Teaching Life Skills to Create Respectful Communities

Students Teaching Attitudes of Respect (STAR) is a program funded by the Northwest Minnesota Foundation. It is offered to schools and organizations within the Foundation’s 12-county region. Peacemaker Resources conducts the retreats and provides follow-up consultation to the STAR teams.

“I learned to stand up for what is right, even if it means standing alone.”

— A 6th-grade STAR Student

Students Teaching Attitudes of Respect

The Northwest Minnesota Foundation sponsors the STAR Team Program for youth leadership. Students Teaching Attitudes of Respect (STAR) is a program designed to increase students' awareness in the areas of community building, media, specific skills needed to deal with conflict, and the utilization of personal power and strengths. The goal is to model and support a positive school culture.

We believe that creating respectful communities and homes requires taking the time to learn necessary skills and integrating those skills into daily life. These skills are taught to teams of six students and an advisor from schools or sponsoring organizations in NMF's 12-county service area.

How Does the STAR Program Work?

Up to six teams attend a fall session and then host an on-site visit by STAR trainers in the winter. The two-day overnight sessions are held at Concordia Language Villages near Bemidji.

The program is delivered by trainers from Peacemaker Resources. Assisting the trainers are the Youth Advocates, or YAs, who mentor and teach the 6th- and 7th-grade students as they go through the fall STAR Program training. They model respectful behavior and are present for the "teachable moment" to facilitate discussions and resolve differences.

During the training STAR team members form relationships with students from other schools built on respect principles. Their leadership skills grow as they share lessons on the life skills learned in the trainings. The teams receive ongoing assistance from NMF through the year.

Registration opens each year on July 1 for sessions that begin the following fall. Two or more sessions are held each year with six teams accepted for each session. We maintain a ratio of approximately two students per adult to ensure a positive, skill-building retreat.

Students who participate in STAR

- Understand that they can contribute to the creation of a school environment that is safe and conducive to learning.
- Recognize that they have the power to make a positive difference in the world by teaching others.
- Gain confidence and leadership skills.
- Develop the attitude that peace skills are fun and cool.
- Become a role models for their peers.

Get Involved

Contact Northwest Minnesota Foundation at (218) 759-2057 to learn how you can become involved or donate to the STAR Program. For information about the STAR Program visit www.nwmf.org. To learn more about Peacemaker Resources, please visit their website at www.peacemakerresources.org.