



## Hidden Heroes/Boys and Girls Club 2009 Pilot Project Final Report

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### Introduction

In March of 2009, the Hidden Heroes Education Society, in Partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Central Vancouver Island piloted a series of Hidden Heroes activities for an afterschool group that could be delivered in any Boys and Girls Club in Canada or the United States.

The pilot program was evaluated and printed as an activity guide with funding from the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Alliance (Job Creation Program).

The Our Hidden Heroes program motivates students, youth and adults to seek out and study the Hidden Heroes (positive role models) in their families, communities and schools, and then to identify and activate the Hidden Hero that lies within each one of them. In this way they learn that it's not the one in a million super heroes that truly make a difference in this world, it's the millions of Hidden Heroes, ordinary people like them who are consistently doing small positive things to make a difference.

This program produces more socially responsible citizens who have experienced the fact that they can make a difference in their communities by consistently doing small positive things for themselves and the people around them.

The Hidden Heroes activity guide provides an excellent way for the Boys and Girls Club to fulfill their mandate of providing a safe, supportive place where children and youth can experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, build positive relationships and develop confidence and skills for life. They have a **National Vision** that includes the following initiatives:

- **Enhance the Capacity of Boys and Girls Clubs to be Leaders in Their Communities** which includes working in partnership with others to build healthier communities, strengthening and increasing national partnerships. They also wish to facilitate the development of innovative service delivery models to increase the sustainability of Clubs and enhance their capacity for leadership.
- **Strengthen the Movement** With consistently high standards and a strong collective identity, the movement can make an even greater difference for Canada's children and youth
- **Build a Credible Voice** We need to contribute our collective expertise and knowledge to the shaping of public policies that benefit children, families and their communities. Work for positive social change by building relationships

with relevant policy-makers and speaking out on key themes affecting children and their families. We need to demonstrate the effectiveness of Boys and Girls Clubs in helping young people to improve their life outcomes and achieve their potential. Stay current by monitoring, synthesizing and disseminating to members the latest research about children and youth.

### **Audience and Setting**

The Hidden Heroes pilot was delivered to The Boys and Girls Club of Central Vancouver Island Fifth Street, Nanaimo location after school program “green group” - a group of twelve youth, 9 to 12 years old, quite diverse in their needs and abilities. Most of the activities took place indoors at the South Side Teen Centre, but some games were played outside. Sessions were delivered once or twice per month for about an hour.

### **Leadership and Direction**

The pilot program was delivered by Melissa Truth, Education Liaison for Hidden Heroes Education Society and Lena Watt, Program Leader for Boys and Girls Club of Central Vancouver Island. It operated under the supervision of Bill Robinson, Founder/CEO of Hidden Heroes Education Society and Sarah Foster, Director of Programs, Boys and Girls Club of Central Vancouver Island.

### **Program Objectives**

- Participants will learn that it's not the one in a million super heroes that make the biggest difference in the world, it's the millions of Hidden Heroes, ordinary people doing small things that make a difference.
- Participants will learn that no matter how young, old, weak or strong, we all have the power to make this world a better place; one person, one family, one community at a time.
- Participants will become more optimistic and maintain a positive attitude and surround themselves with more positive, supportive friends
- Participants will identify one person in their lives who is a Hidden Hero and learn the power of acknowledgement by thanking them – a simple thank you encourages others to do even more of the positive things for which we've thanked them.
- Participants will activate the Hidden Hero within each of them

### **Activity Outline**

This outline does not directly follow what was used for the pilot series, but what was decided on for the Activity Guide. This progression of activities has participants learning about Hidden Heroes in their communities, then gradually learning about and activating the Hidden Hero in each of them. It culminates with a celebration in which a Hidden Hero of their choice is publicly acknowledged.

Lesson 1 – **Why do we Have Heroes?**

Lesson 2 – **What is a Hidden Hero?**

Lesson 3 – **Power of a Positive Attitude**

Lesson 4 – **Needs versus Wants**

Lesson 5 – **Compliments and Acknowledgement**

Lesson 6 – **Persistence Pays**

Lesson 7 – **Secret Agent Hidden Hero**

Lesson 8 – **Celebration**

### **Evaluation Process and Results**

The success of this program was evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively by students and program leaders. Each session was evaluated by the leader so changes could be incorporated into the written activity guide.

Throughout the program we used continuous participant feedback and adjusted the program accordingly. At the beginning of most sessions we started with a quick review of what happened in the previous session. For example, in the opening circle of the third session, participants were asked if they remembered what a Hidden Hero was. This got everyone thinking and was a great way to bring new students up-to-date. It also told us how much we needed to review. At the end of each session we asked the participants the three things they enjoyed the most.

In the last session we played a fun game to review concepts learned in which students had to determine whether or not a Hidden Heroes related statement was true or false. Participants answered each one correctly with ease, indicating that they had a strong grasp of the concepts.

In the first session students filled out a pre-program survey so their attitudes and behaviours around social responsibility could be measured. The same survey was repeated in the last session. The following table summarizes results from the various types of evaluation and how we met our program objectives.

<b>Program Objectives</b>	<b>Results</b>
Participants will learn that it's not the one in a million super heroes that make the biggest difference in the world, it's the millions of Hidden Heroes, ordinary people doing small things that make a difference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants identified several Hidden Heroes in their lives and examined the impact they make.</li> <li>• All survey participants agreed that it is important for kids to learn about Hidden Heroes.</li> </ul>
Participants will learn that no matter how young, old, weak or strong, we all have the power to make this world a better place; one person, one family, one community at a time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the survey, there was a 22% increase in students who thought they had the power to make a difference in their community</li> </ul>
Participants will become more optimistic and maintain a positive attitude and surround themselves with more positive, supportive friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the survey, 25% more students wanted to make a difference in the world</li> <li>• 11% more said they surround themselves with positive and supportive friends</li> </ul>
Participants will identify one person in their lives who is a Hidden Hero and learn the power of acknowledgement by thanking them – a simple thank you encourages others to do even more of the positive things for which we've thanked them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants were able to nominate a Hidden Hero from their community as a group and acknowledge that person on the "Wall of Fame"</li> <li>• Participants individually identified a Hidden Hero and wrote that person a poem to acknowledge them</li> </ul>
Participants will activate the Hidden Hero within each of them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants identified Hidden Hero characteristics they possess and something they have done that makes them a Hidden Hero.</li> <li>• Participants became "Secret Agent Hidden Heroes" at home for one week, changing one behaviour to impact their family in a positive way</li> </ul>

A program evaluation filled in by participants produced the following comments:

- "A Hidden Hero is someone who helps people out and does nice things for the community."
- "Kids need to know that they don't have to be special to be a Hidden Hero. They can be just about anyone."
- "It can teach you about growing up."
- "It's fun and awesome."
- "The games were fun and some of the stories were inspirational."
- "I liked that I got to know how to help the community."

## **Conclusion**

The Our Hidden Heroes program instills positive values and builds self confidence, self esteem and leadership skills. It reduces behaviour management problems as students learn and discover first hand that they can make a difference in their families, schools, communities and beyond and are motivated to do so.

This was a very successful pilot project and it is our hope that the completed Hidden Heroes Activity Guide will be of use to Boys and Girls Club leaders across Canada.