

Vita of Larry K. Brendtro, PhD

Director of Resilience Resources

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Education

PhD, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI: Combined Program in Education and Psychology
MS, South Dakota State University, Brookings: School Administration
BA, Augustana, Sioux Falls, SD: Sociology and Social Work, Teacher Certification

Professional Highlights

Current: Director, Resilience Resources, Lennox, SD
Professor Emeritus, Augustana University, Sioux Falls, SD, Special Education
Adjunct Professor, University of Victoria, BC, School of Child and Youth Care
Co-Founder of the Circle of Courage Resilience Model and Reclaiming Youth International
Former President of Starr Commonwealth, with campuses in Albion, MI, Columbus, OH, and Van Wert, OH
Assistant Professor, University of Illinois, Urbana, Institute for Exceptional Children
Clinical Faculty, University of Michigan Fresh Air Camp, Ann Arbor, MI
Psychology Intern and Residential Counselor, Hawthorn Center, Michigan Mental Health Dept., Livonia, MI
Principal, teacher, social worker, child care worker, Children's Care Hospital and School, Sioux Falls, SD

Research and Publications

Author or co-author of over 200 articles and 15 books on strength-based interventions with challenging youth with translations in multiple languages. Books titles include: *The Drive to Thrive; Deep Brain Learning: Evidence-Based Essentials in Education, Treatment, and Youth Development; The Resilience Revolution; Reclaiming Youth at Risk; Reclaiming Our Prodigal Sons and Daughters; Re-educating Troubled Youth; Positive Peer Culture; and The Other 23 Hours*. Founding editor with Nicholas Long of the journal *Reclaiming Children and Youth*.

Training and Consultation

Has trained professionals in over 20 nations in fields of education, treatment, juvenile justice, child and youth care, and prevention. Served as a member of the US Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the administrations of Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama. Was ceremonially adopted into the Rosebud Lakota Sioux tribe and has worked with indigenous nations worldwide.

Personal

Larry Brendtro and his wife, Janna Brendtro, established the research, publication, and training organization Resilience Resources. Janna has been research editor of reclaiming youth publications over the past 40 years. They reside near Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and have 3 adult children and 7 grandchildren.

THE RECLAIMING YOUTH MOVEMENT

The Roots of Reclaiming

For thousands of years, indigenous peoples worldwide have revered children as sacred beings. During that same period, most Western cultures viewed children as chattel and reared them with harsh punishment. While reformers long attempted to challenge these practices, the modern reclaiming movement dates to August Aichhorn who described relational-based strategies in his 1935 book *Wayward Youth*. As defined by Yochanan Wozner of Israel, reclaiming environments meet the needs of children and youth. In psychological terminology, this includes universal growth needs for attachment, achievement, autonomy, and altruism.

August Aichhorn and Anna Freud trained a generation of leaders including Fritz Redl who emigrated to the U.S. prior to World War II. There, Fritz Redl and David Wineman authored the classic book, *Children Who Hate*. They worked with William Morse to establish the University of Michigan Fresh Air Camp as a laboratory for applied research on reclaiming challenging children and youth. Larry Brendtro was trained in this tradition and completed a doctorate at the University of Michigan. He then joined the faculty of the University of Illinois where he established graduate programs for professionals serving students with emotional and behavior disorders.

Dr. Brendtro left the university to put these principles into practice at Starr Commonwealth which operated treatment programs and alternative schools at campuses in Michigan and Ohio. During fourteen years at Starr, he and colleagues co-authored three books. *The Other 23 Hours* focused on the transformational power of therapeutic living and learning environments and was translated into several languages. This was followed by *Re-Educating Troubled Youth* and *Positive Peer Culture* which presented strategies for enlisting young people and staff in creating climates of respect. Positive Peer Culture is now listed on the California Evidence Based Clearing House, and these three early books are still in print, now being published by Routledge.

The Circle of Courage

After leaving Starr, Brendtro returned to his native South Dakota as professor at Augustana University. He and Augustana colleagues Martin Brokenleg and Steve Van Bockern co-authored *Reclaiming Youth at Risk* which introduced the Circle of Courage model, a consilience of traditional Native American child-rearing values and the science of positive youth development. That small book became a best seller for its publisher, National Education Services (now Solution Tree) and introduced reclaiming principles to professionals worldwide.

Larry Brendtro and Nicholas Long established the journal *Reclaiming Children and Youth* to publish research and practice wisdom related to the Circle of Courage. Fred Tully, founder of the Black Hills Children's Home, invited Augustana to offer graduate degrees there and hosted the first Black Hills Seminars on Reclaiming Youth in 1994. This became an annual event, drawing professionals from throughout North America and beyond. The year 2018 marks the 25th year for the Black Hills Seminars.

A key leader in the reclaiming youth network has been Mark Freado who brought the strength-based principles of the Re-ED model for troubled children developed by Nicholas Hobbs and has been at the forefront of Life Space Crisis Intervention. Through the reclaiming book, journal, and seminars, a world-wide synergy developed. Lesley du Toit brought this model to South Africa and piloted the Response Ability Pathways [RAP] training curriculum. European satellites were developed in Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Hungary, and Switzerland. In Australia, this reclaiming model was promoted by Youth Off the Streets of Sydney, Circle Seminars and Edith Cowan University in Perth, and Allambi Care in Newcastle. New Zealand colleagues formed a professional development trust and extended training throughout the Pacific Islands. And because of its Native roots, the Circle of Courage attracted the interest of indigenous peoples from many cultures.

Over a period of two decades, many schools and treatment programs have embraced the Circle of Courage model. It was applied to faith-based programs in juvenile justice by Scott Larson and generated books on resilience. The Circle of Courage was the early prototype for positive youth development as documented by Wayne State University researcher William Jackson. Under the leadership of Cathann Kress, the Circle of Courage was adopted as the "4-H Essentials of Youth Development" by this, the world's largest youth organization. Subsequently, researchers from Tufts University received major funding to document the effectiveness of these principles, but, in the process, took the liberty to rename Circle of Courage concepts with synonyms called the 5 C's. In spite of this alliterative relabeling, the Circle of Courage presaged other models as noted by Maurice Elias and colleagues in the *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning*.

In 2012, Dr. Brendtro returned to Starr Commonwealth as Dean of the Starr Global Learning Network and chief psychologist in Starr's doctoral internship program. For a time, Starr also operated the South Dakota-based Reclaiming Youth International directed by Mark Freado. However, in 2015, facing financial challenges, Starr Commonwealth was no longer able to continue its support for the South Dakota initiatives. While Starr continues to provide Circle of Courage and RAP training, key leaders in the reclaiming movement are developing new collaborations to insure the future of this strength-based model.

The Legacy Continues

Returning to their native South Dakota, Larry and Janna Brendtro established Resilience Resources to continue their legacy of research, publications, and professional development activities. Co-founders of the Circle of Courage are extending this model. Martin Brokenleg has integrated indigenous science, cultural trauma, and resilience; Steve Van Bockern is applying these principles in educational leadership in developing *Schools that Matter*. Other examples:

- Mark Strother and colleagues at Cal Farley Boys Ranch developed *The Drive to Thrive* which integrates Circle of Courage values with neuroscience and trauma research.
- Howard Bath of Allambi Care Australia and John Seita of Michigan State University co-authored *The Three Pillars of Care: Trauma and Resilience in the Other 23 Hours*.
- Mark Freado and Larry Brendtro are now providing training in the *Planning Restorative Outcomes* (PRO) model of strength-based assessment.
- J. C. Chambers and Mark Freado have developed *The Art of Kid Whispering* with strategies for reaching adult-wary youth.
- Deborah Espiner and Diane Guild of New Zealand created the *Rolling with Resilience* curriculum for strengthening families.
- James Anglin of the University of Victoria in Canada is joining with Larry Brendtro in authoring a book on historic truths from pioneers in child and youth care.
- Leon Fulcher and Thom Garfat continue their leadership in the International Child and Youth Care Network founded by Brian Gannon which links to professionals worldwide.

Many other colleagues continue to advance the vibrant reclaiming movement, dedicated to the principle that there are no disposable kids.

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Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern, co-authors of *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*

