

## True Points

a newsletter for the parents of student leaders

### student leadership

The Student Leadership Training Program

Leaders walk their talk.

Volume 1 Issue 5

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### A letter to an English teacher by Mina Makarios, SLTP Staff

*The following is a letter one of our staff has recently sent to his high school English teacher — it answers the question about where SLTP fits in the lives of our alumni.*

Dear Mrs. Creighton, It recently hit me that I have finished my third year of college here at Harvard and as such, my brain has been in heavy reflecting mode. My experiences here have been amazing, challenging, and fulfilling. I have learned more than I may ever need to know about some areas of the world and am aware of just how much more learning I need to do. I have also been thinking a great deal about my path in life up to this point. As you might guess, doing that leads my brain into the halls of Uxbridge Hall again and again. There are the teachers, including of course yourself, who I

remember believed in me, challenged me to grow, and supported me both academically and personally. There are my classmates, teammates, and friends, the main characters in the stories and times I remember. Finally, there are also the various settings in which my high school life was carried out: Mr. McCourt's room, the tennis courts, and of course a certain well painted English classroom, But the reason I really chose to write to you today is because of one of the key things that links my successful paths in the high school as well as the enjoyable ones I have wandered unto here, my involvement with the Student Leadership Training Program (SLTP). The summer before my sophomore year of high school (which feels like it was in 1893), I went to SLTP, as did the Lewis twins

and Jessa Loomis. Since then, we have remained involved as staff for the program. For me the Student Leadership Training Program has been the place where I learned how to learn. While I cannot deny that I was taught well in high school, I know that my academic success came from the aggressive learning style I picked up at SLTP. Furthermore, this program taught me virtually every leadership skill I know, every organizational skill I know, and was probably the only way that I could have been as active as I was in high school, and still gives me the skills to be an active student leader on a campus where I had assumed I would be the smallest of fishes. As you can see, and as you might remember, I believe

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### Safe Driving

It's a terrible fact—motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teenagers. The most common risk factors involving teenage drivers are driver error, speeding, carrying too many passengers, alcohol, nighttime driving, and low safety-belt use. Guide safe driving practices with these tips from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

- Don't rely solely on driver's education classes. Be directly involved with

the development of your teenager's driving skills—before and after he or she gets a license.

- Choose your teenager's vehicle for safety, not image.
- Restrict or disallow the number of passengers your teenager can chauffeur—passengers can cause distractions or encourage risk-taking.
- Be a good role model and prac-

tice safe driving. Teenagers with crashes and violations often have parents with poor driving records.

- Restrict driving after 9 p.m. Most fatal accidents involving teenagers happen between 9 p.m. and midnight.
- Require seat belt use. Belt use is lower among teenagers than older people, so make it a point to insist on belts at all times.

## Preteen stress

- **Preteens are busier than ever—but have they learned to manage the stress?** Charlene Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese on [iVillage.com](http://iVillage.com) offer practical techniques to help your kids identify stress and manage it.

**Recognize symptoms—**Pay attention to your inner voice, especially when it repeatedly brings up wor-

ries. Keep an eye out for nervous habits, such as nail biting, hair twirling, and foot tapping.

**Create an action plan—**Divide overwhelming tasks into manageable, one-step-at-a-time parts.

**Relax—**Identify soothing activities, such as walking or listening to music, and incorporate them into each day.

**Set priorities—**Organize a to-do list by each task's importance, and try not to worry about low-priority items.

**Get physical—**Exercise to increase energy and motivation!

## Survive and thrive

**It's often the little things that start wearing on families: time constraints, long commutes, daily chores. Does your family have the resilience to withstand the tension? Use these "traits of resilient families" from Family Life Specialist Ben Silliman to help develop a healthy, supportive environment.**

**Commitment—**Encourage family members to be diligent in keeping their promises to each

other.

**Cohesion—**Stick together but respect each other's individuality.

**Adaptability—**Work flexibility into your family rules and traditions.

**Communication—**Speak openly and listen with care.

**Spirituality—**Always act from your faith, and encourage other family members to do so.

**Connectedness—**Keep in touch with extended family and friends, and spend time in community activities.

**Time—**Set aside daily family time.

**Efficacy—**Focus on your family's achievements with pride and optimism, and support each other's explorations and accomplishments.

*... support each other's explorations and accomplishments*

## Wanted: Parent Orientation Presenters

One of the most important services we provide for our campers is setting the tone for understanding with their parents. Our Parent Orientation Program which culminates in the SLTP Celebration every Saturday of camp is vital to our campers success. You

know how important it is for a parental support system to be in place. Each Saturday we endeavor to explain SLTP to the parents. The most effective presentations include staffers, alumni and parents of our alumni. The POPs are scheduled for

the following Saturdays—July 9, 16, 30 and August 6. Please, check your schedule and sign up for the Saturday of your choice. Then email your choice together with your full name and address to: [jim@sltp.info](mailto:jim@sltp.info)

## Summer Conference available space

Registrations for all our summer conferences are underway in earnest! There are just over 7 weeks to go before our summer conferences kick off. All of the applications are available on line as pdf files at [www.sltp.info](http://www.sltp.info)

### OTS

There is one session which is open to all forms of officer teams – from full cabinets to co-captains – from

clubs to classes to student government. (The team requirement is that there must be at least a pair of officers)

July 1-2

### LTC

There are four sessions. Although there are just over 65 slots available at this point.

July 5-9;

July 12-16;

July 26-30

### ALC

There are three sessions and approximately 19 slots available.

July 13-16;

July 27-30;

and Aug 3-6

### TLC

Registration is Closed

July 6-9

### Adviser Certification

There is only one

session and there are 5 slots left.

August 3-6

## A Letter to an English teacher *Continued from page 1*

strongly in this program. However, I have hit the frightening realization that I do not know every teenager in Uxbridge anymore. This is where I need your help. For a long time students in Uxbridge have been incorrectly told by some they could not go to elite universities and that they would not be prepared when they got there. I know that you know this is not true. For me, SLTP gave me the confidence to believe this was not true, and other students need to have this confidence too. Unfortunately, less than .5% of all New England high school students attend any sort of leadership or personal development program at all. While this certainly puts them at an advantage, it deprives other students of the same wonderful opportunity to learn and grow that they have received. As someone who is in direct contact with students everyday, you have the power to get UHS students to this program. There are virtually no students who cannot benefit from this program. I have had friends on bands, football teams, hockey teams, writing clubs, student councils, political activism clubs, and church groups attend. I have also seen many friends who were completely uninvolved attend and benefit a great deal. I guaran-

tee that if you encourage students to attend this summer, you will see a marked change not just in them, but also in the atmosphere of the school next year. I am enclosing applications for all of our summer programs with this letter. Also, there's a description of each of the programs available and reminder cards that you can pass out to students and parents. In the past the Student Council and the Police Department (thanks to Chief Creighton actually), have subsidized some of the costs of the program and I would be willing to help lobby them to do so again if necessary. I would love to talk to you more about the program in person, and suggest you talk to Phil Loomis or Lauren Nutter who are both part of the staff as well. Finally, I wanted to thank you for being someone I went to for support and encouragement in the past, and hope that you can do the same for the students at the high school now by supporting SLTP.

Sincerely,  
Mina Makarios  
Uxbridge High School, '02  
Harvard University, '06

PS: Instances of poor grammar in this letter do not reflect any inadequacies in my high school English curriculum. These inadequacies are much more likely to have developed in my undergraduate life.

## From where I sit by Jim Fitzgerald SLTP Founder

Why should anyone attend SLTP? What makes us so special? Why should attending SLTP be on every kid's to-do list? Why do kids and adults thrive in our environment? Take a look at the following quotes:

**The best way to get praise is to die.**

--Italian Proverb

**The only way to get praise is to die.**

- Ben Franklin

**It is easier to praise people when they are dead.**

- Woody Allen

**Praise is spread like a carpet on graves.**

- Abe Lincoln

The common practice at SLTP, "catching people doing things right" is **revolutionary**. Last night I was looking for quotes on praise (part of my preparation for Tranquillity introductions) and I came across these. Anyway, the quotes above were prominently featured in four of the sources under the topic PRAISE as were a whole bunch of others which followed that train of thought

It's no wonder kids and adults thrive in our atmosphere. At SLTP praise is freely given with no strings attached, it is almost surreal in comparison.

One of my friends who is a college recruiter asked me rhetorically, "why are kids so negative today?" I

replied, *it certainly does make the positive ones stand out, doesn't it?* He said, "it sure does, and those kids jump to the top of my list, but the problem is they are at the top of everyone else's list too."

In the past few weeks I have been reminded over and over again by my collegiate friends how important *Personal Development* is to anyone's aspirations for scholarship money and admission to college. As I always do at this time of year, I reach out to everyone I know who is in the business of either accepting students to college or advising them how to get there. In a very short time I will be speaking to the parents of this summer's SLTP campers and even

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## A new opportunity for SLTP Alumni

At the most recent meeting of the Administrative Board (the governing committee for SLTP), a proposal to dramatically expand the outreach of SLTP was heard and acted upon.

This summer the students attending SLTP will be given information about a very new and most exciting opportunity to exercise STUDENT leadership back in their schools and communities.

CASA will sponsor the

Leadership Action Grant Program. In a nutshell, this program is designed to provide funds for a specific project designed by an SLTP graduate.

We all know many ideas for wonderful service projects do not get off the ground because funding cannot be found.

While it will not be possible to fund every idea an SLTP graduate has (at least not yet), we hope to be able to fund several pro-

jects this coming Fall..

Details about the program and the grant application process will be available on line as soon as they are finalized. The goal is to have information about the grant program included in the camper manuals and Parent Orientation Packets this summer.

## Leadership Action Grant Program

The CASA Leadership Action Grant Program has been established to further empower students who graduate from the Student Leadership Training Program by providing the means to engage them as a resource to bring positive community change by supporting their initiative.

Any student who has completed LTC, ALC or TLC and any adviser who has completed our Adviser Certification Conference is eligible to apply for a grant to fund an action plan of their design.

Proposals should be submit-

ted on the forms provided and must be submitted by September 30. The CASA Administrative Board will select proposals based on the feasibility and community impact. CASA will offer support, advice and various levels of funding to help implement the action plan.

### Grant Requirements

- Must be initiated by a graduate of SLTP (LTC, ALC, TLC or Adviser Certification Conference)
- Must be planned and carried out by school aged youth

- Must improve or benefit the community
- Must have at least one adult supervisor
- Must submit complete grant application by deadline
- Must interview with the Grant Committee
- Must make available a presentation to the SLTP community to discuss the successes and failures

## Tech time with Adam by Adam Travis, SLTP Conference

Article 4: A better browser.

If you're like 90% of people that use the web, you are probably using Microsoft's Internet Explorer as your web browser. Microsoft integrated IE into its operating systems and it quickly became the dominant web browser. Since then, IE has been rather stagnant while other companies have been innovating new features and developing better software. Now Microsoft has a number of competitors and there are good reasons to think about using them.

The hot new browser on the scene is Firefox from the Mozilla Foundation. Firefox is easy to use and displays web pages very quickly. It is a small download and easy to install and expand. It includes great built-in features, like tabbed browsing, an easy way to search popular search engines, and pop-up blocking. Firefox is an "open source" project, which means that anyone can look at the

programming code and is free to use and modify it to create their own custom browser. To download or find out more, visit <http://www.mozilla.org/>.

Some other popular browsers include Opera, Netscape, and the Mozilla Suite. With the exception of Opera, all of these are available for Mac, and Mozilla makes a browser just for OS X, called Camino. Right now, Safari is the leading browser for Macintosh, which led Microsoft to cease all development and support for IE for Mac.

So maybe you are wondering, if 90% of the world uses Internet Explorer, why should I switch? Better features and better security are the simple answer. Because IE is so closely integrated with the operating system, a security flaw in the browser puts your entire computer at risk. This past summer, the Department of Homeland Security, issued a memo suggesting that using an alternate

*Why should I switch?  
Better features and better security are the simple answer.*

browser is one step that will increase computer security. There are a few sites on the web that only work with IE, so you can't ditch it completely, but you can use something better most of the time.

## Standards vs actions

**A national survey of more than 24,000 high school students reveals teenagers' high ethical standards:**

- 74% said they have higher ethics than their peers
- 98% said it's important for them to be a person of good character
- 98% said that honesty and trust are essential in personal relation-

ships

**Still, the same teenagers admit to not-so-ethical actions:**

- 62% said they've cheated on exams
- 82% admitted they lied to a parent about something significant
- 83% copied homework from a peer

- 23% cheated or bent the rules to win in sports

## Conference Profile: OTS

Even though leadership does not require holding a title, SLTP recognizes the need to train and prepare student officers for their SPECIFIC roles, which is the role of the Officer Training Seminar.

The primary objective of OTS is "nuts and bolts" preparation for the roles, procedures, duties and responsibilities associated with the traditional student officer and adviser positions.

Separate practical workshops will be held for each of the cardinal offices—president; vice president; secretary and treasurer. Other officerholders or team captains will attend either specific job

related workshops or tutorials to be determined by the enrollment.

In addition to the specific officer and adviser workshops, the curriculum includes workshops on building effective teams, calendaring, **modern** meeting management, motive-action, time management, goal setting and project planning.

Since the roles and responsibilities of student officers are interdependent, student officers may only attend this seminar as a TEAM. The minimum number of officers for each team is 2 which may include any combination of student officers including the ad-

viser.

Registration is limited and since many schools & organizations do not hold their election of officers until later in May or in early June - schools may deposit registrations to hold / reserve spaces for their officer teams.

Applications for OTS can be found on our website

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

## From where I sit continued from page 4

sooner to the parents of the MassSTAR delegates. Those 300 plus parents are at a loss about the whole college admission "thing." It is different from years ago when they were applying and while the parents want as much information as they can get, they don't have a lot of access. Generally the guidance people at school are too busy or have very little information. So I make it my goal to know what I am talking about -- at least in the broadest possible senses.

In a nutshell, the four legs of the admission table remain - SATs, grades, citizenship (proof provided by resume of involvement in activities and service) and the essay. The "strength" or importance of each leg varies from school to school and a few add on a fifth leg - an interview.

SLTP is a vital part of this picture -- it's in the *Personal Development* resume references -- attending a leadership camp is not a "have to," students are not required to take the course. Students attend for themselves and BY themselves, it is not a school field trip. Attending a leadership camp is done purely for educational growth. It says a lot about the person who has taken that step. It says even

more when that student attends a program with a reputation for excellence.

Each year I receive hundreds of letters from alumni noting the difference SLTP made in your acceptance to college. For most it made a positive significant difference in the amount of money they received from that college. More importantly though, SLTP made a positive significant difference in your life way beyond the college admission process.

It is time to give back to SLTP. It is time to pay your debt. Help us by spreading the word. Help some kids to make better choices this summer -- sure, they can get a job at the local CVS and make 6 bucks an hour. And wow oh wowie when they get their first paycheck after taxes, they will have 83 whole dollars. BUT, that won't help them get into college, nor will it put one cent in their scholarship account.

Last week I attended a conference of the Greater Federation of Womens Clubs with Erin Stewart for MassSTAR. GFWC is a community service organization for women. One woman came to Erin and I with a question - it seems the school in her town does not

send a student to MassSTAR because they already send one to HOBY.

HOBY and MassSTAR host conferences for high school sophomores, each asks that the school send one representative. There are 150 students in the sophomore class at her town's school -- and the principal chooses to recognize and reward only ONE of them to attend a personal development course. The woman asked me how many I thought should go -- I answered 150.

How many kids should go to SLTP? My God, what a question!! I can only think of a few from any school I know who should not go. At Holbrook for example there are about 70 kids in the junior class -- probably 68 of them should go. At Warwick, there are about 400 kids in the sophomore class -- probably 398 of them should go. At Belchertown and Uxbridge, the classes are about 100 students each -- 98 plus should go from each. I measure the "should" with the answers to the questions: *would they benefit?*; **and are they going to college?**

Help us give a whole bunch of kids the best week of their entire lives! *It is up to us to make a difference. It is up to us to care.*

## Thank you—webbie to webbie



Thank you for all of the contributions, notes and emails in support for our newsletter during this academic year.

This issue will probably be the final full edition for this year as we must concentrate all of our effort in the next two months on preparation for the summer

conferences.

Just a reminder that contributions, suggestions for the SLTP newsletter are quite welcome. Send them to:

[jim@sltp.info](mailto:jim@sltp.info)

We'll see you "at camp." Good luck closing out the school year.

## A peek at what's ahead for SLTP

Obviously we have a full summer ahead — but even before and after that SLTP will be busy.

- ◆ On June 4th, the SLTP Connections Theatrical Troupe will present "stop, look and listen" our nationally acclaimed play on bullying to the delegates at the MassSTAR Citizenship Conference at Bridgewater State College.
- ◆ Later in June, we will be filming "stop, look and listen" to produce a DVD that will be distributed nationally.
- ◆ In the next six months, the Alumni Association will be sponsoring state wide service events in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts — details will appear on our website and via

email.

- ◆ This summer, SLTP will sponsor nine conferences beginning with OTS.
- ◆ This summer, SLTP will debut a new play, "Silence is NOT an option." The play centers on what leaders can do about violence against women.
- ◆ Applications to join the 2006 SLTP staff are available on line and are due the second week of August.
- ◆ The Leadership Action Grant Program will sponsor several community service projects initiated by SLTP alumni this Fall.
- ◆ This Fall, SLTP will be sponsoring a day long leadership conference in New York City.
- ◆ The Core Adviser Semi-

nar will be held this Fall for advisers and coaches across New England.

Join us. We pledge to continue to stand up for what is right, even if we are standing alone. We pledge to continue to do everything we can to empower student leaders.