bottom.

The *Discoverers Program* combines character development, life skills, academic learning and outdoor experiences specifically designed for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade youth. It mirrors the *Seekers Program* by providing an integrated approach to character development. The 61 lesson plans for each grade focus on eight character traits: 1) Respect, 2) Responsibility, 3) Honesty/Trust, 4) Caring/Fairness, 5) Perseverance, 6) Self-Discipline, 7) Courage, 8) Citizenship. Additionally a set of Life skills lessons are included. Each 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade book has 61 lesson plans focusing on many of the same themes as the *Seekers Program*; however, lesson plans progress in difficulty and cognitive level. Lessons focus on

critical thinking, conflict resolution, perseverance, courage, interpersonal skills and ethical decision making. The Discoverers program has a teacher's edition and student workbook for each grade. Teachers can use the student recognition program. To further enhance the *Discoverers Program*, each book contains an interactive CD-ROM game for students titled "Super Safe". The game presents a series of six age-appropriate scenarios where students have to make choices about safety issues. The six scenarios are: Internet Safety, Nonviolent Strategies, Verbal Abuse, Bullying, Youth Protection, and Unsupervised Children. The game also provides information that can be sent home to parents/guardians. The information details issues that are being addressed in the "Super Safe" CD-ROM game and shows way parents/guardians can help their child's development. Other value-added components of the *Discoverers Program* includes: community speakers, mentors, outdoor experiences, field trips and teacher training.

### 3. Challengers Program (5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grades)



Specifically designed for the cognitive and developmental levels of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, the *Challengers Program* continues Learning for Life's character education emphasis by integrating components of both the *Seekers* and *Discoverers Program*. The *Challengers Program* focuses on the same eight character traits as *Seekers* and *Discoverers*: 1) Respect, 2) Responsibility, 3) Honesty/Trust, 4) Caring/Fairness, 5) Perseverance, 6) Self-Discipline, 7) Courage, 8) Citizenship. Lesson plans on Life Skills are also part of the *Challengers* program. The 61 lesson plans in each of the *Challengers* books focus on topics such as "Being Responsible", "Making Good Decisions", "Code of Ethics", "Empathy", etc. The lesson plans are geared to a higher level of cognitive and developmental learning than the *Seekers* and *Discoverers* lessons. A Home/Family activity is part of every lesson. Each grade has its own teacher's edition as well as student workbook. A recognition feature helps teachers to reward student participation. The *Challengers Program*, like the *Discoverers Program*, also comes with a "Super Safe" CD-ROM game for students. However, the game for *Challengers* is completely different from the *Discoverers* game, and offers more difficult scenarios to enhance students' critical thinking skills. Other value-added features in the *Challengers Program* are: community speakers, mentors, outdoor experiences, field trips and teacher training.

### 4. Builders Program (7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades)



The *Builders Program* is a comprehensive, four-tier blend of elements focusing on Character Education, Career Education, Building Relationships and Citizenship for students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Lesson plans in both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher's editions are designed to reinforce social, academic and career education skills in various areas, such as critical and creative thinking, conflict resolution, decision making, interpersonal relationships, practical life skills, self-esteem, writing and language arts, citizenship and personal fitness. There are 44 lesson plans in each of the *Builders* Books, ranging in topics from "Peer Pressure: Who Can I Trust" to "Self Assessment of Skills and Abilities" to "Problem Solving: The Intricacies of Relating to Others". The lessons are action-oriented and use teaching techniques such as role-playing, small group discussions, and reflective and moral dilemmas exercise. The *Builders Program* features a teacher's edition and student workbook for each grade. In addition, many of the same value-added features included with the *Seekers*, *Discoverers* and *Challengers Programs* are also part of the *Builders Program*, including community speakers, mentors, outdoor experiences, field trips and teacher training. Life Choices: A Character Game CD-ROM is included in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher's book. It offers exciting activities that help teach life and career skills. The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher's edition features a DVD, "A Time To Tell" that addresses youth protection issues. Builders can be recognized with the Builders Award of Excellence/.

**Community Role Models.** The Learning for Life seventh- and eighth-grade program is designed to provide community role models to motivate and interact with youth. Role models meet with a specific class (e.g., English, Social Studies, or Math) and discuss the relationship of that subject to a work situation. These role models, with backgrounds similar to those of the youth, share their personal paths to success, including the pitfalls and the high points.

### 5. Navigators Program (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grades)



The *Navigators Program* is designed to extend the learning experiences taught through Learning for Life's *Builders Program* for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Just as the word "navigators" implies, the program serves to guide youngsters in making a successful transition from high school into real-world endeavors, including post-secondary education, acquiring a job, being a productive citizen, and establishing and maintaining positive relationships with others. There are two (2) books in the *Navigators Program*: Book One – *A Personal Compass for Daily Living* features lesson plans in the following areas: Citizenship, Ethical Dilemmas, Habits of Character Education and Service to Others. Book One also includes a student DVD on youth protection for high school aged youth called, "Personal Safety Awareness". Book Two – *A Road Map for the Future* features lesson plans in the following areas: Career Education, College Life and Life Skills. Book Two includes a CD-ROM titled *Life Choices: A Career Game*.

Although aspects of these two books are introduced in Learning for Life's elementary books and taught in a more advanced way through the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade books, the *Navigators Program* takes students to a much deeper level of

learning and a much broader set of learning experiences. When students complete the *Navigators Program*, they will be better prepared to enter the workforce or enter post-secondary education. They will have deeper understandings and more strategies to support their efforts to achieve success in their chosen venture. Recognitions are available for students in character and career achievement.

Career Seminars can be a unique feature of the Navigators program. Career Seminars offer students first hand information on future vocational options. Seminars can be organized as a career fair or speakers in a classroom.



## 6. Champions Program (for Special Needs Youth)

The *Champions program* assists students with mental challenges to develop the life skills they need to achieve self-sufficiency. The teacher's edition features 57 lessons also focus on and enhance student self-development. Areas covered include:

- *Personal/Social Skills*. Students learn how emotions affect their own behavior and that of others
- *Life Skills*. Students are taught basic skills for independent living, such as personal hygiene, meal preparation, and job-readiness training.

A recognition program helps to reinforce the skills in the Champions Program.

Because of the various forms and levels of special needs that schools may encounter, any of the Learning for Life curriculum books may be used in the *Champions Program*. In this way, Learning for Life can be tailored to fit the needs of each individual class and student and is certain to be age-appropriate.

### Champions Transition Program

The *Champions Transition Program* is geared toward high school-aged special needs youth. This program features lesson plans focusing on managing finances, vocational opportunities, mental skills for good work habits, decision making skills, planning and preparation and seeking a job. A certificate can be used for those participating in the program.

### Work Site Based Program

#### Exploring Program

*Exploring* is a worksite-based career education program for young men and women who are 14 (and have completed the eighth grade) or 15 through 20 years old.



*Exploring's* purpose is to provide experiences that help young people mature and prepare them to become responsible and caring adults. Explorers are ready to investigate the meaning of inter-dependence in their personal relationships and communities.

*Exploring* is based on a unique and dynamic relationship between youth and the business organizations in their communities. Local community organizations initiate a career-oriented Explorer post by matching their employees and program resources to the interests of young people in the community. The program of Exploring is based on five areas of emphasis: Career Opportunities, Life Skills, Leadership Experiences, Character Education and Citizenship. The result is a program of activities that helps youth pursue their career interests, grow and develop.

Exploring posts can be organized in a number of career fields. Some include: law enforcement, health, law, engineering, aviation and business.

#### Value-Added Features of Learning for Life

**Leadership Development Guidebook for Teenage Youth.** These leadership workshops are designed for senior high students. The goal is help them develop life skills, personal management skills and group leadership skills. The Guidebook includes 16 workshops as well as information on planning options. The workshops can be offered as one-day sessions, an overnight meeting, or as a series of workshops.

**Drug Prevention Education Program.** This is a series of books for kindergarten through sixth-grade youth. The books include age-appropriate and grade-specific lesson plans geared to educate students about the dangers of drug abuse. A full-color poster is included in most books.

**Kid Serve Community Service Learning.** This program is designed to raise awareness about social problems that kids can address in their community through planned community service projects.

## Training

Learning for Life offers training seminar for all seven programs. They are designed to prepare volunteers and teachers to use Learning for Life materials. The training can also be conducted to orient school administrators, prospective financial supporters, and other interested parties on the value of the programs.

## Recognitions

Learning for Life offers a recognition plan needs students to encourage positive behavior, to foster a sense of belonging in the group, to assist in building self-esteem, and to reward a positive work ethic. In Exploring, numerous scholarships are available from a variety of national organizations.

For *Seekers*, *Discoverers* and *Challengers* the recognition plan is an honor wall chart with spaces for student names. There are 15 brightly colored peel-off stickers that relate to the lesson plan themes that are in each book. When the class completes a designated set of themes, the teacher places the appropriate sticker on the honor chart by the name of each student who has participated. Individual Honor Charts can also be sued. Challengers also have the option of using iron-on emblems for the students to wear on their clothing. In addition the Awards of Excellence can be earned in each grade.

The *Champions* (special needs youth) recognition program has its own honor wall chart and incentive stickers. Also a Champions Award of Excellence is available.

Seventh and Eighth grade participants can earn the Builder Award of Excellence

The Navigators program offers Senior-high students the opportunity to earn the Navigators Career and Character Award of Excellence.

Explorers and Navigators can receive Career Achievement Awards for their accomplishments in different career fields.

Learning for Life also offers recognitions for adults who participate in the program. There is also a Character Education Quality Award for classrooms.

### **Mission Statement**

It is the mission of Learning for Life to enable young people to become responsible individuals by teaching positive character traits, career development, leadership, and life skills so they can make ethical choices and achieve their full potential.

### **Vision Statement**

Learning for Life strives to be the foremost co-educational youth program for character and career development.

*For the latest on Learning for Life see our web site: [www.learningforlife.org](http://www.learningforlife.org)*