



[MANNERS OF THE HEART]

Unique message is unlocking hearts and opening minds

AMID AN INCREASINGLY fractured culture, growing concerns about mental health, escalating violence, and a struggling education system, Manners of the Heart has a simple, yet profound, two-word call to action: Choose respect.

Founded in 2002 by Executive Director Jill Garner, the Baton Rouge-based non-profit is on a mission to restore respect and civility in society by equipping schools, encouraging families and engaging communities in respect-based Heart Education.

"It is through the process of esteeming others, we gain respect for each other and ourselves. The development of self-respect doesn't come from a focus on self, but from a focus on others," Garner says.

Manners of the Heart works with schools, families, government and businesses to instill respect, civility and kindness by applying the organization's philosophy through educational curriculum, staff training, workshops, and effective programs and activities.

The user-friendly Heart Education curriculum designed for elementary schools can be incorporated into a classroom teacher's daily lesson plans. Concepts such as cooperation, patience and responsibility are introduced throughout the 23-week curriculum.

"We're helping to prepare kids for life beyond the classroom," Garner says.



"How they choose to view the world will determine their future." Lessons are reinforced at home, with parents receiving a letter detailing what students have learned and offering tips for integration.

Research on the academic impact of Manners of the Heart in schools found heart education led to a 30 percent decrease in disciplinary referrals and a 15 point increase in school performance scores. The curriculum is being used in Louisiana and several other states, as well as Japan and Uganda.

Manners of the Heart also works with families through parenting workshops, community efforts and books, such as *Raising Respectful Children in*

a Disrespectful World, which Garner wrote to offer practical and positive steps for raising respectful, engaged and grateful children.

For business professionals, Manners of the Heart offers *The Business of Manners*® program, which includes customized training and employee development targeting core values such as integrity and caring. A participant in a recent training noted, "This is changing my life, not just my job." The principles taught through *The Business of Manners*® series enhance the culture of the workplace, improve communication, and lead to increased customer and employee satisfaction.

The organization also established

BRRespect, a social movement designed to bring about a transformation in the community through small changes, including daily good deeds and the inspiring "Pledge of Respect."

In the past 18 months, Manners of the Heart has experienced accelerated growth, including hiring additional ambassadors to help promote the organization's mission. Garner attributes this growth to a large-scale recognition that "something is fundamentally wrong in our society" which has pushed social and emotional learning to the forefront. "Everyone agrees there is a tension in the air that is destructive. There is so much disrespect—we no longer can agree to disagree," she says.

"The content of the heart formulates the attitude that determines the action," Garner continues. "All the money and technology in the world can't resolve our problems. You must first unlock the heart to open the mind."

"We may look different on the outside, but we all have the same heart needs on the inside. It is only through the education of the heart we will begin to solve our society's deepest troubles."

Manners of the Heart's vision has always been to reach every child in America. Garner says, "We must recognize that decisions made today will determine whether our children and grandchildren will enjoy their future or be forced to endure it." ■

AT A GLANCE

PRIMARY PRODUCT/SERVICE: Restoring respect and civility, one heart at a time
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