

History and Philosophy

THE VISION FOR BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE BEGAN over twenty-five years ago in the heart of M. B. “Flip” Flippen as he worked with kids through his counseling agency and through Still Creek Ranch, a residential treatment center he founded for troubled youth. He longed for an effective way to help them **make better choices for their lives.**

More and more he wanted to reach young people before they ended up in his office in despair. Flip Flippen is not one just to sit back and dream of good ideas. He believes in doing the hard work it takes to make dreams a reality. As Flip says, “Some people dream dreams, while others stay awake and do them.”

The dream of helping kids make good choices began to come true when Flip walked into **his first Teen Leadership class in the spring of 1989.** From that small beginning years ago, Teen Leadership has gone on to impact thousands of young people and adults. In 1994 it became an **official semester course for credit** in Texas high schools, and by 1997 **middle schools** had their own version. **Elementary teachers wanted a way to teach these same principles to their students,** so in 1994 Keystone Curriculum, with its engaging stories and daily activities, was developed.

In 1977 Flip said: **“If you have a child’s heart, you have his head.”** That statement is even more true today than it was back then. Through the trainings, “Capturing Kids’ Hearts” and “Leading the Way” thousands of school teachers and administrators have learned how to build relationships with their students. **Young people who have no deep meaningful relationships with appropriate adults lack standards and principles and have little or no expectation for their success.** They are easy prey to peer pressure, and many turn to gangs and drugs or just drop out. Helping school staffs develop relationship-building skills **creates a safe environment for learning.**

In 1998 **Flip teamed up with Horse Whisperer Monty Roberts** to capture the EXCEL Teaching Model™ concepts on film in the video *Building Champions*. On-site staff development workshops centering around this captivating video graphically demonstrate how to develop and maintain **self-managing classrooms.** The “Behave In/Behave Out” workshop further develops teachers’ and administrators’ ability to build a safe classroom, maximizing the environment for learning.

Also in 1998, responding to school district administrators’ need for further staff training, Flip developed the “Flippen Leadership Series” to **help districts overcome staff and organizational constraints and build high-performing teams.**

Millions of young people have been reached by teachers and administrators who have attended these trainings, and **it is making a difference.** Flip’s dream is catching fire all across America and beyond.

These young people are our future, and our future is in good hands.