

Inside this issue:

Portfolios	2
From where I sit	2
Dear Dr. SLTP	3
Parent News	3
Alumni	3
The Survey SAYS	4
The Present	5
Pharley Phund	5
Staff START	6
Help START	6
Alumni report	7
Newsletters	7
Mix Success	7
Ask Santa	8
Induction	8
College Bullying	9
2007	9
What to say	10
Intensity	10
DifferenceMaking	10
Bill of Rights	11
Assertiveness	11
Inclusion	12
Involvement ideas	12

Thank you for joining us at the ReE. It was a day filled with SLTP smiles and seriousness!

student leadership

The Student Leadership Training Program

Leaders walk their talk.

Linkage

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 4 THE SLTP ALUMNI NEWSLETTER DECEMBER, 2006

START, a conference for freshmen

As announced here in September, on the first weekend of June in 2007, SLTP and Nichols College will launch a new conference—the **START Conference**.

SLTP, the leader in leadership education, is joining forces with Nichols, one of the leading business schools in the United States. Our collaborative effort has one goal, to improve leadership development in the high schools in New England.

We will stage a two day overnight conference where we intend to invite one

student from every high school in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island and then to provide those students with a guided interactive experience with leaders from the collegiate, business and political worlds while providing those students with an introduction to leadership. We are targeting freshmen so as to provide the maximum benefit to schools.

Think about that ... one student from EVERY high school in those three

Continued on page 6

Enthusiastic — you bet, 400 strong!



On Saturday, November 25, the tenth annual ReEnergizer Conference was held at Nichols College. Delegates from 90 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 version of the play "stop, look and listen."

Again this year we offered separate workshop sessions for all our groups—students, collegians, parents and advisers. There were 90 plus 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 new START Conference and all of our residential conferences.

The skillshops focused on Inclusion and Assertiveness within groups and during projects and how those skills impact on student activities. Naturally the activities involved were pretty active, with lots of requests for

SLTP's Assertiveness Bill of Rights, check out page 10.

"stop, look and listen" focuses on the left behind, left out, ignored and excluded. It is about everyday bullying. 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, and assorted SLTP paraphernalia. The Kaplan raffle was won by Jessica Abel from Central Falls, RI.

The next two big events on the SLTP Calendar are the Spring Adviser Conference (the Core) and the InterLead Conference, which is a student leadership forum on current issues and community service. The Core will be March 28 in Taunton and the InterLead is scheduled for April 29 at Nichols.

Service Portfolio Awards

Service portfolios are a collection 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 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 29, 2007:

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,**



From where I sit by Dr. Jim Fitzgerald

In one of my recent speeches, I spoke about the five different factors that make up a person's S.H.A.P.E.: Spirit,

Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences. Why is this important? Why should we bother figuring out how our life experiences have shaped us? I'll give you five benefits.

1. Understanding your shape reduces stress. You stop comparing yourself to other people. You stop trying to do what you're not gifted to do, and you build on your strengths. You recognize your limitations. You maximize what you're good at and don't worry about the rest. That's a stress reducer.
2. Understanding your shape increases success. What is success? I can tell you what it's not -- it's not making a lot of money. I know a lot of people making a lot of money who aren't successful. Success is figuring out who you are and then being it! Finding your

niche and saying, "That's me!" That's true success.

3. Your shape determines how you learn. Only about 25 percent of people learn by reading and studying. Others learn by listening, by discussing, or by seeing something modeled and then actually doing it. If you happen to learn the way the school system teaches, you get A's; but if you don't happen to learn that way you probably don't get very good grades. It has nothing to do with your intellect. It has everything to do with your shape. We all learn in different ways, so schools ought to be teaching in various ways.
4. Understanding your shape deepens satisfaction. A satisfying life is what you experience when you're doing what makes you happy. Happiness is much more than merely feeling good -- happiness is a combination of satisfaction,

belonging and fulfillment. Happiness leads to freedom. Freedom comes from doing what you're gifted to do.

5. Understanding your shape builds self-esteem. There's an epidemic of low self-esteem in our society today. Most people don't like themselves! Studies have shown one reason for this is that more than 50 percent of all people are in the wrong jobs.

Keeping balance allows us to develop our own special shape.

The great philosopher Popeye said, "I am what I am." That is where it begins, we are who we are and we can become who we want. All it takes is spirit, heart, ability, personality, and experiences.

Dear Dr. SLTP (submit your questions to askthedoctor@sltp.info)

Dear Doctor SLTP,

Our adviser recently had a baby and has not been able to come to school. For a while our vice principal subbed for her as adviser but now she is too busy to help out. For the last month we have really done nothing 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?

Orphaned in MA

Dear Orphans,

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,

Our Student Council treasurer recently moved out of town. We funded a bus for a science field trip and the school accountant reported to us that we had overdrawn our account by \$10. We thought we had over a thousand of dollars in our

account. Searching through our file cabinet, we found 3 deposits from our fundraiser that the treasurer did not submit.

Now the principal wants to take over our bank account. What can we do?

Bewildered in MA

Dear Bewildered,

First things first—work with the school accountant to create a better system of organizing how deposits are made. Fix the problem.

Your principal is acting in what he sees as the best interests of the school. Work with him, prove to him that you can handle the accounts.

Parent Newsletters

Among the features of website is the full service section for the parents of student leaders. We sought contributions from Parents at all of the Parent Orientation Programs last summer, and the results are plain to see.

In the Parent section there is a great deal of information to help explain the feelings and the dynamics of

SLTP. Something we all struggle to explain to anyone who has never attended our program. There are resources. There are suggestions on how to support an active student leader, and beginning this month—there is a sign up for a monthly newsletter.

The newsletter is called “True

Points” and like this newsletter it will be available each month electronically.

We hope to provide parents with information on what is going on in student activities and we hope to provide as much support as we can—check it out yourself, and then get them to check it out.

The SLTP Alumni Association Executive Board

As I write this I'm looking outdoors and I notice one thing: it is snowing! Winter is coming. For myself, it means first semester is coming to a close and I am more than busy with school and chances are, you are too. What does this mean? It means, very likely that your summer at SLTP is turning into LESSONS you have been using at your school. But, there's another aspect of SLTP that is very important and that is the people that attend. How do you stay in touch with them? It was fun seeing many of them at the ReE, but can there be more?

That is where the SLTP Alumni

Association comes in. The Alumni Association is working hard this year to keep alumni connected to each other and the program through Differencemaking and Social events. To do this the Alumni Association has assembled a board of campers and current staff to work together on providing better resources to you. We will be meeting every 6 weeks in Worcester to discuss our plans and we welcome anyone to join us. Here are the basic commitments:

1. Meeting every 6 weeks
2. Helping to contribute to

alumni functions such as writing in the alumni newsletter, setting up alumni events and so on.

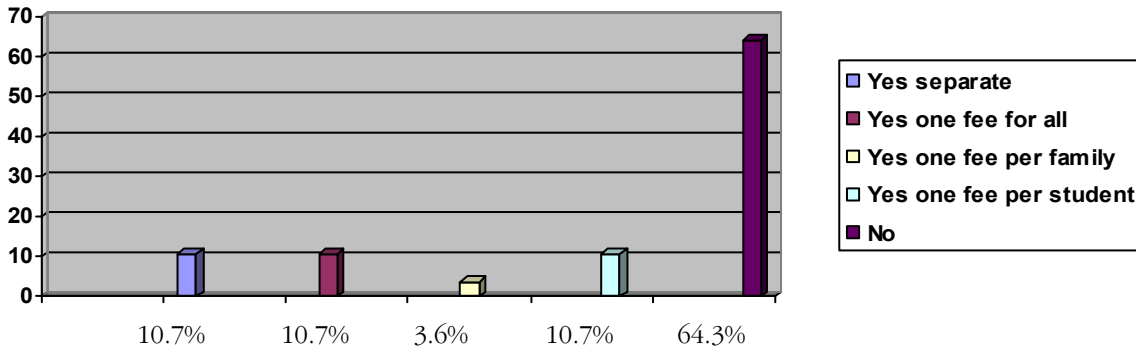
3. Regularly communicating by email

For more information, email Mina Makarious. Or if you don't think you can join at this time but have ideas for us, also please email Mina at mina@sltp.info.

'Tis the season,
The SLTP Alumni Association Board.

And the survey says . . .

This month's on-line survey asked: **Does your school charge activity fees to participate in sports, clubs, etc.?**



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

The purpose of a school is to prepare young people to participate in society. We do not simply participate in society intellectually. So a school should prepare its students socially, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. In other words we should take care of the whole person.

Yes, activities cost money. No kidding!

We cannot maintain a healthy society without cost. Society must care for those who cannot care for themselves and that includes a responsibility to edu-

cate our youth.

Computers cost money. So does gas and oil. So do special needs and advanced placement programs. Are we to consider charging students for those too?

Activities are not merely the social center of the school. They are not window dressing. They are not EXTRA.

Any school without activities should be closed.

Participation in activities should be expected of both students and teachers. There should

be an extremely wide range in the activities offered. AND there should be no charge, no impediment, no excuse offered which could limit the participation.

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 due to students being pulled for this activity or that activity. The number of absences is outrageous.

Students take off for conferences. They take off to plan activities. They take off to count canned food items. They take off for pictures. Activities are something extra. Schools should treat

them as such and the school day should never be shortened or affected by activities.

Charging for activities send the clear message that this is non academic work and it is not part of the normal school day.

Sports are one thing. They do add some fun and excitement, but they cost so much money. Hockey and football equipment and ice time costs are

outrageous and should not force schools to choose between new books or the sports.

We need to make a stand. No Child Left Behind is all about the test scores not about the sports scores.

Living in the present by Sarah Groh, SLTP Staff



I recently had a great conversation with Laura Murphy (SLTP CC) and I wanted to share. We were talking about how it seems like in high school and college, December is a bit of a downhill month. November is all about being with family, pep rallies, togetherness, thankful lists, etc. but then it seems like we quickly slip into this mindset that December is just something we have to get through.

We count the days and the minutes and the seconds and they drag super slow. and so we invest all this anticipation and hope in winter-break and the holidays and basically give up on living in the present. In general, we all try to live in the future tense, which well, in the end can be a major let down.

I guess it's good that we recognize that this happens and try our best to not fall into this downhill slide, buuuut we think we can do a little bit more to counteract it.

Living in the present is super important and it's really the only way that our spheres can

be balanced and we can actually function really well sooo what if we praised our days? it doesn't have to be something physically written down, although that's my plan because I'm a visual person, but the idea is just to kind of reflect on our days and be like "hey wednesday, I love you, this is why..."

Laura even suggested doing it throughout the day which I think is awesome. like on the way to our classes just kind of engaging ourselves in the present like "hey period 7 american legal! this is why I love you" maybe not out-loud though, people might give you a funny look. but that's not to say that you couldn't share this with your friends. I mean we don't need to make all our friends

sit down and list what was good about their day but what about if on the way to our next class we were casually like "oh yess we're doing criminal law today in american legal" or "woohoo I went to subway during lunch period" something sincere, something honest. there's lots of little things during our day that make us happy if we look for them so why not share them with the people around us? Just with ourselves at least?

To steal a line from one of my favorite movies, "you know, being happy isn't having everything in your life being perfect. Maybe it's about stringing together all the little things.. making those count more than the bad stuff" so I'm gonna try to keep this quote in mind and praise my days! yeah, even Mondays!

What do you think? We're awesome, we can take on tough issues like bullying and violence against women, so I'm pretty sure we can take on these winter blahs.

Worth a try right? let me know how it goes!

ps: wednesday I love you, this is why... * this conversation about living in the present* the wednesday visit email * the sandwich I had for lunch * my mom recorded my favorite show for me while I was at work * I had an awesome discussion in my global class * my sat scores * I'm eating a really good cookie *getting to share this email with you! yay that was fun => give it a try

The Jester and Pharley Phund



The Jester has lost his jingle by David Saltzman is among our favorite stories. Reading it at camp after the differ-

encemakers is one of the highlights for every CC and Director.

The Saltzman family has created an opportunity for you to bring your favorite 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.

We recommend and endorse this worthy cause. Visit: www.thejester.org

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

Announcing START continued from page 1

states! That's about 650 students if they all come!

The conference which will include room and board will be nearly free of charge (the registration fee is only \$25). The fee will cover some of Nichols expenses and will provide a minor investment by the parents or the school which may insure better attendance.

So what's going on?

Right now, we are assembling the curriculum, determining what we need and don't need, and we just sent the mailing packet to every guidance office. The invitation packets include advice as to how to make the selection and of

course include the official registration form.

We are going to need a very large staff to pull this off. Some of whom will be involved purely in the planning. Some of who will be involved in inviting business and community leaders to present workshops. Some of who will be members of the teaching staff.

Needless to say, this is a HUGE undertaking. It is unique and without precedent anywhere in the country. 3 States ... Free ... a collaboration between a non-profit and a college — STUDENT led. WOW!

Help us to make this happen. Certainly you could volunteer,

but even without that extraordinary effort, we can use help. We need help insuring that schools advantage the opportunity. Don't let your school be left out. We need to see that this application goes to the people who will act on it.

Watch this newsletter and watch the website for more details. Registration forms were mailed to every school on December 1.

Staffing START



Are you interested in joining the SLTP teaching team, but you cannot afford to give up an entire week of your summer?

Perhaps the START Conference is exactly the opportunity you need.

We are expecting over 200 delegates to this conference, which means we will need around 30 staff.

If you were not able to visit our table at the ReE, it is still not too late to join us. Tap to

Jessa Loomis or Georg Briggs to pick up an application.

We are planning three full days of training (over 20 hours) to prepare our staff to meet the challenges of this new and very large residential program.

For more information email either of the conference co-chairs: Jessa Loomis or George Briggs
jessa@sltp.info
george@sltp.info

How can you help START



How can you help?

At the ReE every school received the START registration materials. Please bring them to your principal and guidance counselor.

The mailing went out to every school in Southern New England, but you can get your school started by helping us get the information out.

Our collaboration with Nichols makes this introductory leadership conference possible, and

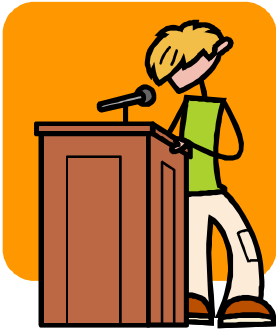
we know it will be an extraordinary experience for the freshmen selected to attend.

Help us to get the word out.

Talk to the guidance counselors about SLTP. Volunteer to serve on the selection committee for the delegate from your school.

Spread the word to the freshmen to apply for consideration.

ALUMNI Executive Board Report by Farrar cooper, Alumni Board



On November 24, the Alumni Board had its first 2006-2007 meeting. The Alumni Board is composed of alumni representatives (like myself) who work to connect SLTP alumni to each other, SLTP, resources and opportunities. If you're currently thinking "wow, she just used the word alumni three times in one sentence!" you are right!

The Alumni Board is all

about working for and with everyone who has gone to an SLTP conference (i.e. alumni), which means two things:

1. please send us a message, request, or anything through the SLTP website (<http://www.sltf.info/alumni/feedback.html>), and
2. we love the word alumni, and it will appear frequently in this article.

So what did we do at our fantastic meeting you ask? We began with some ice breakers; among the many things we learned about each other was each person's name, that everyone was excited for the ReE, and who had been to Utah.

Jessa Loomis (one of the SLTP liaisons and an alumna herself!) had brought peanut butter and fluff, and we wrote fluffer-

nutter sandwich making instructions.

So after a lot of laughter and misinterpretation we discussed two-way communication and the importance of its role in the Alumni Board. We began to brainstorm various ways that we can best serve the SLTP alumni this year.

We finished by designing the Alumni Association activity fair table where we saw many of you during the ReE!

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

Another Difference you made- Mix it Up Successes!



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 2006 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 mem-

ber 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

Ask Santa for SLTP

Already we have lots of kids registered for next summer. There are nearly 40 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 10, 2007

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!

**The
Early Bird
Application
is due
January 10!**

Activity Showcase

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

Officer Induction, a time to get serious

offices?

At the SLTP Staff Family Luncheon on January 7, we will invest our officers, that is our new CC's and our Directors for 2007. There is no oath of office, nor are hands laid on the bible. Each CC and Director does accept their role and make promises to the staff in a formally-informal ceremony. There is a seriousness of purpose that began with the choice of the nomenclature for the ceremony. It is an **investiture**.

Investiture is an old fashioned term for an officer induction ceremony. We chose the term because it really seems to fit with the personal promises being made. 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 with all of the past and present CC's joining to sing and sign "Go light your world."

The hosts of this year's investiture will be Meg Dobro and Ashley Robshaw. Sarah Bourbeau and Laura Murphy (for the first

time) will be invested as the highest student officers in the Student Leadership Training Program.



"The investiture of our officers confirms our commitment to STUDENT based leadership. That it takes place in front of the entire staff and all of the staff families deserves to mark the intentionality of SLTP."

Jim Fitzgerald

Collegiate Bullying by Ashley Robshaw, SLTP Staff

We know all too well that bullying exists in elementary through high schools, in college and even in the workplace. It was not until this past semester, however, that I personally experienced a serious bullying problem in the college realm.

As a senior, I have had my share of roommates, many of whom were random placements and resulted in lasting friendships. I knew from past experience that sometimes things do not work out quite as well, and this was unfortunately the scenario for my second to last semester in college.

She loaned my furniture out to other students without asking. She moved her boyfriend in regardless of housing policy. She threatened to make my life miserable if I did anything about any of it. She stole, broke, and in some cases destroyed my personal property. She had me afraid to come home to my own apartment. She had me isolated in my room when I was actually there.

She was eventually moved out through action of the Boston University Police Department.

Sometimes I still ask myself if I did the right thing in calling them.

It's hard to admit that I've allowed someone to scare me that much. It's hard to know that I've been manipulated. It's hard to realize that I still think

about her everyday and wonder if I'll see her on campus, or if she'll say anything to me again. It's hard to remember the insults she hurled at me, and sometimes still believe them. It's hard to believe things like this can still happen to me, even though I know it happens everyday to others in sometimes similar and sometimes very different situations.

It wasn't until the Re-Energizer that I could admit to myself that I had been bullied. I've seen Stop, Look and Listen in its various forms throughout the years and I always *knew* it was real, but I couldn't always *see* that it was real. It wasn't always possible for me to recognize individual personalities in the characters. But this time around, I *saw* it. The character our LT, Brittany played, and the way the character was played, had the traits of my former roommate down to a tee. When I was sitting in the audience for the first viewing, I had that epiphany that yes, my roommate *was* a bully after all. In talking to the delegates at lunch, I convinced myself that no, what she had done *was not* right. And I had done something about it. It felt good to finally have that realization.

Seeing the play again has provided what I think might be some sort of closure, as has writing this article. Her words still have me doubting myself sometimes, but at least through our training and supportive web I know that her actions towards me weren't right, and that I did the right thing in saying and doing something about it. I've learned that it's okay to be scared, it's okay to recognize that something is wrong, and it's right to do something about it. I've re-learned what I already knew through our program all along.

The 2007 SLTP Conference Schedule

Where leaders learn HOW
to make a difference!

- **The ReEnergizer Conference**
November 25
- **The Core Adviser Seminar**
March 28
- **Spring Leadership Forum**
April 29
- **Officer Training Seminar**
July 5 - 6
- **Leadership Training Conferences (4)**
July 10 - 14; July 17 - 21;
July 31 - Aug 4; Aug 7 - 11
- **Advanced Leadership Conferences (4)**
July 11 - 14; July 18 - 21;
Aug 1 - 4; Aug 8 - 11

- **Leadership in Athletics**
July 26 - 27
- **Adviser Certification**
July 26 - 27
- **The Leadership Center**
July 11 - 14

We're on the Web!

www.sltp.info

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

What would you say to "Todd" ?



Remember Todd, he is the young man in "stop, look and listen" who has written lyrics about blowing up the school.

He feels that no one will listen to him. He feels all alone. He feels that his case is hopeless.

Anyone and probably everyone who has been subjected to the level of social, emotional and

even physical bullying that Todd has endured undoubtedly feels much the same way. Lost and without any sense of hope.

"stop, look and listen" makes no attempt to solve the dilemmas faced by its characters. The writers made no attempt to be as all knowing as an after school special. But none-the-less solutions should be sought. In this case the solutions must be sought by the audience.

"stop, look and listen" creates the level of awareness. It shows in stark reality everyday occurrences in high school. Awareness is the beginning. Action must follow.

So what would you say to Todd?

We know that student activism makes a difference. We know that Peer mediation and Peer Counseling are alternatives. We know that strong Gay Straight Alliance groups would be a possibility. What we know most of all, is that Todd need help.

Are you aware of the resources for that kind of help at your school? Shouldn't you be? There are extraordinary resources available in your school. As a student leader, you should know what they are.

Start with a conversation with the guidance secretary. Find

Intensity vs Reality by Sarah Groh, SLTP Staff



Recently the LTs had an email conversation about a tv program called "Stand Off" which displayed an extremely violent episode about bullying.

This episode was described as "intense" which made me think about our play. I think the strength in stop, look & listen is that we DON'T use the physical bullying to show "intensity". Though I'm always glad to hear about any type of me-

dia attention against bullying I would have to say that we usually do it better. Maybe that sounds like a bold statement, but usually when any group takes a stand against bullying they primarily latch onto the physical, it's more visual, it's more widely accepted as bullying, etc, etc. Though seeing someone on tv with an immediate threat to their life can definitely be scary, I think it's even more scary for me to see real life played out on our stage. "Intensity" desensitizes, reality connects. We're able to connect with so so many people who see the play and actually motivate them to make a positive significant difference, to insight change and do

something. We put everyone who sees the play in a situation where there's something they can do, something feasible, it proves that we don't have to be a police officer to stop violence or torture in our schools, in fact, it should never get to that point if we each take a stand.

Our play isn't sensational and ripped from the headlines, it's taken from our own hallways; It's real.

It's about making a difference

Bringing a smile to a child at any time of year is special, but during the holiday season, it is even more so. This past week I met an amazing seventh grade girl and her two best friends. Since before Thanksgiving, the trio have been collecting stuffed animals.

They are washing them, using needle and thread to make repairs, adding bright new bows and neckties, and then bringing them to homeless shelters

or to other charitable agencies.

Sure they were told that it doesn't make a difference. Sure they were told that some shelters will have rules against recycled toys. But that didn't matter.

The three girls wanted something to do. They were excluded by the "in group" at their school and their guidance counselor recommended making a difference instead of anger. I like their choice!

The SLTP Assertiveness "Bill of Rights" © 2006 SLTP, all rights reserved.

The SLTP Assertiveness Bill of Rights is reprinted here with permission from the CASA Administrative Board. You can find it in the "camper manual" **Stepping Stones** on pages 49 and 50, in the Self Awareness and Assertiveness Section.

- The right to decide how to lead your life. This includes pursuing your own goals and dreams and establishing your own priorities.
- The right to believe in yourself and in your abilities.
- The right to achieve.
- The right to your own values, beliefs, opinions, and emotions.
- The right to respect yourself for your values & beliefs, no matter the opinion of others.
- The right not to justify or explain your actions or feelings to others.
- The right to tell others how you wish to be treated.
- The right to express yourself and to say "No," "I don't know," "I don't understand," or even "I don't care." You have the right to take the time you need to formulate your ideas before expressing them.
- The right to ask for information or help -- without having negative feelings about your needs.
- The right to change your mind, to make mistakes, and to sometimes act illogically -- with full understanding and acceptance of the consequences.
- The right to like yourself even though you're not perfect, and to sometimes do less than you are capable of doing.
- The right to have positive, satisfying relationships within which you feel comfortable and free to express yourself honestly -- and the right to change or end relationships if they don't meet your needs.
- The right to change, enhance, or develop your life in any way you determine

Asserting yourself

Do you often find that others coerce you into thinking their way? Is it difficult for you to express your positive or negative feelings openly and honestly? Do you sometimes lose control and become angry at others who don't warrant it?

A "yes" answer to any of the above questions may be an expression of a common problem known as "lack of assertiveness." *What is Assertiveness?*

Assertiveness is the ability to express yourself and your rights without violating the rights of others. It is appropriately direct, open, and honest communication

which is self-enhancing and expressive. Acting assertively will allow you to feel self-confident and will generally gain you the respect of your peers and friends. It can increase your chances for honest relationships, and help you to feel better about yourself and your self-control in everyday situations. This, in turn, will improve your decision-making ability and possibly your chances of getting what you really want from life.

"Assertiveness basically means the ability to express your thoughts and feelings in a way that clearly states your needs and keeps the lines of communication open with the other" (*The Well-*

ness Workbook, Ryan and Travis). However, before you can comfortably express your needs, you must believe you have a legitimate right to have those needs.

Inclusion by Danielle Desrosiers, SLTP Staff

Inclusion can not be defined through exclusion. It isn't the process of not actively leaving someone out. Letting someone sit at your lunch table but never talking to them is not inclusion at all.

Inclusion is an active process, you have to work to make each and every person in the group feel comfortable. Hard Work, right? I feel as though we were all re-minded of just how hard inclusion can be when we made our pro and con lists. Following those lists we played a game called "let me in," this game is often about assumption and about exclusion but my eyes were opened to a few more lessons in the game the ReE. In room 6 the directions were given (vague as usual) and the students caught on quickly and their instant question was can we let them in? We repeated the direction and sent their leaders back to watch what would happen. Leader one easily stepped back into circle one, while

leader two looked into from the outside as her circle was tight, everyone's hands joined. She quickly commented that the other group let their leader in and quickly the hands dropped and she pushed her way in. We did the activity a second time... the first leader once again easily walked into circle one.. the second leader was timid and although her circle wasn't shoulder to shoulder their wasn't really room for her either, she looked at the circle very unsure of what to do. Finally one girl stepped up and asked that two boys move aside and every push over and make room, then invited the leader to join them. Woah! That blew me away.

We talk about being invitational and about including others but you often see that last step of inviting omitted. As we started processing the connections flew.

What would have happened in the play if Lindsay and Kelly invited Maura onto the team,

how different would the scene be?

What about in our high schools, what if instead of initiation and hazing of freshman there was a pizza night and they were welcomed to the team?

There were so many good ideas flying around the room. What can you do at your school to invite someone to be included?

Inclusion isn't just about letting them stand in your circle but inviting them in and reminding them they are wanted.

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

Involvement ideas

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! AND the more you do, the more people you can involve!

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 %)