

VIRTUES

The Virtues Project™

Claire Ashmore

Sea Green Ink www.seagreen.virtuesproject.com
www.seagreenink.com

Claire Ashmore, a qualified master facilitator for The Virtues Project™, provides Virtues training workshops as implemented in more than in 90 countries. The training provides a model for building qualities of character in schools and businesses as well as for families and non-profits. Workshop participants come away with a toolkit for relationship building by reminding us how Virtues such as determination, courtesy, purposefulness, justice, kindness, optimism, mindfulness...are all available to draw on. *"Claire is a gracious, dynamic presenter, who reaches us through stories, clear concepts and a passion for virtues."* Workshop participant, Long Bay, NZ 2004

Claire lives in Waipa District in New Zealand and can be contacted on +64 (0)21 145-5561 or e.claire@ymail.com for booking trainings

Why Train My Staff?

Ever wondered how to make that mission statement of yours come alive?



Claire Ashmore providing facilitator training for heads of social service organizations and military representatives at Bongdo Retreat Centre, Seoul, South Korea, 2004.



Just as
nature
needs
balance,
people need
balance.

Anne Wilson
Schafe

The Virtues Project™ is being implemented by thousands of facilitators in over 90 countries in families, pre-schools, schools, businesses, prisons, government departments, social service organisations. Read Claire Ashmore's personal story of how she came to be involved...

The Story goes...

A few weeks after listening to the screams of an 8-year old girl being thrown against the wall of a neighbour's apartment at 3am as "punishment", Claire Ashmore, from Cambridge, NZ, woke one morning in her South Korean apartment with the strong, compelling 'thought impulse' that she *must* 'take *The Virtues Project™* to Korea'. She had no idea that four days later she would be standing up presenting her first Korean Virtues workshop at the USO in Seoul to a group of about twenty Korean War veterans, some USO staff and locals. That first presentation was April 20, 2002. The then Regional Director of the USO for Korea, Elaine Losey, embraced the concept on behalf of the US army. She explained that soldiers might want the option of participating in training that would sustain them spiritually. Since the Virtues Project has no political or religious agenda, it is able to be integrated into any setting.

With the USO staff officially on board, several hundred US soldiers based in Korea were trained in Virtues. The USO project facilitated similar numbers of Korean public school teachers to be trained in or to use the Virtues in classrooms. Furthermore, about twenty Korean elementary schools enjoyed Claire's Virtues activity manuals every Saturday morning in a USO Good Neighbors Programme taught by volunteer soldiers and katusa (Korean-speaking soldiers). Ten of those schools were in the South Korean village on the DMZ border. The USO reported that Korean schools hosted gracious dinners with musical entertainment provided by the children in order to thank the soldiers for the benefits of Virtues in education.

It started with a thought impulse of dramatic proportion, and soon, soldiers, teachers and heads of social service organisations became proponents of The Virtues Project™.

Of the Koreans trained, a small group, inspired by the transformational and inspirational effects of *The Virtues Project™* independently set up an NGO in Seoul, which has now centralised virtues activities for Korea and set a strategic plan in action: 'To Take *The Virtues Project™* to Korea'. The NGO acts under the umbrella of 'Improving Civil Society' and goes under the name of 'The Virtues Project Korea Committee.' This NGO had Claire complete the training of their trainers in August 2004, who then hosted a media visit by the authors of the project in January 2005. They are now a non-profit organization working with social and business organizations throughout Korea. For more information on books and programmes available in Korean, visit *The Virtues Project Korea Committee* website: <http://www.virtuesproject.or.kr> (which is in Korean). Or for information in English on programmes and speakers internationally, please go to <http://www.virtuesproject.com>

The Virtues Project™ has a life of its own

Clearly, this simple thought impulse manifested into a large-scale operation. Claire says that as more needed to be done, the right people seemed to ‘fall from the sky’ to develop Virtues activities suitable for Korean schools: programme organizers, translators, artists, calligraphers and writers for the Virtues materials. When Claire moved back to Hamilton, editors and outsource writers there became involved writing school activities manuals. “It was a matter of trusting the process and keeping going: People just stepped in, each offering to work on the next stage. *The Virtues Project™* seemed to have a life of its own.” Claire acknowledges the grassroots nature of the Virtues work, and has worked in creative partnership with the authors of the project for around 20 years.

Who created The Virtues Project™?

More than 20 years ago, the authors, Canadians, Linda Kavelin Popov, her husband Dan Popov and brother John Kavelin conceived *The Virtues Project™* due to the rising trends of bullying, violence, and racism in schools and communities. The Popovs had started by asking the question: ‘What is in common to each and every person on the planet?’

What ‘something’ would promote peaceful interaction in today’s cultural and social diversity? They began by researching books of philosophers from different cultural traditions and also the Holy Books of every religion.

What did they find? **Virtues** like determination, integrity, patience, assertiveness, love and truth are words shared by all. *The Virtues Project™* training is based on the more than 900 words found to be in common to us all. 52 words were selected for *The Virtues Project™* package, and set in the context of a 5-step strategy.

Thus, *The Virtues Project™* was born. Linda Kavelin Popov’s first book, *The Family Virtues Guide* was soon followed by a second book, *The Virtues Educator’s Guide* and both were enhanced by her book, *Sacred Moments* which contains stories of virtues-based situations for reflection. Trained Virtues Project facilitators around the world now offer simple, inspirational and transformational training, which has proved itself time and again. See *The Virtues Project™* website: <http://www.virtuesproject.com> for

**The Virtues toolkit
promotes peaceful
interaction inside social
and cultural diversity.**

more information on books and programmes available. In 1991, the project was honoured by the UN as a model programme for families of all cultures. In 2004, The Dalai Lama endorsed Linda’s latest book *A Pace of Grace Virtues of a Sustainable Life*. saying: “*A Pace of Grace*’ contains vivid examples of how to make our daily lives meaningful. I offer my prayers that those readers who sincerely put them into practice will achieve that inner peace that is the key to lasting happiness.”

VIRTUES

The Virtues Project™ is currently operating in over 90 countries...

in families, pre-schools, schools, businesses, prisons, government departments, social service organisations... Claire Ashmore, based in Auckland NZ, and operating locally and internationally, says of the process: “By cultivating and balancing virtues as a daily practice, we can systematically bring out the best in ourselves and others.

**For taking practical steps to the possibilities of a better world,
contact Claire for information or requests for training
by emailing e.claire@ymail.com or texting/calling 021 145-5561
www.seagreen.virtuesproject.com**