

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” – William Bulter Yeats

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Firestarter Youth Power Curriculum

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Firestarter is a program designed to engage young people ages 10-18 in solving the problems that face their community and world.



Firestarter Guidebook

The mission of Firestarter is to empower young people to identify and create solutions to serious social problems. Firestarter will motivate young people to explore the issues that face them, raise their awareness of local and global problems, and build their skills to become effective and meaningful problem solvers, locally and globally.



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Introduction

This guidebook is designed to be a hands-on, interactive tool. You will read the examples of young people from across North America who are solving serious problems in their communities *TODAY*. There are descriptions of activities you can do with your friends to help inspire them to do something. Included are action planning forms to help guide you in your effort to change our world. At the end of the Firestarter Handbook you'll find a list of resources that can inspire and educate everyone on how to help our world, including organizations and websites that *YOUth* and adults can use.

Young people have an incredible energy and vitality that can be embraced to promote social change. By promoting young peoples' self-awareness and capacity for leadership, communities can encourage Youth Voice and involvement in decision making and problem solving activities.

All Firestarter participants will develop a social change project during the Firestarter workshop, and are encouraged to implement it immediately. These project proposals will be presented to other participants, and collaboration will be encouraged for success. The key elements of these projects will be compiled and distributed as key elements for positive social change in our communities and world.

The Firestarter Series was created with a group of young people in 1997. The first program focused on teamwork and problem-solving skills, the second on social responsibility and personal involvement. Firestarter will encourage young people to solve serious social problems through effective skill building that incorporates multiple learning styles and a highly interactive workshop format. By applying progressive education methods (including experiential teaching methods and service-learning), I believe young people can be empowered to change the course of negative outcomes that await bored, uninspired and apathetic youth. Firestarter employs those methods, and veers away from over-simplified "pizza-box" youth programming.

Through hands-on support and applicable education, young people can change the world they live in. Firestarter participants will develop a meaningful and realistic Action Plan to start making a difference in their community and world. But that is just a spark. You've gotta spread the flame!

Adam Fletcher
Olympia, Washington, USA



Module One: Spark a Flame

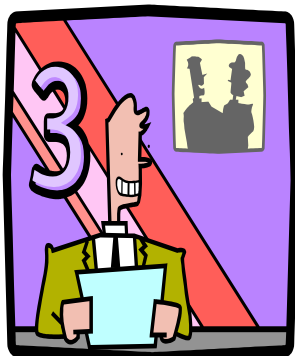
Motivation

"Why should I do anything?" "What difference does it make?" "Who cares?"

TODAY, right now, all around the world there are young people just like you doing things to make their communities better places to live. How do YOU see yourself? Are you "just a kid"? Do you think youth have "too much time on their hands"? A young person in Los Angeles, California wrote the following article. Read what he has to say, and then think about it.

The Media Distorts Teens

by Gohar, 18,
California



Every time I go to the supermarket, I see another magazine cover saying there's something wrong with teens. After teens shot their classmates at Columbine High, Newsweek's cover showed the face of a troubled teen that looked angry and dangerous. His eyes were cold and mean. The headline stated in bold, white letters, "The Secret Life of Teens."

Inside the magazine, the cover story referred to the rap artist Eminem. A parent is quoted saying, "I don't understand this kid Eminem. What is he about?" The article goes on to say that "...the secret lives of teenagers are likely to remain a secret."

Who writes this stuff? Have these editors talked to a teen lately? They make it sound like we're all ready to blow up our schools with bombs that we built in our bedrooms. They accuse us of having secret lives, but we're not

the ones that are going around having affairs with interns so that Time magazine can publish a cover story saying "How the Scandal Was Good For America" (February 22, 1999). That cover seemed to excuse President Clinton for his affair with Monica Lewinsky

When a teenager commits a terrible crime, the media connects the crime with the teen's age. They make it sound like all teens are like that. But when an adult commits a horrible crime, the media doesn't try to make it sound like all adults are demented killers.

After the tragedy in Columbine, the front page of the Los Angeles Times read "Armed Youth Kill Up to 23 in a Four-Hour Siege at High School." But after the August shooting by a 37-year-old at the Jewish Community Center in Granada Hills, the headline across the August 11 paper read "Gunman Opens Fire, Wounds Five at Day Camp." His age was not mentioned in the headline.

Headlines and Pictures Suggest That All Teens Are Severely Depressed

There were a ton of articles published after the Columbine incident. Each one tried to figure out what's wrong with teens. Many of the articles made valid points. But their headlines and presentation give the wrong impression. An article in Newsweek titled "When Teens Fall Apart" makes it seem like all teens are unstable and ready to crumble. Another article



titled "How Well Do You Know Your Kids" gives the impression that all teens keep major secrets from their parents. They make it sound like it's the teens' fault that the parents don't know them or what's happening in their lives.

After Columbine, people started to censor teen videos, TV and music. President Clinton singled out three video games that he thought, "glorified violence" and contributed to the deaths in Colorado. Producers postponed violent episodes of sitcoms such as the season finale of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and video retailers were asked to return tapes of The Basketball Diaries. So many people were criticizing Marilyn Manson, he cancelled his own concert, although Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold didn't listen to Manson's music. (They listened to Rammstein and KMFDM.)

After the shooting at the Jewish Community Center, none of the media pointed out what kind of music the gunman listened to or what kind of video games he played. Nor did the media ask these questions about the Atlanta man who killed his wife, children and people who worked at his office. In fact, Newsweek's cover had the headline, "The Atlanta Massacre." What? Why didn't they publish "The Secret Life of Adults?"

"Groaning Lumps?!?"

An Aug. 9 cover story for U.S. News & World Report reported "Inside The Teen Brain." The first paragraph portrays teens as moody adolescents who don't do chores and homework but spend five hours on the phone every night. The first paragraph read, "Your bluebird of happiness is flown, replaced by a groaning lump that can scarcely be roused for school. In short, your home is now inhabited by a teenager." (A lump? Sounds like something you put in the

oven for dinner. And aren't adults grumpy in the morning too?)

The second paragraph continues, "The shooting in Littleton, Colorado, focused the nation's attention on aberrant adolescent behavior, but most teens never come close to committing violent acts. Still, even the most easygoing teenagers often confound their elders with behavior that seems odd by adult standards."



But it is adults that often confound us teens with behavior that seems odd.

Adults make laws but they don't enforce them. They make a law saying that no one under 17 can see a R-rated movie without a parent, but then they make it really easy for us to see it. In June, after American Pie opened, my friends and I went to see it. Not all of us were 17. One of my friends was two weeks short of her 17th birthday. So when I was purchasing my ticket, I asked for two. The lady refused, because I wasn't 21. No biggie. I stood in line again and bought another ticket from another lady. Ironically when we entered the theater, the guard at the door asked my friend for her ID. She showed it and even though she wasn't 17, he let her in.

Adults talk about caring about teens but all they care about is how much money they can



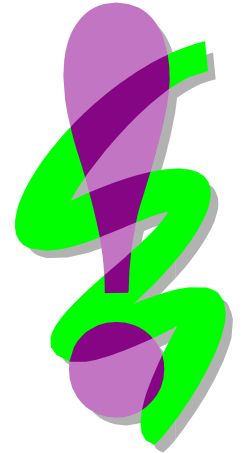
make off us. For example, the movie *American Pie*, with its graphic story about some boys who make a pact to try to lose their virginity before prom, is clearly aimed at teens. Yet it's rated R. The moviemakers could have cut some scenes and gotten a PG-13 rating, but they didn't-why should they? They know that teens can all go see an R-rated movie if they want to.

Many companies now hire teens to work as trend spotters. They try to predict what the "next big thing" is going to be. That way they can get a head start on manufacturing and marketing to youth.

Adults talk about how teens "confound their elders," but they take no responsibility for the mixed messages that they send us. I wonder if the editors of teen magazines even read what they publish. If they did, they would see how contradictory their message is. On one page of a teen magazine, it says that it doesn't matter what you look like because you are beautiful the way you are. On the next page of the same magazine, there is an ad for Cover Girl makeup and the following page has a guide for losing weight before summer. I've seen one ad for diet pills that shows a thin girl in a bikini. The ad says, "My friends laughed when I bought a bikini. But when I walked on the beach..." Does it ever occur to the advertising executives that these pills aren't safe and that some girl who is five pounds and four ounces overweight might order them?

Adults talk about wanting teens to succeed but often they block the path to success. They won't hire us because we don't have experience. But how do we get experience when we can't get jobs because we don't have any?

It is adults who cut the education budget. It is adults who make the decisions that leave us with tattered books, unqualified teachers and chairs that rock back and forth because their legs are uneven. It is also adults who allocate more money to prisoners than to students. So why doesn't Newsweek report how hard it is to get into a decent college or how many hours teens spend a night on homework?



It's Time For Adults To Take Responsibility for Their Actions

And maybe it is time that the media started taking responsibility for what it did. After the shooting at the Jewish Community Center, one of the local news stations had a special report on what encourages these madmen to go out there and commit these heinous crimes. An expert said that the images of people crying and comforting each other is often what encourages people to kill. And while the expert was talking about comforting and crying, the station was showing pictures of people doing it. And before the station went on a commercial break, it showed more pictures of this sort. It was as if the station was doing this on purpose.

So next time an adult asks, what's wrong with America's teens ask them, "What's wrong with America's adults?"



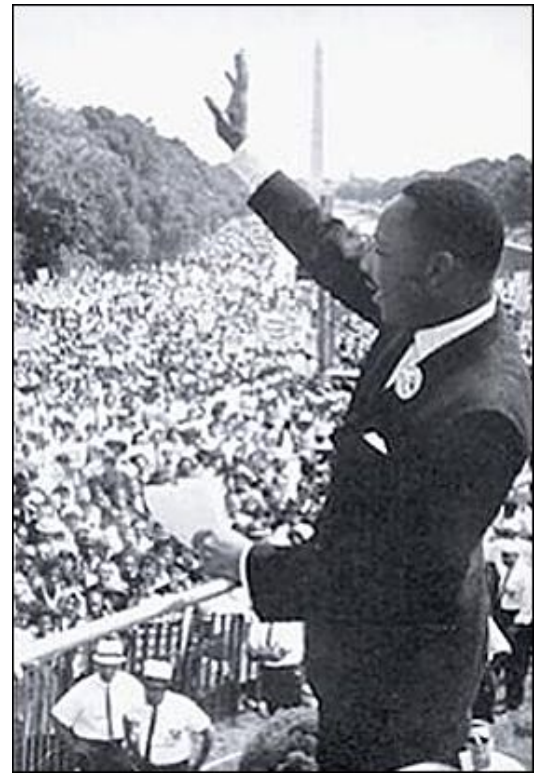
There are many causes, issues, problems and challenges that you can work to change or solve. The following is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963. In it, Dr. King addresses several issues.

I have a Dream

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.

But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.



In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check -- a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.





But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.



Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.



I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.



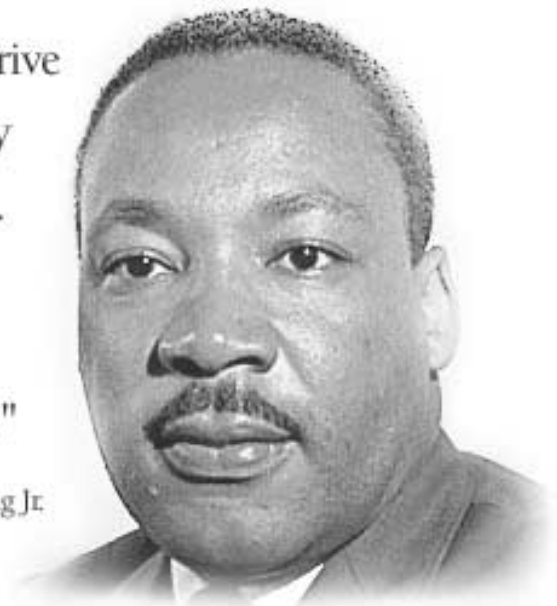
When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"



Notes on Motivation

"Darkness cannot drive
out darkness; only
light can do that.
Hate cannot drive
out hate; only
love can do that."

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Module Two: Build a Fire

Awareness

"What can I do? I'm just a kid!" "Am I the only one trying?"

What does it mean to be young? What is it like being YOU? Are you a "kid", a "youth", a "teen", or a "young person", and what's the difference? What difference can YOU make? Let's figure that out, and then decide what it means!

The Power of One

Fitting In With the 'In' Crowd
by Liz, age 16, MN

My so-called friends can't accept that I don't wear the "In" clothes as they call it. Since I don't wear Tommy Hilfiger, or American Eagle, or some of those other big name brands, I should not be allowed to be part of their activities or even be treated like everyone else. What's really bad is that, I proved them wrong when I shaved my head. When I did this people never thought that I was the same! They took me to be a psycho, who needed mental help!

The only reason it is wrong is because I am a female. I hate being like everyone else. If we all wore the same clothes, acted the same, and did everything the same this world be very boring to live in. I'm one of those people who live to be different and unique in my own way, and people can't except that I'm different and I'm not part of their "normal" way of life.

What are the issues that affect Liz in her story?

Identify an issue that affects you personally?

Write a short paragraph about your issue.





Youth-Driven Success Stories

The following stories are about young people who decided there was a need in their community, and then DID SOMETHING to meet that need. Some projects were one-time, and some are on going. Let these stories inspire you as you search for a fire to start!

Cleanin' It Up **Changing Our Neighborhoods**

Katie, 15, from Kansas City, Missouri, decided that her community's streets were an eye sore and it was time to do something about it. "Cleaning up the streets is needed in my community because it looks trashy and I thought if we could clean it up, we could make a difference not only in my eyes, but other people's eyes too. I would like to see a nice clean community that people care what it looks like."

Takin' Care of Kids **Teens Helping Kids**

Rachel, 13, from Nashville, Tennessee, and her friends are concerned about children who have serious emotional disturbance (SED) so they created a hotline for kids to call, get advice or just talk. They also created a public service announcement about SED. "The 'Kid Counselors' give information and resources to the callers. We want to help bring awareness to the issues surrounding mental illness and help kids with SED to be accepted as an important part of our community."

Voices of the Past **Recording the History to Affect the Future**

Kristen, 14, from Glenshaw, Pennsylvania, records the thoughts and stories of World War II and Korean War veterans. "I think it will give the youth of my community a better understanding of what happened during the war. Hopefully, it will also give us a greater respect to the men and women who sacrificed their time, effort, support and sometimes lives so we can be free today."

WE Own Our Communities **Knowledge is Power**

Blair, 15, from Moorestown, New Jersey, has joined forces with community leaders to reclaim a neglected community center and continue to transform it into a library with computers for inner city kids. "Volunteerism opens a myriad of different culture and races, we have a unique opportunity to look at the work through their eyes and 'walk in their shoes.'"

Taking Care of Ourselves **Bringing Youth Towards Economic Independence**

Shawneequa, 17, from Norfolk, Virginia, started Youth Empowerment Virginia. The project is committed to assisting youth in reaching their academic, social and economic potential. The program fosters independence and responsibility, empowering more youth with their own desires to become active, constructive caring members of the community through better leadership skills, social skills and educational services.

Project: Unity **Getting Students Voice Heard Through Technology**

Project: Unity was founded in November of 1999 by a group of students from schools across Washington County, Pennsylvania. Project: Unity's goals are to allow students to discuss school, community, or family problems with each other and to find a solution that will benefit all involved. Using today's technology, they wish to unite a county and the people within that county to save time, money, and lives. This group feels that they can make a difference by relying on the principles of honesty, hard work, leadership, and perseverance. These students are the leaders of tomorrow, and they're starting today.
www.projectunity.bigstep.com/



Friends and Shelter for Teens (Part 1) - Helping Teens Who Are In Abusive Relationships

Three years ago, Cecilia, age 20, developed the nation's first teen-operated organization that is fighting to stop teen dating and domestic violence, and increasing awareness of teen domestic violence.

"Statistics tell us that every nine seconds a woman is beaten; that both sexual and physical abuse of adolescent boys and girls is at alarming rates; that substance abuse is rising among our youth. With this being so, who then is responsible?"

"When I got involved with an organization called INA, Inc. (Increased Natural Ability), we worked on the remedial part of the problem of domestic violence. The idea was floating around INA to have a preventive aspect of domestic violence because this is the sort of thing that if you could prevent, it would really reduce so much grief. So I took the initiative and started this organization called Friends and Shelter for Teens (F.A.S.T.). It's sort of misleading because we don't actually have a shelter per se, but it's more like a haven for teens to get together while we're trying to help others and help ourselves."



CECILIA'S PROFILE

What makes a successful community leader?

From personal experience, you have to be willing to accept personal failure and to put your ego down. You learn so many things you don't know and sometimes you'll just feel like you're at the bottom and feel like, "I don't know anything!"

What's your dream?

I want to make social change by establishing an orphanage for those children who don't have parents.

How do you create lasting, positive change?

We aim to have an impact on the future and there's nothing better to do than to make it be an organization with an infrastructure that will be there while you're gone. I think you need to make sure that whatever it is you're trying to do outlasts you and the only thing to do is to build the infrastructure. You may not have all the glories of seeing the impact while you're there, but you have to make sure the groundwork is there so that while you're gone, other people can work on it.



Notes on Awareness



Module Three: Fan the Flames

Skill-building

"How can I do anything?" "I don't have any answers!" "I'm not a leader."

Are you the class clown? Are you organized, with everything straightened out? Do you write poems or make art? Do you get good grades? All of these are skills that YOU can use to lead people and make a difference. Let's figure out how you get things done!

Communicating Success

In order to gain support from other youth and adults, young people need to use several different forms of communication.

What are some different forms of communication?

What are some different ways to use those communication skills?

How can you use these skills to start solving your issue?

What skills will you use?



Can YOUTH be Teachers?!?

*"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."
William Arthur Ward*

As a New Leader in your school, community and world, you will be required to thoughtfully and skillfully build community and facilitate discussions with your friends, other students and all sorts of adults. No one will give you the "right" questions to ask, and they won't tell you how to *engage* the people you want to work with. As you contemplate your role as a leader, list some attributes of these different kinds of leadership roles. Are these all leadership roles?



Teacher

Mentor

Servant

Guide

Coach

Captain



Community Leadership Roles



Mentor

Are you a mentor leader, or a boss leader? As a mentor, you are a catalyst; that is someone who gets things started and keeps them moving. A mentor will encourage new ideas and perspectives by inspiring the members of your group to address issues and consider alternatives. As a mentor, your purpose is to draw out the best in each member of your group. You don't have to lead the group to consensus or a certain result. A mentor will encourage communication and the exchange of ideas in a thoughtful manner. You will keep the shared vision of your group alive by encouraging each individual in your group to thoughtfully participate in discussions and activities.

Coach

coach (kōch) *n.* 1. A person who trains and directs individuals or teams. 1b. One who gives instruction. 2. One who prepares others, who enables and inspires others.

ath let ic (āth-lēt'ik) *n.* The principles or system of training and practice for activities that requires physical skill and stamina.

team (tēm) *n.* 1. A group on the same side. 2. A group organized to work together.

Servant-Leader

The servant-leader is a servant first, leader second. Do you have a natural feeling that you want to serve others? A servant-leader serves others, and then, as the course of time happens, becomes a leader. The difference between a regular leader and a servant-leader comes from the care taken by the servant to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.

For All Leaders...

The best test is: do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to serve others? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit from the service of the leaders, or at least not be further deprived of what they need?

Write a definition for the kind of leader you are:

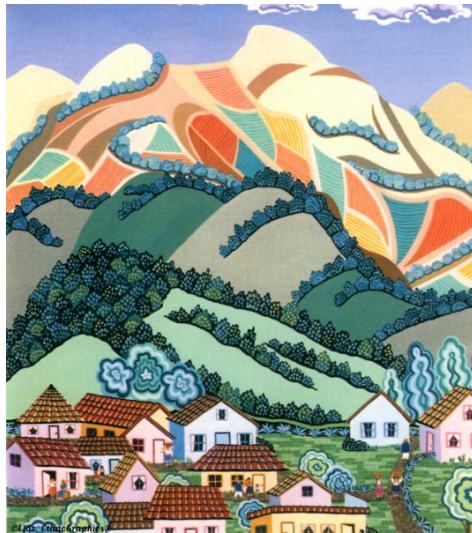


Community Mapping

What is community? Is it a literal, physical place that you can touch, taste, feel and see? Or is community a larger thing, an untouchable thing that doesn't have any particular form or shape? Take this page and map out your community, one physical, and one intangible. Remember to list the people and places that make your community real to you!

People

Places



Steps for Involving Students for Student Leaders

Involve your peers at every level. Encourage and empower them to learn the history and purpose of your issue on their own. Let students take responsibility for their own knowledge and encourage them to take "ownership" in the issue. They have a stake in the current health and future well-being of their communities; let them understand that being well informed on the past and present of their issue allows them to make the issue a significant part of their lives. Integrating these different sections into one will enable you to inspire your peers. Mix and match ideas from the different sections for a winning approach!

Step One:

Provide substantial information from the start.



Step Two:

Make knowledge of the past and present into your project.



Step Three:

Make history come *ALIVE* through hands-on activities.



Step Four:

Involve everybody in all the process and integrate all the steps!

Simple Strategies for Leading YOUR Peers

- + **Think about your peers: What are their names? What are they interested in? Why should they be involved in your project?**
- + **Share that same information about YOUrself with them!**
- + **Have fun and laugh together!**
- + **Ask questions if you don't understand what another person is saying.**
- + **Listen to other people without making judgements.**
- + **Be yourself.**
- + **Be honest.**
- + **Remember that YOU are young too! You don't have to act like an adult. How do adults treat you? Do you treat your peers like that?**
- + **Use your role models as examples.**



Notes on Skill-Building

YOUTH Leading YOUTH

So YOU *are* a leader. How can you become a better one? Here's some skills other young people have identified they want to develop in order to become better mentors, guides, coaches and facilitators:

- ✦ Public Speaking
- ✦ Time Management
- ✦ Publicity
- ✦ Computer Training
- ✦ Effective Communication
- ✦ Facilitation of Meetings
- ✦ Decision Making
- ✦ Organizational Effectiveness
- ✦ Working With Diversity
- ✦ Getting Good Resources

Where in your school or community can YOU learn or hone those skills? Brainstorm some resources on this page.



A great leader worked in the field as his people finished their project. When they were finished, they patted each other on the back and declared "We've succeeded, and we did it ourselves!" The great leader smiled, knowing his job was done.



Module Four: Spreading Like Wildfire

Next Steps

"There's TOO much to do!" "I don't know where to start!"

YOU can make a difference and change your life, your community, your nation, or even the WORLD. Through some hard work and planning, you can get things done. Follow the Action Planning Guide and find success!

Friends and Shelter for Teens (part 2) **Helping Teens Who Are In Abusive Relationships**

Check out what Cecilia did to start an organization to help others and how you can do it too.

ACTION STEPS

Gather support and resources from friends and family.

Do outreach by word of mouth to family and friends. Ask for donations or for any type of resource.

Advertise and hold fundraisers to gain support and finances.

We frequently use our fundraisers to get the chance to let the people in power know about our group and it is a chance for us to establish a relationship with them.

Research organizations affiliated with your cause to look for a parent organization.

I became part of INA, Inc. (Increased Natural Ability). The one thing unique about F.A.S.T., aside from being the first teen-run domestic-violence organization, we have outgrown our parent organization, INA, Inc

Make a budget and proposal for your program.

Prepare a budget and plan of objectives and goals to present to organizations and

government officials for support and finances.

Involve the media and government officials in your cause.

We want to make our connection to the people who have the power to make a difference and who are in a position to really change things, such as the Governor of Massachusetts. We got a lot of press coverage when we had a fundraiser last May that the Governor and his family came to.

Recruit people for volunteers or workers.

The thing about having a teen organization is that we're all going to become 20 years old eventually and we need to keep replenishing new people to run the organization. So the goal of the first generation of F.A.S.T. teens is to make the group sustainable enough so that the next generation of F.A.S.T. teens will have all the resources and information available to them to continue running F.A.S.T.



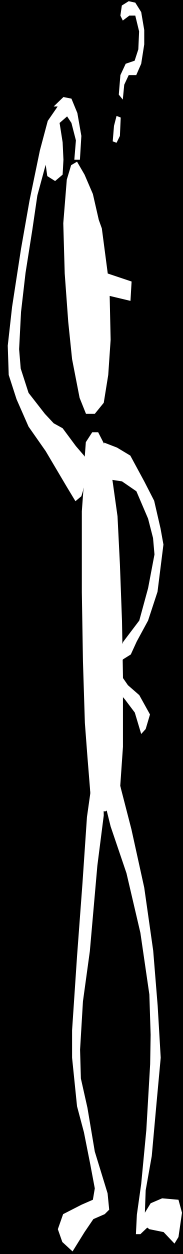
December 22, 2000

Caroline, Alberta

Firestarter 2000
Personal Action Plan

Action Plan

Start thinking!



We want to achieve our goals. We want to solve real problems with real solutions. In order to do that, its good to develop a written path to follow. Complete this Action Plan worksheet to help ***BUILD THE FIRE*** in your project!

Project name:

Community affected:

Organization/ Group/ Class affected:

Collaborators/ Partners/ Team members:

1. **State the *problem, issue, or topic*:**

What problem, issue, or topic have you selected to work on?
Describe it in specific terms:

Based on your opinions and needs survey:
How does this problem affect your community?

How serious is it?

What individuals or groups are most affected?

What is your community currently doing about the problem?
Include government, business, schools, clubs, or churches

What's YOUR Problem?
is it?



December 22, 2000

Caroline, Alberta

Firestarter 2000
Personal Action Plan

Get others involved!



Action Plan

Design the Project.

Evaluate Options:

What are some different ways to approach the problem, issue, or topic you've chosen?

Which of these options do you think are going to be most effective?

Which are realistic in terms of your time and energy?

Design the Project:

- What are the goals of your project?
- What will be accomplished?
- Who will your project affect?
- How long will your project take?
- What does success mean for your project?
- What resources do you need for this project?
Include people, money, skills and materials
- Where and how will you obtain these resources?
- What are the major obstacles to a successful project?
- Who is likely to support your project?
- Who is likely to oppose your project?

What are YOU gonna do about it?!



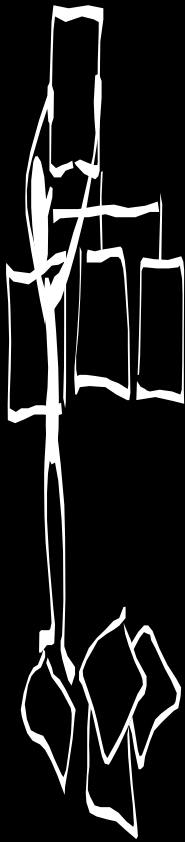
December 22, 2000

Caroline, Alberta

Firestarter 2000
Personal Action Plan

Be a LEADER!

Action Plan



Develop a Plan.

- What activities are needed to complete your project?
Include meetings, research, rallies, etc.

- What tasks need to be accomplished to complete your project?
Include getting materials, making arrangements, getting permission, finding locations, etc.

Create A Timeline

- In what order should these tasks be completed?
- What dates should these tasks be done by?

NOW IMPLEMENTATION



December 22, 2000

Caroline, Alberta

Firestarter 2000
Personal Action Plan

Get things DONE!

Action Plan



Carry It Through!

1. Tasks and Budget

Tasks: What major tasks need to be completed?
Who will be in charge of each?

Write the person's name and the date the task is due to be completed.

Task:

Person:

Due Date:

Budget: List supplies, materials, or financial assistance needed.
Next to each item, identify ways to meet these needs.

Resources Needed:

Ways to Meet These Needs:

Make it REAL!



Notes on Next Steps



Other Information

Local Opportunities for YOUTH

Suspensions Removed from Student Records Civil Liberties newspaper, August 1999

Sunnyside High School students and their parents have negotiated an agreement with Sunnyside School District to clear illegally imposed suspensions from the students' school records. The suspensions were imposed when the students left school last November to protest the passage of Initiative 200, a measure restricting affirmative action programs.

"I am happy that we were able to persuade the School District to remove the mark on my daughter's record," said Luz Maria Ortiz, a parent of one of the suspended students. "It wasn't fair for the school to suspend my daughter, especially without giving us a chance to discuss it with them first."

"The District was right to correct the problem for all of the affected students without protracted litigation. This resolution will allow the students to focus on continuing their education without worrying about a disciplinary record that should not have been imposed," added Lucy Helms, an attorney who represented the students and parents on behalf of the ACLU of Washington. Columbia Legal Services also provided legal representation.

School officials suspended over 160 students on November 4, 1998, after the students left school grounds to take part in a peaceful protest of the passage of Initiative 200. The students believed that the initiative, which limits affirmative action in public employment, public contracting, and public education admissions and hiring decisions, would harm their future educational and economic opportunities. When the students returned to school grounds after the protest, they found out that they had been suspended for three days, effective immediately, without any opportunity for a conference with school officials and without notice to their parents.

The U.S. Constitution and state law require that the parents and students be given an opportunity to discuss proposed suspension with school officials before it is imposed. Schools must also use progressive discipline, trying less severe measures before imposing suspension. Suspension is not authorized for the first time a student has an unexcused absence. The students and parents allege that the Sunnyside School District violated their constitutional rights and state law by suspending them en masse, without any opportunity for a conference, and without any individual determination of the appropriate discipline for the situation. Mount Vernon students who took part in a similar protest simply received detention.

Last November, parents, students and their representatives met with School District officials to seek reversal of the suspensions and to have them removed from the students' records. The District reduced the suspensions to two days but declined to clear the students' records. Several students and parents then retained legal counsel and were able to obtain an agreement to have the suspensions removed from the records of all of the affected students without filing a lawsuit.

From www.aclu-wa.org/issues/students/



National Organizations for YOUTH

JustAct JustAct is a national, nonprofit organization promoting youth leadership and action for global justice. Founded by students in 1983 as the Overseas Development Network, the organization has been a forum for thousands of young people to address global issues such as social inequity, human rights, and environmental sustainability. www.justact.org

Earth Force The Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN) at Earth Force provides opportunities for young people to understand, improve and sustain watersheds in their community. GREEN empowers young people to learn more about water quality within their watershed and use their findings to create solutions. www.earthforce.org/green

Activism 2000 Project Website for the A2K Project, a private, non-partisan organization to encourage young activists. Great list of media outlets, fundraising opportunities and national organizations looking to empower youth. Activism 2000 Project, P.O. Box E, Kensington, MD 20895; 1-800-KID-POWER; info@youthactivism.com.

Alliance for Justice Alliance for Justice offers training for young adults (age 15-25) in advocacy and direct action organizing to stop gun violence. Technical assistance for young people engaged in advocacy campaigns to end gun violence. Matching Challenge Grant up to \$10,000 to support youth-led organizing. Includes a 250 page stand-alone resource guide to aid youth-led social change.

CoMotion CoMotion is about learning to tackle a problem in your community through action and mobilization. CoMotion works to build youth activism by providing training and technical assistance to youth led efforts on the issue of gun violence across the country. If you want to stop gun violence in your school or community, call CoMotion at (202) 822-6070.

Foster Care Youth United
<http://www.youthcomm.org/Publications/FCYU.htm>
Foster Care Youth United, which began publication in June, 1993, is the only bi-monthly magazine written by and for young people in foster care. FCYU is designed to give a voice to young people living in the system by providing a forum for an open exchange of views and experiences by those most impacted by foster care.

The Free Student <http://www.thefreestudent.com/>
Which is available both on the Web and by e-mail, keeps readers aware of news of particular relevance to students. Recent subjects include politicians calling for censorship, the recording industry fighting Napster, and students fighting for freedom in Belgrade and Tehran.

Generation Net <http://www.generationnet.org/>
This website asks, "If you could change any U.S. law or policy, what would it be?" and enables members to democratically choose their top priorities. The group then organizes grassroots campaigns for the changes they've chosen. GenerationNet.org's offline campaigns will take the issues to the politicians on their home turf, while they're campaigning for re-election.

Global Youth Action Network Website for the Global Youth Action Network, an international collaboration among youth and youth-serving organizations to share info, resources and solutions. Also, the website for Youth in Action, the US network of GYAN. GYAN, 211 E. 43rd Street. Ste. 905, New York, NY 10017; (212) 661-6111, fax (212) 661-1933; gyan@youthlink.org.

Harlem Live Harlem Live broadens youth's view of the world using technology and journalism while fostering understanding through diversity. Harlem Live covers events, people, issues throughout Harlem, learning as young men and women the processes of journalism, web creation, professional growth and so much more.

LA Youth: Youth News Service Essays and opinions written by teens in LA to go along with print newspaper intended to provide "free speech and creating for young people a journalism program that fosters critical thinking, writing skills, literacy and civic education." Topics include juvenile justice, homophobia, bereavement, entertainment and more.

Latin American Youth Center Latin American Youth Center programs help youth develop critical thinking and leadership skills and, through the visual and performing arts specially, address cultural differences and difficult social issues. The LAYC supports youth and families in their determination to live with dignity, hope and joy, exphasizing Respect, Synergy, & Trust.

ListenUp! Since January, 1999, ListenUp! has assisted more than 1,000 youth from diverse backgrounds in the researching, writing, production, editing and distribution of their own media. This project lets youth know that their work and voices are important and valued while contributing to an open climate for youth media production.

PEACEFIRE Young perspectives on censorship in media and the Internet. Links to stories from other news sources.

VOX VOX is an independent newspaper written by and about Atlanta-area teenagers. Print publication features essays, reporting pieces and creative writing, and is distributed monthly during the school year. VOX, Youth Communication, 229 Peachtree Street, NE, Ste. 203, Atlanta, GA 30303; (404) 614-0040.

Youth Advocacy Coalition Youth Advocacy Coalition advocates for and with young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender in an effort to end discrimination against these youth and to ensure their physical and emotional well being. NYAC's many programs include a National Youth Summit in Washington DC to bring youth and adults together for advocacy.

YO! (Youth Outlook) YO! is a newspaper written by and for Bay Area youth. It is distributed 10 times a year to schools all around the Bay Area. YO! includes essays, reporting pieces, cultural reviews and poetry. It's last page is writing by incarcerated youth. YO! Youth Outlook, 660 Market Street, #210, San Francisco, CA 94104; (415) 438-4755, fax (415) 438-4935.



International Organizations for YOUTH

Global Youth Connect

Global Youth Connect is a global organization, led by and for young people, which supports and encourages youth activism for human rights and social transformation. Our mission is to build and support a community of front-line activists from around the world, and to inspire a new generation of young people to work for human rights and social transformation. GYC was created by a steering committee of young people from around the world, and is led by a Board of Directors made up entirely of youth.

www.globalyouthconnect.org/

Global Youth Action Network

The Global Youth ACTION Network is an international collaboration among youth and youth-serving organizations to share information, resources and solutions. Its purpose is to promote greater youth engagement. The GYAN creates the opportunity for every young person to be heard, leverages their voices to impact national and global agendas and provides tools, recognition and financial support for youth who take positive action to improve our world - community by community. www.youthlink.org/

The United Nations Youth Unit

The Youth Unit is the focal point within the United Nations system on matters relating to youth. It has been set up to do four things: enhance awareness of the global situation of youth and increase recognition of the rights and aspirations of youth; promote national youth policies in cooperation with both governmental and non-governmental youth organizations; strengthen the participation of youth in decision-making processes at all levels; and encourage mutual respect and understanding and peace among youth.

www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/



Links

There are a lot of organizations that you can research for more information. The following is a list of programs and organizations that are online.

Volunteerism:

www.pointsoflight.org
www.americorps.org
www.cityyear.org

Social Activism:

www.calltoaction.org
www.nebraskansforpeace.org
gwww.nylc.org

Travel and Work Abroad:

www.peacecorps.org/
www.crossculturalsolutions.org

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

There are several WEBSITES that have great information about the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Below is a list of useful sites.

www.thekingcenter.com

The King Center site, including history, philosophy, quotes, and community outreach and involvement

www.dosomething.org

Includes Kindness and Justice Curriculum, and further information for teachers and students

[www.nps.gov.malu](http://www.nps.gov/malu)

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Site, National Park Service

www.mlkday.org

Corporation for National Service Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Site

www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1998/mlk.page/

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, CNN Interactive

mlk.cafeprogressive.com/enter.html

Comprehensive listing of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sites

www.lakeview.mccsc.edu/martin.html

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Noah Woodland, Lakeview, WA Elementary

Youth Rights

Framing Youth: 10 Myths About the Next Generation, Mike Males

A really great book by the guy who wrote *The Scapegoat Generation* that lists 10 myths about teens and tells you why they're wrong (and proves it!).

Escape from Childhood, John Caldwell Holt

John Holt was a revolutionary in children's rights and education (Holt was a great teacher himself). He makes some great arguments on why we should treat children and youth as equals. These books come highly recommended from any youth rights advocate who knows their stuff.

+ www.asfar.org

+ www.youthrights.zzn.com

+ www.kidspdx.org

+ www.brat.org

Youth Leading & Inspiring Adults

Some prime examples of young people motivating adults are demonstrated in the following books:

"Foxfire: 25 Years", edited by Eliot Wigginton and His Students, Doubleday, 1991;

"The Kid's Guide to Social Action"

"Kids With courage", both by Barbara Lewis, Free Spirit Publishing, 1993 and 1995.

+ www.nationallyouthsummit.org

+ www.youthresources.org

+ www.yipidodah.org

+ www.ysa.org



The Charge of the **Firestarter**

I will fan the flames of idealism.

I will bring young people together

to solve the problems that face

our communities,

our nation,

and our world.

I will spark a flame of interest,

build a fire of commitment,

fan the flames of courage,

and spread idealism like wildfire.

I will carry this commitment

with me always and in all ways.

I am a Firestarter,

and I will burn forever.



Biography - Adam Fletcher Sasse

At the age of 25, Adam has spent ten years serving and working in the area of youth development, with small non-profit organizations, school, churches, and through AmeriCorps National Service. He served three terms in AmeriCorps, and is now working with a national organization called the Points of Light Foundation based in Washington, D.C.

As a teen, Adam taught drama to low-income African American kids in Omaha, Nebraska. He also worked at several camps and a nature center sharing his love for the outdoors with a variety of young people. In Nebraska, Adam developed after school activities, basketball and mentoring programs at churches and community centers. He worked with Planned Parenthood and the YWCA teaching adult living skills to high-risk teens, as well as facilitating residential programs for youth in a drug treatment facility.

In 1997, Adam served in Lincoln, Nebraska with the AmeriCorps National Service program. AmeriCorps is a nationwide movement engaging people of all ages in service to their community and nation. AmeriCorps Members receive a small living stipend and a college education award in return for their service. In Lincoln, Adam focused his efforts on creating tutoring and mentoring programs for Kurdish and Iraqi refugee children. They included after school and in-school tutoring, summer camps and soccer programs.

In 1998-1999, Adam was in the Washington Service Corps as an AmeriCorps Member. He served with the Boy Scouts of America where he created new Scout units in minority communities around Tacoma, Washington. He also developed and directed a ropes challenge course on the Olympia Peninsula for youth groups from across the state.

In 1999-2000 Adam served in the AmeriCorps Leaders Program. The ACLP is a national service leadership development program coordinated by the Corporation for National Service in Washington, D.C. Adam performed his service with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps in Taos, New Mexico. While there, he supervised a service learning program for American Indian, Hispanic and Anglo youth ages 6-24. The program was held across the community and emphasized traditional heritage as a learning tool.

Currently Adam is a Youth Engaged in Service (YES) Ambassador with the Points of Light Foundation and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in Olympia, Washington. His role is to promote youth involvement within OSPI, as well as provide schools with training and consultation in encouraging youth voice.

Adam has attended a variety of colleges and universities, and is currently attending the Evergreen State College in Olympia and is studying education and youth and community development.



Bibliography

1. Article "The Media Distorts Teens", from *LA Youth*, the newspaper by and about Los Angeles teens.

LA Youth newspaper is a countywide, teen-written publication with a readership of 300,000 youth and adults. It is published six times a year. LA Youth, an independent non-profit organization, was founded in 1988 to train, inform and provide a voice to Los Angeles youth through journalism. www.layouth.com

2. *Friends and Shelter for Teens, Fitting In With The "In Crowd", and Youth Driven Success Stories are from Do Something.*

"Do Something offers my students a chance to act, to be heard and to be recognized as valuable and necessary partners and leaders in our community's growth. Do Something shows my kids - many of whom had never been positively recognized, many of whom had left school, been on parole, had babies at home to care for, who never thought their opinions or actions mattered - that they as young people have the power and the obligation to work for a better world." - Caitlin Wittig, Teacher, Options High School in McAllen, Texas. www.dosomething.org

3. Action Plan adapted from Vancouver, WA *PeaceJam™ Project Planning Guide*, ©1994.

PeaceJam is an international education program built around leading Nobel Peace Laureates who work personally with youth to pass on the spirit, skills, and wisdom they embody. The goal of PeaceJam is to inspire a new generation of peacemakers who will transform their local communities, themselves, and the world. www.peacejam.org

4. Photos of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from the Seattle Times.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. interactive site, features celebration and discussion of the vision and legacy of the man. This Web site contains stories and photos culled from The Seattle Times over the past decade. As for the current state of race relations and other topics addressed on this site, check the guestbook -- and don't forget to add your thoughts before you leave. www.seattletimes.nwsource.com/mlk/

5. Definitions are from various sources

Servant Leader is from *The Servant as Leader* by [Robert K. Greenleaf](http://www.greanleaf.org) (www.greanleaf.org); *Coach* is from *Coach's Manual* by [Institute for Community Leadership](http://www.icleadership.org) (www.icleadership.org)

6. Simple Strategies... adapted from article in CNS' The Recourse Connection, written by Joy Des Marais

