



## The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Leadership Course

### Overview

The Martha's Vineyard Leadership Initiative was selected as a site for The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Leadership Course based on the book, *Stone Soup for the World: Life Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes*. The Institute brings the Stone Soup fable to life, inspiring people to give their gifts so together we can feed the hunger in our hearts and the hunger in our world. We use these 100 life-changing stories to teach values: empathy & authenticity and inspire our youth to find their moral compass, a true north as young people navigate important decisions for their life, their community and the world.

### Leadership Course

The Institute's 10-week after school program with juniors and seniors from Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. The group had equal boys and girls. The group reflected the ethnic diversity of the Island with African American, Brazilian, Wampanoag and New England youth. Project Coordinators Gia Winsryg-Ulmer and Grace Burton-Sundman facilitated the sessions with Author and Founding Director, Marianne Larned. Graduation was held at the MVRHS Library on June 8. Teachers and parents were invited.

### Target Audience for the Leadership Course

The Leadership Course provides Guidance Counselors and Leadership Educators with the resources and tools to facilitate and manage powerful leadership trainings and to collaborate with other educators in the field. For youth, the online Platform is a place to connect with other program participants and educators, share reflections, set goals, access training materials and much more.

**Local-Global Leadership Course:** Martha's Vineyard is a rural community with its eye on the world. Many MVYLI youth are world travelers. The stories *Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes* feature 29 countries and 65 U.S. communities. The goal is to use the stories and Education Curriculum to develop skills essential for 21<sup>st</sup> Century leaders.

### The Educational Experience

**The Institute's Performance Metrics** measures the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills taught in the BETA Program: Adaptability, Communication, Critical-thinking, Conflict-Resolution, Teamwork, Project Management, and Problem Solving.

The **Leadership Course** focused on developing these skills were developed through readings stories from the book, *Stone Soup for the World*, hands-on exercises and connecting with communities around the globe. Youth

were able to connect with each other and develop skills in a powerful way during the Program. Youth learned about the Platform and made recommendations for how we can maximize its impact with other youth.

## Leadership Course

- **Session 1: Leadership Community:** We read *Stone Soup Magic* and introduced how the Platform would be integrated into each session. Each student brought an iPad or computer, or we provided one.
- **Session 2: Teamwork:** We read *The Great Martha's Vineyard Barn Raising* and shared experiences of being part of a project that required teamwork.
- **Session 3: Communications:** We read *Freedom From The Madness*, where Mahatma Gandhi uses non-violence as a form of powerful non-verbal communication. We then shared pieces of our personal stories.
- **Session 4: Problem-Solving:** We read *The Heavens Open* about the Peaceful People's Revolution in the Philippines. We learned about the problem-solving process through a hands-on problem solving activity.
- **Session 5: Conflict Resolution:** We read the story, *Democracy in Action*, about the work of Ada Deer who fought for and won the right for her Wisconsin Tribe to be reinstated. We also watched the trailer to "We Still Live Here" about Wampanoag Tribe reclaiming it's language and drew parallels between the two stories.
- **Session 6: Critical Thinking Skills:** We read *Fulfilling Martin's Dream*, about how Dr. King inspired Chicago businessman to create the national mentoring organization, Inroads to support young people of color. We brainstormed ideas for an online service projects serving youth that could be done through the Platform.
- **Session 7: Project Management:** We read *Tree People*, about a 16 year old youth who planted a million trees in Los Angeles. MVYLI youth also began to define two projects that they want to put into action.
- **Session 8: Time Management:** We read *The Power of an Idea* about a 15 year old high school student who organized a system for cafeteria food to be distributed to homeless shelters in Florida. We used the Institute's time management worksheets to fine-tune our own project timelines.
- **Session 9: Adaptability:** We read *The Businessman with a Heart* about Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Muhammad Yunus who founded the successful Grameen Bank to give micro-credit loans to empower women to develop their own businesses. MVYLI youth launched their online service projects and explored the power of
- **Session 10: Professionalism:** *She Kept Her Promises* about Eleanor Roosevelt's leadership. We watched the **MVYLI Job Shadow Day Video** featuring the youth and their mentors.

## Outcomes

### 1. Performance Metrics Highlights

- **Improvement average: 14.2 points**
- **Communication:** + 20 points in total (average of +4 points)
- **Adaptability:** +11 points (average of 2.2 points)

2. **Youth Success:** MVYLI has the largest group of seniors (15) - all are attending 4-year colleges. Five received full scholarships.

### 3. Leadership Course Projects Developed by Youth

- **MVYLI Service Leadership** matches Vineyard youth with volunteer opportunities [www.volufind.com](http://www.volufind.com)

- **Sustainability Project: Virtual Field Station Project:** [www.virtualfieldstation.com](http://www.virtualfieldstation.com)

An educational tool for students to access scientific research from Vineyard organizations on marine environment for science fair projects as well as internships, summer jobs.

- **MVYLI Voices Survey** to engage students, educators and administration in a dialogue about how to improve the school culture and learning environment at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School.

#### **4. Youth Enthusiastic Response on Leadership Course**

*The Leadership Course serves a good purpose, it gives us the outlet to reflect and collect our thoughts about the session in constructive and thoughtful way and to really comprehend what we learned, felt and accomplished.*

**Bella Chimes**

*I learned that when tackling a huge problem, any little bit helps and makes a difference and baby steps lead to bigger steps.*

**Cooper Bennett**

*I learned that it's best to not sit back and over-think a great idea. If you have an idea that you think would make a difference in your life, your community's life, or anyone's life, you should go through with it and act on it in a timely manner.* **Chris Aring**

*I learned we should be accepting, and willing to forgive a wrong someone has made in order to move forward.*  
**Skyler Cameron**

*Breaking down the components of communication really gives you a better understanding of how to work on the parts you may be weak on such as listening or speaking your mind.*

**Jack Murray**

*People around the world can use this Platform in ways to connect with others, break barriers between people and help us connect as one.* **Aurora Austin**

*The Platform could be used to create change in countries with a lack of resources. They could use this for students who don't have access to programs that give them the resources to pursue their future. It can connect them with successful people in their community or even around the world to guide them.*

**Bella Chimes**

*The Institute's programs are very much aligned with my 5-year plan for Martha's Vineyard Public Schools. In the past, our students have greatly benefitted from MVYLI's emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving, expanding their horizons and helping them think about their future. I'm especially pleased to see the Leadership Course is focused on writing, critical thinking, problem solving, expanding youth horizons and helping students think about their future.*

**Martha's Vineyard Regional School System Superintendent Matthew D'Andrea**

#### **Leadership Course Recommendations**

- One story a week allows students to delve more deeply into the values and lessons learned.
- Focus on small group work since the class is about 30 students.
- Engage students from Leadership Course to help facilitate a future weekly class.
- Work from a template so teachers/students adapt the curriculum using the book and curriculum toolbox.

- Create incentives that impact their high school GPA.

## **The Platform: Lessons Learned & Recommendations**

### ***1. Develop a group culture of respect and cooperation***

- Create Ground Rules collectively with students.
- Talk about why each one is important.
- Do activities and icebreakers that work on developing the values of the ground rules.
- Have people self-evaluate their following of the ground rules.
- Talk about the power of positive group process.

### ***2. Make the Institute's Leaders Platform a powerful vehicle for learning***

- Build "how to use the platform" training into the beginning of the Course
- Provide laptops for each youth so technology doesn't become a time-consuming obstacle to learning.

### ***3. Make Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing key components of the Course***

- Build in time for writing, discussion and responding to other's feedback.

### ***4. Create opportunities for group members to practice the skills they are learning***

- Facilitate the development of on-line service projects
- Create leadership positions within the course
- Strive to collaborate with the group to develop the Curriculum

### ***5. The Look, Feel & User Experience of the Platform***

- Like an "iPad" – to be sleeker, smoother, more intuitive.
- Create a training tool that looks and acts like social media.
- Users should be able to "share" something easily (your photo album idea, or a website that is related to the topics covered in the course or similar subject matter.
- Users should be able to communicate easily with other youth with similar passions.
- Users can easily find other youth with similar passions to connect with in the first place.
- Users can customize their pages to reflect these passions.

## **MVYLI Program as MVRHS Leadership Class**

Upon completion of the Program, MVYLI youth were invited to share their thoughts about the proposed collaboration with MVRHS' Leadership Class.

*Yes! We should because the Leadership Class at MVRHS is lacking. We should share it with others so that they can have an opportunity to learn the necessary leadership skills for life – which are taught very well at MVYLI. This program teaches many skills not found within the classroom.*

**Chris Aring**

*We could use this Leadership Course to give MVRHS students the ability to work on the fundamentals of leadership. To get better at something its important to break it down and look at the pieces and try to work on them. Thank you for spending these 10 weeks with us and helping us to improve and grow. You guys are lovely!*

**Bella Chimes**

*I believe this Leadership Course would be a very useful course to the MVRHS Leadership Class and more. It teaches interesting and important leadership components.*

**Daniel Gaines**

*This Leadership Course should be open to not only students but for people of all ages! It is very helpful for learning leadership skills. The main problem with the opening it to the public is that they are busy and this is very time consuming. I had a great time and it was very helpful.*

**Cooper Bennett**

*This Leadership Course would be beneficial to high school students because it is an original course that helps teen grow. There isn't another course like this that teaches life skills. It would be a very beneficial opportunity.*

**Ali Bartlett**

### **About The Stone Soup Leadership Institute**

The Institute is a 501c3 non-profit organization founded on Martha's Vineyard in 1997 -- developing educational tools, creating youth-community leadership initiatives, and sustainability projects to build a better world. The Institute's book and curriculum has been used in over 120 communities worldwide to inspire youth and engage leaders to address critical issues facing their communities. From Martha's Vineyard to the inner cities of Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Oakland to rural communities of Puerto Rico, Caribbean Island of Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands and the Philippines, The Institute has developed strategic partnerships to bring under-served communities into the new global economy. The Institute developed 6 unique youth leadership initiatives on Martha's Vineyard (MVYLI), Hawaii, Oahu, Lanai (SHYLI), Holyoke, MA (SHYLL.co), Vieques, Puerto Rico (VYLI) and Virgin Gorda, BVI (VGYLI).

### **About Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative**

For 10 years, the Stone Soup Leadership Institute has developed a comprehensive year-round program for Vineyard youth to develop "21st Century Skills." Through its year-round mentorship program and annual weeklong Leadership Summit, MVYLI aspires to build bridges between the classroom and the Island's real life struggles for equality and sustainability. The work of MVYLI is in building leadership, communication, personal confidence, community, building, and *internal* motivation. MVYLI youth have the motivation to lead them to success in life.

**The Institute's Leaders Platform** takes The Institute's 20-year investment to an online format so millions around the world will have access to our Stone Soup style leadership training modules and transformative programs. This dynamic new educational strategy offers a wide range of smart tool resources designed for people who dream of a better world and are ready to take action in their life and in their communities. The Platform offers high-touch/high tech in-depth leadership training, access to a vast digital content library and a virtual space to collaborate and learn from others working for change in their communities.

Stone Soup Leadership Institute • [www.stonesoupleadership.org](http://www.stonesoupleadership.org)