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Fall Newsletter

September 2011



A Tribute to Heroes This month is the tenth anniversary of the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil. In the aftermath of 9/11, all kinds of American heroes have emerged. We at Tool Kits for Kids are dedicating our Fall 2011 newsletter to heroes, and discussing the impact of heroism on the developing minds of children and teens today.

Heroes Are More Important To Children Than Ever Today's children are often reminded about brutality, death, natural disasters, family crises and serious illness. Sometimes the news is from far away, and sometimes it hits way too close to home. How can children maintain feelings of safety, security and optimism? Heroes and heroic acts demonstrate the best of humanity, providing hopes and dreams of what's still possible.

Many Kinds of Heroes Like many great concepts, the idea of *hero* originated from the Greeks. Heroes were not Gods, but rather mortals, whose actions were so extraordinary that they left an immortal memory. Today, our heroes may be individuals who against all odds make the world a better place. We have scientific heroes who solve seemingly impossible problems. Many of our modern day heroes are soldiers, police officers and firefighters who willingly assume personal risk for the sake of others. We have heroes who have stared serious illness in the face and yet still overcome great obstacles. We have unintended heroes who make split second decisions to put other's needs ahead of their own. It has been said that, *The hero is one who kindles a great light in the world, who sets up blazing torches in the dark streets of life...*

Children's Heroes Many children are asked to write or think about their heroes, about whom they admire and which qualities they wish to emulate. Today, some children recognize their parents or family members as personal heroes. Other children mention celebrities and sports figures as heroes. Some kids view historical figures who have achieved greatness as heroes.

Superheroes Imagine someone who fights evil, has special superhuman qualities such as X-ray vision, ability to fly, or incredible strength, blended with a strong sense of justice and compassion. That's a winning combination. Superheroes play a special role in the hearts and minds of children and teens. Yet, superheroes have often paid a terrible price for their gifts, with most suffering a significant loss in their early years. Superman, Batman, Spiderman, and even the young wizard Harry Potter have all lost their parents in childhood.

Discussions with Children about Heroes Talking with young people about their heroes and role models is a good way to explore morality, justice, optimism, survival and hope. Here are some suggested topics:

- ◆ Help the child contrast celebrity and fame with true acts of heroism. Some celebrities set notable examples, by using their fame to help human beings on a wider scale.
- ◆ Discuss how heroes can be imperfect, yet still remain examples of greatness.
- ◆ In recent years, there has been an awareness of heroic minorities and heroic women. These newly recognized heroes need to be valued not just by girls or minorities, but by all.
- ◆ Young people need to learn stories about true heroes from history. Expose children to the great stories of our past. Young people also can benefit from learning about the heroic stories right in their own extended family.

The more kids learn about people both past and present who have shaped our world in a positive way, the more opportunities children will have to find models of excellence.

How Can Kids Be Heroes? Children and teens are not quite ready to be heroes most of the time. What they can do is learn to be kind, respectful of others, confident, and open to trying. We at Tool Kits for Kids are committed to teaching young people the necessary life skills to be emotionally healthy. It may not make them heroes, but emotional steadiness increases the odds that a young person can make a contribution. Our innovative skill-building Tool Kits include powerful strategies to boost self-confidence, manage worry, and build resilience.

- ◆ The **Charge Up Your Confidence Tool Kit for Kids™** helps kids focus on their strengths, value their own opinions, and recognize the importance of effort.
- ◆ The **Outsmart Your Worry Tool Kit for Kids®** helps young people think in strong and accurate ways, so anxieties stop interfering with what's important in their lives.
- ◆ The **Build Up Your Resilience Tool Kit for Kids™** helps in times of crisis, with tools to remain positive about the future.

Tool Kits for Kids Helps Families of Real Life Heroes Sadly, sometimes our best and bravest make the ultimate sacrifice. The lives of our fallen military, law enforcement officers and firefighters are honored by organizations dedicated to keeping their memories alive, as well as providing comfort to the families. Tool Kits for Kids has been part of this effort to help families of our hero soldiers, firefighters and police. Our Resilience Tool Kit is helping widows, teens and children deal with the loss of their special heroes.

Tool Kits For Kids® News Our Tool Kits are used worldwide, providing emotional first aid solutions for resilience, confidence and anxiety. Here are recent company highlights:

- ◆ Early this year we showcased our products at the American Group Psychotherapy Association Conference in New York, and also at the New York PTO Spring conference where we met many interested moms, educators and mental healthcare professionals.
- ◆ The Build Up Your Resilience Tool Kit for Kids™ is now being used by families of US Military personnel, and by families of American firefighters. It has also been included as an important national resource to help families who are dealing with the loss of a loved one. In addition, Tool Kits for Kids® will be listed in an e-bulletin for national trauma experts.
- ◆ You can now find Tool Kits for Kids on Twitter and Facebook. All of our products are available for purchase on toolkitsforkids.com and also at amazon.com. Later this month, products will be featured at the Creative Therapy Store; an important resource for mental health professionals and educators.

Please visit our website and click on the “News” tab to see timely topics of interest, and help for children dealing with disasters, anxiety, self-esteem, as well as social and family issues.

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