

Subject: June Newsletter
From: SLTPlead@aol.com
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To:

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An Email Newsletter for SLTP Alumni & Staff

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Consider this . . .

For ages, educators have encouraged young people to practice athletics and musical instruments, not so that they could be great high jumpers or violinists, but **so that they could develop the deeper characteristics we associate with these activities:** discipline, teamwork, sensitivity, confidence, selflessness, determination, attunement to beauty, etc.

Now, through programs like SLTP, we enable students to *practice* listening non-judgmentally, to *practice* demonstrating compassion, to *practice* inclusion, to *practice* empowering others. SLTP can be educational for anyone. But for students who are want to make a difference and who are willing to learn, **it has the potential to be life altering.** Experienced student leaders can't help but carry deeper lessons into their lives outside the classrooms of SLTP.

Who do you know who should be with us this summer?

Changing the World

Last year SLTP examined a basic fact of life . . . High school students are constantly being reminded that their "job" is to get ready for real life. As if high school wasn't isn't REAL!

The issues that face student leaders are in fact VERY real. It is tough to face these issues responsibly and proactively when others seem to feel that what you do doesn't matter, or that what you do is just practice or a dress rehearsal.

Since it is vital to enable student leaders to live "in the present," the SLTP staff took on

the task of preparing a play as a focal point for discussing the issues themselves, as well as the context of living in the present.

There are only three ways humans learn - visually, auditorily, or kinesthetically, that is by watching, listening or doing. During the course of each of our week long conferences, we make every effort to accommodate each learning style for each learner. The major vehicle we use to accomplish this task is of course experiential and interactive. Increasingly over the past few years, we have added elements of drama to illustrate as well as to point and to focus discussion. The daily thematic skits have enabled us to connect our curricular lessons to our daily theme and to practical applications of the learnings and understandings.

Two summers ago, SLTP brought the play "Bang, bang you're dead" to New England and it proved to be a very vital link in our lessoning strategies for inclusion. Last summer, we presented "Getting ready for Real Life" not as a back handed jibe at those who sneer at the reality of school life, but rather as a call to action for Student Leaders. The issues raised in each and every scene in that play were not only real, but each cried out for student leaders to act inclusively.

This summer the SLTP Staff will present a new play, "Changing the world" in tribute to all of the differences that student leaders make. The interactive play was written by the staff and will be presented prior to the social.

Presentation of the play and the skits provide a forum for the exploration and discussion of extremely serious issues without becoming preachy or boring or Disney-esque.

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The ReEnergizer

The date of the REE is set. It will be Saturday, November 30th. The Registration fee will be \$15. *Connections* will be featured. Registration forms will be distributed this summer and are available on line.

2003 Leadership Trainers and Leadership Instructors

Applications for the 2003 SLTP Staff are being accepted. The deadline for staff application is August 15. Applications will be included in the conference materials this summer and are available on line.

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Reasons

The question "why" is one of the first questions a little kid learns, and little kids often ask it so often it becomes more than annoying. Still, there is a very important lesson in this for student leaders, adviser and teachers.

Knowing "why" is basic to human nature.

Sure, we often do things by rote, or just because we are expected to, or because "we have always done it that way."

Knowing "why" is a key element in group development. Knowing "why" is the first step, believing in the "why" is the beginnings of teamwork.

Why are we doing this? What does this have to do with . . . ?

Can the traditions of your organization pass the "why" test? Is there a reason for the way you do the things you do?

Recently I attended a meeting of a student council in Massachusetts. The group leaders informed me that they started every meeting with an activity. The meeting I was attending was their month night meeting and they ALWAYS opened with the same

activity.

I was looking forward to the meeting. When I got there I sat at the back of the room. All of the chairs were arranged in a big circle. After everyone was seated, the president got up took away her chair and started the music -- the entire group began playing "musical chairs."

I was shocked. But understanding came to me with waves of enlightenment.

What does musical chairs teach? What are the lessons?

Think about it.

Aggression . . . exclusion . . . leaving people out . . .

Hmmmmmm, are these lessons team oriented?

This groups actions outweighed its words. And while there was a legitimate attempt to have fun at the meeting, the effect of the game was to splinter the group and create insiders and outsiders.

In short, know why you use an activity before you use it. Be sure that you weigh ALL of the effects.

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>From the mailbag

Last month we asked everyone: What can student leaders do about bullying?

The answers included:

<> SLTP can sponsor a conference to address the issue

<> speak out

<> involve the faculty and the administration

<> involve the peer mediators (start a peer mediation group)

<> get the guidance department involved

We are going to brainstorm this question much further this summer. In the meantime check out the article below.

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Relational aggression

"Relational aggression" is the new term used to refer to **behaviors that are intended to hurt another person's friendships or sense of inclusion in a peer group.** It most commonly takes the form of either social exclusion ("Don't let her sit at our table") or rumor spreading ("If you don't help me, I'll tell Jess that you said she was ugly").

It is practiced much more by girls than by boys.

Why girls? Girls are socialized to be "nice," to value relationships, and to not be physically aggressive. As a result they tend to: 1) Channel their aggressive impulses in more covert ways than their male peers and 2) Use what they more keenly appreciate and are attuned to: relationships.

And although relational aggression is certainly subtler than a punch in the nose, it can be just as hurtful. Lately there has been a burst of coverage about relational aggression in American popular media. Talks show hosts (including Oprah) have talked about it, the New York Times Magazine featured an article entitled "Mean Girls" in February, a number of highly publicized books about it were published this Spring, and two weeks ago, over 4 million 4th-7th graders in the US learned about relational aggression in Time Magazine's

school supplement.

I for one certainly hope that all this attention leads student leaders, advisers and principals to:

- <> Understand and recognize relational aggression as more than a rite of passage
- <> Attune themselves to notice this type of behavior
- <> State unequivocally that relational aggression is unacceptable

At it's worst, relational aggression is a form a bullying, and it must be dealt with in the way that all bullying is dealt with: With a firm *NO* to the bully and a protective and empowering place for victims. More ove rthe school must act proactively -- seeking to practice inclusion and acceptance as the norm.

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Time is running out

Call today 1.800.600.7223. Get registered. The get ready for an absolutely amazing week!

There is one slot left in Session 1 ALC. (a transfer), there are just 3 slots left in both ALC 2 and ALC 3.

Session 1 LTC will be declared full on Monday. We expect that Session 4 LTC will be full by the end of the coming week.

As of this writing (but there is no mail delivery on Sunday) Sessions 2 and 3 LTC have about a dozen openings.

Don't be left out. If you are worried there will not be room -- call Fitz. Get your friends enrolled -- you know they will not regret it!

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The 2002 SLTP Conference Schedule

at

Nichols College in Dudley, Massachusetts

Where leaders learn HOW to make a difference!

The ReEnergizer Conference - Saturday, November 30

LTC's - - July 9 - 13; July 23 - 27; July 30 - Aug 3; Aug 6 - 10

ALC's - - July 10 - 13; July 31 - Aug 3; Aug 7 - 10

Collegiate Initiative - - January 12

Officer Training Seminar - - July 1 - 2

SLTP - 2002 Student Leadership Training Program - A Leadership Safari