

# About The Heroes Circle



## The Heroes Circle® is a global healing and wellness initiative inspired by the children of Kids Kicking Cancer.

Our non-contact, martial arts-based school program gives kids the tools to self-regulate when they encounter academic stress, social pressures, or adversities at home. The program teaches meditative breathing, mindfulness, and movement, using real-life examples to engage children's imaginations while teaching them to work through overwhelming emotions like stress, fear, and anger.

**At the Heroes Circle, our work is concentrated around three strategic areas:**

- **Pain and stress management for pediatric patients**
- **Empowering children to recognize and respond to stress**
- **Inspiring healing and well-being in adults**

The Heroes Circle mantra, Power Peace Purpose, captures our approach to children who are experiencing stress:

### ☆ **Power**

Most children don't feel like they have a lot of power. They are often told what to do and when to do it. That sense of lack of control is sharpened in children who have experienced illness or other traumatic events. The Heroes Circle helps children recognize and connect to their power, using it to establish inner control when they feel stressed or overwhelmed.

### ☆ **Peace**

Using the Heroes Circle self-regulating techniques, children are better able to banish self-defeating thoughts, focus on their healing and learning, or navigate through social situations to bring themselves back to a place of calm control.

### ☆ **Purpose**

The Heroes Circle participants are given the purpose of helping other children who may be in hospitals across the world. They are also trained to use their techniques to teach their family, friends, and community. Teaching others reinforces what the children have learned and helps them put their difficulties into perspective. When we ask children their purpose they reply, **"TO TEACH THE WORLD!"**

## The Heroes Circle Elementary Program is an evolution of our work in pediatric pain management.

Rabbi Elimelech Goldberg founded Kids Kicking Cancer in 1999. After losing his first child to leukemia at a very young age, Rabbi Goldberg sought to create a program to better serve children suffering from life-threatening illnesses. His training as a martial arts black belt and experience as a counselor led to the creation of Kids Kicking Cancer. Since that point, he has been appointed as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Wayne State University School of Medicine.

Backed by research, our martial arts-based meditative techniques have proven successful in reducing pain in children with cancer and other pediatric illnesses, as well as their otherwise healthy siblings.

As a result, Kids Kicking Cancer expanded from servicing only pediatric cancer patients to creating the Heroes Circle, an initiative dedicated to lowering the pain and stress of ALL children.

The children in our Heroes Circle community are given tools that empower them to take control of negative emotions like pain, fear, and anger.

Our goal is to use these same tools to empower school children to take control of their stress at home and in the classroom.



The Heroes Circle Elementary Program is a curriculum that uniquely combines resilience-building and empowerment.

Using the power of martial arts to teach meditative breathing, mindfulness, and movement, the Heroes Circle engages children's imagination while teaching them how to work through overwhelming emotions. This powerful method helps children learn to regulate the limbic system while encouraging them to teach others and gain purpose in their lives and the lives of very sick children around the world.

The Heroes Circle Elementary Program is a highly regarded, evidence-based program. Using MRI data, this program has been shown to decrease activity in the brain's pain matrix. A highly stimulated pain matrix inhibits a child's ability to focus and learn. This curriculum is specifically built to address the effects of stressful situations, thereby improving a child's ability to self-regulate and learn.

This program has been proven effective in school settings. In fact, longitudinal survey data revealed that most of the children who participated in our program during the unexpected and severely disruptive first school year were still using the Breath Brake to manage their stress five months after classroom instruction ended. Students internalized the benefits of self-regulation and were using the Breath Brake entirely independently, without instruction or intervention.

**Our goal is to empower individuals at all levels of the school community to support the children they serve more effectively.**

### **For Teachers**

We've made The Heroes Circle program easy to navigate and integrate into the classroom setting. Standards-based lesson plans help teachers connect The Heroes Circle to their content and area of expertise. The program includes extensive training for teachers and a self-care module designed to ensure teachers have all the tools they need to successfully implement The Heroes Circle curriculum.

### **For School Principals and Administrators**

We've included features that integrate smoothly with Title I, social and community welfare, and other existing school resources. This program can complement a range of school cultures while positively impacting student-to-student relationships.

### **To Support District-Level Learning Goals**

The Heroes Circle program supports student social and emotional development by incorporating evidence-based standards from the five CASEL competencies, nationwide English/Language Arts Standards, and Michigan Health and Physical Education standards to support district-level learning goals.