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KidLead

Growing
Great
Leaders

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KidLead

Growing Great Leaders

A leadership program designed to identify and support future leaders.

Written by **Kristina Szaszy-Jones**

KidLead declares, "If you want to change the world, focus on leaders. If you want to change leaders, focus on them when they're young." It beckons parents, teachers, and coaches to "discover America's only leadership development program that specifically targets leaders when they're moldable." It challenges adults to offer children a unique opportunity to become leaders at a young age. It begs all of us to invest in our nation's youth, to foster preeminent qualities in young people, to truly make a difference, not only *for* our children, but *through* them and *with* them.

KidLead, a nonprofit leadership training program, is designed specifically for kids ages 10–13 and 14–18. KidLead playfully suggests that "children are wet cement." This works in tandem with findings that suggest that a child's character is well-established before he or she becomes a teenager, which is why leadership training at an early age is so important. KidLead is not a kids' program emphasizing leadership, but rather a leadership program designed to identify and support future leaders.

Here's how it works: KidLead certifies trainers to use the *LeadNow* and *LeadWell* curriculum. The curriculum designed for 10- to 13-year-olds is referred to as *LeadNow*, and the curriculum designed for 14- to 18-year-olds is called *LeadWell*. Adults apply to become certified trainers. Once accepted, they pay a one-time fee for an

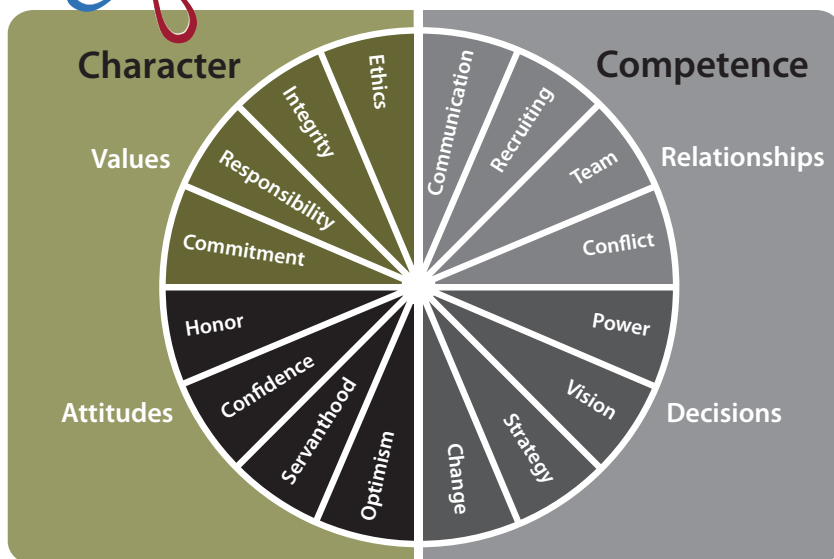
in-depth one-day training, and then they are equipped to facilitate their own *LeadNow* or *LeadWell* training club. Trainers are independent agents, though they usually align with organizations that serve preteens, such as schools, churches, civic groups, and after-school programs. Parents who are interested in having their children participate in KidLead programs fill out an application and two Social Influence Surveys and submit them to a local KidLead training program. It takes about a week or so to find out whether your child has been accepted into the program.

KidLead programs are not linear, nor do they employ exclusive findings. They are, in fact, designed based upon research findings from the Center for Creative Leadership, Harvard Business Review, and literature review by founder Dr. Alan Nelson. KidLead's curriculum is based upon sixteen qualities desired in leaders. KidLead has broken down the qualities into four groupings or modules.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KIDLEAD



KidLead Curriculum



Anyone raising children in this day and age can appreciate the challenge involved in preparing children and young adults to become future leaders. And KidLead founders Dr. Alan and Nancy Nelson understand it better than most. Dr. Alan Nelson, the organization's CEO, was a leader in the social sector for more than twenty years and has authored fifteen books, as well as hundreds of small- and feature-length articles. His most recent book, *KidLead: Growing Great Leaders*, was released in spring of 2009. Nancy Nelson embarked on this endeavor just as prepared—her experiences leading children's programs for more than a decade have primed her for her role as designer of KidLead's curriculum and trainer certification.

As classrooms and homes become increasingly connected to the global community, some may find it reassuring to know that there is an organization dedicating itself to teaching children not only how to be a part of that community, but to be leaders in that community. Whether that means leading a church group, a high school class, or eventually a financial institution or a government agency—no matter whom or what they lead—KidLead prepares children and young adults for the challenge.

For more information about KidLead, contact Dr. Alan Nelson at 877.845.4353, or visit www.kidlead.com.

