

# **THE STORY BEHIND THE CHILD OF DIVORCE**

**In August of 2008, professionals of all ages from many different fields of study sat around a conference table in the Tulsa area to discuss the growing concern for children of divorce.**

**This group formed a nonprofit initially named Blended Love, Inc. with a mission statement of “mending the heart of the child of divorce.”**

**Founders, Dr. Brian & Monica Epperson, both educators created a revenue source for the organization by donating royalties from a book written by Monica, “A Heart with Two Homes.”**

**The book, written for children ages four to ten, highlights the value of journaling for children who have been through a divorce. This book quickly became the first work of the organization, donating over five hundred books to schools, churches and other nonprofit organizations.**

**After many months of research and collaboration with multiple organizations studying the effects of divorce on children, Blended Love formed a Program Committee with the primary objective being to write research-based curriculum for both students and teachers.**

**“Most divorces involve children, and more than one million children are affected by divorce each year.” According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 2006.**

**As this population grows, we believe it is important to offer them resources to overcome the negative effects being revealed today. Effects such as lower grades, higher risk of not graduating, higher risk of drug and alcohol abuse and many more alarming negative effects that can be found on-line.**

**Our focus as an organization is to bring resources (books, journals, child-centered programs, and teacher-centered programs) to anyone and everyone vowing to help mitigate the negative effects of divorce on our children.**

**For more information visit: <http://www.thechildofdivorce.com>**

# OUR MISSION TODAY AND THE NEEDS THAT DRIVE THEM

## Meeting A Serious Need with A Mission:

“With over 63% of America’s children not living a two-parent biological home,” according to Newsweek, it is our hope to equip those children and those potential students with the necessary emotional intelligence to avoid lowering grades, gang recruitment, substance abuse, anxiety and depression, teen pregnancy and any other pitfalls that might keep them from a productive, successful life.

**“Of all the children born to married parents this year fifty percent will experience the divorce of their parents before they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.”**

**–Fagan, Fitzgerald, Rector, “The Effects of Divorce on America”**

We believe our curriculum, Change Agent Journal Program, supports our mission by equipping children with coping skills to handle change with a positive perspective and with an empowerment of self-awareness and problem solving skills needed in today’s ever changing world.

Change is the one constant.

Change Agent Journal Program provides ways to positively handle change by focusing on bolstering emotional intelligence.

We believe it is important to equip all children to cope positively with change. Research supports this belief.



# ACHIEVING OUR MISSION

The Change Agent Journal Program has been created to bolster emotional intelligence by equipping children for change. Change Agents guide students through a six-week program designed to equip students with positive coping skills. At the end of the course, students will be deemed, “Change Agents.”

## The Goals of the Program

1. To provide the student with a positive adult role model who has coped positively with change and who can provide emotional support and guidance.
2. To encourage peer-to-peer empathy, growth and support.
3. To equip students with skills and attitudes proven to help young people to cope positively with change.
4. To meet natural childhood needs of security, structure and stability.

## Key Features of the Program

- We help all children to deal with change. We include all students, so that no student is excluded from becoming a Change Agent.
- Our program is not in addition to teachers meeting the Oklahoma P.A.S.S. Objectives. We help the teacher meet academic objectives using content designed to help children cope with change.
- We teach practical skills and attitudes that are shown to help children through change. Our program is supported by research.
- Our Change Agent instructors have been through change themselves. They bring experience and training to the classroom.
- Our program consists of six consecutive weeks in the classroom with each visit lasting forty-five minutes to an hour. This allows professionals to volunteer as Change Agent Instructors.

# **BIBLIOTHERAPY**

## **What is Bibliotherapy?**

**Bibliotherapy is simply understanding more about yourself and finding comfort in characters you read about in books.**

**“Bibliotherapy is the process of using books to help children think about, understand, and work through social and emotional concerns. Reading with children can be therapeutic...Adults can use reading to help children come to grips with issues that create emotional turmoil for them. Reading can also be...very effective in preventing and resolving behavior problems.” (Positive Child Guidance, Darla Ferris Miller.)**

**Bibliotherapy is not a new concept. It actually dates back to the 1930's and was used to help soldiers after war.**

**Most researchers agree that when using Bibliotherapy with children it is important to pick out a book that is relevant to their concern or circumstance and follow loosely this format:**

- 1. Choose a book suited specifically for a student's circumstance**
- 2. Discuss the book after the reading of the text**
- 3. With younger students draw feelings or events brought to mind**
- 4. With older students use a journal or write about the feelings or events brought to mind**

**We believe that it is more than a temporary healing; it brings about resolution through understanding of an experience and camaraderie through the character.**

**A resource for choosing books involving family changes, traumas and other life experiences for children:**

**<http://www.best-childrens-books.com/bibliotherapy.html>**