

## Character Programs Work

There is an increasing body of research to support the idea that character education programs are effective if adequately designed and implemented. The University of St. Louis in connection with Character Education Partnership has recognized 33 character programs that have evidence to support their effectiveness. Character education affects various aspects of the “head” (knowledge, thinking), “heart” (emotions, motivation), and “hand” (behavior, skills). Clearly there is ample evidence that character education frequently improves academic performance, reduces risk behaviors (e.g. drug use, violence, pre-marital sexual behavior), increases desirable behaviors (e.g. altruism), and improves social-emotional and pro-social competencies (e.g., socio-moral reasoning, problem-solving skills, emotional competency.)

*Marvin Berkowitz, PhD, Center for Character and Citizenship*

## Get involved

### Character Coalition

Contact person - TCOC staff:  
Cindy Patton - Executive Director, Topeka City of Character  
Character Coalition initiative, please contact Cindy Patton at 785-273-4330.

Or visit the web site:  
[www.topekacityofcharacter.org](http://www.topekacityofcharacter.org)

Address:  
Topeka City of Character  
P.O. Box 152  
Topeka, KS 66601-0152



*Good  
character  
is the key  
to success!*

Character Coalition

## Character: a definition

Character is the inward motivation to do what is right, whatever the cost. A character quality is a habit, a usual pattern of thinking, speaking, or acting. Good character qualities, like any habit, can be developed by making decisions and taking actions that reinforce those habits.

*“Character implies both thought and feeling, history and action.”*

*Mary Pipher, Ph.D.*

## Topeka, “City of Character”

A “City of Character” is one in which the elected officials, community leaders, and citizens-at-large recognize the importance of good character.

Topeka City of Character (TCOC) is a non-profit, non-religious organization, with 501(c)(3) status. The TCOC Council is devoted to promoting good character in order to improve the lives of our residents and enrich the spirit of our community.

## Our vision

The City of Topeka will become a community of good character where people work together to ensure that individuals and families are strong, homes and streets are safe, education is effective, business is productive and citizens care for one another.



## Our plan

Provide a networking opportunity for groups that emphasize character as part of their program.

Provide character education resources and information online for groups to download from our website.

Provide a central place for various groups to discuss effectiveness of character education materials and programs.

Character Fair at the Zoo - a yearly celebration of good Character in Topeka.

## Benefits of good character

- Helps individuals reach their full potential
- Enhances self-acceptance, self-confidence and self-satisfaction
- Increases productivity and accomplishments
- Improves relationships
- Benefits and encourages others
- Contributes to success

## Character meets needs

**Lack of Respect**

**Student Violence**

**Dishonesty**

**Failure in school**

**Cheating in school**

**Graduation rates**

These problems must be addressed to ensure a productive workforce for the future of Topeka. There are many character programs in place in Topeka that are already positively impacting the statistics in these areas.

More importantly the personal lives of students are being improved as they incorporate good character into their daily decision-making.

**Character: who you are when no one else is watching.**