

Dear Friends,
We made it to spring and just wrapped up the 39th Annual SLS Conference! It was certainly memorable with the Northern Michigan weather challenges, but everyone there experienced true SLS magic. The 2026 conference became a living example of resilience, connection, and protective factors in action. It was truly awe inspiring to witness.
Spring holds so much as we enter the final stretch of the school year. It's a season full of exciting milestones and new beginnings; SAT and ACT testing, prom, college visits, graduation anticipation, and more.
Spring is also a time to focus on important awareness efforts, Mental Health Awareness Month, Distracted Driving Education, Underage Drinking Prevention, and Alcohol Awareness Month. If your school or community group is interested in Safe Driving or Alcohol and Other Drug Education workshops, please reach out to SLS. We're happy to tailor programming to meet your specific needs and have over 50 workshops and trainings available.

Let Us Grow

Kaley Long, Taylor High School

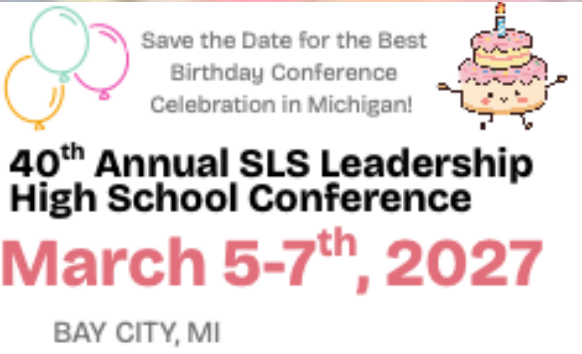
When I was little, I learned that trust isn't something to give out easily. At the time that I joined SLS my freshman year, I was quite held back, shy, and skeptical of the people around me. Over time, however, I grew really fond of them. They became family to me, through my highs and my lows. Now I see that family slowly growing. Over the past year, I have gotten the chance to know my advisors who have gained my trust in ways I once thought impossible. And I know that when, and if, I ever have a problem, I have someone in my corner to help me when things go wrong. Our advisors can be our lifelines but so are we to each other. Like a bee needs a flower and a flower needs a bee. The bee may need a flower to make honey, but the flower needs a bee to grow and strive in their environment. Even when I felt like no one was there, I knew my advisors had my back. They became a part of my story. However, no story is the same. Each is intertwined in its own way. It may not be perfect, but it is mine. And for that I am thankful. But I want you to remember, no flower can bloom on its own. It needs water, sunshine, and fertile soil. Your community is your soil, your advisors are your water, and you are the sun. You give yourselves the chance and opportunity to shine. So, take it. You never know when you will get another chance. As you grow up, remember that at one point or even now, we are or were all little seeds planted for a chance to grow.



Thank you, Chefs Toni and Kendall, for saving the day cooking pancakes for the conference attendees during the inclement weather extended stay.



Spring 2026, Volume 39, Number 1



Attention!!
Please share this newsletter with student leaders within your school!
Thank you!

Conference Impact:

Key Student Learning Outcomes:

- Increased confidence and resilience.
- Willingness to step outside comfort zones.
- Strengthened leadership, kindness, and peer support skills.
- Greater awareness of inclusion, mental health, and accessibility.
- Understanding of how daily choices influence others.
- Practical tools to implement in their schools and communities.

Student-Reported Highlights:

- High-energy activities such as the dance and Jeopardy.
- Inspiring speakers and interactive workshops.
- New friendships and meaningful connections.
- Student-led sessions and leadership activities.
- A strong sense of community and positivity.

Impact on Decision Making:

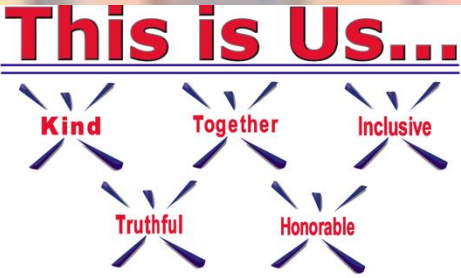
- Increased confidence to lead and make positive choices.
- Heightened awareness of the consequences of decisions.
- Motivation to support peers and strengthen school communities.
- Renewed commitment to kindness, inclusion, and leadership.
- Real-world skills applicable across school, home, and life.



Power of Commitment

Zacur Harrell, Clarenceville High School

In life, we make commitments whether it be to ourselves, to others, or to the groups we are a part of. Sticking to those commitments is more than just following through, it is a reflection of our integrity. When you commit to something, you are giving your word. And honoring that word shows respect not just for others, but for yourself. It's not always easy. There will be challenges, distractions, and moments when quitting feels tempting. But it's in those moments when we choose to stay the course that we grow stronger, more resilient, and more confident in who we are. When we follow through we don't just reach our goals, we build trust. We become known as reliable, dependable, and someone others can count on. These qualities are key, in both personal relationships and professional life. Right now, the commitments you make within your group are powerful. They shape your progress, strengthen your connection, and fuel your collective success. Commitment builds trust. It keeps momentum alive. And it shows that you're all in. So, here's my challenge to you. Take a moment. Grab a piece of paper and write down your personal commitment or your goals. Be honest. Be bold. Then, tuck that paper away. In six months, pull it back out and ask yourself, "Is this still my commitment? Are these still my goals?"



Conference Awards:

- SLS Student of the Year: Kassidy Muldrew, Madison Academy High School
SLS Advisor of the Year: Les Thomas, Alcona High School
SLS Most Improved Chapter: Alpena High School
SLS Unsung Hero: Tamara Klida, Freeland High School
Best Door Decoration Award: Madison Academy High School
"Happy" The SLS Mascot "Best Dance Attire Winner": Taylor High School
"Perky" The SLS Mascot "Perkiest Group Winner": Clarenceville High School
Sticking Together Award: Garber High School
Kindness Award: Keith Stark, Taylor High School
Inclusiveness Award: Clarenceville High School
Truthful Award: Marion Jr/Sr High School
Honorable Award: Hudson Jr/Sr High School
Conference Action Plan \$500 Winner: Garber High School for "Leaders Shaping Littles"
SLS Outstanding Grant Project Award for "SLS Mentorship Project": Alcona High School; Freeland High School; Garber High School; Madison Academy High School; Taylor High School
Sponsored by the Jamie Daniels Foundation





Federal, State, and/or County Funding has been provided through the Oakland Community Health Network Substance Use Disorder Services and MDHHS/SUGE to support **partial** project costs.

Thank you SLS Supporters, Sponsors, and Partners!

Brad Petitpren	Dianne Bostic Robinson	Ward Bartlett	CCR Renovations	Kathleen Altman
Dean Petitpren, Founder	Toni Lauretano, Alumna	Deb Kowalczyk	Jim Voss	Larry Bliss, Alumnus
Tricia DeVries, Alumna	Laura Dodd, Alumna	David Simmons Trust	Rose Sargol	Richard Moxley
Michele Rousseau	Michelle Turner, Alumna	Zane and Sandra Hatahet	Dawn & Jeremy Flood	Sue White
Dan Peace	Robert F. Beard Foundation	Mary Colwell	T-shirt Plus	Arrow Printing
Tina Woods	Altman & Company	Donna Curiak	Dolores Trethewey	Janice Nephew

Brad Simmons Trust	JCT Foundation	PETITPREN, INC.	Stacey Anklaam	David Simmons Trust
	Nikki and Allan Motes	Voss Industries-Taylor		Enterprise Mobility™
James Page	Pam Voss-Page	Edelyn Westwood Photography LLC	SLS Board of Directors & Alumni	

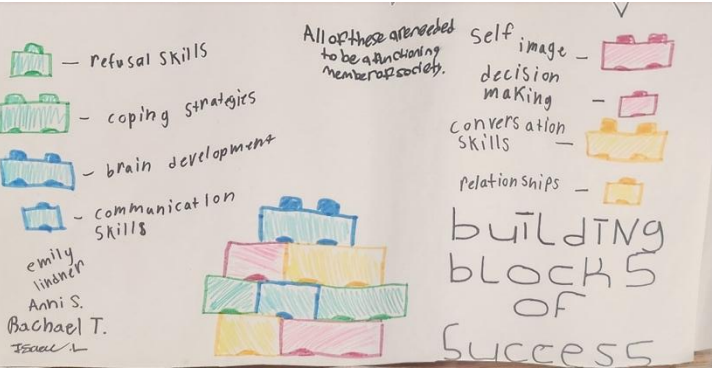
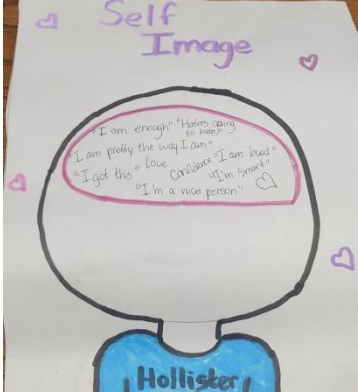
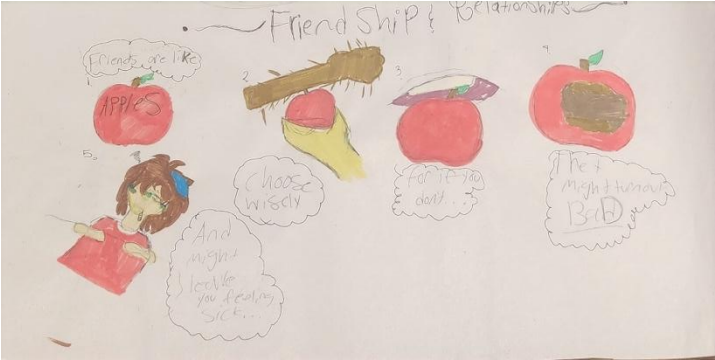
Students Leading Students, a program of Student Leadership Services, Inc. (SLS), is an assets-based school and community-based program implemented throughout Michigan. SLS aims to increase skills that protect students from anxiety, stress, and self-defeating behaviors. SLS trains students in skills that decrease alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and other drug use (ATOD) among middle and high-school students. SLS strategies empower and equip youth leaders with knowledge, life skills, and resources to design and implement youth development, mental health, and drug prevention programming. SLS supports local chapters by training adult advisors, and training student chapter leaders. SLS hosts student-led conferences, provides materials that correlate activities with research, provides grants, and disseminates evidence-based research and strategies about preventing teen ATOD use and other self-destructive actions. SLS creates participatory experiences for youth. To bring SLS to your school, anywhere in Michigan including small towns, Mackinaw Island, and the UP, contact dmf@SLStoday.org or call 248-706-0757.

Did You Know?!?

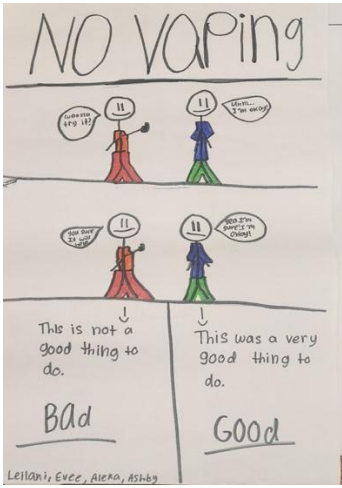
SLS is the only Michigan-developed, student-led program with proven outcomes and national validation!

By one of our Funders the Jamie Daniels Foundation:
[Peer-Led Programming Prevents Substance Use Disorder - Jamie Daniels Foundation](#)

SLS is an inclusive organization that supports all student-led groups that support the SLS mission.



Oakland County Middle School Students learned about emotional and mental health.



Creativity Needed!

Help us in our hunt for student created music, poems, stories, posters, and other artistic outlets. We are looking for artistic expression that represent SLS. There is an opportunity to win a scholarship and have your IDEA sent to all Michigan schools (2,500). Reach out to Dawn with your work or any ideas at dmf@slstoday.org.



Register for the SLS Annual Golf Outing here at:
<https://slstoday.org/2026-golf-outing/>.

SLS Board of Directors
Ward Bartlett, President (since 1997)
Toni Lauretano, Vice-President & Treasurer
Dianne Bostic Robinson, Secretary & Strategic Planning (since 1997)
Zane Hatahet, Board Member
Michael Beard, Board Member

For education, information, and inspiration, stay connected with SLS.
www.SLStoday.org
1150 Scott Lake Rd
Waterford, MI 48328
248-706-0757

988 is the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. You can text and/or call to **988** and chat to 988lifeline.org.

Register now using the link below for the SLS Summer Leadership and Team Building Camp June 24 & 25.
[Leadership & Team Building Camp \(June 24 & 25, 2026\)](#).

SLS Mentorship Project Update:
Sponsored by the Jamie Daniels Foundation
We're thrilled to celebrate the **five SLS Mentor Groups** participating in this year's **SLS Mentorship Project**, proudly supported by the **Jamie Daniels Foundation**. These schools exemplify leadership, collaboration, and commitment to student growth across Michigan.

Mentor Groups
Freeland • Taylor • Alcona • Madison Academy • Garber
Each group is actively mentoring and recruiting new schools to expand the reach of SLS programming and peer leadership.

Recruited Schools

- **The New Standard Academy** — recruited by *Madison Academy*.
- **Swan Valley** — recruited by *Freeland High School*.
- **Oscoda High School** — recruited by *Alcona*.

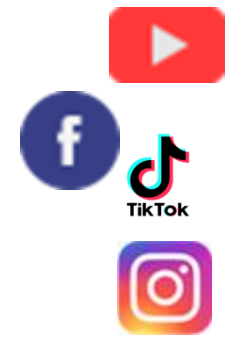
Garber and Taylor are currently recruiting new schools in their regions continuing to grow the mentorship network!

Join the Movement
Is your school located in **Wayne or Bay County** and interested in being mentored? Connect with **SLS** to learn how your students can join this inspiring initiative and make a lasting impact.

Celebrating Leadership
The SLS Mentorship Project empowers students to lead, connect, and create positive change, one school at a time.

41st Student Advisory Board Application:
Established in 1986, we train each passionate group of emerging leaders to lead and teach their peers and younger students. They work with our team and member schools to promote youth involvement, networking and stakeholder partnerships. The Student Advisory Board (SAB) develops and leads conferences, assemblies, and workshops. These students are dedicated to creating healthy, safe, and inclusive schools and communities across Michigan and we are proud to help them do this important work!
Applications for 2026-2027 are NOW OPEN! Deadline to apply by is May 22, 2026!
[SAB-Application-2026-2027-Video-Application.doc](#)
Questions? Email Dawn at dmf@SLStoday.org

@ **SLSTODAY**



SLS Staff

Dawn Flood, Executive Director/ Master Trainer
Pamela Voss-Page, Research Director
Marcia Partin, Prevention Specialist
Ann Colwell Johnson, Program Specialist
Allison Benzing, Newsletter Editor
Pastor Benjamin Goss, Youth Pastor
Aitana Massey, SAB Advisor

Student Advisory Board Members 1986-2026
Volunteer Alumni throughout the world!