



INSTITUTE OF HEARTMATH®
Empowering Heart-Based Living

Media contact: Gabriella “Gaby” Boehmer
(831) 338-8710 or gboehmer@heartmath.org

Institute of HeartMath® Offers New *Wild Ride to the Heart™* Game Helping Children Deal with Challenging Emotions

BOULDER CREEK, CA. – March 18, 2010 – A new board game can help teach children emotional awareness and self-regulation skills to better handle life challenges and the variety of emotional reactions that these challenges can trigger. As children learn these new skills they’re better prepared to handle situations that can range from divorce to the kind of temper tantrums that plague the cereal aisles of grocery stores. The Institute of HeartMath® (IHM), a leading research and education organization (<http://www.heartmath.org>), offers the *Wild Ride to the Heart™* board game for home and classroom use.

For decades board games have been used to teach children strategic thinking skills and social interaction. Studies show board games can actually help increase learning capabilities in children. A 2007 study by Carnegie Mellon University with low-income preschoolers found that playing a numerical board game for fifteen minutes in four sessions improved the preschoolers’ performance on four kinds of numerical tasks. The improvements still remained nine weeks after the four game sessions.

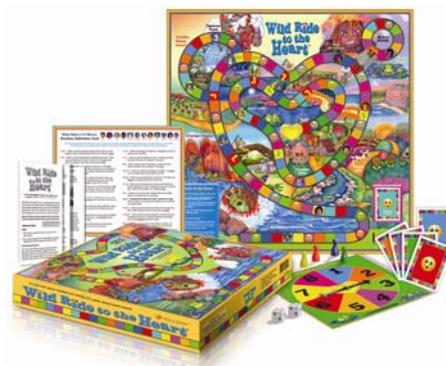
Based on more than 18 years of scientific research on the physiology of emotions and the intelligence of the heart, *Wild Ride to the Heart* is an engaging and entertaining way for parents and teachers to aid children in learning the sometimes-challenging components of emotions.

Wild Ride to the Heart helps in developing emotional resilience and establishing family connections through a simple and fun-to-play format. For example, Darcy Lord, Ph.D., took the game home to her husband and their six-year-old son, Nikolas. She said it was amazing to watch while they all enjoyed playing the game together. “When he [Nikolas] does the ‘Go to the Heart’ part (an educational self-regulation tool in the game), he closes his eyes and puts his hand on his heart. Then very soon this really beautiful smile comes across his face,” she said.

Children are often less experienced at comprehending and sorting through new emotions. They laugh and cry with ease; they can become frustrated fast and are quickly confused by their emotions and other people’s reactions. *Wild Ride to the Heart* is developed for children ages four and up. It helps create an opportunity for children to learn, express and understand nineteen of the most commonly experienced emotions using their hearts and minds in a fun and educational environment.

Players spin a wheel or roll a die to advance around a colorful board, trying to follow a path to reach the heart at the center of the board. As you move along the board, the game’s road to the heart is paved with unpredictability (just like in life), and can get rocky and wildly fun along the way. Children will engage in a range of emotions, illustrating *happy* with a facial expression, or learning the meaning of *frustration* and how to cope with it. At first, the game is best played with the aid of teachers, older siblings, parents and other family members.

Wild Ride to the Heart incorporates a simple emotion-regulation tool called Go to the Heart™, which was adapted from HeartMath’s HeartSmarts® and Early HeartSmarts® social and emotional learning programs for



both school and home-schooling pre-kindergartners through fifth-graders. IHM research shows a direct link between a student's ability to self-manage emotions and academic performance.

"In recent studies we've shown that shifting from a turbulent state to a more positive emotional state can facilitate the higher cognitive processes that are critical for focusing attention, reasoning and creativity," said Dr. Rollin McCraty, Director of Research at the Institute of HeartMath.

Wild Ride to the Heart's Go to the Heart tool is designed to help teach children to find the same positive emotional state that builds emotional flexibility and resilience.

For families with busy lifestyles, it might be rare to spend enough time together, and deal with emotions that are often easily overlooked. Capturing and holding children's attention, helping to strengthen their relationships with family and friends, and bringing families closer together are some of the things *Wild Ride to the Heart* can help accomplish. The sharing experience helps everyone – parents, children, and siblings – better understand emotions in a fun and unique way.

The *Wild Ride to the Heart* game:

- Helps children begin to identify and understand their emotions.
- Helps children in their relationships with family and friends at home and school.
- Is based on breakthrough scientific research about emotions and learning.
- Helps teach children emotional self-regulation to better control their mood.
- Can help bring family and friends closer.

What's in the box:

- Colorful, illustrated game board.
- Markers for moving around the board.
- Surprise Cards that challenge players to perform various tasks, including:
 - Make faces of different emotions.
 - Describe what makes them feel certain emotions: frustration, disappointment and courage.
 - Practice the HeartMath emotion-regulation tool "Go to the Heart."
- Emotions Definition Cards that explain the meaning of the most common emotions: love, sadness, happiness, anger, calm and fear.
- Spinner.
- Two dice.

The *Wild Ride to the Heart* board game can be purchased at <http://www.heartmath.org/wildridetotheheart>, where more ordering information and details are available.

Facts and Study Resources:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/12/AR2010011202134.html>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080325083304.htm>

About the Institute of HeartMath:

The Institute of HeartMath, www.heartmath.org, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization dedicated to teaching the principles of heart-based living around the world and promoting global coherence by inspiring people to connect with the intelligence and guidance of their hearts. IHM, founded in 1991 by Doc Childre, is a world leader in stress reduction and emotion management research. Through its research and education divisions, the institute has developed practical tools, educational programs and services – collectively known as the HeartMath System – for the mental, emotional and physical benefit of children through seniors without regard to their social, economic or cultural status. IHM research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals such as American Journal of Cardiology, Stress Medicine, Preventive Cardiology, Journal of the American College of Cardiology, Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science and Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine. For more information about IHM Education and Professional Development programs visit www.heartmath.org/education or call (831) 338-8500 or (800) 711-6221. You can learn more

about IHM's latest available resources by joining their social networking pages on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), as well as their [YouTube](#) channel. IHM's latest resource page, [HeartMath My Kids](#), is dedicated to providing all caretakers of children with practical information.