

# Teens & Toddlers Program Transforms Lives

Founded by Laura Huxley, Longtime Beachwood Canyon Resident  
by Theresa Danna

If you are seeking a low-risk, high-return investment, then Laura Huxley has a tip that will sweeten your portfolio. Huxley is the founder of *Children: Our Ultimate Investment* (COUI), a nonprofit foundation "for the nurturing of the possible human."

Since 1978, COUI has been offering programs such as Teens & Toddlers, a high school curriculum that partners at-risk students (both female and male) with toddlers in participating daycare centers. On a weekly basis, the teens care for the toddlers, giving them the opportunity to apply classroom lessons in child development and psychology, effective communication, and positive discipline. Statistics show that the program is successful in achieving its goal of preventing teenage pregnancy, but the return on this investment extends beyond the prospectus.

"For the first time in their lives, these teens become role models," Huxley explained. "A great transformation happens. They become more self-aware and self-confident."

One of the teenaged girls who participated in the program

said, "When a child wraps their arms around me, or when they smile as if I'm important, it's a great feeling. I have low self-esteem and feel so worthless all of the time, but these kids make me feel so special... it's been a while since I've felt like this."

Huxley said that the program benefits two generations. Not only does it encourage teens to postpone parenthood, but it also inspires them to create healthy relationships. "They will not treat their children the way they were treated," Huxley said.

"Love is good," she continued, "but you have to respect children for who they are. In our program, the teens have a voice and are respected."



Photo courtesy of Michael Childers Studio © 2000 323.466.9951

In 2004-2005, COUI will serve students at Phoenix High School in Venice. The organization is actively seeking participation from a school in Hollywood as well. The Teens & Toddlers program

is also implemented in several schools located in inner-city boroughs of London.

"These young people have a very hard life," said Diana Whitmore, COUI International Director, of the teens whose parents are drug addicts, prisoners, or abusive. "The process of coming into contact and befriending a small child is very healing for the young people. Many of them have never experienced a successful relationship in their lives."

The USA Teens & Toddlers program depends on

private funding. "The schools here don't pay anything," Huxley said. Expenses include program administration, staffing, and a training program for facilitators. Huxley said that individual

contributions of money or volunteer time are welcome and will help assure program continuity.

To learn more about Teens & Toddlers and other COUI activities, visit their website at [children-ourinvestment.org](http://children-ourinvestment.org); e-mail [ChildrenOUI@aol.com](mailto:ChildrenOUI@aol.com); or contact Dianne McCutchan, Executive Director, (323)461-8248 or PO Box 1868, Los Angeles, CA 90078.

**Photo:** Beachwood Canyon resident, Laura Archera Huxley, founded *Children: Our Ultimate Investment* 26 years ago to promote conscious conception and parenting. Her published books include *You Are Not the Target*, *The Child of Your Dreams* (co-authored with Piero Ferrucci), and *This Timeless Moment*, which describes her life with her husband, writer and philosopher Aldous Huxley.

— Theresa Danna has published articles, lectured, and appeared on radio and television regarding the topic of spiritual parenting. She lives in the neighborhood with her 5-year-old son and can be reached at [theresadanna@prodigy.net](mailto:theresadanna@prodigy.net).