

Presented by the Massachusetts Youth Leadership Foundation
P.O. Box 990053, Boston, Massachusetts 02119

Student leaders participate in 2008 MassSTAR 3-Day Conference hosted by Lasell College



The Massachusetts Youth Leadership Foundation partnered with Lasell College in Newton, MA to host the spring 2008 conference. The conference took place Friday, May 30, 2008 to Sunday, June 1, 2008.

Nearly 100 students from all over Massachusetts participated in the 2008 MassSTAR Conference. They heard from panelists and participated in workshops and activities centered around the conference's theme: *Think Globally, Act Locally*. After the conference ended, students said that their lives were changed and that the conference inspired them to be better people in their communities.

Keynote speaker gives message of Ubuntu

John Barros, executive director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Roxbury, MA, was invited to be the keynote speaker at the closing ceremonies of the 2008 MassSTAR Conference. DSNI's mission is to empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create and control a vibrant, diverse and high quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners. At age 17, John began working his way through the ranks of DSNI and worked in various capacities at the CDC since his teen years. He became the first young person elected to the DSNI Board of Directors, triggering a more visible, active presence of youth across the organization.

Speaking to an audience of MassSTAR delegates, volunteers, and invited guests, John spoke about the philosophy of "Ubuntu". The word 'Ubuntu' originates from one of the Bantu dialects of Africa, and is pronounced as uu-Boon-too. This traditional African philosophy offers us an understanding of ourselves in relation with the world. According to Ubuntu, there exists a common bond between us all and it is through this bond, through our interaction with our fellow human beings, that we discover our own human qualities. According to South African Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Ubuntu is the following:

"It is the essence of being human...A person with Ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are. The quality of Ubuntu gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them."

John challenged the students to remember this philosophy as they return to their schools to bring back what they've learned at the MassSTAR Conference.



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Alumni & Volunteers reunite at Life is good Festival

After hearing **Jim Laughlin**, senior Director of Communications for Life is good, speak at this past spring's conference, the MassSTAR Alumni Association decided that they wanted to volunteer at the 2008 Life is good Festival, which was held on the Boston Common this past July 19th. Volunteers and staff from this year's conference reunited to help the Life is good Foundation's efforts at raising money for Project Joy.

Project Joy is a Boston-based non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the healthy development of young children who are at risk. Through innovative training retreats, Project Joy provides teachers and childcare providers with the resources they need to strengthen and heal their children through play.

At the festival, MassSTAR worked with Life is Good's "Green Guy" in promoting education about the festival's recycling initiatives. The Green Team also encouraged guest to recycle and to reduce waste. Two other teams worked with the production and distribution of Life is good balloons. Although the weather was hot and humid, the MassSTAR Alumni and volunteers spread their PMA to all!

Volunteering at the Life is Good festival was more than just a reunion, it was the embodiment of the MassSTAR mission. MassSTAR is more than just three days of activities, it is the application of invaluable life skills. It was a wonderful opportunity to see the people who understand the ferret cheer as well as the importance of staying positive while blowing up balloons. The heat we endured was worth making hundreds of kids happy with a balloon as well as helping Life is Good and Project Joy empower underprivileged children through the power of play.

– **Krista Zalatores '04** (pictured at left)



Longtime sponsors, GFWC volunteer at conference

The General Federation of Women's Clubs of Massachusetts has been a long-time supporter of Massachusetts Youth Leadership Foundation conferences. This year, GFWC clubwomen played an integral part prior to the conference weekend in reaching out to high schools across the State. Volunteers contacted schools to ensure that guidance counselors and principals received the necessary information to nominate a student for the conference.

In addition to financial support made possible through donations from clubs across the state, GFWC of Massachusetts clubwomen from various clubs served as volunteers at the conference itself and worked side-by-side with MassSTAR alumni. There was also a GFWC table at the volunteer fair for students to learn more about club activities. Thank you to all of our GFWC volunteers!



MassSTAR Alumni Association Update

MassSTAR Alumni Association Meetings

Boston University
725 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA
Every third Sunday of the month

August 17, 2008
September 21, 2008
October 19, 2008
November 16, 2008
December 21, 2008



*Stay tuned for Western MA Alumni Association Meetings beginning in September at UMass Amherst's Brett Dorm!

2008-2009 MassSTAR Alumni Association Elected Officers

President – Nicole Sanethong '07, Lynn English High School
Vice President – Adrianna Boulin '07, Stoughton High School
Secretary – Sarah Wojda '08, Ursuline Academy
Treasurer – Nick Valentini '07, Georgetown High School
Fundraising Chair – Whitney Simon '08, Stoughton High School
Western MA Liaisons – Adam Kingan '08, Agawam High School, Pierre Joseph '08, High School of Science & Technology
MYLF Board Liaison & Immediate Past Alumni Association President - Samantha Curtis '06, Boston College



MassSTAR Alumni Spotlight: Nicole Sanethong '07

Name: Nicole Sanethong '07

Hometown: Lynn

High School: Lynn English High School

Three words to describe you: go-getter, organized, persistent

Favorite MassSTAR Memory: During the 2008 conference, the junior staff watched while the delegates played the diversity game or as we know, the ice cream game. As the junior staff watched from the sidelines, we noticed many different things that we didn't notice when we were playing the game. It was just amazing to see the difference and both experiences impacted me in very different ways. Since I already knew the end result, it helped me to understand the game much more and it was very different just being a spectator than an actual person playing the game.

Why is MassSTAR Important? MassSTAR is important to me because it teaches the youth to become leaders and it empowers them to go back to their communities and take action. MassSTAR has inspired me greatly and it has taught me that even the youth can make a large difference even if it's something small.

Why did you want to become MassSTAR President? I wanted to become MassSTAR President because I wanted to keep the MassSTAR spirit alive and make sure that our organization lasts for a very long time. I want to leave a lasting impression on everything I do and I want to give back to the community as much as I can.

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MassSTAR Alumni Association Update

Make A Difference Day October Workshop!

Saturday, October 25, 2008 9AM – 4PM
Boston University
725 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA

Mark your calendars! MassSTAR alumni and guests will join together in Boston on Make A Difference Day, Saturday, October 25th to reunite with old friends and meet new ones! This mini conference is open to all, so get your friends, student councils, and sports teams involved! Cost of attendance is \$20 per student with lunch included. Kepp checking the MassSTAR website for more details!



MassSTAR Back to School Drive

The delegates of MassStar apply the five points of the MassSTAR star (respect, responsibility, collaboration, initiative, and intentionality) in their everyday lives and endeavors. This year, we are doing a community service activity to support the Wa Area Development Association (WADA). WADA is an organization that assists the development of the Wa area in the Upper West Region of Ghana through educational grants and the provision of other developmental programs. The founder of WADA, *Evelyn Abayaah*, spoke at this year's conference.

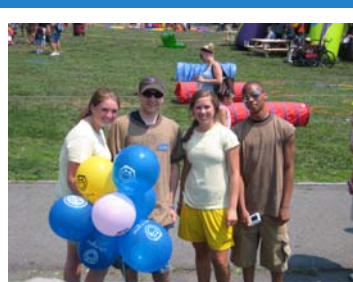
We are starting a **Back to School Drive** and are collecting school supplies such as pens, pencils, notebooks, folders and any other school supplies that can be thought of. In our efforts to collect all these supplies we vow to apply the five points of the star guaranteeing us success and fluidity in our plan to provide WADA with supplies. We will begin advertising our collection in late August early September and we plan to collect all of our supplies at our one day conference on *October 25, 2008*. We are anticipating an overwhelming amount of supplies and look forward to see the hard work that will be done by all those in MassSTAR!

Support longtime volunteer, Caroline Mailloux '01!

Caroline needs our support! She is currently in Mali volunteering for the Mali Health Organizing Project (MHOP). Mali is located in West Africa where 93% of the urban population lives in slum neighborhoods where residents face crippling poverty and little or no access to water, sanitation, healthcare, or education. Caroline's classmate from Brown University has been named by FOX's Teen Choice Awards and Do Something Inc. as one of the top nine youth activists in the US! Online voting will determine if she wins \$100,000 to build a much-needed health and sanitation system in Sikoroni, Mali.

How can MassSTAR help? VOTE NOW for Caitlin and MHOP EVERY DAY UNTIL AUGUST 4th:

<http://www.dosomething.org/awards> You get one vote per email address per day. You must enter a birthday between 1989 and 1995 for your vote to count. Hopefully our votes will help MHOP and the people of Mali.



MassSTAR Seen & Heard

"It's a very life-changing experience," Adam told Reminder Publications. "I think every single school should send someone [to the conference]."

He added that the most important lesson he learned was "how to be a better leader by being a better follower." Adam said the conference has empowered him to participate in more volunteer projects and also try to promote greater volunteerism among his peers.

- Adam Kingan '08, Agawam High School, talking about his MassSTAR experience

"It was HOT!!! I also felt better after the festival knowing that I made a difference for all of those kids. I am also very glad that Life is Good is going Green. I can't help but think that even though I may have seen one water bottle in the trash, it's one more water bottle that I recycled. That's the simplicity of recycling- something as little as even one empty water bottle, when recycled, helps make the world a cleaner place..."

- Brendan O'Connor, '08, Dedham High School, on volunteering at the Life is good Festival

"I feel so honored to be accepted to come to such an amazing program. I met so many people and made so many new friends. But most importantly the people I heard from and met said so many inspiring things that I really felt changed me into being a stronger, more positive, and more capable person. This was an absolutely life-changing, incredible opportunity that I believe can have the potential to change and benefit everyone for the better. Thank you so much MassSTAR!"

- 2008 MassSTAR Delegate

Interested in volunteering with MassSTAR?

The Massachusetts Youth Leadership Foundation is currently forming it's Conference Committee for the 2009 MassSTAR Conference. We would welcome new volunteers to make 2009 even bigger and better! Areas of volunteering include:

- Recruitment (calling area high schools, helping with registration, etc.)
- Conference programming (speakers, presenters, activities, community service opportunities, etc.)
- In-kind donations (water, snacks, photocopies, t-shirts, etc.)
- Facilitators and operations staff

Also, if you'd be interested in hosting an Alumni Association service project or workshop, or would like to be an adult resource for alumni, please contact us at volunteer@massstar.org.

