Capturing Kids' Hearts™ & Teen Leadership™: Violence Prevention Programs

I. Introduction

Mention achievement at school and everyone thinks of student grades and test scores. **But student successes are possible only when many other things go right.** Great learning can happen only in classrooms where trust and respect enable active participation; where discipline problems are not allowed to subvert teaching and learning; where enthusiastic teachers connect with students as partners in learning; and where administrators fully support the efforts of teachers and students.

Creating such an environment is a tremendous challenge. **Capturing Kids' Hearts** is a **character education** and **violence prevention program** that provides tools for administrators, faculty and staff to build positive, productive, trusting relationships — among themselves and with their students. This process transforms the classroom and campus environment, paving the way for behavioral and academic achievement. Participants in the program learn proven, relational skills that help them:

- Develop specific skills and techniques for conflict resolution
- Develop safe, trusting, self-managing classrooms
- Decrease delinquent behaviors such as disruptive outbursts, violent acts, drug use and other risky behavior

Once a teacher acquires and successfully models the relational skills taught in the **Capturing Kids' Hearts** training, (s)he is eligible to enroll in the advanced **Teen Leadership** training. The **Teen Leadership** curriculum teaches personal responsibility and builds leadership skills in students through role plays, group activities, speeches, and projects. As a result of the course, students:

- Recognize and resist peer pressure to engage in self-destructive behavior
- Become better family members and citizens
- Acquire critical life skills such as goal-setting and following through on commitments
- Develop a healthy self-concept, healthy relationships, and a sense of personal responsibility

The positive effect that **Capturing Kids' Hearts** and **Teen Leadership** exert on academic achievement and pro-social skills was documented using both experimental and quasi-experimental research designs and published in peer-reviewed journals. Both prevention programs reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors that impact whether or not youth will engage in negative behaviors, including drug abuse.

II. Effective Prevention Programs: Risk and Protective Factors Model

The characteristics of effective prevention programs have been studied for more than 20 years, and the component shared by all effective prevention programs is a focus on the risk and protective factors that influence drug use.

Protective factors are characteristics that decrease an individual's risk for abusing substances. The National Institute of Drug Abuse lists the following as protective factors (factors shown in ***bold/italics*** are factors specifically addressed by ***Capturing Kids' Hearts*** and ***Teen Leadership***):

- Strong and positive family bonds
- Parental monitoring of children's activities and peers
- ***Clear rules of conduct that are consistently enforced***
- Involvement of parents in the lives of their children
- ***Success in school performance***; ***strong bonds with institutions***, such as ***school*** and religious organizations
- Adoption of conventional norms about drug use

Risk factors are characteristics that increase the likelihood of substance abuse problems and include:

- Chaotic home environments, particularly in which parents abuse substances or suffer from mental illnesses
- Ineffective parenting, especially with children with difficult temperaments or conduct disorders
- Lack of parent-child attachments and nurturing
- ***Inappropriately shy or aggressive behavior in the classroom***
- ***Failure in school performance***
- ***Poor social coping skills***
- ***Affiliations with peers displaying deviant behaviors***
- Perceptions of approval of drug-using behaviors in family, work, school, peer, and community environments

Source: NIDA Notes (2002). Risk and Protective Factors in Substance Abuse Prevention, 16(6), retrieved from http://www.drugabuse.gov/NIDA_Notes/NNVol16N6/Risk.html

The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) describes the following principles for adhering to the risk and protective factors model in prevention programs. The manner in which the ***Capturing Kids' Hearts*** training and ***Teen Leadership*** curriculum adhere to these principles is outlined for each principle:

PRINCIPLE 1 - Prevention programs should enhance protective factors and reverse or reduce risk factors. (Hawkins, 2002)

Capturing Kids' Hearts training as well as the *Teen Leadership* curriculum <u>enhance</u> the following protective factors identified by NIDA:

- strong bonds with school (connectedness between teachers and students)
- school performance
- clear rules of conduct that are consistently enforced

Capturing Kids' Hearts training as well as the *Teen Leadership* curriculum <u>reverse or reduce</u> the following risk factors identified by NIDA:

- failure in school performance
- poor social coping skills
- inappropriately shy or aggressive behavior in the classroom
- affiliations with peers displaying deviant behaviors (peer pressure effects)

PRINCIPLE 2 - Prevention programs should address all forms of drug abuse, alone or in combination, including the underage use of legal drugs (e.g., tobacco or alcohol); the use of illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana or heroin); and the inappropriate use of legally obtained substances (e.g., inhalants), prescription medications, or over-the-counter drugs. (Johnston et al., 2002)

Teachers trained in *Capturing Kids' Hearts* as well as *Teen Leadership* are equipped to address anti-social behavior, including drug abuse. Through having a personal relationship with students and implementing the classroom Social Contract (outlining clear rules of conduct), teachers have the ability to tackle difficult situations and topics of discussion.

As with any new behavior (such as abstaining from drug use), students must first want to quit the risky behavior, believe they have the ability to quit, and then have the support network in place to help them continue the new behavior. Many studies have found an improvement in behavior when schools show concern for students, and recent studies led by Dr. Voisin (2005) at the University of Chicago as well as those led by Dr. Resnick (2004) at the University of Minnesota demonstrate a <u>significant association</u> between an increase in teacher connectedness to students and a decrease in anti-social behavior in teens. The *Capturing Kids' Hearts* and *Teen Leadership* prevention programs provide the relational support needed for teachers to talk with students about drug abuse.

PRINCIPLE 3 - Prevention programs should address the type of drug abuse problem in the local community, target modifiable risk factors, and strengthen identified protective factors. (Hawkins, 2002)

Capturing Kids' Hearts and *Teen Leadership* address the type of drug abuse problem identified by the local school community by targeting modifiable risk factors (*failure in school performance, poor*

social coping skills, and affiliations with peers displaying deviant behaviors) and strengthening identified protective factors (*strong bonds with school, school performance, and clear rules of conduct that are consistently enforced*).

PRINCIPLE 4 - Prevention programs should be tailored to address risks specific to population or audience characteristics, such as age, gender, and ethnicity, to improve program effectiveness. (Palmgreen et al., 2001)

Key risk periods for drug abuse occur during major transitions in children's lives. The first big transition occurs when children leave the security of the family and enter school. Later, in early adolescence as children advance from elementary school to middle school, youth are likely to encounter drugs for the first time.

Upon entering high school, additional social, emotional, and educational challenges confront adolescents. They may experience a greater availability of drugs, drug abusers, and social activities involving drugs at this time in their lives. Such challenges may increase the risk that they will abuse alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.

Capturing Kids' Hearts is tailored to address risks associated with transitions in children's lives from kindergarten to completion of high school. The prevention program addresses childhood risks (such as aggressive behavior) in the early grades by helping teachers help children develop appropriate, positive behaviors. Early negative behaviors can lead to more risk factors, such as academic failure and ineffective social coping skills, which put children at risk for later drug abuse. *Capturing Kids' Hearts* is effective in middle school and high school because it helps put into place the protective factors that can help adolescents overcome significant risk factors.

Teen Leadership is specifically tailored for junior high and high school students by addressing the risk factors that are unique to adolescents.

The NIDA website (2008) states that preventive interventions "provide <u>skills</u> and <u>support</u> to high-risk youth to <u>enhance levels of protective factors</u> and <u>prevent escalation to drug abuse</u>." Therefore, both *Capturing Kids' Hearts* and *Teen Leadership* qualify as preventive interventions because <u>*they enhance connectedness to school*</u> (protective factor), <u>*address poor social coping skills and failure in academic performance*</u> (risk factors), and <u>*align with the principles for adhering to the risk and protective factors model in prevention programs*</u> outlined by the NIDA.

III. Types of Prevention Programs

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Model Programs Guide (http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/program_types.htm) provides a list of types of prevention programs. Of the types identified, *Capturing Kids' Hearts* and *Teen Leadership* are considered prevention programs that address **School/Classroom Environment** and **Leadership/Youth Development**.

School/Classroom Environment Prevention Programs

Programs in this category focus on reducing or eliminating anti-social behaviors by changing the social context in which they occur. The *Capturing Kids' Hearts* and *Teen Leadership* prevention approach is closely aligned with the Social Cognitive Theory of learning (Bandura, 1986). An underlying assumption of Social Cognitive Theory is that behavior is dynamic and dependent on personal beliefs as well as the environment, which influence each other simultaneously (Perry, Baranowski & Parcel, 1991).

A second assumption of Social Cognitive Theory is that people acquire new behaviors through the observation of others and through self-regulatory mechanisms. Observation simply means observing skill-sets and behaviors of others and imitating those behaviors. Self-regulation involves self-assessing behaviors, keeping track of actions, comparing actions to a standard (established norm) of behavior, and self-directing acquired behaviors.

> As reported in the **OJJDP** website, "…according to Gottfredson (1998), programs aimed at clarifying and communicating norms about behaviors are effective ways to reduce crime, delinquency, and **substance abuse**." **OJJDP** also states that "…programs that have the capacity to build students' attachment to their school are often highlighted as models for prevention."

Leadership/Youth Development Prevention Programs

Programs in this category focus on developing competencies in youth that improve their ability to be productive and effective at tasks and activities valued by others.   OJJDP states that this "*approach cannot be identified by a single program or a particular substantive content. Rather, it is the process that is significant.*" Programs such as *Capturing Kids' Hearts* and *Teen Leadership* that use this broad-based strategy of prevention seek to improve the pro-social competencies and other life skills of youth. For instance, possessing more assets (ability to engage others, ability to stay on task, ability to take responsibility for one's own actions, ability to communicate) leads to fewer risk behaviors and greater school success and physical health (Scales, 1999).

Capturing Kids' Hearts and *Teen Leadership* build resiliency in youth (especially those at high-risk of engaging in anti-social behavior) by enhancing protective factors and minimizing risk factors. One

common protective influence that helps at-risk youths resist pressure to engage in risk behaviors is a bonding to conventional adults (parents and teachers).

IV. Scientifically-Based Research: Evidence of Effectiveness

Establishing a safe, learning environment in which academic achievement is enhanced and anti-social behavior is diminished is a major concern of school leadership. In order for schools to receive funds to implement programs that will assist in creating a connected school environment, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) specifies that programs that schools implement must provide <u>scientifically-based research</u> that demonstrates that the program is effective.

Program developers must always be assessing a program in order to determine its impact, and The Flippen Group has conducted research for the past decade that demonstrates the effectiveness of *Capturing Kids' Hearts* and *Teen Leadership.* Governmental agencies require program developers to use research study designs that are considered "experimental" (randomized controlled trial) or "quasi-experimental" (nonrandomized controlled trial).

Research studies conducted on these two prevention programs have demonstrated improvements in pro-social competencies and academic achievement as well as decreases in anti-social behavior. The following studies used experimental or quasi-experimental research designs, and two of them were published in peer-reviewed journals:

Study 1 (Experimental)

School Violence: Prevalence and Intervention Strategies for At-Risk Adolescents

<u>**Research Design**</u>**: Randomized Controlled Trial**
<u>**Research Published in a Peer-Reviewed Journal**</u>**: Yes**
<u>**Programs Used**</u>**: Capturing Kids' Hearts and Teen Leadership**

Citation: *Cirillo, K.J., Pruitt, B.E., Colwell, B., Kingery, P.M. Hurley, R.S., and Ballard, D. (1998) School Violence: Prevalence and Intervention Strategies for At-Risk Adolescents,* <u>*Adolescence*</u>*, 33(130):319-330.*

Dissertation: *Cirillo, K.J. (1998). Effects of a Social-Cognitive Group Intervention on Selected Psychosocial Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness of High School Students, Texas A&M University, College Station.*

<u>**Summary of Research**</u>

<u>**Texas A&M University, 1998 (Dissertation)**</u>**:** Researchers explored the effects of *Capturing Kids' Hearts* and *Teen Leadership* on self-esteem, loneliness, parent-adolescent communication and perception of leadership development of high school students from a city in east-central Texas. The

research study used a randomized controlled trial study design to investigate the effects of **Capturing Kids' Hearts** and **Teen Leadership**.

Thirty-six experimental group members participated in the social-cognitive intervention. Thirty-four students in a youth organization from the same city served as the control group and did not receive the intervention. The experimental group met once a week for ten consecutive weeks. Each session was two hours in duration. The experimental and control groups were asked to fill out a questionnaire prior to and upon completion of the intervention. Significant interactions were investigated with simple main-effects analyses.

Instrument Range, Pre and Post-test Means and Standard Errors for Dependent Variables for the Control and Experimental Groups

Variables	Pretest Mean	Standard Error	Post-Test Mean	Standard Error
Self-Esteem Range (0-64)				
* Experimental	40.33	1.11	46.91	1.01
Control	40.53	2.11	39.50	1.21
Attitude Toward Group Work Range (25-175)				
* Experimental	124.39	1.34	132.97	1.65
Control	119.85	2.11	118.02	2.12
Personal Development Range (24 -168)				
* Experimental	136.36	1.86	147.25	1.77
Control	127.91	3.08	127.38	3.13
Loneliness Range (20 – 80)				
* Experimental	37.89	1.17	32.50	1.09
Control	9.94	1.62	40.03	1.53
Mother-Adolescent Communication Range (20 – 100)				
* Experimental	62.44	1.92	70.63	1.79
Control	66.23	1.41	65.32	1.31
Father-Adolescent Communication Range (20 – 100)				
* Experimental	60.75	2.00	67.42	2.07
Control	62.61	1.50	63.17	1.42

Simple main-effects analyses for the intervention group and the control group indicated that for the students receiving the **Capturing Kids' Hearts** / **Teen Leadership** intervention, all measured variables *(pro-social competencies)* were positively impacted, specifically:

- Self-esteem/confidence increased; *(self-concept)*
- Attitude toward group work improved; *(teamwork and cooperation)*
- Personal development/maturity improved; *(pro-social behaviors and attitudes)*
- Loneliness decreased; *(coping skills, emotional competencies)*
- Mother-adolescent communication increased; *(communicative skills)*
- Father-adolescent communication increased; *(communicative skills)*

These data suggest that using this social-cognitive group intervention, coupled with mentoring from community leaders, holds promise as an intervention for enhancing self-esteem, improving parent-adolescent communication, developing leadership skills and reducing loneliness in high school adolescents.   Therefore, **Capturing Kids' Hearts** and **Teen Leadership** are prevention programs that enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors.

Study 2 (Experimental)
The Impact of a Teen Leadership Program
Dissertation: *Danaher, A.C. (2006). Character Education: The Impact of a Teen Leadership Program, Texas A&M University, Kingsville.*

Research Design: Randomized Controlled Trial
Ph.D. Dissertation Research: Yes
Research Published in a Peer-Reviewed Journal: No
Programs Used: Capturing Kids' Hearts and Teen Leadership

Summary of Research

Texas A&M University, 2006: Dr. Danaher studied the effect of **Teen Leadership*** on student connectedness. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of the **Teen Leadership** program on student perception of school connectedness, student behavior in terms of making smart choices, and student confidence. Her research provided quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating that students who participated in the semester long **Teen Leadership** class were significantly more connected to their teachers than students in the control group. The **Teen Leadership** students:

- Made significantly smarter choices and were therefore better behaved at the end of the semester than students in the control group.
- Became somewhat more self-confident during the duration of the study.
- Perceived the class to enhance their feelings of connectivity with each other. Additionally, both teachers and students perceived that the **Teen Leadership** class heightened the classroom environment and teacher-to-student as well as student-to-student interactions.

*[All Teen Leadership teachers must be trained in Capturing Kids' Hearts.]

The dissertation research is in the process of being published in a peer-reviewed journal. An initial publication (Danaher et al., 2008) containing an overview of character education and the issues facing today's youth has been published by this author in a peer-reviewed journal.

STUDY 3 (Quasi-experimental)

It All Began with a Handshake

Citation: ***Sherwood, R. (2003). It All Began with a Handshake, The Effective Schools Project Journal, 9: 6-11***

Research Design: **Quasi-Experimental (Non-Randomized) Controlled Trial**
Ph.D. Dissertation Research: No
Research Published in a Peer-Reviewed Journal: Yes

Summary of Research

Cleburne High School (TX): The results of a study undertaken at Cleburne High School (TX) and published in a peer-reviewed journal highlight the effect of ***Capturing Kids' Hearts*** and ***Teen Leadership*** on academic achievement. The comparative, longitudinal study used a quasi-experimental research design with a control group. The research demonstrates that academic performance improved when students participated in ***Teen Leadership***.

A copy of the published research article may be viewed at the following link:
http://www.flippengroup.com/pdf/funding/ESPfinal03.pdf

Summary of Effects of *Capturing Kids' Hearts* and *Teen Leadership*:
From: *The Effective Schools Project Journal, 9:6-11*

Cleburne High School Summary of data per student group	English	Math	Social Studies
Total 9th Grade % Passing 1st 6 weeks 2001	64.7	71.4	81.1
Total 9th grade % Passing 1st 6 weeks 2002	76.2	80.7	91.0
*PASS Students % Passing 1st 6 weeks 2002 *Intervention group	95.5	92.6	98.5

Summary:

Compared to the general population of students in 9th grade (control group), students in the PASS class (intervention group) in which the teacher had been trained in both ***Capturing Kids' Hearts*** and ***Teen Leadership*** demonstrated:

- 11% lower overall failure rate
- 19.3% higher English passing rate
- 11.9% higher mathematics passing rate
- 7.5% higher social studies passing rate
- 98% overall attendance rate (2.4% higher than all students.)

Continuing Research:
Randomized Controlled Study for Capturing Kids' Hearts Whole School Leadership Model

The three studies cited above demonstrated improved behavioral and academic outcomes at the level of the student or student group and, therefore, demonstrate what can be expected if **Capturing Kids' Hearts** is implemented on a wider scale within a school. Most developers of prevention programs design studies that include randomization at the student or classroom level, but rarely attempt random assignment at the school level.

Experimental and quasi-experimental study designs at the school (or cluster) level present difficulties for schools because prevention programs such as **Capturing Kids' Hearts** must be administered fully in the "treatment" schools and not at all in the control schools. Administrators are reluctant to appear to favor one school over another when it comes to funding, so funds to implement innovative programs are often "sprinkled" over large numbers of schools such that only a small percentage of staff members are trained in each school. As a result, expected outcomes are difficult to measure and quantify.

Despite the obstacles to designing studies that meet the research criteria established by governmental agencies for whole school models, The Flippen Group has obtained the support of leadership at the regional level in two states, California and New York. The leadership has agreed to fully implement the **Capturing Kids' Hearts Whole School Leadership Model** in the treatment schools and to support the participation of the control schools for the duration of the study in order to prevent attrition. The program provider has the support of the school principals, the district superintendents, and the regional superintendent.

New York Research Study
The study in New York is fully funded and began in July, 2008, when teachers and administrators begin the training process. Six high schools were divided into three pairs of matched schools (based upon demographics as well as past academic and behavioral measurable outcomes). Schools from each pair were randomly assigned to the treatment or control group in order to eliminate confounding variables, thus ensuring ignorable treatment assignment.

Standardized effect sizes will be used to report the results.   In order to have the required statistical power (0.8), the behavioral standardized effect size will need to be approximately equal to 1. Although this is considered to be a large value, previous studies employing longitudinal pre- and post-treatment case study designs have demonstrated that the program developer may expect a 50-75% reduction in discipline referrals when schools implement **Capturing Kids' Hearts**. The program developer has obtained from the schools in the study the relevant outcome data for the 3 years preceding the study and has determined that even a 25% reduction in discipline referrals will allow the mean outcomes of the treatment and control groups to differ by at least 1 standardized effect size (1 standard deviation).

The following programs make up the **Capturing Kids' Hearts Whole School Leadership Model**: **Flippen Leadership Series, Executive Coaching, Capturing Kids' Hearts 3-day Workshop,** and **Process Champions** (an advanced course for lead teachers who excel in the principles of **Capturing Kids' Hearts**). Pre- and post-surveys, direct observation, and school records provide information on the fidelity of delivery, the level of implementation, and the changes in behavioral and academic outcomes including:

- Increase in behavior that displays core values
- Increase in pro-social behavior (e.g., supporting peers)
- Decrease in problem behavior (e.g. substance use, fighting, disciplinary referrals)
- Increase in academic achievement (e.g. percent A,B,C honor roll, percent >3.5 GPA)

The study will continue from July 2008 to July 2010. A report will be drafted and submitted in October , 2009 to one or more of the following federal sites: What Works Clearinghouse, National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). The NREPP is not accepting new program submissions until October 1, 2009.

A manuscript will be drafted and submitted for review by a peer-reviewed journal.

V. Developing Local County Studies

Local educational leaders may want to conduct quasi-experimental studies of **Capturing Kids' Hearts** and **Teen Leadership** in their school districts in order to provide science-based evidence of the effectiveness of the program in local schools. Treatment schools should be paired with matched control schools based upon demographics as well as past academic and behavioral measurable outcomes.

VI. Summary: Using Title IV Funds for Capturing Kids' Hearts and Teen Leadership

Background

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) Title IV, Part A, Section 4115 (a)(1)(C) requires that, to meet the principles of effectiveness, a program or practice must be based on scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program to be used will reduce violence and illegal drug use.

In the NCLB, Title IX, Part A, Section 9105 (37) the term 'scientifically based research':

(A) means research that uses rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and

(B) includes research that—

> (i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;

> (ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;

> (iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;

> (iv) is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs

> (v) ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication, and

> (vi) **has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal** or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Capturing Kids' Hearts and *Teen Leadership* have been evaluated using systematic, empirical methods involving rigorous data analyses. The research relied on methods that provided reliable and valid data and employed experimental or quasi-experimental designs. The program is sufficiently developed that schools can replicate the results. In addition, two of the research studies have been accepted by peer-reviewed journals. The outcomes included decreased anti-social behavior such as violence (risk factors) and enhanced pro-social behavior and academic success (protective factors).

Both of these programs follow the principles supporting the risk and protective factors model identified by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) as being a critical component shared by all effective prevention programs that seek to impact drug abuse.

Therefore, since the research for Capturing Kids' Hearts and Teen Leadership employed scientifically-based research that demonstrated decreases in risk factors and increases in protective factors that are known to impact drug abuse, these programs are scientifically-based prevention programs.

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