

# *student leadership*

## The Student Leadership Training Program

Leaders walk their talk.

# Linkage

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 4    THE SLTP ALUMNI NEWSLETTER    DECEMBER, 2005

Pharley Phund	2
School Service	2
Positive Risks	3
Congratulations	4
Join us	4
Ask the Doctor	4
Book Review	5
2006 SLTP Dates	5
Early Birds	6
Ceremonies	6
ReE	6
Survey results	7
Yes, but ...	7
No, but...	7
Since 1990	8
Portfolios	8

## The REE - 400 plus go MAD!

On Saturday, November 26, the tenth annual ReEnergizer Conference was held at Nichols College. Delegates from 104 schools joined us to make it one of the largest conferences, as well as the *loudest*, the *funnest* and the *learningest* conferences held in New England this fall.

We had over 400 register. Even with the big crowd, registration and Confluence went very smoothly. It seemed like everyone brought lots of friends and everyone was in the mood to have some fun.

We celebrated the region's Champions for Youth, and were featured with a special presentation of our new play about inclu-

sion "if not you—who?" And we met the newest student members of SLTP's Alumni Executive Board.

Again this year we offered separate workshop sessions for all our groups—students, collegians, parents and advisers. There were 104 colleges, middle and high schools represented, with attendees traveling from as far away as NY to be with us.

Attendees left with the coveted Early Bird Applications as well as lots of specific information regarding the submission of portfolios for the Service and Development Medals.

*Continued on page 7*

## Mix it Up Day was HUGE!

Last month more than 1,000,000 students accepted the challenge to begin bridging social boundaries in their schools. On *Mix It Up at Lunch* Day 2005 schools all over the country helped students to step out of their comfort zones and sit somewhere new, with someone new. More than 40 of SLTP's

member schools participated this year.

To read specific stories related to this National Event, visit their website. There you will find lots of information about the struggles and triumphs that students faced to pull this off.

[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

## Newsletter Submissions

SLTP welcomes contributions to our newsletters from our alumni and friends.

Articles should be no longer than 200 words. Each article submitted for publication must address a topic of interest to student leadership. The article must include a bio of the author - name; address; email address, phone; school; year in school; & SLTP graduation year.

Opinions must be clearly identifies as those of the author.

We reserve the right to edit for length, clarity and style. We also reserve the right not to publish articles which do not meet the criteria established in our guidelines.

For additional information, please refer to the guidelines posted on [sltp.info](http://sltp.info)

## The Jester and Pharley Phund



Recently we heard from Claire, the Director of the Phund who called to congratulate SLTP for binging the message to so many students who want to make a difference. We are proud to share that over 17 alumni have begun read-a-thon fundraising programs in their towns.

The Jester has lost his jingle is among our favorite stories. Reading it at camp after the differencemakers is one of the

highlights for every CC and Director.

In case somehow you missed this plea for help, the Saltzman family has created an opportunity for you to bring this amazing book to kids in the hospital suffering with cancer. It is called “the Reading To Give” Program. It is a read-a-thon to raise funds to bring copies of the Jester to those kids in the hospital.

The mission of the organization is as follows: To provide educational experiences that give every child a sense of hope, a

feeling of self empowerment, a love of learning, the joy of laughter and a desire to live up to Pharley’s motto: It is up to us to make a difference. It is up to us to care.

SLTP recommends and endorses this worthy cause.

Visit: [www.thejester.org](http://www.thejester.org)

Remember, if you decide to sponsor a read-a-thon, please keep us posted. We want to honor your achievements.

## School Service

Mix It Up Day, Teacher Appreciation Day, Secretary’s Day, Principal’s Day, Custodians Day, Café Staff Days . . . All very traditional, all fun—but is that all there is to school service?

The obvious answer is no. But seriously what else is there? Okay, let’s throw in tutoring. Is that it? The days of clapping erasers, washing blackboards or sweeping the floors are long past.

A look around at most high schools, and it would appear that service is limited to the above suggestions.

The challenge is to expand this envelope. A school just like any community desperately needs voluntary efforts to grow and to thrive. Isn’t that what good citizenship is all about?

The possibilities include but are not limited to:

- Peer mediation—to respond to school safety issues;

- Wall murals—to create more ownership and improve the atmosphere;
- Welcome wagon service—for new and transfer students;
- Survival kits for teachers—with special kits for new teachers;
- Garden development — to improve the atmosphere and add more green to the environment;
- Painting girls rooms and boys rooms;
- Parking lot line painting;
- General clean-ups, scrub downs or painting days . . .

There is a lot you can do!

**A SCHOOL LIKE ANY COMMUNITY NEEDS VOLUNTARY EFFORTS TO GROW AND THRIVE.**

**In Massachusetts alone there are approximately 280,000 students in high school.**

**Of those students, less than 2,000 participated in ANY form of leadership training (.007 %).**

**In those schools there are approximately 50,000 student leadership positions available, which were filled by approximately 18,000 students. (.06 %)**

## Positive Risk Taking



There are definitely two sides to risk taking behavior. There is glaring evidence of unhealthy, unnecessary and even unlawful risk taking all around us every day. This negative risk taking affects our very quality of life: drug abuse, violence, crime, and vandalism are only some of the problems. Most young people and most adults as well view risk taking behaviors as only negative in nature. There is a lack of understanding about risk taking as a positive activity.

One of the most important aspects of student activities is teaching positive risk taking behavior. Positive risk taking can be defined as productive attempts to reach more of our potential in many areas: better health and fitness, fulfilling relationships, academics, activity involvement, leadership, athletics, personal and professional growth. Positive risk taking is a process that involves attempting new challenges - - socially, intellectually and / or physically. Understanding the process involves exploring the opportunities, taking the positive risks, as well as dealing with success and failure.

The majority of the opportunities offered to young people in the school setting as positive risk taking are VERY HIGH RISK - athletic teams, school plays, student council, class office, band, honor roll - generally only the best are selected and the rest experience personal failure. The real deterrent to taking positive risks and becoming more than you can be IS THE FEAR OF FAIL-

URE. It is an invisible barrier that fences people off from challenge, adventure and natural highs. It can impede learning as well as growth. In many cases taking a risk involves opening yourself up to a highly visible failure. That failure cannot be easily blamed on anyone else. This affects self confidence, self esteem and reputation. Personal failure is scary at any age!

Student leaders must recognize how risk affects their group and utilize all of their leadership skills to help minimize risk by increasing the rewards for taking positive risks.

Reasonable risk taking is part of life. The reasonable risks present in the games and activities of the SLTP that could result in emotional upset or physical harm are minimized by operating according to plan. That means knowing what the possible outcomes are of whatever challenge or adventure you are presenting. We do not remove the perceived "risk". It's a valuable teaching tool. We present our activities according to plan, utilizing proven safety procedures allowing predictable results.

Initiative problems, non-competitive games, stunts, trust activities, adventure games and challenge activities comprise the make up of SLTP's training activities. All are purposeful. The benefits of activities that can bring people together are many. The need for such team building vehicles is perceived by an ever increasing number of high schools and businesses.

The activities we utilize offer an effective, engaging way to bring people together to build trust and to break down the artificial barriers between individuals and groups of individuals. We do not practice or present any of the so-called "high risk" activities.

We do not offer a "ropes course." Nor will we. It would be contrary to our mission and purpose.

Our curriculum of camp activities is sequential - - each activity dependent on and building on the activity previous to it. As formal curricula these activities have been evaluated as having improved self-concept, and improved the ability of group members to cooperate to work well together.

One of the primary objectives of these activities is to help participants deal with the process of risk and the effects of change. Risk is normal in the daily lives of student leaders and essential for growth. Risk avoidance or staying in a "comfort zone" impedes individual self concept, as well as group growth. Risk increases motivation, eliminates boredom, inspires creativity, and allows a group to achieve.

There is little doubt as to the value or to the effect of this kind of activity. Campers and staff tend to fear it at first and then find it very gratifying.

The Positive Risk Taking activities of SLTP extend far beyond the "trust activities." All of the Breakaways and most of the Crew Activities also involve PRT. Participants clearly enjoy the challenging, meaningful activities that we present. This enjoyment is equally related to both the challenge and to the meaning.

The meaning of the activities is present ONLY when the staff does their job which includes debriefing the experience and connecting the lesson to the participants personal experience.

## Congratulations & Thank you



Congratulations to the exiting Alumni Association's Executive Board for 2005: Liz Chase, Cathryn Cortesa, Andrew Lawton, Eliza Stopa, and Daniela Ortiz for

their hard work, dedication and contribution to the new alumni association.

Due to their efforts, SLTP

is now helping graduates of the program stay in touch with one another, stay in touch with SLTP and further SLTP's mission of offering resources and opportunities to graduates of the program.

This past year the alumni representatives assisted in planning and implementing the Difference-Maker Showcase, a conference that highlights service and citizenship in leadership.

In addition the alumni

board connected with the Jester and Pharley Fund to spread the word about read-a-thons for the organization. As their last project they organized an SLTP get-together at Six Flags in August of 2005. SLTP thanks the 2004-2005 alumni representatives and is looking forward to another year of difference-making with the 2005-2006 alumni board!

## Join us to make a difference

The alumni board for the 2005-2006 year is still being formed and we are still looking for more involvement. If you are interested in being an alumni representative, please send an email to Chris at [chrisboie@sltp.info](mailto:chrisboie@sltp.info) stating why you would like to be on the board and what your focus might be. Part of the alumni board's responsibility will be to coordinate the service aspect of the InterLead Interstate Student Leadership Forum which will happen on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006<sup>th</sup> at Nichols College.

While being an alumni representative is a great way to contribute, you can also stay connected and participate as a general alumni member. If you have a great idea for fundraising, recruiting, or a service project, send it along to us via email! Please feel free to contact the alumni association with any ideas, thoughts or updates at [alumnimail@sltp.info](mailto:alumnimail@sltp.info). We would love to hear from you!

## Ask the doctor

(send your questions to: [askthedoctor@sltp.info](mailto:askthedoctor@sltp.info))

Dear Doctor SLTP,

Our adviser has been very ill and has not been able to come to school. For a while our group stayed together but for the last month we have really floundered and the school rules state that we cannot meet without a teacher being present.

None of the teachers are willing to help without getting paid and the principal doesn't want to get involved.

What can we do?

Abandoned in NY

*Dear Abandoned,*

*First you have to get your group together and discuss it. If*

*you have to—meet someplace off campus. Your group has to agree to solve the problem. Perhaps someone in the group can influence a teacher to volunteer. If not consider asking a parent, or the youth coordinator, or a youth minister.*

*Good luck and keep us posted.*

Dear Doctor SLTP,

We have a lot of really new teachers this year. Most of them are teaching for the first time. Our Spanish teacher is having a very rough time. She seems like she is always scared, and many of the big guys take advantage of that.

When she starts to pass out paper they yawn and stretch suddenly in wild gestures when she gets near them. She turns all red, and it looks like she is getting ready to cry.

Everybody just laughs. I hate it. But what can I do?

Bewildered in MA

*Dear Bewildered,*

*First things first—talk to your parents, you are going to need their help. Then make an appointment to see your principal together. Explain what is going on.*

*Your teacher is being bullied. No one should have to endure that sort of treatment.*

## After Further Review by Liz Agosto, SLTP '95; LI



Danny Seo created an organization called Earth 2000 when he was 12 years old and by the time he was 18 had participated in and organized several successful lobbying efforts, boycotts and protests. Using his experience, Seo wrote *Generation React: Activism for Beginners* as a guidebook for youth activism. Seo built the book on the belief that one person, no matter their age, can make a difference in the world. The book is peppered with practical tools and tips, such as sample press releases and letters to legislators, as well as terminology that is useful when dealing with the media, lobbying the senate or organizing an event. While the book is geared toward youth activist organizations with such details as how to launch campaigns and effectively stage boycotts and protests, all types of student leaders can still find useful information in this book.

Of particular interest to student organizations can be the chap-

ters on fundraising and public relations. Seo provides helpful hints on creating effective fundraising efforts and features some creative money-making ideas, such as speaking to representatives at the local mall to find out if they donate the coins in the water fountains to local organizations.

Other students may find the chapters on student rights and lobbying useful. In his discussion of lobbying, Seo stresses that student voices can make a difference in major political decisions. He presents information on how to contact local legislators and ways that your voice can be heard. He also points out that it is important for students to know and understand what their rights are when it comes to being vocal about problems in their schools and he suggests visiting the American Civil Liberties Union website to learn more about those rights.

Overall, *Generation React* has some very useful pieces of informa-

tion that can help you, as student leaders, prepare events, reach a larger audience and work towards making a difference in your school and your world. A few of the resources that Seo provides are out-of-date but the majority of the organizations and resources he lists are functioning and can be found online through a simple search.

If you are interested in beginning a youth activist organization than this would be a great book for you to read before you begin the planning. Otherwise, I recommend checking this book out of your local library and reading the sections that are relevant to you and your organization.

## The 2006 SLTP Conference Schedule

Where leaders learn HOW  
to make a difference!

- **InterLead—the Inter-State Student Leadership Forum**

April 1

- **Officer Training Seminar**

July 6 - 7

- **Leadership Training Conferences (4)**

July 11 - 15; July 18 - 22;

Aug 1 - 5; Aug 8 - 12

- **Advanced Leadership Conferences (4)**

July 12 - 15; July 19 - 22;

Aug 2 - 5; Aug 9 - 12

- **Leadership in Athletics**

July 27 - 28

- **Adviser Certification**

July 27 - 28

- **The Leadership Center**

July 12 - 15

- ♦ **The ReEnergizer**

We're on the Web!

[www.sltp.info](http://www.sltp.info)

Information for  
Parents, Teachers,  
Students,  
Administrators  
Applications \*  
Photos

## Ask Santa for SLTP for Christmas

Already we have lots of kids registered for next summer. There are nearly 30 students who have signed up for LTC and ALC and it is only early December.

In the student packets at the REE, there were special applications. These applications are the "Early Birds" and they include a discounted tuition offering substantial savings for making an early decision. The deadline for these applications is January 12, 2006

Like the Earliest Birds,

these applications offer significant discounts and are NOT be available on line. Only those students who attended the ReE or their friends have access. So if for some reason you could not attend the ReE but you are in a position to sign up now for camp — reach out to your crew-mates from last summer and get a hold of an Early Bird.

Next summer is shaping up to be SLTP's largest ever. We have added staff and we are exploring every means to increase our capacity.

But the best advice we can give is to register EARLY. So put on your nicest smile and go ask Santa to give you SLTP for Christmas!

## Officer Induction Ceremonies

Student organizations like any organization must have traditional ceremonies as part of the package. Corporations, the military, sports teams, branches of government — every form of organization has some degree of pomp and circumstance integrated into their operation. Yet, with the exception of National Honor Society, Key Club, Vica, Decca and some Student Councils — most student organizations are lacking in this traditional element.

Establishing a seriousness of purpose is fundamental to group cohesion and identity, isn't

it? Doesn't it then make sense to establish traditions to accentuate and underline that seriousness? Can you imagine the President of the United States taking office with the lackadaisical routine utilized in most schools as the students assume their offices?

At the SLTP Staff Family Luncheon on January 8, we will invest our officers, that is our new CC's and our Director. There is no oath of office, nor are hands laid on the bible. But there is a seriousness of purpose that began with the choice of the nomenclature for the ceremony. It is an

**investiture.**

We are investing our faith, our hope, and our trust in our officers and they are investing themselves in us and in our program.

The theme of the ceremony is the unification of our Past, Present and our Future. There are candles and proscribed speaking parts. The ceremony concludes will all of the CC's present joining to sing and sign "Go light your world."

## The ReE continued from page 1

The skillshops focused on Communication within groups and during projects those forces impact on student activities. Naturally the activities involved were pretty active, and who would have guessed that a haircut could be so funny?

The play focused on the left behind, left out, ignored and excluded. It raised awareness about the everyday and ordinary things that

happen in schools that are often very painful. The discussion and processing of the play seemed to involve nearly everyone in the audience.

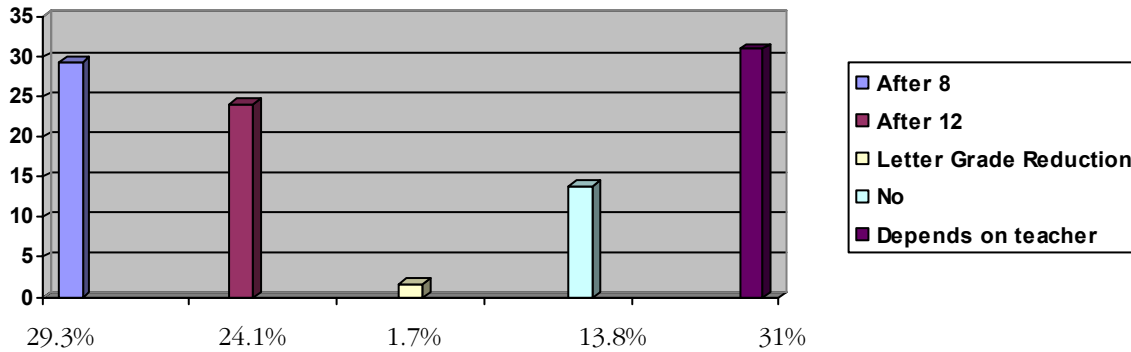
The door prizes included tee-shirts, video tapes and Resource Books. One of the advisers took home SLTP's newest resource, the IT Kit, which is large shoebox filled with activity ideas, directions and toys. The Kaplan raffle was won by

a parent from Swampscott, MA.

The next big event on the SLTP Calendar is the InterLead Conference, which is a student leadership forum on current issues and community service. The InterLead is scheduled for April 2 at Nichols.

## And the survey says . . .

This month's on-line survey asked: **Does your school punish excessive absences with academic failure?**



### Yes, but I wish it didn't by Helen Fitzgerald, CASA Executive Director

Age old wisdom says that the punishment should fit the crime. If a student enjoys academic success in a class but has poor attendance, why punish him academically.

If we view attendance as important, and we should, we should address the issue of absence without compromising our integrity. That is what we do when we punish a student using grades. Grades are supposed to measure academics and

academics alone.

If we follow the logic of grade punishment, then we can take points off for not eating lunch, or running in the corridors, or throwing a spitball, or any one of hundreds of other offenses not related to academics.

Academic punishment is absurd. Yes, there is a nation wide problem with absenteeism. And solving it will take hard work. Academic punishment is

the cowards way out to a very complex issue.

### No, but I wish it did. by Vinnie Compton, HS Geometry Teacher

Every day I am faced with the dilemma of multiple absences in every class. Luckily I do not work in the inner city where the number of absences is outrageous.

Students take off for vacation. They take off for college visits. They take mental health days. When they leave our schools for the real world, they will find that this is not tolerated.

We need to make a stand. Grades are the only message the students care about.

I am envious of schools that have a hard line approach to attendance. I read recently about the Boston schools that lock students out who are tardy. That sends exactly the right message.

Many students take easy

classes just so that they can coast and miss days whenever they want. The absentee policy might change their thinking.

## Since 1990

Since 1990 the Student Leadership Training Program has been identified with the phrase “making a difference.” Every summer during each of the sessions, students and staff join to make differences within each other so that they may make differences for their schools and communities when they return.

One of the unique ingredients of the SLTP experience has always been the commitment to make a

difference while “at camp.”

Since 1990, SLTP has :

- Collected over 20,000 POUNDS of food
- Collected over 24,000 articles of clothing
- Made over 8,000 ornaments resulting in that many toys for needy kids
- Made eleven videos for children residing in battered

women’s shelters

- Made thousands of holiday cards for service men and women overseas
- Plus — 30,000 Peace Angels; dozens of Baby quilts; Games books; coloring books, pencil boxes placemats and thank you letters to servicemen.

## Service Portfolio Awards

Service portfolios are a collections of artifacts and personal reflections that document your commitment to community service and personal development. Portfolios are an excellent conversation piece for college or graduate school interviews. They can also bring your resume to life for scholarship selection committees and other award programs. So with all of those benefits in mind, here are some tips for making an award winning service portfolio:

- Organize your portfolio in a binder with a table of contents, page protectors and dividers
- Include letters of recommendation, certificates and notes of appreciation from organizations with whom you have worked
- Write a brief summary of skills and lessons that you gained from each service experience
- Fill your portfolio with pictures (this means remembering to take photos during service projects)
- Copy and insert news clippings that highlight your achievements or a project that you were in-

involved in

- Describe the leadership roles you held during particular projects
- Document the time commitment involved in each service event, including the number of hours and duration (ie three hours a week from November to January)
- For a personal touch incorporate creativity and self-expression
- Remember to be sincere and brief-- you want the portfolio to honestly speak for itself and spur additional questions
- Cap off the documentation with a list of your short and long term goals for service and leadership

SLTP will award its next service and personal development portfolio awards at the InterLead Conference at Nichols College during a special ceremony on April 2, 2006:

There are three levels of Awards based on time and level of commitment:

- Bronze
- Silver
- Gold

To be eligible submit a copy of your service or personal development portfolio by **February 15, 2005**

to Jim Fitzgerald 108 Observatory Way Marshfield, MA 02050.