

Profiles in Leadership

They Asked Us What Was Important *Danielle Strunk*



West High student, Danielle Strunk, became involved with Hope Street during her junior year because a HSYD staff asked her what she thought. “No one ever asked me what I thought or what was important to me. I also liked that we were expected to come up with the solutions. No adult told us the answers and then made us carry out the plan.”

Danielle wanted to make a difference in her school. She was ready to make a commitment to creating change. “It was just the right spot for me.” “I saw the world in a different light than many of my friends. There were things that were wrong and I wanted to make them right.” Many told her she should just ignore the problems, after all she was just a kid.” Not Danielle, she was out to do something about those problems, she was ready for the challenge of leadership.

One of the turning points for Danielle was when after making a presentation to the Wichita school board, they were discussing her comments and she raised her hand to clarify her comments and they refused to let her speak. “They flat out ignored me, as if I wasn’t there.” Danielle went home, sat on her porch for an hour and a half, shaking in frustration. It was this experience that cemented in her mind that she was going to work to make sure that youth had a voice.

Danielle continues to work to make sure that students like her have a place to speak out and create change.



The mission of Hope Street Youth Development is to provide opportunities for youth to build power and reach their full potential so they may think for themselves, speak for themselves and act in their community.

For more information how Hope Street Youth Development is making a difference and changing lives, visit other Profiles in Leadership at www.hopstreet.com/profiles/

If you want to get involved or help support our work visit www.hopstreet.com/involved or call 316.263.7325.

From the Founder

The greatest testament to the power of Hope Street Youth Development is in the lives of young people that are changed everyday.

This series contains a mixture of current students and graduates of Hope Street.

We provide these stories because we know that the work of youth development is not abstract philosophy but instead personal, intensive work with real people. These are their stories.

We measure our success by the difference we make in the lives of individual students because it’s the only true measure of leadership development.

I hope these stories will help you believe in the work of Hope Street as much as I do and that you will consider joining us as we make a difference by changing lives.

Aaron Fowler

