

True Points

a newsletter for the parents of student leaders

December, 2006

Volume 3, Issue 3

Inside this issue:

Truth & lies 2

4 Stages 3

Join us 3

Survey results 4

2007 SLTP 5

Bullying 6

Submissions 6

Riches 6

Bill of Rights 7

Assertiveness 7

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



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.

Continued on page 2

The ReEnergizer Conference—right time again

By Mina Markarious, SLTP Staff

Of the non-summer programming SLTP operates every year, the ReEnergizer is both the most and least representative of our general way of doing things. Unlike those programs, in which we have five full days to work with students, the ReEnergizer is a mere four hours, though those hours are packed to the brim with

learnings. Though it might not “feel” like our summer experiences, the ReE is very intensely tied to the program’s mission of empowering student leaders because it hits students when they need it most.

Perhaps fittingly, Thanksgiving is a time of full plates for student leaders. Seniors are wrestling with college applications,

classes are in full swing, student groups are beginning to experience tensions, even high school faculty start to feel the physical and emotional fatigue brought on by three months of hard work. It is the time student leaders are most needed to keep up the energy in a school, yet

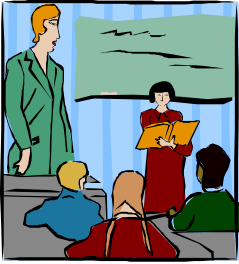
Continued on page 7

Truth and lies about teens

For 40 years lifestyle writers and news magazines have written volumes about "the generation gap" a term coined in the 60's. Hmmm, today we seem to be suffering from a "reality gap." Adults and the media have a definitive perception of young people and that perception is quite different from reality.

- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
The number of teens who commit violent crimes is increasing. (over 60% in 3 national surveys)
- **The Reality**
Crimes committed by teens are at their lowest levels in 25 years.
- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
Teen birth rates are increasing.
- **The Reality**
The birth rate for teens has decreased constantly and substantially every year since 1991.
- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
Teens are smoking in ever increasing numbers.
- **The Reality**
The number of teens who smoke has dropped to its lowest rate since researchers began collecting the data in 1975.
- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
Teens lack commitment and do not contribute to their community.
- **The Reality**
Teens contributed over 10 Million hours of service last year in New England alone!
- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
Requiring community service for graduation or even car licenses is a good idea.
- **The Reality**
Although no funded study has yet been completed, no increase in service has been measured as a result of the requirement.
- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
Teen drunk driving laws are lax, which results in more teens driving drunk.
- **The Reality**
Teen drunk driving standards are rigid, and the percentage of teens receiving punishment for DUI is triple the percentage for adults. Further the number of teen deaths via alcohol related car accidents remains relatively constant and is much lower than adults.
- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
4 out of 10 kids live in one parent households and the number is increasing.
- **The Reality**
Only 25% of all children live in one parent household and that number has been flat since 1995.
- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
Drug abuse among teens is on the rise.
- **The Reality**
Drug abuse among teens has been on the decline for the past several years -- this is not a dismissal of the problem - if there were only 1 teen, it would be a problem - it is only to point out that the statistics indicate something contrary to what is perceived.
- **What adults perceive and the media portrays**
Teens have little or no values and are not family oriented.
- **The Reality**
According to the latest survey by the Horatio Alger Association (who do an annual survey called "the State of our Nation's Youth) - the greatest majority of teens get along with their parents extremely well; would rather spend extra time with their families; put family members at the top of their list of role models over athletes and celebrities.

The Four Stages of Child Development *by Laura Murphy, SLTP CC*



Recently in a class I'm taking about Sociology of Childhood we studied the effects of parenting on a child's development. While the class mainly focuses on the development of a child in his or

her early years, I felt that the subject matter was still, and maybe even more relevant to development in the teens. Simply because a child becomes a teenager, does not mean that the parent's role should lessen.

In parenting there are four things that must be provided for the child, after the basic necessities like food and shelter and clothing are met. These four staples to the healthy development of a child are:

a. establishing a secure attachment – By establishing a secure attachment I mean creating trust within the relationship. When a parent gives consistent attention and support to the child, the child can trust that his/her parent will be there when needed. When secure attachment is present not only do children feel comfortable sharing themselves in the home, but they feel comfortable daring to share with others as well.

b. communicating expectations – Within SLTP we talk about expectations a lot. We use a “tell, show, do” format to set expectations and refrain

from setting rules. When a parent sets rules, they create an atmosphere of “don'ts”; they create a world with nothing to work towards but rather things to avoid. When a parent sets positive expectations however it lets the child know the parent believes in their ability to reach those expectations. It allows the child to have goals in mind and guidelines in a purely optimistic way.

c. supporting exploration and learning - Supporting exploration and learning though is seems relatively simple is actually quite difficult. It means asking your child what they are learning, even when met by your son/daughter's resistant attitude. Teenagers in today's society live in a world full of negativity. In schools, they are taught by their peers that learning is a negative thing. There is a stigma attached to being the bright kid, and an even bigger one attached to being the kid who enjoys school. Teenagers are being trained to be good enough in their learning. As a parent, it's your job to battle this. There is very little praise and incentive for learning in school, but by praising not only good grades but good conversations about subject material you have the ability to make learning a positive experience for your child.

d. transmitting social values and knowledge – Similarly to the effect schools have on our youth's

relationship with learning, middle schools and high schools often foster incredibly negative social environments. Boys are taught to be competitive and aggressive while our girls are taught to be quiet and polite. Social, Emotional, and physical abuse within friendships and romantic relationships are condoned by faculty turning their heads the other way. Through praising your own child for positive behavior, and talking about important social issues however parents have the ability to give their children important social values and knowledge.

When a parent is providing each one of these for their child they are helping to create a balance for their child in all four spheres of their being – the social, the emotional, the intellectual, and the spiritual. Schools aren't teaching to all four spheres so that means parents are needed even more. By taking the initiative to do these four things, a parent shows respect to their son or daughter by taking the time to make their home a positive place. I can safely say that as a teenager you need your parents even more than when you were a little kid.

Get involved –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

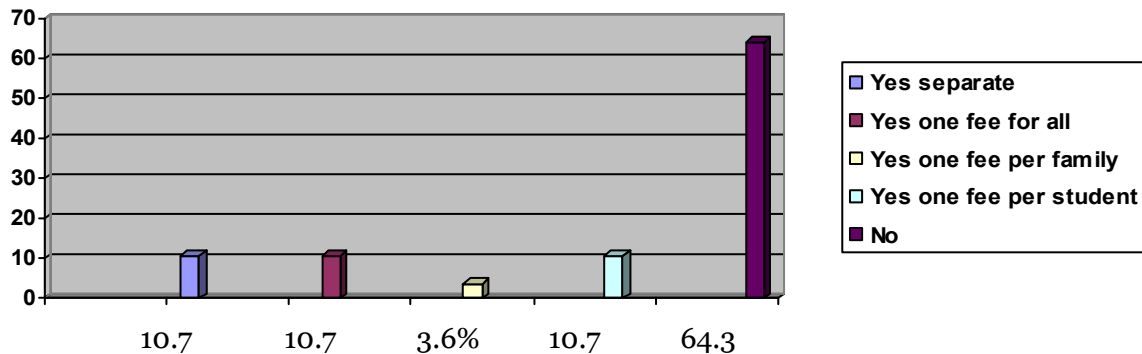
3. meet and greet the parents dropping off their kids.
3. Join the Facilitation Teams for one or all of the Parent Orientation Programs at the closing of this summer's conferences.
4. Join the Fundraising Teams to seek out in-kind donations from local businesses.
5. Join the Phone Calling Teams

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.

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 can-

not care for themselves and that includes a responsibility to educate 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 some-

thing 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.

The ReEnergizer Continued from page 1

they too need someone to pick up their energy.

This is where the ReEnergizer comes in. The conference works in several ways to restore energy to student leaders. First, the ReEnergizer allows students to interact with half a thousand others who are facing the same difficulties and to share ideas, and emotions with them. Second, the ReEner-

gizer literally helps add student energy. Make no mistake about it the ReEnergizer is an SLTP conference and as such comes with an enthusiastic and positive staff and a loud and productive atmosphere. Finally, the ReEnergizer helps to restore the confidence of student leaders. By holding two experiential workshops, and a powerful educational play, the ReEn-

nergizer allows delegates to remember their toolbox of skills for difficult times. Ultimately, the result is exactly what we intended: a "learningfull" pick me up for students who are best poised to empower student participation and leaders.

From where I sit Continued from page 1

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.

Finally, 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.

2007 SLTP Conferences

Where leaders learn HOW to make a difference!

- **The Core Adviser Seminar**
March 28
- **InterLead Forum**
April 29
- **START Conference**
June 3 & 4
- **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
- **The ReEnergizer Conference**
November 24

We're on the Web!
www.sltp.info
Information for Parents, Teachers, Students, Administrators Applications *

Bullying won't be wished away

Recently there has been a lot of talk in education circles, in the media and certainly from our politicians regarding harassment issues in schools. To hear the talk one would think that the only harassment issue that exists in schools deals with sexual identity. While I applaud the new found awareness, I am appalled that this awareness is wearing blinders.

SLTP will remain focused on bullying and harassment of ALL students and staff.

The US Department of Education reports that in 2001, 12 percent of students ages 12-18 reported someone at school used hate-related words against them. Further, the Department of Education reported that the nature of this hate speech varied—from words related to race, religion, political view, disability to sexual identity or orientation. 12 per

cent reported it — clearly a sign of a very broad problem.

One of the best anti-bullying sites www.bullypolice.org, reports that 90 percent of students felt being bullied caused social, emotional, or academic problems and that both bullies and their victims have problems later in life.

Each month, 250,000 plus students are physically attacked in schools and the American Association of School Psychologists estimates that over 1,000,000 high school students suffer through hate-related verbal abuse at school. Further 69 percent of high school students report that school officials including guidance counselors and administrators respond poorly or not at all to reports of bullying.

Our schools must teach

students and teachers to interact with civility and respect among and toward all persons regardless of status, or condition. Schools should and must model those expectations and teach guidelines which equip students with the skills to become positive citizens in the school.

Bullying is not just the issue of the month — that is why it is a problem that continues to go unsolved. It is time to stop talking a talk. It is time to walk the talk we have started with “stop, look and listen.”

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 identified 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

Riches?



You might think that all teenagers care about is what they wear and what they drive, but a recent survey suggests otherwise.

When asked, "What would

you do if you won \$100,000?" an astounding **93%** of American teenagers said they would buy a gift for their parents.

Here's what else they'd spend their cash on:

New car 67%
Vacation 63%

College 55%

Charity 45%

(Source: Impulse Research for Tombstone, quoted in USA Today)

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