

The DifferenceMaker

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

THE DIFFERENCEMAKER—AN ADVISER NEWSLETTER

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2004 ReEnergizer—building a place to stand.



On Saturday, November 27 The ninth annual ReEnergizer Conference was held at Nichols College. Delegates from 89 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 500 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 the play "bang, bang, you're dead." During lunch we elected the student members of SLTP's Alumni Executive Board.

Again this year we offered separate workshop sessions for all our groups—students, collegians, parents and advisers. There were 89 schools represented, with attendees traveling from as far away as NY to be with us. And we arranged a virtual classroom link to China and Spain.

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

The skillshops focused on inclusion and Motive-Action and how those two forces impact on student activities.

The two next big events on the SLTP Calendar is the DifferenceMaker Showcase on April 3rd and The Core – a workshop for Advisers on February 2nd. (more on those later in this newsletter).

Positive Risk Taking by Dr. Jim Fitzgerald

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

One of the most important aspects of student activities is teaching positive risk taking behavior. Positive risk taking can be defined as produc-

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

The majority of the opportunities offered to young people in the school setting as positive risk taking are VERY HIGH RISK - athletic teams, school plays, student council,

class office, band, honor roll - generally only the best are selected and the rest experience personal failure. The real deterrent to taking positive risks and becoming more than you can be IS THE FEAR OF FAILURE. It is an invisible barrier that fences people off from challenge, adventure and natural highs. It can impede learning as well as growth. In many cases taking a risk involves opening yourself up to a highly visible failure. That failure cannot be easily blamed on anyone else. This affects self confidence, self esteem and reputation. Personal failure is scary at any age!

Student leaders must recognize how risk affects their

group and utilize all of their leadership skills to help minimize risk by increasing the rewards for taking positive risks.

During the Leadership Training Conferences, each of the Breakaways examine the dimensions of risk and the participants discuss the challenges as applied to their specific situations back at school. While it is difficult to put ourselves in the shoes of others, seeing how even low risk activities could deter student involvement creates more aware student leaders.

Alumni Association Election

One of the highlights of this year's ReE was the election of the regional representatives of the SLTP Alumni Association Executive Board. All high school and undergraduate alumni of SLTP's residential conferences are eligible to serve.

The Executive Board will be directing the planning and preparation for the DifferenceMaker Showcase on April 3. Additionally each Regional or state team will be responsible for facilitating a service project for the alumni in their region during their

term of office (which will conclude at next year's ReE).

Soon the Executive Board will elect their officers.

Elected to the Executive Board were:

- Liz Chase – 03, 04 – CT
- Andrew Lawton – 03, 04 – CT
- Eliza Stopa – 04 – RI
- Chris Quinn – 04 – RI
- Kim Martel – 04 – RI

- Cathryn Cortesa – 04 – MA
- Suzi Healy Wurzburg – 03, 04 – MA
- Daniella Ortiz – 04 – MA

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 in-

involved in

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

SLTP will award its next service and personal development portfolio awards at the DifferenceMaker Showcase Conference at Nichols College during a special ceremony on

April 3, 2005:

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

Bronze

Silver

Gold

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

to Jim Fitzgerald 108 Observatory Waye Marshfield, MA 02050.

**INTENTIONALITY:
DOING THINGS ON
PURPOSE WITH
PURPOSE**

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 Core—an adviser toolbox seminar

On Wednesday, February 2nd at the Taunton Holiday Inn Conference Center (which is just off Rte 495 near both Rte 24 and Rte 95) CASA and SLTP will host "the Core - an Adviser Toolbox Workshop."

The conference is designed specifically for student activity advisers. The focus will be on practical skill building. The conference center was selected because of its central location to the greatest majority of our member schools. (it is within an hour and a half of most of RI and all of central and eastern MA). We chose the early February date because we could find no conflicts with other conferences or events.

This is a chance to get practical in-service training for yourself and some (or all) of the activity advisers in your school. It's time to get out for some training and a motivational booster shot. **The registration fee is only \$15.** Typically conferences for teachers are generally 50 - 75 dollars --obviously we made this as economical as we could.

We plan to cover the nuts and bolts of organizing student activ-

ity programs with skillshops planned for "intentionality" and "actioneering." In addition we plan to have a theatrical presentation and a nationally recognized keynote speaker.

We have posted a descriptive website at the CASA webshell--
www.studentactivities.info/Advisers

In addition to being useful for current advisers, this conference will be especially helpful to collegians who are interested in becoming teachers. It will also be helpful to town and church youth leaders as well as to all club advisers and athletic coaches.

For MA teachers PDPs will be available.

Specific information can be found at our website and on the following pdf files:

1. the registration form --
www.sltp.info/Advisers/TheCore.pdf
2. the informational flyer --
www.sltp.info/Advisers/CoreBrochure.pdf
3. an invitational letter --
www.sltp.info/Advisers/Coreletter.pdf

Let me in!



Advisers struggling with the "inclusion circle" exercise at the ReEnergizer Conference.

The DifferenceMaker Showcase—April 3, 2005

The *DifferenceMaker Showcase* is a very special conference. We believe that service should not be a "have to." Service should be a "get to." Service is leadership in action. This conference is about expanding service opportunities, learning how to stage particular events and exploring the possibilities for service inside and outside of school.

Our attendance goal is

250 – just one carload. It's only 10 bucks each!

We'll learn who won the Student Leader of the Year.

We'll learn who won citations for Public Service.

We'll learn who won citations for Personal Development.

We'll celebrate the Lifetime of Difference Award winners.

We'll learn, we'll listen, we'll laugh, we'll see old friends

and make some new ones.

So mark your calendar now – bring your friends and your friends' friends for a spectacular spring afternoon. It's **Sunday, April 3rd.**

What to do with old electronics

Rapid advances in technology come with a price: the equally rapid pace of obsolescence. The average life-span of a computer, for example, will have dropped from 4.5 years in 1992 to approximately two years by 2005.

As a result, "e-waste"—discarded computers, TVs, cell phones, and other electronics—comprises one to four percent of the municipal solid waste stream, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. What's worse, this equipment is often made from non-renewable resources and contains hazardous chemicals including lead, chromium, cadmium, and mercury.

Here are some ways you can cut down on this e-waste:

Buying

* Before you buy replacement technology, assess your current equipment. Can you improve your computer's performance with a memory or video card upgrade? Do you need a cell phone with all the newest features when your old one works just fine? Is it worth buying a new port-

able CD player if you eventually want an MP3 player?

* Choose a product that has all the features you will need for the foreseeable future, has space to add components such as memory if needed, or takes the place of two separate gadgets (for example, you could consolidate equipment by buying a cell phone with integrated personal organizer, or a printer with integrated scanner or fax).

* Purchase used or refurbished electronics (but be aware that these products might not come with a warranty).

Reusing

* Before discarding obsolete electronics, find out whether a local repair shop, electronics training program, or even a technologically inclined friend or family member could use it for parts or practice.

* Consider donating used electronics to a nonprofit organization or shelter. Some organizations, for example, reprogram used cell phones for emergency use by senior citizens or victims of domestic violence.

Computers that are less than five

years old should be donated through an electronics refurbisher (see the link below), who will clean out old files and software and ensure all of the components are running properly. Computers that are more than five years old should be recycled, since software and technical support for older systems is difficult to find.

Recycling

* General electronics: Many cities and towns now offer electronics recycling as part of their household hazardous waste collection program. Contact your local public works department to find out what equipment it will accept and on what days; some charge a small fee per item.

* Computers: If your town does not accept computers, look for a commercial recycler that can break down and distribute usable components and dispose of the rest properly (see the links below).

* Cell phones: Many cell phone manufacturers and service providers will take back used phones for reuse or recycling.

Information on the web

For more information:

- EPA--ECycling
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67496>
- High Tech Goes Green
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67497>
- Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67498>
- Computer Take Back Campaign
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67499>
- Ten Tips for Donating a Computer
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67500>
- MAR Refurbishers
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67501>
- Electronic Industries Alliance--Cell Phone Recycling and Donation Programs
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67502>
- EPA--Computer Take Back Options
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67503>
- Recycling Resources
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67504>
- Electronic Industries Alliance--National Database of Reuse and Recycling Programs
<http://www.ucsaction.org/ctt.asp?u=111402&l=67505>
- www.ecologyproject.org

The 2005 SLTP Conference Schedule

Where leaders learn HOW
to make a difference!

- **The Core—An Adviser Workshop**

February 2

- **The DifferenceMaker Showcase**

April 3

- **Leadership Training Conferences (4)**

July 5 - 9; July 12 - 16; July 26 - 30;

Aug 2 - 6

- **Advanced Leadership Conferences (3)**

July 13 - 16; July 27 - 30; Aug 3 - 6

- **The Leadership Center**

July 6 - 9

- **Officer Training Seminar**

July 1 - 2

- **Adviser Certification**

July 27 - 30

- **The ReEnergizer Conference**

November 26

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

Early Bird Applications

Delegates to the ReEnergizer Conference are reminded that their packets contained the Early Bird Applications which offer a substantial savings for making an early decision.

The Early Bird Applications are due: **January 10**



SLTP School Survey



Please send us this information as soon as you can. We are compiling data on student services in our area. Send it electronically to: jim@sltp.info or via snail mail to: School Survey 108 Observatory Way Marshfield, MA 02050

Does the school provide email addresses for students?

- Yes
- Yes but limited
- No

Not including sports how many school sponsored activities are there?

- Under 20
- 20-30
- Over 30

What time is first lunch?

- 9:30
- 10:30
- Other _____

When are student elections held (student council, class office)?

- Sept / Oct
- January
- May / June

Are the library and guidance offices open at night?

- Yes
- Yes—one night a week
- No

Are late buses provided for participants in activities?

- Yes
- No
- No buses at all

What time does school start?

- 7:15
- 7:30
- Other _____

Does the school charge an activity fee?

- Yes
- No
- Under consideration

Are advisers provided additional professional release days?

- Yes-1 or 2
- Yes-principal's discretion
- No

Are there separate pay scales for advisers and coaches?

- Yes
- No

School

Address

Principal's Name

Name

Address

Email

Activity sponsored