

# Character Building with the Six Pillars of Character



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For over 30 years, CHARACTER COUNTS! has worked with parents, educators, and coaches around the world to help them instill the Six Pillars of Character—trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship—in their students. These values serve as the foundation for our work, whether in kindergarten classrooms, middle schools, high school sports, or in the home.

CHARACTER COUNTS! is a values-based program because values guide our decisions, and at its core, character education is about helping kids make good decisions. Without intentional values, human beings tend to make decisions based on what is easiest or most emotionally satisfying. In fact, one could

argue that we make decisions that way because we value what is convenient and feels good. However, this isn't a good decision-making framework. If we don't want to default to impulsive values, then we must have intentional values to guide our decisions. In CHARACTER COUNTS!, we want our decisions to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and demonstrate good citizenship.

The Six Pillars of Character are not exclusive. It's OK to have other values. Nor are the Six Pillars inherently better than other values. The Six Pillars are useful because they are universal, an important factor when working with diverse stakeholders. Regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or any other demographic factor, there are few if any people who hope their child is irresponsible.

There aren't many teachers or parents who wish they trusted their kids less. When we can align diverse stakeholders around a set of core values, then we can align our decision-making as individuals and as a collective. In other words, we can analyze whether our individual decisions and our group or organizational decisions reflect the Six Pillars.

Once the Six Pillars of Character have been identified as your values, the next step is to turn values into behaviors. Values can be vague. What is perfectly respectful to me, you might find abhorrent. We have to define what the Six Pillars actually look like for us in our specific circumstances. In some schools, responsibility might look like wearing your school uniform each day, while other schools don't have a school uniform at all. Sometimes definitions change based on age. In little league sports, fair could mean everyone plays the same amount of time. In middle school, fairness could mean everyone gets to play, but not necessarily the same amount. In high school, fairness could mean those who deserve to play the most get to play the most. The point is, values must be defined so that we can turn stated values into operational values—what we do each day.

Many of the books featured in Story Monsters Ink provide exceptional opportunities to teach students how to use the Six Pillars to make decisions, but also define what each pillar looks like in action. For example, if a character in a book is asked to help a friend cheat on a test, how could the Six Pillars help the character determine what decision to make? Or, if a character in a story stands up for their friends, you can ask students which pillar the character is demonstrating. The same type of exercise can be done with any value you privilege in your family, school, or team.

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**Story Monsters Ink** is offering all CHARACTER COUNTS! supporters a free 12-month digital subscription. Subscribe here **StoryMonstersInk.com** and use code: CC12

*Learn more about **Story Monsters**.*

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## **Meet this year's Iowa Character Award recipients!**

Meet Dress for Success DSM, this year's Business/Organization of Character Award recipient!



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# Meet this year's Iowa Character Award recipients!

Meet Jack Eherenman, one of this year's Citizen of Character Award recipients!

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## NYCL 2018 Participants

### Adel Desoto Minburn

- Emma Brown
- Lucas Heitz
- Mikayla Klein
- Danielle Selover

### Ankeny

- Ryne Bete
- Megan Dao

### Ankeny Centennial

- Connor Beath
- Sara Camargo
- Paige Canova
- Taitlyn Canova
- Kara Denner
- Erin Doruska
- Alex Ford
- Allika Gustafson

- Shantal Hernandez Guerrero
- Sydney Hiatt
- Morgan Kinch
- Karlin McGarvey
- Alia Smith
- Adam Vaske

### **Ankeny Christian Academy**

- Chad Elrod
- Hannah Howard

### **Baxter**

- Andee Joos
- Lauren Ratliff

### **Bondurant – Farrar**

- Madison Agans
- Erin Bailey
- Gloria Bailey
- Camden Coon
- Jacob Hayworth

### **Carlisle**

- Sophia Fett
- Paige Mercer
- Nathan Rowray
- Hannah Schurz
- Megan Sievers
- Carter Sorenson

### **Dallas Center – Grimes**

- Kaylin Berghoefer
- Tyler Borneman
- Carter Eischeid
- Holly Ellis

- Abigail Greiman
- Elizabeth Mensing
- Cooper Pierce
- Caleb Rhoads

## **Dowling Catholic**

- Grace Coleman
- Clare Culver
- Shannon Dougherty
- Caroline Fink
- Catherine Finnegan
- Katherine Greening
- Leah Hunter
- Kade Johnson
- Mary Kelly
- Sophia Nguyen
- Jessica Thomas
- Katherine Timboe
- Maureen Wainwright

## **East**

- Kennedy Anderson
- Amaya Bales
- Emma Buchacker
- Jake Cort
- McCayla Dahlberg
- Faith Gbarjolo
- DeLanie Jackson
- Jasmine Johnson
- Arissa McGregor
- Nayeli Nazarit
- Arminda Neppl
- Danielle O'Connor
- Naleta Pephirom
- Nawal Rai
- Paige Sensouk

- Yabsira Tekle
- Alex Tiengkham
- MaryKate Walling

## **Hoover**

- Karli Benson
- Lorelle Dean
- Victoria Htoo
- Lal Kima
- Elise Marshall
- Rachel Math
- Hannah Poortinga
- Jade Sharp
- Lydia Swanson

## **Indianola**

- Matthew Deike
- Brock Elbert
- Gabrielle Haynes
- Tyler Juffernbruch
- Jenna Lee-Johnson
- Connor Lynch
- Colton Miller
- Abygail Mouzakis
- Annika Shaw
- Joseph Westlake

## **Iowa Christian Academy**

- Will Hatchitt
- Collin Schroeder

## **Johnston**

- Obsee Abbajabal
- Marianne Aldrich
- Angela Cai
- Grace Campidilli

- Lauren Fergus
- Jacqueline Fisher
- Chantelle Foster
- Alexandra Guilloz
- Danny Ho
- Rylee Matthews
- Aubrey McCombs
- Makenna Mumm
- Kennedy Ortmeier
- Parul Srivastava
- Dana Thacker
- Sophia Van Zee
- Carolyne Waldron
- Sierra Wicks
- Christopher Yao
- Letian Zhang

## **Lincoln**

- Jharna Adhikari
- Alana Astor
- Nixson Benitez
- Anjana Biswa
- Erika Canada
- Clayton Davis
- He Eh
- Zoie Goldstone
- John Goode
- Ben Knoebel
- Coby Konkol
- Hillary Lopez
- Brittney Miller
- Alexis Riccio
- Kristina Toben
- Susmita Wagle
- Kaylee Weaver
- Gaudi Zamora

## **North**

- Laura Christensen
- Kim Ngoc Deo
- Jasmine Echeverria
- Set Flower
- Riawna Hunter
- Lilyahna Kowal
- Phuoc Phu
- William Rassavong
- Caleb Slater
- Phillip Sunga
- Parker Swigert
- Margaret Wallace

## **Norwalk**

- Luke Agey
- Gianna Bellizzi
- Emma Burnett
- Grace Crady
- Jaden Deal
- Ana Eagan
- Allie Ollila
- Noah Schumacher

## **Roosevelt**

- Sauda Abdullahi
- Carmen Almendarez
- Charlotte Bening
- Tiffany Bolanos
- Connor Crabill
- Emma Grimm
- Eleanor Hildebrandt
- Madeline Kahl
- Beyonce Karlstad
- Meghna Mallapan

- Faiza Naseer
- Cade Pahl
- Jane Romp
- Neve Steger
- Katelyn Wilson
- Meghan Workman

## **Saydel**

- Darian Garcia
- Andrew Malone
- Alyssa Monroe
- Southeast Polk
- Abbragale Blaine
- Derek Carlson
- Brenda Dao
- Abbey Doyle
- Jenna Eastman
- Paige Kruse
- Tessa McDonald
- Sophia Patchin
- Elizabeth Pavon
- Ami Penquite
- Evan Perry
- Adam Schneider
- Chandler Schrock
- Victoria Shaffer
- Emma Slifka
- Ryan Strickland
- Zachary Strickland
- Ben Thompson
- Jenna Vignovich
- Isabel Wilson

## **Southeast Polk**

- Abbragale Blaine
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- Abbey Doyle
- Jenna Eastman
- Paige Kruse
- Tessa McDonald
- Sophia Patchin
- Elizabeth Pavon
- Ami Penquite
- Evan Perry
- Adam Schneider
- Chandler Schrock
- Victoria Shaffer
- Emma Slifka
- Ryan Strickland
- Zachary Strickland
- Ben Thompson
- Jenna Vignovich
- Isabel Wilson

## **Urbandale**

- Max Carver
- Marissa Chavez
- April Czarnecki
- Brooke Dannenfeldt
- Lindsey Ingraham
- Aditya Kotla
- Jonah Larsen
- Matt Moran
- Jacob Sammon
- Katherine Stoelk
- Riley Vander Hart
- Varun Vepa

## **Valley**

- Emily Ash
- Heidi Bantz



- Andrew Behrens
- Jane Berg
- Blake Edwards
- Walter Golay
- Helen Gould
- Claudia Jun
- Cassie Larick
- Bin Rui Li
- Gabe Lockin
- James Meng
- Megan Nelson
- Allison Ohringer
- Evan Paine
- Hannah Ross
- Darrell Smith
- Kate Snodgrass
- Jasmine Spann
- Greta Stewart
- Cole Strelecki
- Rachel Studer
- Radha Velamuri
- Sukhman Virdi
- Katie Wyatt

## **Waukee**

- Nathan Brush
- John Delaney
- Mackenzie Devoto
- Christine Emerald
- Katelyn Felt
- Nate Goodwin
- Evan Gray
- Megan Groathouse
- Ryan Herren
- Hima Joseph
- Elle Kramer

- Marisa Mapes
- Grace Millsap
- Jori Nieman
- Alex Nigg
- Mitchell Pollitt
- Sydney Ripplin
- Hannah Sand
- Adam Severson
- Kaitlyn Severson
- Avery Showalter
- Sarah Ummach
- Michael Vicente
- Meredith Wood
- Jessey Wyzgowski

#### **Woodward – Granger**

- Briley Bermel
- Kayley Dresback

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# **Exercising Your Character – Educational Resources**

We're looking forward to seeing you at Exercising Your Character.