

Special Note from Dr. Philip Zimbardo



I'm delighted to have contributed a few ideas and much support for the creative work shown by Diana B. Thompson. This work is designed to teach children how to be heroes at home, effective leaders in their school, and champions in their community.

My focus here is to support grown-up sidekicks, who, like me, are parents and teachers of today's youth. As sidekicks, we have the opportunity and responsibility to help our young heroes-in-training live up to their potential as fully as possible. The *Heroes Leaders Champions*® program is unique in providing an effective range of resources for both students and the adult sidekicks who mentor them.

To have its broadest impact, Diana has designed her brilliant program with four components. In each of them, resources are presented for: identity-shaping, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and healthy problem-solving intelligence. The four main components of this program are:

Chapter Book: *Battle of the Books* demonstrates how building skills works in real-life application.

Comic Books: 12 books serve as cliff notes for building skills and personal development tools.

Curriculum for School: Provides a full-year program for building a culture of heroic problem-solving for k-8th grades.

Program for Home: Offers families with games and activities for a supportive team dynamic.

I want to first outline some of the truly valuable messages that emerge from the *Heroes Leaders Champions* program.

A young person's identity may be created by circumstance or intentional self-creation. When we give young people tools and experiences to create themselves as heroes, they are poised for success. Diana's program does this.

Enthusiasm for role play proves that children love heroes. Both boys and girls want to be heroes. Transitioning a love of heroes from pretend play to real world application is a natural progression. Diana's stories support this.

Students need more healthy, real-life examples of relatable kids overcoming everyday challenges. When we give young people examples, resources, and situations to re-create themselves as heroes, they can better navigate situations in their own lives. Diana's stories do this.

As creator of the Stanford Prison Experiment, I discovered how easily circumstances can give birth to villains and victims. I have dedicated years to nurturing the powerful spirit of heroes. I have done this through my nonprofit foundation known as the **Heroic Imagination Project**.** I believe that heroism as a civic virtue starts in the human mind. I work to inspire high school and college students to become everyday heroes willing to stand up, speak out, and take wise and effective action in all the challenging situations they face in their lives. By helping young people believe in themselves as heroes, they have an increased capacity to do good and fight evil. My task would be easier if those high school students had first gone through Diana's curriculum. This provides a solid foundation on which to transform compassion, empathy, and goodwill into daily deeds of heroic action—both

small and socially significant.

The world's challenges are growing at an astronomical rate. The youth of today will face unprecedented challenges. They will need heroic problem-solving skills. This program is one way to give young people the tools they need to become the heroes, leaders, and champions they most want to be.

Philip G. Zimbardo Ph.D.

President and founder of the Heroic Imagination Project
Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Stanford University
Former President, American Psychological Association
Creator, Stanford Prison Experiment

***The **Heroic Imagination Project** is designed for high school and college students. Lessons are based around a number of fundamental social psychological themes, and principles all centered in scientific research. Each lesson includes provocative videos that stimulate reflection and discussion. Central to each lesson is helping students learn and practice critical thinking skills. This process involves identifying obstacles, blocking effective action, uncovering appropriate solutions for each obstacle, then transforming it into a workable challenge. Our educational offerings are now in thousands of high schools around the world—revolutionizing the nature of classroom learning.*

We empower ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

For more information on the Heroic Imagination Project, visit: www.heroicimagination.org.