

# Take the *LEAD*



Inspirational young people tell their stories



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Family and Youth Services Bureau

## Taking Them by the Hand

"Mentors become attached to the students and the students love having a high school kid be their friend," says 18-year-old Ryan Wootten of Orlando, Florida's Teen Trendsetters Reading Mentors Program. "They think it is so cool!"

Ryan first read about Teen Trendsetters in the magazine Florida Trend's NEXT. He filled out an application two years ago and has been with the program ever since.

Teen Trendsetters prepares third graders for Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), a required



reading and math test that will determine if they go on to the next grade. High school students are paired with third graders and trained to help them prepare for the test.

Ryan has benefited as much from the experience as the third graders he serves.

"I have been able to make friends and touch the lives of third graders by being there for them," he says.

### **For more information contact:**

Teen Trendsetters Reading Mentors  
924 North Magnolia Avenue, Suite 319  
Orlando, FL 32803  
(407) 650-3899  
[floridanext.com/trendsetters](http://floridanext.com/trendsetters)

## Enlighten the Community

"Some people didn't want us to exist," say members of the Liberty High School Civil Rights Team, "but we kept at it, and now we're the only school in West Virginia to have a civil rights team."

The team promotes diversity with various activities, including a schoolwide Racial Awareness Week. They enhance cultural awareness and encourage others to "celebrate the differences" in a small, mostly White high school. The team received a key to the city from the mayor of Clarksburg, West Virginia, in 2001.



### For more information contact:

Liberty High School Civil Rights Team  
One Mountaineer Drive  
Clarksburg, WV 26301  
lhscivilrightsteam@hotmail.com

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

-JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, THE 6<sup>TH</sup>  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES



## They Got the Scoop

"A great leader is someone who is trustworthy, responsible, and honest," says Nikita Reese, a student at Calvin Coolidge Senior High School in Washington, DC.

Nikita is one of the youth from the Latin American Youth Center, a multicultural community-based organization that supports youth and their family. The center has partnered with Ben & Jerry's ice cream stores to operate and own two PartnerShops in the Washington, DC area. Youth "scoop their way to success" by making money working behind the counter and participating in job training and entrepreneurial education programs.



Reliable and trustworthy, Nikita organizes birthday parties, scoops ice cream, cleans up the store, manages the money, and makes cakes during her work week. Through these ongoing responsibilities, she's learning to lead.



**For more information contact:**  
Latin American Youth Center  
1419 Columbia Road NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 319-2225  
[www.layc-dc.org](http://www.layc-dc.org)

## Be a Reading Role Model

"A true leader is a servant who desires to make a difference for others," says Lucas Hunt, a Loretto High School senior in Tennessee.

When Hunt realized that many students in his community valued athletics over academics, he looked for the reason why. He found that funding for school libraries was being cut and that many children did not have access to newly published children's literature. He began the Volunteer State Readers program, where ninth through twelfth graders from Loretto High School volunteer their time to be "reading role models" by reading to students at a local elementary school.

Hunt and other volunteers are making a difference for younger children in their community by getting them excited about academics early on.



"It exposes the children to academic role models—which is necessary in my community," says Hunt.

**For more information contact:**  
Volunteer State Readers Program  
Program Coordinator  
Loretto High School  
525 Second South Avenue  
Loretto, TN 38569



"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth."

—MUHAMMAD ALI, WORLD RENOWNED BOXER

## When Art Imitates Life

"You have to have patience and be willing to sacrifice to be a great leader," says 19-year-old Maurice Kie, who has been a member of the Life Pieces to Masterpieces program for 11 years and was a founding apprentice of the program.

Life Pieces to Masterpieces empowers African American males between the ages of 3 and 21 who live in public housing in Washington, D.C., by providing them with creative outlets to express themselves. Members tell stories about their life experiences, and then the group creates an art project to recreate each story.



"We come up with a theme, paint it, cut it out and sew it together," Kie says explaining how the youth create using a collective process. "It is similar to quilting."

With patience, teamwork, and sacrifice, the boys and young men create beautiful art.

**For more information contact**

Life Pieces to Masterpieces  
603 50<sup>th</sup> Street NE, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Washington, DC. 20019  
(202) 399-7703  
[www.lifepieces.org](http://www.lifepieces.org)





## Finding Their Way

"Before I got into community youth mapping, I didn't think I was going to get anywhere in life, and I didn't think I was going to graduate or anything," says 16-year-old Vincent Burns of Wilmington, Delaware. "Now the school I go to is ranked third academically in the Nation."

When Burns' probation officer directed him to Community Youth Mapping two years ago, he says, it changed the path of his life. "I decided I wanted to change my life because I was tired of getting in trouble," says Burns who recently participated in



a national youth panel discussion on Community Youth Mappers. "Once I got into this program it kind of opened my eyes to a lot of new things."

Youth mappers interview businesses and explore neighborhoods in search of places for youth to find jobs and positive things for youth to do with their free time. Using this canvassing strategy, youth identify resources that may not be found in phonebooks and share information with other youth.

In the process, they change their own lives and the lives of their peers.

**For more information contact:**  
Community Youth Mapping  
Cym@aed.org  
[www.communityyouthmapping.org](http://www.communityyouthmapping.org)

"Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve"  
-DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,  
HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

## Be Heard in Your Community

"A leader is someone who not only commands, but can also follow orders," says Sammy Lie-Tjauw, a member of the Gwinnett Children's Shelters Teen Advisory Board.

Youth board members use this motto when lobbying local politicians around issues affecting shelters and group homes

or when planning activities with teen residents. The board is made up of youth in the community who help make key choices for the teen center of the Gwinnett Children's Shelter. Every month they



participate in a community service project and have group discussions with youth on issues like careers, self-image, and healthy living.

Working as a team, the board members learn to lead and to follow in order to be heard in their community.

### For more information contact:

Teen Advisory Board  
The Gwinnett Children's Shelter, Inc.  
P.O. Box 527  
Buford, GA 30519  
(678) 546-8770  
[www.gwinnettchildrenshelter.org](http://www.gwinnettchildrenshelter.org)

"A leader has the vision and conviction that a dream can be achieved. He inspires the power and energy to get it done."

-RALPH LAUREN, FASHION DESIGNER AND BUSINESS MOGUL



## Sharing Knowledge

"Being able to reach the audience you will encounter, having perseverance, making decisions and thinking about things before you act upon them are all qualities of a good leader," says 19-year-old Eric Jackson.



Jackson, a sophomore at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, volunteers 5 hours a day with Civic Works as an Americorp volunteer counseling and



tutoring middle and high school males from around the city in subjects that range from life skills to mathematics. Growing up in the Cherry Hill section of Baltimore City, he saw many of his peers go in the wrong direction and feels more positive voices need to step up to the plate for communities like the one he grew up in.

The program helps youth like Jackson lend his advice back to his community.

### **For more information contact:**

Civic Works  
2701 St. Lo Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21213  
(410) 366-8533  
[www.civicworks.org](http://www.civicworks.org)



## Turn Off the TV And Get Fit

"I think a leader is someone who has a big heart to reach out to people, and they have no problem taking criticism," says 15-year-old Colleen St. Onge, president of the Waainiigaanzijig Tribal Youth Council.

The council started with the idea of helping people make one simple change toward more active lifestyles for its "Celebrate Fitness" campaign. Knowing people would be reluctant to give up television altogether, the youth council developed the "TV Remote Turn In" campaign to encourage people to

get up and switch channels instead of sitting and clicking a remote. Community members who turned

"Since you get more joy out of giving joy to others, you should put a good deal of thought into the happiness that you are able to give."

-ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, HUMANITARIAN

in their remotes could earn prizes. The council also hosted basketball games, snowshoeing, and ice skating.

Colleen's "big heart" has helped hundreds of people in her community take small steps towards a healthier lifestyle.

### For more information contact:

Youth Education and Activities Program  
The Waainiigaanzijig Tribal Youth Council  
Sault St. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians  
Lambert Tribal Center  
St. Ignace, MI 49781  
[www.unity.org](http://www.unity.org)



## Creating a Community That Suits You

"A great leader is a person who sees a problem and instead of trying to fix it, works to eliminate it by going to the root of the problem," says Hampton Youth Commission member Chrystal Holloway.

The 24 high school youth on the Hampton Youth Commission speak on issues that are most important to them and their peers.

Chrystal also serves on a subcommittee that is developing a teen center they hope will feature a cybercafe and recording studio, among other amenities.

"We are trying to develop a teen center



that is a positive place where teens can go without feeling like they are under the scrutiny of adults," Chrystal says.

Youth on the Hampton Youth Commission have found a way to go to the root of the problem, to affect public policy and play a formal role in their city's decision making.

### For more information contact:

Hampton Youth Commission

Hampton, VA 23669

(757) 728-3285

[www.areyouinthegame.com](http://www.areyouinthegame.com)

Here are a few Web Sites that you can help youth interested in becoming leaders in their communities.

Idealist (Action Without Borders) --- [www.idealists.com](http://www.idealists.com)

Learn and Serve America --- [www.learnandserve.gov](http://www.learnandserve.gov)

Youth Service America --- [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)

Big Brothers Big Sisters --- [www.bbbsa.org](http://www.bbbsa.org)

National Youth Leadership Council --- [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)

Sound Out --- [www.soundout.org](http://www.soundout.org)

Youth On Board --- [www.youthonboard.org](http://www.youthonboard.org)



For more information on positive youth statistics and Positive Youth Development, please contact the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth:

**NCFY**

P.O. Box 13505

Silver Spring, Maryland 20911-3505

Phone: (301) 608-8098

Fax: (301) 608-8721

Web site: [www.ncfy.com](http://www.ncfy.com)

E-mail: [info@ncfy.com](mailto:info@ncfy.com)

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