



PATH OF SUCCESS

PATH OF SUCCESS STUDENTS OF EXCELLENCE

“POSSE”

A four year integrated youth leadership system built upon research-based components and designed to propel teens on a straight-line trajectory into the future.

Yearbook Note: “[Thank you Mr. Watts], I’ll always remember that I dared to be different and it made all the difference!”

Katharine Sachs,
NCCS 9th Grader

Introduction

Path of Success, Inc. (“POS”), founded in 1992, is a non profit 501(c)3 organization that works with parents, teachers and organizations to ‘directionalize’ high school students. It is based at Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, CT, John F. Kennedy’s Alma matter, and maintains offices in Milford, CT and Davenport, IA.

Path of Success Students of Excellence (“POSSE”) is a four year system that develops youth into focused leaders that are able to realize success in relationships, academics and in their future careers. The system seamlessly integrates research-based leadership and development components that provide a comprehensive result for youth participants.

The POSSE program was developed to enhance the comprehensive nature of the highly successful POS Leadership Seminar (“Seminar”). The Seminar, a one-to-three-day program, has positively impacted thousands of high school age youth from Wyoming to New York for over a decade. Seminar graduation is the first step of the POSSE system.

The Cornerstone: The Seminar

The Seminar consists of five or six 45-minute sessions, interspersed with group activities. It has been developed from 14 years of direct experience working with and listening to thousands of youth. The key factor that differentiates the POS system from others is its effective delivery of tangible tools that students are able to utilize immediately to effectuate change in their lives.

The dynamic Seminar, designed to teach youth how to live life on the level of their desires, can be implemented as a one-day, two-day, or weekend retreat; and it may be held on the Choate Rosemary Hall campus, at a host facility or other location. Effectiveness of the teaching is greatly enhanced through the use of follow-up modules or when coupled with POSSE. POS Guidebooks are provided to each participant to guide them through the Seminar, allow them to chronicle their thoughts and to use as an encouragement tool for ongoing principle application post-Seminar.

Sessions are as follows:

- Session 1: Tapping the Spirit Within - Teaches students how to unleash their true potential by living on the level of desire.
- Session 2: Renewing Your Mind - Teaches students how to overcome pains of the past to achieve goals of the future.
- Session 3: Who Are You? Character vs. Personality - Challenges students to live based on personal principles, rather than public praise.
- Session 4: Dream Big Dreams - Introduces students to the power of “dreaming on purpose”[®].

- Session 5: Mastering the Art of Goal Setting - Shows students how to outline a plan for turning their dreams into reality.
- Session 6: Daring to be Different - Instills in students the courage to walk their newfound path of success.

The POSSE System

POSSE is a four-year comprehensive and scalable system or framework which identifies students in the spring semester of their eighth grade year, and provides them leadership training, character development and academic support until they enter college. Studies have shown that youth personal development systems are most effective when they are comprehensive, long term, intrusive, and centralized.

POSSE was designed to specifically weave together the community fabric of services that exists, fill in the gaps and thereby provide youth with a seamless—and gapless—road to the future.

Through the six-phase system and based on the principles introduced in the first year through the Seminar, POSSE students will take part in retreats, outdoor challenges, summer internships in both public and private industries, and community service and character building activities.

POS Support: POS provides to a local community the framework for POSSE, curriculum, materials and leadership training for both the youth and for adult volunteer leaders. POS staff may also be contracted to oversee initial start-up phase of POSSE with the desire that eventually local leaders and organizations will assume all responsibilities. In this way, resources remain in the local community, costs are minimized and sustainability is more readily realized.

Local Resources & Cost: Optimally, one or two local organizations work together in partnership to provide start-up funding, meeting facilities, volunteer adult leaders, and other resources needed for system proliferation. The cost of POSSE is wholly dependent on how the local partnership structures the initiative. Many costs can be minimized by identifying already-existing services in the community and partnering with such organizations.

Organization: The structure required to implement POSSE is simple consisting of a manager, volunteers and a facility.

Management: At the outset, it is important to have at least one paid individual to manage the POSSE program, a POSSE Manager (“PM”). This insures both continuity of delivery and provides the community with an accountability stop. One option is for the local partnership to engage POS for the management component with the goal of training area staff to continue beyond the initial agreed-upon period. Whether local or POS supplied, the PM would meet monthly to provide representatives of the local partnership with updates and to garner support for various needs.

Youth Support Team: A high level of ongoing support will be provided to youth participants through a volunteer support team. The support team will be comprised of: a Team Advisor¹ (“TA”) that will be assigned from one-to-four youth; Community Leader Mentors,² business people that share career insights and assist with career opportunities; and College Student Tutors,³ individuals willing to assist from a community service perspective. Activities will take place at a designated location or “Center” which should be centrally located, for instance at a YMCA facility.

Meeting Place: The Center will provide the needed physical facility for office space if needed, meeting space for monthly gatherings and TA's, and a supportive haven for POSSE students. Ideally, providing POSSE students with access to computers with filtered Internet access and email addresses increases the value of the Center experience and enhances connectivity with involved youth. Center atmosphere should be supportive and comfortable, yet provide professional surroundings for activities with community leaders. Transportation of youth to and from the Center will need to be addressed.

The POSSE initiative consists of the following phases:

- Phase I - Identification, Selection & Orientation "Diamonds in the Rough"
- Time Frame: Eighth Grade First Semester

Description: During this phase, potential POSSE applicants are identified and provided an opportunity to learn more about the POSSE system. POS will work with the local partnership, junior high school faculty and administrators in the area to identify students in the fall semester of their eighth grade year. All students, with the exception of those with behavior disorders, may be eligible for the POSSE program. The local partnership may decide to limit POSSE to youth in financial or other challenging circumstances. Through an application and interview process, POSSE students will be selected and, with their parents, provided an orientation to the system. A special dinner for selected youth and their parents can be held to celebrate the new beginning.

- Phase II - Principles of Leadership
"Unleashing Your True Potential"
- Time Frame: Eighth Grade Second Semester through Freshman Year End

Description: The Seminar is the POSSE starting point. Youth will attend the Seminar in a specially designed three-day format or Leadership Retreat during the second semester of their eighth grade year or during the summer prior to their freshman year. At the retreat, which will be held at an area facility such as YMCA Camp Abe Lincoln, POSSE students will be taught leadership principles, learn POSSE basics and expectations of being in the program. Parents will attend a portion of the retreat for informational and buy-in purposes.

At the start of the new school year the POSSE support system will come into play. The support system will include the following: 1) Assigning each POSSE student an email address, password access to POS's Internet streaming service, subscribing them to both POS's list serve and the Pillar newsletter; 2) Issuing them a goal and schedule sheet with a listing of required and optional meetings and to encourage and support journaling activities, and 3) Connecting each POSSE student with their support team led by a TA.

Throughout the second phase of POSSE, youth will become involved in exercises that cultivate the application of leadership principles on a day-to-day basis. Encouraged by their Support Team, POSSE participants will learn how to set and attain goals and the importance of making the right choices that regularly confront them. While much of Phase II will involve focus on "self" by ridding oneself of bad habits, strengthening self determination skills, resisting peer pressure, and learning new good habits, POSSE will also promote camaraderie with other participants.

Depending on the available facility, participants will meet with their TA's on a semi-monthly basis, Community Leader Mentor monthly, and as an entire POSSE at a monthly

Gathering. At the Gathering participants will receive additional training from Alfred Watts or from a Community Leader Mentor about principled living. Goal setting activities will also take place at monthly meetings. Connection with College Student Tutors will be facilitated by the PM and TA's.

Towards the end of the school year, youth will be provided volunteer internship opportunities for the summer with public or charitable organizations. Summer volunteer internships will act as segues for students into the next POSSE phase that moves beyond self to teamwork and commitment to community.

- Phase III - Team & Community Building
"Tapping the Riches Within"
- Time Frame: Pre-Sophomore Year Summer through Sophomore Year End

Description: Adopting a similar approach used in Phase II, POSSE will begin the year with a retreat. This year, the retreat's focus will be on community leadership and altruism. Support will include monthly meetings, mentoring, tutoring, assistance from a TA, and internships. At the beginning of the year, POSSE will undertake a needs assessment and then design a community service initiative for the year that will involve at least four hours of service work per participant per month. Monthly Gatherings will focus on the management, execution and coordination of the 10 month initiative. The initiative will culminate with an out-of-town or international service trip to provide participants a view of other communities.

By year's end, POSSE students will have successfully completed a self-designed community project. Capitalizing on the previous summer's volunteer job experience, youth will be provided opportunities to work in paid summer internships with area businesses as a result of placement efforts facilitated by the PM.

- Phase IV - College Preparation & Tools for Success
"College Bound"
- Time Frame: Pre-Junior Year Summer through Senior Year Fall Semester End

Description:

While Phase IV again adopts a comprehensive support model used in the prior phases of POSSE, this year is differentiated as POSSE students will be taught numerous practical skills, such as interviewing techniques and study skills, via modular training units. Modules will include:

- College Calendar – marking important dates
- Project Paycheck – the basics of handling money
- Powerful Presenting – presentation/interview basics
- Stellar Resume – creating an initial resume
- Groundhog Job Shadow Day – time with an employer
- Job 4U – jobs for youth and required expectations
- College Funds – sources and form completion info
- University Road Trip – identifying/visiting colleges
- Radical SAT/ACT – prep for the exam

- Phase V – Review, Technological Edge & Life's Future
“What Lies Ahead”
- Time Frame: Spring Semester of Senior Year

Description: Preparing for one of the most significant transition of their lives - high school to college - POSSE students will revisit the basic principles taught in Phase II. They will also begin learning how to act as role models and mentors to younger students and will be provided with specialized mentor training. Following a four-day Leadership Summit, students who have taken the entire POSSE journey will be given a laptop computer and provided specialized training through a battery of seminars that will provide each of them with a certificate of technology, attesting to their knowledge of computers, the web and information technology.

A Life Team will also be assembled for each POSSE graduate. It will consist of three adults that pledge to pour into the student’s life and to be invasively involved with them in college so a successful track can continue. One parent should be part of the Life Team unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

- Phase VI - A Lifetime Connection
"Going Forward and Giving Back"
- Time Frame: Pre-Freshmen College Summer

Description: Having successfully completed POSSE, participants will be treated to a special black tie celebration at a location such as Terrace Hill by the Governor and will be invited to continue their involvement with Path of Success for their lifetime. They will be encouraged to maintain contact with Path of Success for personal and evaluation purposes.

“In my 33 years in education, nothing available compares to the positive student results achieved by Path of Success.”

Morton Dukehart, Trinity Episcopal School Head of School, May 2006

Today's youth are not receiving the leadership skills necessary to reach their true potential in life. Path of Success plans to engineer a new future for students by providing them useful tools and positive encouragement.

¹ Team Advisors: TA's will provide support to youth as they write their plans and goals for the future. TA's will also review the results of the aptitude test with members of his or her team, assess the student strengths and weaknesses, and suggest a plan of action for the upcoming school year. TA's will be in regular contact with POSSE youth to assist with mentor functions and tutor coordination, goal setting, and character development, and to provide general success coaching. TA's will also be in contact with the PM to share information and coordinate supportive efforts.

² Mentoring: Path of Success is confident that POSSE youth will come away from the Leadership Retreat with the inspiration to dream big dreams and the tools necessary to make them a reality. POS, however, discovered an increase in program effectiveness when youth are paired with mentors who have similar life experiences. Carefully screened, trained volunteers from the community will be utilized as Mentors to POSSE youth to guide and encourage them as they apply the newly learned principles each day. Mentors, many of them business and corporate contacts, will also provide POS with ideas concerning what they generally desire experience-wise for entry level individuals so POSSE youth can begin to build such experiences into their summer and school-year activities. If an existing mentor program does not meet the requirements for the POSSE program, a comprehensive mentor program will be developed with the assistance of the National Mentoring Partnership. With this in mind, each student will be matched with a mentor. Mentors will work with the student throughout the POSSE program providing insight, advice and exposure to professional conduct and the business environment. Mentors will be encouraged to build meaningful friendships with their mentees and meet with them at least monthly. Mentors will present to the Gathering at the Center.

³ Tutoring: Path of Success will recruit college students from neighboring colleges to provide tutoring on a regular basis for POSSE youth in their weak areas. They will be encouraged to serve not only as tutors, but to also provide insightful advice relating to the college experience. Tutors will work with groups of POSSE participants at the Center. Participants will be given access to additional tools to make learning fun and challenging. These tools will include Craniamania.com, Tutorcafe.com and other innovative Internet teen sites. Students desiring to test their skills will also be encouraged to participate in national competitions.