

Pop Culture Hero Coalition Joins with YMCA to Teach Relatable Mental Health and Social Emotional Learning Skills to Kids

The Coalition's Heroic Journey Curriculum, Created by Pop-Culture-Fluent Psychologists and Veteran Educators, is Being Used in 160 YMCA sites Across the U.S.

LOS ANGELES, CA, USA, March 24, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Pop Culture Hero Coalition, the first 501c3 non-profit to use evidence-based psychology in combination with stories from TV, film, and comics to teach mental health and social emotional learning skills for kids and teens, has teamed up with the

YMCA of the USA to utilize its [Heroic Journey Curriculum](#). Created by pop-culture-fluent psychologists and veteran educators under the direction of award-winning author and Coalition Founding Partner Carrie Goldman (Harper Collins' *Bullied: What Every Parent, Teacher & Kid Needs to Know About Ending the Cycle of Fear*), the Heroic Journey Curriculum has been used in over 160 YMCA locations across the U.S.

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*YMCA of Northern Colorado
CEO Dr. Chris Coker*

“The Y was very impressed with the science and depth of The Heroic Journey Curriculum,” said YMCA of Northern Colorado CEO Dr. Chris Coker, who championed The Heroic Journey with Y USA. “So we wanted to partner with them to test it in various Ys across the country for a nationwide roll out.”

“The Heroic Journey teaches kids the core social emotional learning skills that they need to function well in our world,”

said Goldman, who writes on child development for The New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, and Psychology Today. “Through the power of treasured stories, kids learn to identify,

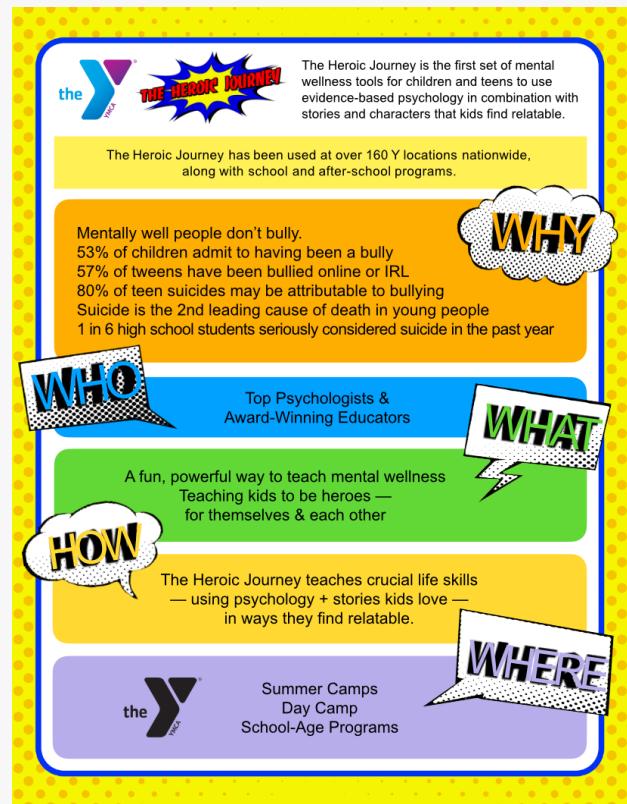


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understand and manage their emotions – especially the uncomfortable feelings that explode during times of stress, such as envy, anger, fear, and sadness – and kids gain the ability to form and sustain healthy relationships. We focus on building empathy, practicing respectful conflict resolution, and asking for help during times of struggles. Our goal is for kids to complete the Heroic Journey and be better positioned to thrive in our society."

"The Heroic Journey not only gives children the language and resources to identify and express the complex emotions that they feel every day," adds Julia Shipman, who supervises School Age Programs at seventeen Y sites, "but it gives educators and parents a toolkit on approaching these daunting subjects with their children to make positive change." In agreement is Lakeland Hills Kids Club After School Program and Y Summer Camp Director Shannon Bujoreanu: "The kids love the Curriculum — love, love, love it," she added. "And our kids need this more than ever. It has been a godsend."

The U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy stated in a December 2021 advisory, Protecting Youth Mental Health, "This is a critical issue that we have to do something about now. Kids increasingly are experiencing bullying, not just in school but online...they're growing up in a popular culture and a media culture that reminds kids often that they aren't good-looking enough, thin enough, popular enough, rich enough, and frankly, just not enough."



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The 32-lesson Heroic Journey Curriculum uses fun, relatable stories — including The Avengers, Star Wars, Wonder Woman, Black Panther, and Batman — to teach children and teens to develop lifelong skills. Lesson plans include Resilience, Empathy, Self-Compassion, Multi-Cultural Identity, Social Media: Funny vs. Mean, Ending Implicit Bias, and How to Seek Help, and also include tools for navigating peer pressure and enlisting positive allies in order to have successful lives. It teaches kids how to navigate depression, anxiety, loneliness, fear, shame, self-doubt, imposter syndrome, and to make decisions — for themselves and to better the world we live in— based on positive core values.

“With increasing intensity, young people are experiencing a lack of healthy identity, brought on by a culture that worships celebrities, along with a lack of healthy role models and the insecurities brought on by social media,” stated Founding Partner and CEO Chase Masterson, who initially realized the transformative power of pop culture through her 5-year role on Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. The Heroic Journey provides fun, relatable tools for building healthy identity and developing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in positive ways. And we give them tools to avoid risk behaviors, before it’s too late.”

To learn more about Pop Culture Hero Coalition and its Heroic Journey Curriculum, please visit www.PopCultureHero.org.

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Pop Culture Hero Coalition is the first 501c3 nonprofit to use evidence-based psychology in combination with iconic stories and characters to teach crucial mental health and social emotional learning skills in ways that children, teens, and adults find relatable.

www.PopCultureHero.org / @SuperheroIRL

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