

February, 2006

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Please note:

The March Newsletter will be late due to the SLTP Staff Conference.

student leadership

The Student Leadership Training Program
A Newsletter for the Advisers of Student Activities

The DifferenceMaker

Volume 3 issue 4

The DifferenceMaker—an Adviser Newsletter

A Case for Student Activities

Student activities constitute one of the vital vehicles for the education of young people. Organizations provide students with intentional practice in skills, knowledges and understanding of people and procedures. The past twenty years has reflected a significant shift away from what was called the “administrative function” of student activities toward the “educational function,” that is toward the engagement of genuine learning of life skills and citizenship skills. Activities provide students with a learning laboratory to experience membership in a democracy as well as opportunities to learn democ-

atic principles through participation.

The success of any student activities program depends upon the quality of leadership and the obligation of the school to develop student leadership. A student activities program should widen the opportunities for participation by all students in the life of the school.

The function of any and every school is education. Human beings learn best when they are comfortable. An effective student activities program is actively engaged in creating that atmosphere of comfort.

A sense of be-

longing creates a sense of comfort and belonging to a club or activity will engage that sense for student.

A sense of contribution will engage comfort. Participation in student activities allows students to have the opportunities to feel that they are doing something worthwhile, that they are building something that matters.

Relating to others will engage comfort. Student activities allows students to develop a network with a purpose. It is more than a mere social network, it is a community.

Continued on page 4

What’s available this summer?

Registrations for all our summer conferences are underway in earnest! There are just over 24 weeks to go before our summer conferences kick off. All of the applications are available on line as pdf files at www.sltp.info

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

OTS

There is one session which

Continued on page 3

Caveat Emptor

Let the buyer beware!

It is sage advice and a dire warning. Yet it offers little comfort if you have been burnt by a vendor who promised more than he could deliver.

Schools are major business centers for many companies. When making decisions for your student activities, you may want to consider any and all of our suggested criteria.

We are barraged by salespeople every day from many different companies. Suppliers and vendors run the gamut from very ethical and responsible to dishonest and unreliable. These business relationships can be smooth as silk or rougher than rough.

CASA suggests the following:

When choosing a fund raising company.

- 1 References & reputation—ask and verify
- 2 Years of service—if a company has been around for a while, chances are it will be around to help you in the future
- 3 Implementation — how much work and who must do it?
- 4 Profit margin—how much do you get FINAL NET.
- 5 What problems can you see?

- Now and later, what problems might the product service create?
- 6 Does it have value? Is there a need, or is it whimsical?
 - 7 Side benefits—are there any other benefits (i.e., uplifting spirit, fun, faculty support, community involvement, etc.)
 - 8 Company or representative benefits—are there any other benefits from choosing this company? Will they help in other areas? Will they support you in other ways?
 - 9 Watch out for sales incentives—these are often calculated into the cost, even though they are represented as “free.”
 - 10 Watch out for multi-year agreements or contracts—these may not be legal as you are employed on a yearly contract, but it is often better to evaluate the service and decide every year.

When choosing a representative:

- 1 Product knowledge, how well does he/she know the products and the company?
- 2 School savvy—how well does he/she know how schools operate?
- 3 Interaction with students—how well does he / she relate to stu-

dents, is the interaction comfortable or strained?

- 4 Track record—does he/she deliver on their promises — check them out.
- 5 Your comfort—can you work well with the person?

Keep in mind that there are many variations in pricing of similar goods and services. These variations can be found even between two sales reps for the same company. Protect your funds by requesting bids, investigating reputations and shopping various suppliers.

In these days of limited finances, we must handle student activity money in the most prudent and judicious way possible.

We hope that these suggestions are helpful in causing you to make good business decisions. There are a lot of really good companies and a lot of really fine sales reps out there.

Finally I suggest sharing with every adviser that you meet at the Inter-Lead. It will help us all if we share who we use, who we trust and of course who we do not trust.

Handle a lot of excuses? Try this:

On the wall just outside Admiral Hyman Rickover's office in the Pentagon (Admiral Rickover was once Navy Chief of Staff), a small glass frame bore the following message:

TO SAVE TIME, PLEASE GIVE YOUR EXCUSE BY NUMBER

- 1 I thought I told you.
- 2 That's the way we have always done it.
- 3 No one told me to go ahead.
- 4 I didn't think it was very important.
- 5 I'm so busy I just can't get around to it.
- 6 Why bother? The admiral won't buy it.
- 7 I did not know you were in a hurry for it.
- 8 That's his job, not mine.
- 9 I forgot.
- 10 I'm waiting for an okay.
- 11 That's not my department.
- 12 How did I know this was different?
- 13 Wait till the boss comes back and ask.

Leadership Classroom—"Can you hear me, now?"

Reprinted with permission from "Confluence II"

39 Can you hear me, now?

Summary

This is a small to medium sized group workshop designed to help participants experience and understand *listening, communication, Problem solving, Connections* through the difference established by *KNOWING HOW* vs. *winging it*.

Possible Focal Points

- Connecting and applying lessons
 - Listening
 - Communication
 - Power
 - Knowing how -- learning cycle
- Lateral thinking (outside the box)

Materials and Situation

Dixie cups -- two per person; enough open space for everyone to

put their head near their cups

Timing

15 - 25 minutes

Procedure

1. Give each person two empty cups.
2. Ask them to stack the cups inside each other, letting the first cup nest loosely inside the second.
3. Task the group as follows: Get the top cup out of the bottom one without turning the cups over AND without touching the top cup OR doing violence to the bottom cup.
4. Start by shouting at the cups to see if you can scare the cups to separate.
5. Make a rule.

6. Use telepathy.
7. Solve the puzzle.
8. After some time has passed call for the group's attention and state: Shouting at the cups seems to have had no effect. Debrief shouting as a solution . . . (does it motivate you, why, why not?)
9. Demonstrate the solution. (blowing across the lips of the cups will cause the first cup to lift and float upward and up.) Allow the group to practice the "trick."
10. Debrief thoroughly.

Commentary

Be prepared for some other solutions as well as some level of frustration.

What is available this summer? Continued from page 1

LTC

There are four sessions. Although there are just over 120 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 32 slots available.

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

TLC

There is only one session and there are 5 slots left.
July 12-15

Adviser Certification

There is only one session which is open to all teachers,

coaches and collegians and there are 8 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

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

A case for student activities continued from page 1

A sense of fulfillment will engage comfort. Student activities allows students of every ability level to work together and to succeed together. This sense of competency is well beyond what is possible in the regular classroom.

The end result of the increased comfort is academic success. Student activities cause more students to be successful as

students.

Essential to the success of any student activities program is purpose. Teachers must be engaged to teach the lessons of problem solving, organization, time management, confrontation, conflict management, communication, listening, as well as all the duties and responsibilities of the club.

If not then the lessons learned

are accidental. And the role of student activities is too important to leave to chance.

Alumni voices anonymous per request

For eight years gymnastics was my life. I breathed it, drank it, dreamed about it. I practiced all the time and barely had a life outside the center. When I was 13 I dislocated my knee, but I still had a good chance to qualify for regionals if I could just keep going. Two years later, I had to give up competitive gymnastics to have two surgeries. Without the sport that I loved, I began to lose weight and grow depressed and upset at myself and everything up to and including God. What had I done that was so bad that God would allow my dream slip away? As you can tell, I was a mess.

Worst of all my mother decided that I needed to go to this leadership camp. Gawd, what was she thinking? I lost the battle, but I knew I was going to hate it and I was determined to just hide in my room as much as I could.

When we pulled into the driveway and I saw the kids dressed at pirates yelling and screaming and running around the parking lot, my heart sank.

This was going to be worse than I thought!

I won't bother to tell you what my first day was like—you can imagine. I was so full of myself and so determined to have a horrible time. I asked Jim if I could share this with everyone without publishing my name. Not because I am trying to hide anything or whatever. Because of what I learned the rest of that week.

I will always miss competitive gymnastics. But in the year since I gave it up, I have grown to appreciate all of the more important things in my life. While I was on the team, my family and friends were pushed aside. I had no time for anything except gymnastics. My family and my friends were supportive but I took that for granted.

The SLTP camp made me realize that and a whole bunch of other stuff. I came to see myself as me first and the roles I play second.

At camp I watched that happen to all of us as we learned

what “24 hour mutual respect” really means.

So this is not exactly an “SLTP saved my life” speech, but I am really glad that I came. When Jim asked us to turn and look for our parents in that last assembly, I just cried when I saw my Mom.

I still get sad sometimes when I think about gymnastics, but only sometimes. I am looking forward to ALC this summer and I want to go to TLC AND I want to be on staff.

Oh and pirates make me smile now!

The InterLead—April 2nd

Last Spring we decided to revamp the Spring Conference, which was introduced as and ran for five years as the Difference-Maker Showcase. Last year the Showcase had it's best turnout. So why change something if it is working?

For quite some time we had been kicking around the idea of an "issue based" conference. The success of our touring play, "stop, look and listen" and last summer's powerful "silence is not an option" have spurred this re-formatting of our Spring Conference. We decided to combine the two formats -- service and issues and turn the Spring Conference into a full day event like the ReE.

InterLead - short for Inter-State Student Leadership Forum - will attempt to be just that - a forum for the expression of student ideas and opinions on the issues which most affect them. The InterLead conference will each year be designed to raise, discuss and explore issues that face their student constituencies and to explore community action. The Forum will bring together student leaders with community leaders to determine and create action plans.

This will be a conference that makes a statement. It's statement on the issues will be supplemented by the combination of exploration of service opportunities, since the current generation is the

most committed to community service ever. We hope to draw workshop presenters to showcase their service projects and offer explanations of the opportunities that are available across our region. This component of the conference is being coordinated and developed by our Alumni Association Executive Board, who did so well with this element last year.

This year the Forum will address violence against women in schools, its causes, effects and will explore action plans. The key element in the program will be the internationally acclaimed play, "The Yellow Dress." Following a thorough processing of the play which will include a determination of its reality and connection to high school and collegiate school life, there will be discussion groups designed to involve student leaders and community leaders in solution planning. We are inviting state legislators from all over our region. And we need everyone's help to reach out.

Another primary need for students is meaningful service projects. The InterLead will provide the opportunity for many groups who need student involvement to showcase them selves for student leaders.

For now -- we are examining a town meeting format for the General Assembly after the proc-

essing of the play. This would enable us to raise several ideas for discussion in the shortest amount of time. We don't see this as a confrontation between student leaders and community leaders -- we see it as an opportunity to collaborate while extrapolating solutions. Legislators need to see student leaders as what they are -- leaders. And students need to see legislators as what they are -- difference-makers. It should be wild. It will raise awareness as to the seriousness of today's student leaders. It will raise awareness of the quality of today's political leaders.

Make your plans today, we must limit the size of the audience to approximately 300 to accommodate the presentation of "the Yellow Dress," so it will be first come first served.

See the last two pages of this newsletter for a brochure and registration form. Now, get busy -- lets fill the auditorium.

The Adult Role in Student Leadership by Dr. Jim Fitzgerald

She had the kind of reputation that made you shudder at the possibility that you might wind up in her 4th grade class. Everything about her said, "Don't mess with me." I survived her class with only the usual amount of after school time, but it was a couple of years later—after I messed with her, I guess—that she gave me the first leadership challenge of my life.

By that time I was a 6th grader at Saint Ambrose Grammar School in Dorchester, Massachusetts. My buddies and I patrolled the recess yard like we were small town cops with an attitude. One day, for reasons that are not at all clear to me now, we decided to violate the rules by crossing through the kindergarten area and visiting the younger kids' play zone. Sister Gerado intercepted us as we were strolling back to our own turf. She demanded to know what we were doing; and instead of cowering and apologizing like I should have, I offered her a confident response that included challenging what I thought was a stupid rule.

The look that passed over her face made me regret immediately what I'd said. She surprised me by not growing furious and laying caustic rebukes all over us. Instead she got quiet, refusing to conceal her disappointment in us. We had "let her down."

Her response gnawed at me all day. I realized that I had a genuine respect for ole Geronimo and had treasured her opinion of me more than I ever knew. After school I shuffled downstairs into her classroom to whimper an apology. Instead of letting me off easy, she told me *why* she was so hurt by my flippant attitude. She told me that she had always thought I was an unusual young man, in a category with only a couple of students she ever had and while I was lazy, I was the kind of person from whom she "expected great things." My smart-aleck backtalk earlier was in another category entirely. It was just "common."

At that moment I realized I never wanted to be *common*. Sister Gerado was the first in a long line of adults who have variously modeled,

taught, inspired, encouraged, challenged, and corrected me. Seeing stuff in me that I wasn't aware of, these grown-ups helped me to discover the joy of leadership, and eventually the thrill of teaching leadership.

All of which brings me to my point. Those who believe that student leadership is simply about adults getting out of the way so kids can take over are wrong-headed and short-sighted. Their thinking has been soaked with the same sort of laughing gas that led French philosopher Rousseau to conclude that the problem with education is...ADULTS! *If we tyrannical adults would just leave children alone they would learn, grow, and develop just fine on their own. Like wild flowers in a meadow, kids have everything they need to bloom their way toward a beautiful life. Only adults could mess up such a naturally perfect plan....*

That's crap!

I think that today's version of student leadership aspires to something more than a vision of teens who come early and stay late so they can set up and clean up. If that is true, then adults must play a significant role in the process. The key is the role of the adults must be finite. It must not control everything. And the role of the adults in the organization must be defined and accepted by the student leaders from the beginning.

To lead, student leaders must exercise real decision making and real choices. Adults face the responsibility of balancing the student's choices against legal, moral and ethical standards as well as the reputation of the school and the community.

To be sure there are gray areas. To be sure there are misunderstandings and conflicts. Those too can and should be learning experiences.

Being a student activity adviser is complicated. Let's examine the first rule of the job.

Don't Let Kids Set the Direction without help

When you want to travel to

Hartford from Boston, the direction you choose matters. There is one correct direction. Everything else is, at best, a temporary detour and, at worst, a sitcom episode waiting to happen. "Which way should we go?" Anyone who's looked at a map should be able to come up with the *correct* answer. "We head west...and a little south."

Some adults think they are doing cutting edge student leadership by asking kids to supply the direction for the group. They're wrong. Direction-setting needs to be assisted by those who are geographically literate. Non-map-readers need not apply. It doesn't mean that kids can't help – it just means they should not do it alone.

In SLTP we call this process "non-participatory participation" and it is the cornerstone of our adviser training program. Without solid grounding any student group is vulnerable to misdirection. Student activity misdirection is characterized in at least three ways:

- ◇ *lostness* (when the group never had a clue that anyone even cared about where they should go);
- ◇ *defiance* (when the group knew what was wanted/ expected but decided to go their own way);
- ◇ and *chaos* (when the group goes in every possible direction). We don't do students any favors when we ask them to do something they aren't ready for

The adult role is to guide and to teach, which is exactly what we signed up to do.

Conference Profile—Adviser Certification

Everyone involved in student activities understands the value of cocurricular programs to both school and community. That value has been acclaimed in virtually every national study of our system of education. Yet very little training has been offered for the advisers, sponsors or coaches who are charged with those activities.

Essentially this program provides the opportunity to learn and master the techniques and methodology of advisership. It is a comprehensive program quite unlike most hour long workshops and even day long seminars that merely skim the surface by offering only idea sharing.

To begin with, our program reviews the basic skill areas that are essential to successful advisership - *organization, group process, structure, project planning, involvement, motivation and leadership training*, then we approach the step by step progression through all the aspects of activity programming as teacher preparation.

Fundamentally we hold that successful advisership is the result of actively teaching and preparing students to lead themselves. So the intent of the program is to enable and prepare advisers to teach leadership skills to their students. As a result, our program is experiential in nature.

The registration fee covers program materials and meals for the

two days. The dorm and classrooms are air-conditioned. The program materials include: a leadership manual, an adviser's manual, a book of ideas, an adviser's "toolbox", a program shirt, and a group photo.

Registration is limited. Professional Development Points will be awarded.

Applications and more information can be found on line.

Join us—July 27-28!

The 2006 SLTP Conference Schedule

Where leaders learn HOW
to make a difference!

- **InterLead—the Inter-State Student Leadership Forum**

April 1

- **Officer Training Seminar**

July 6 - 7

- **Leadership Training Conferences (4)**

July 11 - 15; July 18 - 22;

Aug 1 - 5; Aug 8 - 12

- **Advanced Leadership Conferences (4)**

July 12 - 15; July 19 - 22;

Aug 2 - 5; Aug 9 - 12

- **Leadership in Athletics**

July 27 - 28

- **Adviser Certification**

July 27 - 28

- **The Leadership Center**

July 12 - 15

- ♦ **The ReEnergizer**

November 25, 2006

We're on the
Web!

www.sltp.info

**Information
for Parents,
Teachers, Stu-
dents,
Administra-**

Conference Brochures

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>

Presenting “The Yellow Dress”

According to the American Journal of Preventive medicine, approximately one out of every three high school and college students experienced violence in a dating relationship. The Student Leadership Training Program alumni and staff are working to find solutions to the escalating problem of dating violence in New England.

On April 2, at Nichols College, SLTP will host a unique event. It is called the InterLead, and it will be a forum joining student leaders with community leaders to discuss, investigate and collaborate on this problem. The attendees at the InterLead Conference will see *The Yellow Dress*, a powerful and dramatic one-woman play based on the real life stories of young women who were victims of relationship abuse.

The Yellow Dress is the story of a young woman who warmly tells us of her relationship – that begins as young love and ends in tragedy. Following the processing of the play, the audience – student leaders from all across New England and invited state legislators from Massachu-

setts, Rhode Island and Connecticut will engage in a discussion aimed at a collaborative solution.

SLTP is once again raising the issue of violence against women, as it has raised the issue of bullying because student leadership must be involved with community leadership if solutions are to be found. Dr. Jim Fitzgerald, founder and director of SLTP said, “Our hope is to heighten awareness and to engage the best minds from our schools and communities to develop solutions that will result in a cultural shift that does not accept violence in relationships.”

The Yellow Dress program is produced and directed by Deana’s Fund, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to promoting healthy relationships. The organization provides theater and arts based educational programs to schools and communities around the United States.

According to Sher Quaday, Director of Deana’s Fund, “The Yellow Dress Program is a good first step to developing an effective dating violence prevention program. It is a great

tool, especially when used together with school and community efforts.”

Dr. Fitzgerald adds, “That is the point of the InterLead, bringing student leaders from so many schools to engage with community leaders on this issue is sure to get both groups actively engaged seeking solutions. Our alumni believe that leaders must stand up for what is right, even if they are standing alone. On April 2, at the InterLead, student leaders will get a chance to stand side by side with their community leaders. We are pleased to give them a place to stand. Archimedes said that with a place to stand he could move the world. At SLTP we believe that leaders have the power to change the world.”

Come join us on April 2!

Dating Violence

What do we mean when we talk about dating violence?

Dating violence isn't an argument every once in a while, or a bad mood after a bad day. Dating violence (or relationship abuse) is a pattern of violent behavior that someone uses against a girlfriend or boyfriend. Abuse can cause injury and even death, but it doesn't have to be physical. It can include verbal and emotional abuse constant insults, isolation from friends and family, name calling, controlling what

someone wears and it can also include sexual abuse. It can happen to anyone, at any age, no matter what race or religion they are, no matter what their level of education or economic background.

Understanding what domestic violence is means being aware of the many different things abusers do in order to control their partners. The checklist of behaviors on the next page may help you decide if you or someone you know is being abused.

Silence is NOT an option. Awareness is the beginning. Get help.

Relationship Q & A

The statistics say it is ONE in THREE ... That is pretty scary. Share this page with your students.

Does your boyfriend or girlfriend. . .

Use emotional and psychological control?

- * call you names, yell, put you down, make racial or homophobic slurs, or constantly criticize or undermine you and your abilities as a partner?
- * behave in an overprotective way or become extremely jealous?

- * make it difficult for you to see family or friends, or "badmouth" your family and friends?

- * prevent you from going where you want to, when you want to, and with whomever you want to?

- * humiliate or embarrass you in front of other people?

Does your boyfriend or girlfriend. . .

Use economic control?

- * force you to account for what you spend or take your money?

- * prevent you from getting or keeping a job or from going to school?

Does your boyfriend or girlfriend. . .

Make threats?

- * make you afraid by using looks, actions or gestures?
- * display weapons as a way of making you afraid or directly threaten you with weapons?
- * use their anger or "loss of temper" as a threat to get you to do what they want?

Does your boyfriend or girlfriend. . .

Commit acts of physical violence?

- * carry out threats to hurt you, your pets, family members, friends, or themselves?
- * destroy personal property or throw things around?
- * grab, push, hit, punch, slap, kick, choke, or bite you?
- * force you to have sex when you don't want to or to engage in sexual acts that you don't want to do?
- * deny you access to food, fluids or sleep?

These are some of the most

common tactics used by abusive those who try to control their partner, but certainly not the only ones. If your partner does things that restrict your personal freedom or that make you afraid, you may be a victim of domestic violence.

You are not alone. Millions of women and some men are abused by their partners every year. The good news is that more resources are available now than ever before to help you be safe. If you answered yes to any of the questions -- it is time to get some help. Talk to your guidance counselor. Talk to your SRO. Talk to an adult at school that you trust. Talk to your parents.

What do you think? What other behaviors or actions do you think could be considered domestic violence?

Invite Your Principal and Community Leaders

Invite your community leaders to join us at the Inter-Lead. The SLTP Staff, our Alumni Board and the folks at Deana's Fund are sending personal invitations to legislators and community leaders.

But don't leave it all up to us. In fact, please help us by inviting your legislators and the leaders of your com-

munity. This is a major issue and it cries out for a collaborative response.

We believe that this issue is too important to try to solve by accident.

Last summer's play, "silence is NOT an option" got a lot of student leaders actively involved in trying to work on this problem, we believe that

the Forum will allow for substantial discussions.

So help us to reach out.

student leadership
The Student Leadership Training Program



InterLead

The Inter-State Student Leadership Forum

This is a very special conference with a very unique format. At the InterLead we will take advantage of the diversity of the attendees—who come from all over New England from big schools and little schools. The focus will be on service and on the issues facing student leadership.

We believe that service should not be a “have to.” Service should be a “get to.” Service is leadership in action.

We also believe that there are very important issues facing schools and our nation. The forum will enable student leaders to express their beliefs as well as learn from experts in the field.

We will bring together all manner of experts to present workshops and to showcase the opportunities to make differences.



April 2, 2006

Nichols College, Davis Hall

\$15 per person

Deadline: March 15

***For more information or to download applications visit:
<http://sltp.info>***

