

We are dedicated to the development and support of our young people through awakening somatic, social and emotional intelligence in community.

We are a growing intergenerational team of seasoned educators and therapeutic mentors.

We are dedicated to inspiring and training the next generation in the consciousness and skills that nurture the healthy social life in community.

Through creativity and conversation, we offer special focus groups addressing the emerging developmental social needs of children, youth, and adults.

Our programs weave together nonviolent communication skills, problem solving, council process, somatic resourcing, and matrix group dynamics.

All of our activities are rooted in the creative process, allowing the inherent intelligence of each young person to organically emerge.

The Outer Circle  
c/o Wild Life Productions  
PO Box 7478  
Boulder, CO 80306  
303-415-0272  
www.balanced.com

# Positive Choices

A course for  
Young People in Eighth Grade  
who want to understand more about:

- How to care for your self when so many changes are happening in the body & heart
- How to know what is true for you & then how to stay true to that
- The impacts of drug use, the line between use & abuse
- The power of natural highs
- The nature of healthy intimacy
- How to pace all the talk & action around sexuality
- How to be safe when so many young people are not
- The role that media can have on lives
- How to stay centered in adolescence through creativity, community & service

## Course Description

This course is intended to reveal the simple facts about what is going on in the lives of some adolescents and how to discern what is healthy and what is not. Eighth grade is a delicate moment where many young people are first exposed to many new, exciting, and even destructive aspects of life. Our young people need clear information and practical tools that will help them inwardly and outwardly navigate through this uncharted terrain during the years ahead.

Through the modeling and mentoring of youth leaders, creative older youth who have successfully found their way through adolescence and are passionately engaged in serving life, this course will give young people a picture of what is possible, both the pitfalls and the potential of adolescence.



Each week will begin with an experience of a positive high, an opportunity to engage in a creative activity led by one of these inspired youth leaders. The group will then be offered a presentation

by a professional or practitioner in our community, someone who is experienced in the relevant theme being discussed that evening. The closing portion of the evening will include a discussion, often in the form of council, allowing the eighth graders to share their feelings, perceptions, concerns, questions, and/or ideas. Melissa Michaels and Michael Herrick will be the professional team carrying the group through the full duration of the program, assisting in the integration of the information and experiences being shared.

## Program Guides

**Melissa Michaels, Ed.D.**, is the founder & director of *Surfing the Creative® International Youth Rites of Passage Programs*, *Wild Life Productions*, and *Golden Bridge*, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving and empowering the lives of young people through body-centered education and rites of passage programming. She creates cross-cultural, intergenerational learning opportunities that are dedicated to our collective renewal through the liberation of the creative spirit. Melissa mothers two adolescent daughters and mentors youth across the globe who are seeking positive ways to heal their lives and contribute to the well-being of others and the natural world. Please see: [www.bdanced.com](http://www.bdanced.com) and [www.goldenbridge.org](http://www.goldenbridge.org).

**Michael Herrick, M.A.**, is a psychotherapist, painter, poet, consultant, and step-parent of a middle school learner. He has had an abiding interest in ceremony, initiation rites, and group process for the past 30 years. As a teacher and trainer for the Hakomi Institute, from 1986 - 2001, he taught workshops and psychotherapy trainings worldwide. Currently, he teaches and maintains a private practice and studio in Longmont, CO. A primary focus of his work is with adolescent boys, men of all ages, and the ceremonies that bless and inform their lives from birth to death.

## Positive Choices Schedule & Themes

Monday, January 8th • 7-8pm:

### Informational Evening for Youth & Parents

Bring your questions, ideas, & needs

Monday, January 15th:

### The Future with Claudia McLaren Lainson

Remembering our destinies by listening to the dreams that stir in our hearts

Monday, January 22nd:

### Media with James Wilson

What are the messages being delivered through the television, computers, radio, movies, and all around?  
How does this impact our brains and our choices?

Saturday, January 27th:

### Self-Care with Rachel Walton

What are positive ways that we tend to our bodies, hearts, and spirits?  
Alcohol & Nicotine: They may seem common, but what are their costs and who profits when young people use them?

Monday, January 29th:

### Use and Abuse with Avani Dilger

What is the difference? How do we help ourselves and our friends if relationships to things and people turn destructive?  
Drugs: Why do some young people seek these kinds of experiences and what actually happens to their brains and bodies and futures when they do?

Monday, February 5th:

### Creativity & Cool with Melissa Michaels & Michael Herrick

How can positive highs carry us through our adolescent years? Who defines what it means to be cool? In what ways do we want to create, communicate and act that are true and respectful of ourselves and one another?

Monday, February 12th:

### Positive Intimacy with Melissa Michaels & Michael Herrick

What kinds of connections feel right and what kinds do not? What is smart touch and how do we stay safe and self-respecting? How can we both build healthy connections and set needed boundaries?

Saturday, February 17th:

### Resourcing & Moving Forward with Melissa Michaels & Michael Herrick

What are the inner tools and outer supports we have or want to cultivate as we grow through adolescence? What are actions we can take in our communities and our world to make a positive difference?

Simple, healthy snacks will be provided during each session

**Each Monday Group will be from 6:30pm - 9:00pm**

(Except the informational evening, January 8th, which will be from 7-8:00pm)

**Each Saturday Group will be from 10:00am - 1:00pm**

#### Location:

Boulder First United Methodist Church  
1421 Spruce St., Boulder

#### Tuition:

\$220.00/youth  
(Scholarships in Full and Part Available)

**With questions and to register:** please call 303-415-0272 and/or send in your tuition to Wild Life Productions, P.O. Box 7478, Boulder, CO 80306



## Guest Faculty

**Claudia McLaren Lainson** has been a Waldorf educator for the past 28 years, teaching both kindergarten and high school students, as well as leading adult education courses and workshops in Anthroposophic Studies. Claudia is a Therapeutic Educator currently in private practice at Windrose Academy, outside Boulder, Colorado, where she helps children, parents and adolescents meet the challenges facing so many families today. Claudia founded Windrose Academy in 1998. It is an academy dedicated to the therapeutic practices concordant with her vision of the emerging impulses of the 21st century. Claudia is married and has raised three children who are now in their 20's.

**JW Wilson** is the Executive Director of *The Advanced Learning Institute* an organization which researches, develops and implements scientific based learning programs. Mr. Wilson is also the author of the soon to be published book, *Cracking the Learning Code*, the culmination of over twenty years of scientific research into how to accelerate the speed of learning and enhance its effectiveness. The key finding is that in each one of us there is a genetically implanted learning code, which must be turned on before we can create long-term memory and behavioral change. JW is also the Managing Director of the *Veterinary Institute of Integrative Medicine* and *The Insulite Laboratories*. His diverse background has placed him in *Who's Who in Medicine and Health Care*, *Who's Who in Science and Engineering*, *Who's Who in Finance and Industry*, *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

**Rachel Walton, MSN, CRNP** is a co-author of *Smart Medicine for a Healthier Child*, a reference book written for parents describing natural and conventional approaches to many of our children's health concerns. Her life and work are dedicated to nurturing integrative care for people in all of life's cycles, in particular adolescence and the elderly. She has spent many years working in hospitals, clinics, schools, and with people from a variety of cultures studying natural medicine and cultivating principles that emphasize an essential way of being in the moment. Rachel currently works as a hospice nurse and teaches community courses on compassionate care of the dying in her hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Rachel makes glass and silver beaded jewelry and is inspired by that which reflects light.

**Avani G. Dilger, MEd, MA, CACIII, DTR**, is a certified Addiction Counselor Supervisor, a Somatic Psychotherapist, and a registered Dance/Movement Therapist, who has specialized in substance abuse prevention and treatment with adults, teens-at-risk, and their families. She currently teaches graduate students at Naropa University in the MA Somatic Counseling Psychology Program and the MA Transpersonal Psychology Program and works as a substance abuse counselor for teens and families at Compass House, a non-profit agency in Boulder. She is currently developing a "Natural Highs" Peer Mentor Program, teaching teens in recovery to become leaders in supporting other teens with drug and alcohol issues and in building a positive, healthy peer culture in our community. She is passionate about the creative potential of craving and addiction issues and is a trainer and consultant for evidence-based practices in the criminal justice system.

## Youth Leaders

**Taliza Mizrahi** is a professional Hip Hop dancer working both in Colorado and in the L.A. area. She developed the SGI Buddhist Youth Division in Colorado, as well as a Hip Hop dance based youth empowerment program called "Dancers for Peace", both programs dedicated to fostering global citizens committed to living a contributive life. Taliza is a bilingual youth leader for *Surfing The Creative® International Youth Rites of Passage Programs*.

**Jonathan Davis** is an arts educator working in a variety of settings as a dancer, actor, musician, and director. He is the co-founder and former co-director of *Express Your Self* dance studio, along with being the musical director for *Surfing The Creative® International Youth Rites of Passage Programs*. Formally trained at Colorado College in Theater and Dance, Jonathan brings a broad range of pedagogy and techniques to his teaching including Waldorf Philosophy, Co-creative Performance and Mythic Storytelling.

**Lucia Rich** has her MFA in Physical Theatre from Naropa/LISPA, London International School of Performing Arts. She has been creating and performing innovative works of dance, theatre, and clown in venues world-wide since '99, and has been teaching improvisational dance and Physical Theatre for almost a decade. Lucia is currently a member of the Octopus League here in Boulder, and recently served as a primary youth leader during *Surfing The Creative® 2006 International Youth Rites of Passage Programs*.