

True Points

a newsletter for the parents of student leaders

April 2006

Volume 2, Issue 5

Inside this issue:

InterLead 2

Student Leader of the Year 3

Ubuntu Booklet 3

Join us 3

What's available 4

Up syndrome 4

Submissions 4

Bullying 5

Running for Leadership Brochures 5

Scholarships 6

Parent Orientations 6

Adulthood 7

Who should attend 8

SAFE 8

General Flyer 9

LTC Flyer 10

From where I sit By Dr. Jim Fitzgerald, SLTP Director

All across the US and especially here in New England, the realities of the budget cuts will devastate school programs for the coming year -- those are the facts. Pretending or praying that the politicians will face their responsibilities is not sensible. For the politicians, it is all about talking the talk -- that is sounding good with just the right "sound bite" like "leave no child behind or "making schools more accountable."

Whatever ...

School after school next year will be without many teachers. School after school next year will settle for "good enough." Already hundreds are planning to eliminate or cut back activities. These draconian measures are seen as the only means of solving the various budget shortfalls.

More than ever, student

leaders need SLTP.

Why? Well, the positivity, the emersion in a "can do" atmosphere. The companionship and fellowship certainly come to mind as reasons. Knowing you are not alone. Knowing that others are facing the reality and NOT burying their head in the sand is vital, and these lessons can be carried back to their communities.

Let's not forget the skill training -- clubs and activities are VITAL to schools and communities - especially in negative times. Strong student leadership can provide activism and hope. We teach the skills to run meaningful programs.

The atmosphere in schools where cuts have taken place often turns very sour -- administrators retreat behind rules, teach-

ers become more sarcastic, students feel more and more detached. In that environment vicious emotional, social and even physical bullying often fills the gap. Awareness is the only answer.

But mostly the reasons are for the kids themselves. SLTP provides enrichment and fulfillment. You know that is true, so do I. Sure it enhances and provides a very important line on their resume. Sure it provides them with an edge for college acceptance -- less than one per cent of the student population attends a leadership program. And those points are seriously important for parents and other teachers to hear -- but the most important reason is the one every adviser can

Continued on page 2

Adulthood

"The schools as presently constituted serve the interests of a society content to define education as a means of indoctrination and a way of teaching people to know their place." -Lewis Lapham

Put yourself in the following scenario, imagine a large corporate building filled with adults who have all

been called to a meeting ...

... Welcome, we have gathered you all here because things are about to change in your lives.

Quit your jobs; put aside your other interests:

For the next 4 years, you are going to be attending school.

We have sorted you into

groups according to your chronological age: 23 year olds, proceed to room 214 down the hall; 38 year olds, please stop whining and walk in single file to the cafeteria.

We have designed the curriculum. We know that it seems largely unrelated to

Continued on page 7

A report on the InterLead by Helen Fitzgerald, CASA Director

The InterLead rocked. Jim called the conference one of the "milestone moments" for SLTP. How big was it, well he went on to say that the conference was an absolutely turning point for our program. We had over 200 students, parents, administrators and their teachers who were joined by legislators from MA, CT and RI. We experienced "the Yellow Dress" and that experience gave us a level of awareness from where we could all enter into discussions about solutions. We broke into small groups called forums (Jim is a former history teacher can you tell?). In those forums, we each struggled with answers to the problem of violence against women in our schools. We looked for REAL solutions -- for today and for tomorrow. We began with what should each of us DO and SAY when we see instances of abuse. All of the forums created a consensus of their best solutions and reported to the general assembly. The SLTP Administrative Board is going to compile these into a "white paper" to distribute to our member schools. And will be available through a link from our website upon its completion.

We had 8 legislators and a candidate for Lieutenant Governor attend and participate in the program. Their attendance made a big difference. We are very proud of what we did. We know we did not

solve the problem, but we all feel better having worked on it. I cannot wait to see the "white paper."

It's not possible to say enough about "the Yellow Dress" either. The presentation is riveting. The content is eye opening, the acting is amazing. But make no mistake it is NOT about the drama. The real substance of the play is in the processing of the play, one of our CC's, Ashley Robshaw, joined the team from Denna's Fund (the group that owns the production) to process the play. As usual with an SLTP crowd, the debriefing went pretty deep.

And that is when the fun began, Jim split us into 11 small random groups, with most groups getting one of the community leaders. And we experienced our first forum. A forum is an open yet pointed discussion, it's purpose is to find the best answers to questions that a group can extract from its talent and experience—and then to report those answers to a decision making body.

All of the group reports were gathered and will find their way into a cumulative report that will answer:

- ◆ what should we Do and SAY as individuals and as leaders about the problem of violence against women?

The responses went from the general to the specific — as in what to say and do when you SEE

abuse. only weeks away now.

Following the forums we had a PICNIC — Spring Conferences are the best! After the picnic we had 9 workshops to choose from, which varied from specific community service needs like the walk for Hunger to a session that explained the types of service that exist.

InterLead - short for Inter-State Student Leadership Forum - Our goal was to attempt to be a forum for the expression of student ideas and opinions on the real issues. And in joining the student voices with the voices of community leadership, we hoped to create a real spirit of activism. It worked!

This was a conference that made a statement. It raised awareness as to the seriousness of today's student leaders. It also raised awareness of the quality of today's political leaders.

We closed out the InterLead in our traditional closing for the Spring Conference honoring the Student Leaders of the Year and the Lifetime Differencemaker. Like I said, this conference rocked!

From where I sit continued from page 1

provide that is your personal commitment to make your school a better place.

Please help us to spread the word. Please let's not give up. Keep plugging, it IS worth it. Student activities are way more than fun and games. Student activities are not EXTRA, the role they play in every

student's education is vital.

With a full court press we can make a difference for a lot of kids. We can change the world. Please don't let your students put off the decision any longer. Please do not leave it up to others. Please do not worry about stepping on someone's toes. As Far-

ley said, "It is up to us to make a difference. It is up to us to care."

Tomorrow is here, we can not put this off any longer.

The 2006 Student Leaders of the Year

Each year we endeavor to celebrate and honor the achievements and involvement of SLTP graduates through the prestigious Student Leader of the Year Awards.

The accomplishments and involvement level of the graduates of SLTP is well known across the country. SLTP Alumni continue to make their mark in their high schools, in their communities and especially at the colleges they choose to attend. This year we had 14 finalists for the award. Each of the fourteen clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of student leadership and the evidence of that effect was plain to see in their accompanying resumes and testimonial letters.

All were feted at the InterLead Conference in front of their parents, teachers and peers. All received SLTP scholarships and camperships for deserving students back at their school. Here are the finalists:

Sarah Bashein—Sharon HS, junior
Becky Damon—Rockland HS, junior

Liz Duclos—Attleboro HS, senior
Jared Katz—St John's Prep, senior
Bridget McDonough—Braintree HS, senior
Greg Mills—Masconomet HS, senior
Lauren Nutter—Uxbridge HS, senior
Ethan Palmer—New Milford HS, senior
Brittany Perro—Northbridge HS, junior
Justin Quartararo—Walt Whitman HS, senior
Christina Santana—Doherty HS, junior
Christina Wieggers—New Milford HS, Senior
Kayla Wilcox—Cumberland HS, senior
Doug Williams—Belchertown HS, senior

The 2006 SLTP Student Leader of the Year is **Lauren Nutter**.

Lauren attended LTC in 2003, ALC in 2004 and TLC in 2005. She is heavily involved at Uxbridge High School and has participated in virtually

every leadership program that has become available to her. Like her fellow finalists, Lauren's resume and academic record are exemplary.

She has striven to learn all she can about how to make a difference. For the past two years, Lauren has served as a Leadership Trainer with SLTP and was recently elected to the Alumni Board.

According to Lauren "among the most valuable lessons I learned at SLTP has been learning the relationship of cooperation to collaboration. It helps me to know when to step back and when to step forward. Leading from the middle is a difficult concept to grasp."

Lauren received her award from two past recipients of the Student Leader of the Year Award—Meg Dobro and Alyssa Currier.

Ubuntu—the InterLead Program & Action Guide booklet

Copies of "Ubuntu" the program/newsletter are available on line. The pages of Ubuntu provide a road map to follow to engage your school and community in a collaborative response to the violence against women in our schools.

Among the articles are: "warning signs," "teacher awareness," student awareness," "community support," "what to do," and "where to begin."

It is a pdf file located at:

<http://www.sltp.info/newsletters/Ubuntu1.pdf>

Join us !

Join us. Help SLTP to grow and thrive. Become part of the action. We need help getting the word out . What can you do? Here are some direct action suggestions:

1. Join the Presentation Teams at SLTP information tables at various conferences
2. Join the Welcome Wagon team for our summer conferences to

3. meet and greet the parents dropping off their kids.
3. Join the Facilitation Teams for one or all of the Parent Orientation Programs at the closing of this summer's conferences.
4. Join the Fundraising Teams to seek out in-kind donations from local businesses.
5. Join the Phone Calling Teams

6. to call schools and secure information.
6. Join the Recruiting Teams to present to parent groups.
7. Join the Connections theatrical troupe to present or help stage on of our traveling productions.
8. Apply to join our staff.

What's still available for the summer?

Registrations for all our summer conferences are underway in earnest! There are just over 15 weeks to go before our summer conferences kick off. All of the applications are available on line as pdf files at 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 6-7

LTC

There are four sessions. Although there are just over 100 slots available at this point.

July 11-15;
July 18-22;
August 1-5
and Aug 8-12

ALC

There are four sessions and approximately 30 slots available.

July 12-15;
July 19-22;
August 2-5;
and Aug 9-12

TLC

There is only one session and there are 3 slots left.

July 12-15

Adviser Certification

There is only one session which is open to all teachers, coaches and collegians and there are 10 slots left.

July 27-28

Leadership in Athletics

There is only one session which is open to secondary and collegiate athletes and their coaches and there are 24 slots left.

July 27-28

Up Syndrome

Among the many email newsletters I get is one from PartnersinKindness.org. In a recent article, Zelig Pliskin retold a story about how a Down Syndrome child changed a person's day and wondered why those children are not called "Up Syndrome."

It is a good question. Having served as a volunteer at many Special Olympics and having worked with many DS kids over the years, perhaps it is time to change the nomenclature.

DS kids are more often than not filled with joy—and a

joy they strive to share. Words are all we have, and the words we use paint a picture of our expectations.

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

Bullying Awareness week

Seven years ago, on April 20th, 1999, our nation's worst school shooting took place at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Thirteen students and a teacher were killed, and 23 other students were wounded. The two young attackers, who had been bullied by their schoolmates, also died.

We must learn from this tragedy. We must join the organizations, school districts, teachers, and parents who have already spoken out against bullying.

We must do our best to make people understand the harm

it can cause. In addition, we must show younger students, through actions as well as words, that their emotional and physical well-being is important to us.

SLTP's fight against bullying in school must not, of course, be limited to one week a year. However, in remembrance of the Columbine shootings, and as a symbol of our year-round struggle against bullying, we invite you to do something and to join the national effort to raise awareness.

For most schools in New England, this national week coin-

cides with the April vacation—so plan events before or after the week.

For more information visit:
<http://www.bullypolice.org>

Running for leadership

Running her talk

Meg Dobro, one the Conference Coordinators has offered to run for SLTP as she ventures forth on her second Boston Marathon. This time around meg has been issued a number, which means she is entitled to run for a charity.

Meg will be running for SLTP.

In this month's alumni newsletter Meg submitted a call for help from our alumni to sponsor her effort.

Helen and I would like to kick start that drive to the finish line with a pledge of \$2 per mile for each of us. Tap to Meg with your pledge, (meg@sltp.info) and if you are free that day—how about set-

ting up somewhere along the route with a cheering section?

SLTP Brochures on line

Currently we have the following brochures posted on line:

- <http://staff.sltp.info/brochures/athleticsflyer.pdf>
- <http://staff.sltp.info/brochures/otsflyer.pdf>
- <http://staff.sltp.info/brochures/LTCflyer.pdf>
- <http://staff.sltp.info/brochures/ALCflyer.pdf>
- <http://staff.sltp.info/brochures/Adviserflyer.pdf>
- <http://staff.sltp.info/brochures/interleadflyer.pdf>
- <http://staff.sltp.info/brochures/Generalflyer.pdf>
- <http://staff.sltp.info/brochures/whysltp.pdf>

Scholarship opportunities



The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes honors outstanding young leaders who have made a significant positive difference to people and our planet. Their leadership and courage make them true heroes — and inspirations to us all. Each year, the Barron Prize selects ten winners nationwide. Half of the winners have focused on helping their communities and fellow beings; half have focused on protecting the health and sustainability of the environment.

These young people reflect the great diversity of America. They are female and male, urban and rural, and from many backgrounds.

The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes is seeking nominations for its 2005 Awards.

The Barron Prize honors young people ages 8 to 18 who have made a significant positive difference to people and our planet.

Each year, 10 national winners receive \$2,000 to support their service work or their higher education.

The Barron Prize relies on

thoughtful adults to identify and nominate children from the diverse communities in which they live. The Prize accepts nominations on an annual basis and distributes \$2,000 awards every fall. To nominate a young person, the adult nominator must submit a fully-completed nomination packet (received in the Prize office by April 30)

This year's nomination deadline is APRIL 30.

For more information or to download the information to nominate, visit: <http://www.barronprize.org>

Parent Orientation Teams

One of the most important services we can 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. Explaining the happenings of a week of camp in 30 minutes is more than a challenge, but it is also more than a little fun and more than

a little fulfilling. The most effective presentations have included staffers, alumni and staffer/camper parents.

Join the team and help us to continue this success.

The Parent Orientation Programs

- ⇒ **Session One POP Saturday**
July 15 9:05-10:15 Nichols Dining Hall
- ⇒ **Session Two POP Saturday**
July 22 9:05-10:15 Nichols Dining Hall
- ⇒ **Session Three POP Saturday**
August 5 9:05-10:15 Nichols Dining Hall
- ⇒ **Session Four POP Saturday**
August 12 9:05-10:15 Nichols Dining Hall

*Join us, sign up by emailing Jim Fitzgerald (jim@sltp.info)
Indicate which week you are committing to attend.*

your daily life, to your concerns and to your dreams. But that's just the way it is.

In fact, if you don't perform up to our expectations, learning what we decide you need to know, when we decide you need to know it, there will be consequences that could have life-long implications.

One more thing: Misbehavior will not be tolerated. We would prefer you to be excited about all this, but if you can't muster enthusiasm, at least don't talk back.

Did we hear moaning? "This is not what you want to do!" you say? What gave you the impression we are interested in what you want?...

An unpleasant scenario? Unquestionably.

But if we are honest, we have to acknowledge that this is how many young people experience school.

Our current education system leaves little room for student input or student choice. It is not student driven. It is adult driven.

And increasingly, coercive tactics-- zero tolerance policies, high stakes testing, threats of punishment, etc.-- are employed both to get students to school, and to "inspire" them to do what educators want when they are there.

Sure, most young people acquiesce with only occasional complaints. But can we reasonably expect them to act differently when this is the **only** approach to education they have ever known?

And true too, many, many teachers, by engaging their students, are able to actually inspire their students. Students in these classrooms would freely choose to attend school.

Still, public and private education provides ample evidence of a form of mistreatment increasingly known as "adulthood."

Adulthood refers to behaviors and attitudes that are based on the assumption that **adults are better than young people, and entitled to act upon them without their agreement.** It is characterized by disrespect towards the intelligence, judgment, emotional life, leadership, or physical being of young people.

Adulthood is so pervasive in our world that, like the fish who don't realize they live in water, most of us are simply unaware of it.

Consider a few obvious examples:

The stranger who touches a toddler without asking permission...

The store manager who suspiciously follows any teenager through his store...

The teacher who treats a student rudely...

The teacher or principal who employs sarcasm as a disciplinary tool ...

The regular, systematic, emotional and social bullying employed by high school coaches ...

The adviser who does everything ...

The teacher who teaches a subject ...

The principal who never asks for student input before implementing a rule or schedule change ...

Locked bathrooms ...

All these actions, taken with impunity, demonstrate the kind of disrespect that young people regularly face.

Now I am not suggesting that 12 year olds begin to design their own curriculums with impunity. Young people expect, crave and depend upon the guidance, advice, structure, material support, and discipline that caring adults can provide.

I am not saying we need to do away with the institution of public or private education. Quite the contrary: Providing free public education is one of the finest impulses in our culture, one that is essential to creating a just, prosperous and peaceful world and I agree with Franklin Roosevelt – it is a basic and fundamental

right.

My concern is that the dominant approach to education demonstrates a gross lack of respect for and understanding of young people's ability to manage their own lives in an age-appropriate way. **Students simply are given little choice about matters of consequence related to their education:** what to learn, when to learn, who to learn with, where to learn, who should teach them, etc.

Respect must be given. Responsibility is not a code word for obedience or compliance. Leadership depends on both respect and responsibility. And both require the benefit of experience to grow. And young people are so much more capable of guiding their lives and acting responsibly than society gives them credit for.

This lack of self-determination in schools is perhaps the biggest reason why students respond so positively to SLTP. By contrast, SLTP is fundamentally concerned with *showing respect for and giving power to young people.*

In fact, SLTP is characterized by a relatively benign set of questions that nevertheless seem almost revolutionary in the traditional school context.

Questions like:

- ◇ Do you want to be here and participate?
- ◇ What do you think?
- ◇ Do these lessons connect to you and to your life?
- ◇ Are the lessons applicable?
- ◇ How will you use this lesson?
- ◇ What are your concerns, hopes and desires?
- ◇ How do you feel today?
- ◇ How do you understand your current life situation?

Who should attend SLTP?

So, who should attend a program like SLTP ?

Our answer is based on just one qualification.

We believe SLTP is for *any student or adviser* who is interested in learning how to make a difference ! **Student leadership does not require a title.** Nor is it defined through membership in certain activities. Nor is it defined by popularity. To that end, we do not believe that ANY one activity is THE most important activity in a school. Each activity helps to create the fabric of belonging, and therefore ALL of the activities are THE most important.

The majority of students who attend SLTP are very involved in their school and in their community. All are seeking to learn how TO DO more.

The willingness to learn is vital. So is the understanding that leadership is about DOING. Leaders are defined by what they do -- not by the titles they hold or by the organizations they belong to.

The only program requirements that exist are based on experience.

- *Delegates to the LTC's* - must be secondary students (junior high or high school).
- *Delegates to the ALC's* - must have completed the first level.
- *Delegates to the TLC* - must be graduates of both LTC & ALC.
- *Delegates to the Adviser Program* - must be practicing or aspiring coaches or advisers.

Delegates to the OTS - must be officers and /or advisers and have **at least one** other team member in attendance.

What each participant should "bring"

*a desire to make a difference
a willingness to learn
enthusiasm
an acceptance of growth
a desire to master change
a dream to work on*

What SLTP will provide
*an atmosphere of unconditional acceptance
significant learnings and understandings
the opportunity to practice what we teach*

The principles of SAFE

During my facilitation of the Forums at the InterLead, I responded to one of the group reports with a flurry of passion. One of the points they made was that at the heart of the issue was the behavior of men and women towards each other at school. Further they stated that at the very least schools should be one place where kids can go to be safe.

The word **safe** exploded in my head. Certainly we all know how I feel about the connection between learning and comfort. Certainly we all know how I feel about acceptance and respect. All of these thoughts mingled with the adrenaline and out popped a new acronym. Later this month at the AB meeting, I intend to propose that the endorse, adopt and put forward the following principles of SAFE schools. The principles of SLTP are worth emulating.

The following are the basic expectations to foster a healthy atmosphere conducive to learning.

1. Schools are for learning, everyone should have the equal opportunity to learn in an atmosphere conducive to learning.
2. The basic rule of personal conduct and the treatment of others is unconditional acceptance.
3. Respect must be a given.
4. Inclusion must be the norm.
5. Teachers, coaches and all school employees must accept the obligation to practice inclusion and acceptance and to foster both conditions.
6. Language or behaviors that exclude, limit, divide are hurtful, are harmful or are derisive in nature are banned.

With those core tenets in place, schools can build from there. Applying the principles of respect and acceptance to their teaching methodology and their curriculum, schools can create more challenging and appropriate environments for the learning necessary in the 21st century.

Imagine curriculums that engage learners no matter what

style of learner they are.

Once the school environment is free of the network of violence that stems from the lack of acceptance and the predetermined exclusion — then students and teachers will be free.



S.A.F.E.

☺ Schools

☺ Are

☺ For

☺ Everyone

Think about it.

What are the biggest lessons you've learned in life? Did you learn by reading a book? By your favorite lecture? Or by doing something? We suspect it was through something you did, or something that happened to you.

It's the same with growth as a leader. When students directly help someone in need (*putting their words into action*), they grow as an individual and as a leader.

Act now to take a leap into effective leadership. Encourage student leaders to join us at one of the 10 summer conferences in 2006. And besides all the different weeks, there are four different levels of the experience...*all designed to boost individual student's skills and knowledges:*

Be sure to visit <http://www.sltp.info> frequently for updates.

We teach . . .

Leadership **ideals**

Leadership **skills**

Leadership **practices**

For more information or to download applications visit:

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

Our Conferences

The ReEnergizer

November 25, 2006

Officer Training Seminar

July 6,7

Leadership Training Conferences

July 11-15; 18-22; Aug. 1-5; 8-12

Advanced Leadership Conference

July 12-15; 19-22; Aug. 2-5; 9-12

Leadership in Athletics

July 27-28

Adviser Certification Conference

July 27-28

The Leadership Center

July 12-15

Interested in learning how to make a difference?

Want to get more organized?

Need to revitalize your leadership skills?

Join us **this summer** at The Student Leadership Training Program's

student leadership
The **S**tudent **L**eadership **T**raining **P**rogram

Leaders walk their talk.

Leadership Training Conferences



where? Nichols College – Dudley, Mass.

when? July 11-15; 18-22; Aug 1-5; 8-12

what? leadership skills, ideals and practices, fun, practical and applicable lessons, peer networking

Tuition: only \$350!

For applications or more information Visit: <http://sltp.info>

Conference Highlights:

*Idea sharing ~ Skill building ~ Critical concerns
Essential Skill training ~ Special Theatrical Program ~ Eventology ~ Proactivity ~ Intentionality
DifferenceMakers ~ college scholarship information ~ Portfolio Construction
Staff from all over the country ~ Keynote speaker ~ Comprehensive manual
Three to one student to staff ratio
and much, much more ...*