



## **Becoming Leaders in their own Lives through Life Literacy**

### **Instructor and Contact Information:**

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### **Meeting Days and Time:**

Tuesday 5:30 – 6:30  
Thursday 5:30 – 6:30

### **Program Description:**

Get Lit is a cohort-based model that teaches, engages and encourages students in the sixth through twelfth grades to develop outstanding leadership skills, build strong character, how to intentionally acquire external/internal assets and transition with a positive plan post high school whether attending a four-year university, a technical college, or entering the workforce. Students are monitored in the areas of leadership development, character education, self-management, critical thinking, the 40 Developmental Assets, and college and job readiness. The program platform paves the way for helping young people become leaders in their own lives to get the most out of themselves and the world around them.

### **Program Concept and Branding:**

The program was created in the fall of 2015 and was originally called The Life Literacy Academy. The original concept and goal of the program was to help young people develop 31 or more of the 40 Developmental Assets (Search Institute) and get excited about what was ahead upon completing high school, but over time the students in the program began to get fired up or rather “lit” about the now versus waiting to see what the finished product (their life and opportunities post high school graduation) would be upon graduating from high school. We witnessed students stepping up to the plate during challenging times at home, becoming more focused on what they wanted out of their education experience at the middle/high school levels and seeking opportunities to make a difference on/off campus. The students took the asset development work and ran with it, which put them well ahead of the program timeline I had set from the beginning. Recognizing how empowered participants had become, I rebranded the program model in 2020 to reflect more of how an individual could use asset development to change his or her life in the moment versus what could be as one makes the leap into adulthood following high school graduation. The new program name reflects how I have seen students get lit about their lives regardless of circumstance and of course still honors the life literacy legacy since the first three letters of literacy are l-i-t.

Per the logo at top of the page, the flame is the centerpiece of the logo and program. The center of the flame represents becoming a leader at home. Home is where the heart is and serves as the foundation of where things begin in our lives. The next shade of the flame represents becoming a leader in your

school and in combination with our home experiences, becomes the training ground for the adult we become in the community and workplace. The final shade or most outer ring of the flame represents the opportunity to become a true leader in your world. It is the potential and excitement of what we may become through our life experiences at home, school and in the community.

**Need:**

Hormonal changes, adolescent brain development and a desire for independence can lead youth transitioning to adulthood to engage in high-risk behaviors that would be detrimental to their well-being. Some of these behaviors include substance use, violence, and sexual activity. In society, parents/families are to provide the support and guidance needed to prepare youth for adulthood; however, this support alone isn't always enough to help youth become successful and contributing adults. Evidence has shown that a positive youth development (PYD) program utilizing an "asset-based" approach could provide meaningful guidance and support to help youth in the community avoid high-risk behaviors and develop social competencies, positive values, a commitment to learning, belonging, and empowerment.

**Program Facilitation**

Get Lit will facilitate leadership development and asset development through hands on experiential learning activities and peer to peer mentoring, while utilizing elements from multiple evidence based national models and life skill building tools to effectively work with students and their families. Below is a brief description of each component and tool:

40 Developmental Assets - A framework of positive supports and strengths created by the Search Institute that helps young people become healthy, caring and productive adults. A strong emphasis will be placed on achievement motivation, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, peaceful conflict resolution, personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, planning and decision making.

Bully's Dojo - A presentation of Safe Defense tools and techniques for true self-defense. It provides a comprehensive look at conflict resolution and peacemaking with a safe and common language.

WhyTry - A powerful curriculum that incorporates pictures, videos, media hands on activities, music, journals, etc. to teach students critical social and emotional life skills in a way they can understand and remember.

Character Counts! - A resource utilizing the six pillars of character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship) as a foundational strategy to improve school climate.

Sparks - Sparks are the activities and interests that truly engage kids to be their best. Research shows that kids who know and develop their sparks—and who have adults in their lives to help—have higher grades, better school attendance, and a sense of purpose. It is work that builds on the Search's Institute's research on Developmental Assets.

Service Learning/Community Service - Identify, study real world problems on/off campus and transforming them into real world opportunities to serve.

Wise Choices Process - The process is a very powerful example of critical thinking created by Skip Downing, one of the leading student success educators in the country.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA AND OBJECTIVES**

The Get Lit program evaluation process will focus on tracking program success via attendance, grades and disciplinary records of the participants. We will also assess their knowledge of the six pillars of character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship) with a pre/post evaluation. Per the Search Institute, participant success will be evaluated with a Developmental Asset Profile (DAP) tool. To date, more than 600,000 young people between the ages of eight and 18 have taken the DAP, making it is one of the most widely-used instruments in the world for measuring the internal strengths and external supports that influence a youth's success in school and in life. When DAP data is combined with data on attendance, achievement, and other factors, it is possible to gain a more complete picture of young people's lives. That more complete picture makes it possible to design and implement better strategies to prepare young people to thrive in some type of college, a high-skill career, and citizenship.

**The evaluation tools that will be utilized during the program include the following:**

(a) A staff/parent survey to determine positive changes made by students in the classroom and/or other homeschool co-op program tracks in terms of behavior and attitude.

(b) A pre- and post-DAP will be given to each program participant to determine any new knowledge or changes in participants' self-perceptions of his or her assets.

(c) An end of school year evaluation on the Six Pillars of Character will be given to participants to determine their ability to identify the pillars.

**The program will be deemed a success when the following objectives are met:**

1. 90% of participants will be able to identify the six pillars of character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship).
2. 90% of staff/parent working directly with participants will rate the program's leadership development, asset building and character development experiences as useful for young people to use in their school, home and community.
3. 90% of the participants will show a gain of at least 5 assets by the end of the school year.

**Course Materials:**

Pens/Pencils

Two Pocket Folder

Steno Pad

USB Flash Drive

Tablet/Laptop (optional)