



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Student Submissions on the Four Pillars of National Honor Society
- Service projects
- Importance of Being INFORMED leaders

“The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet.”
-Theodore M. Hesburgh

“Character is power; it makes friends, draws patronage and support and opens the way to wealth, honor and happiness.”

-John Howe

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“Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.”

-Albert Einstein

“You do not lead by hitting people over the head—that's assault, not leadership.”

-Dwight D. Eisenhower

Leadership

Editor's Note on "Overachiever's Anonymous"

On the next page is a submission that was sent by a National Honor Society member who really does not grasp the meaning of National Honor Society. In an attempt at sarcastic wit, this student manages to undermine everything we stand for as National Honor Society. This student mocks the fact that National Honor Society recognizes well-rounded students who show proficiency in each of the four pillars of National Honor Society: scholarship, leadership, citizenship, and service. People typically only focus

on the importance of scholarship, and though important, successful people have other qualities than intelligence. The most successful people, our leaders, heroes and role models, demonstrate many different qualities that help them become good at what they do. National Honor Society tries to recognize the most significant of these qualities by focusing in on these four which seem to be rather broad and easy to attain. This is why there is a service requirement that goes with National Honor Society as well as the

grade requirements. Citizenship and leadership are more difficult to place requirements on because they differ with each person. The service requirements, however, can also demonstrate a student's leadership and citizenship. I believe that this article is important for everyone to read because I see this sort of attitude toward NHS so often and if it is recognized, the NHS leaders and work to remedy this problem.

- Megan Johnson,
FCNHS Vice President

FCNHS Participation

It has become evident that FCNHS participation is dropping and without chapter's participating in FCNHS functions, there is no purpose for FCNHS. The State Brain Brawl competition that was scheduled to take place in April was cancelled due to a lack of participation. This is not only disappointing to FCNHS officers, but also to any active chapter that planned to compete in this event. Hopefully, there is a better turn out at the State Convention in January and at the 2009 State Brain Brawl this April.

I am requesting that the readers of this newsletter make an effort to talk to NHS chapters near them and convince them to become active members in the Florida Council of National Honor Society. With greater involvement, FCNHS has the ability to accomplish more. Active chapters should take the initiative, as leaders, to increase FCNHS participation.

Overachiever's Anonymous

We've all been there. Why is it that you're in NHS? 80% of the people I surveyed looked at me as if I were an imbecile for asking and replied, "To get into college." The other 20% I suspect are either liars or reincarnations of Mother Teresa. (I'll give you a moment to erase the image of Mother Teresa in braces and a cheerleading uniform from your mind.) The fact is every NHS member is more or less the same. Does your transcript read something like this: Sandy Stepford, 4.2 GPA, insert sport (avoiding anything too elitist like rowing, golf, or cricket), secretary of Students for Something Good (exempli gratia ending world hunger, genocide, or global warming), and your personal essay read as insincerely and ridiculously as a Miss America interview? Mine does, too.

I confess; I'm a National Honor Society failure. I don't have sticker tattoos that say scholarship, leadership, citizenship, and service. I've been known to not do an assignment until lunch. I didn't interview for a leadership position because I'm not very good at motivating people. I mumble the last lines of the pledge of allegiance. I don't wear school colors on spirit days, and, at pep rallies, I often have the strange compulsion to apply goth make-up and run away screaming from the giddy crowds. I'm not the quintessential NHS student, and, unless you are one of those Mother Theresa reincarnations mentioned above, I doubt you are either.

Despite our efforts to be ideal students, leaders, and citizens on our transcripts, we're not perfect. It's essential that we realize that we're not perfect in every aspect, and that the National Honor Society will thrive only when its members use their unique talents for universal good and recognize that, in the end, we're just people helping people. Something we forget while striving to embody (or at least look like we embody) those famous four pillars of NHS: scholarship, leadership, citizenship, and service. That's not to say that these traits aren't important, but let's look at some famous failures that are remembered today for bettering society:

Failure in Scholarship: Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc was a remarkable woman. Through her innovative leadership and dedication to her country, she had commanded an army of four thousand men and turned the tide of the Hundred Year's War before she was twenty in a time when women were treated as well as livestock. She was, however, illiterate. (Stay in school, kids; she was captured and burned at the stake before she was made a saint.)

Failure in leadership: Queen Christina of Sweden

You've probably never heard of her, and there's a really good reason why. Although she was given the education of a prince, she loathed ruling. So, she converted to Catholicism (Sweden is largely Protestant) and moved to Rome, the intellectual haven of the day. She became a renowned scholar and patron of the arts despite her rather lackluster earlier career as queen.

Failure in citizenship: Christopher Columbus

By the time you were five you could probably recite that in 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue with the patronage of the famous Ferdinand and Isabella. What you probably didn't know, however, is that Columbus was really Genoese and changed his allegiance from Genoa to Portugal, back to Genoa, to Venice, England, Spain, France, and finally to Spain. So, a Genoese man brought God, gold, and glory to Spain only because Italy, England, France, Portugal, and his native Genoa turned him down.

Failure in service: none

Finally we get to the important part: you can make the world a better place and be a poor student, leader, or citizen, but you must be sincerely concerned with helping others. There is no scholarship without the intention to better the world with knowledge, no leadership without a desire to serve others, and no citizenship without an objective of creating a better country and improving the lives of fellow citizens.

Anne Frank wrote in her famous diary, "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." NHS can help, but bettering the world starts with you. I'm starting an Overachievers Anonymous Committee, and I welcome you to join it. You can do it, say it out loud! (Okay, maybe not out loud.)

I'm more than a transcript. I sincerely want to change the world.

You don't have to have mastered the four tenets of NHS, but if you can't say that, find a different club.

-You've obviously not read the article if you expect to see a name here

Service

Service is of the utmost importance in life which is the reason service is among the focal points of National Honor Society. Habitat for Humanity is a great organization for those who would not be able to afford to buy their own homes. Habitat for Humanity helps families to be able to purchase homes that it builds at no profit to the organization. Habitat also provides simple loans to these families so it is easier for them to pay for the home. To help Habitat for Humanity, your National Honor Society chapter could raise money to help with the costs of building houses for these families. You could contact the local Habitat for Humanity and organize a time to go and help them actually construct the houses for local families. They need help with everything building the foundation to installing carpet and painting the walls. The families appreciate it so much and it is very rewarding to see the product of your time and effort.

Also, make sure to be informed on current events because they give you many new service ideas. After a natural disaster, for example flooding or tornados, your chapter could raise money, write letters, or make “survival bags” containing toiletries and such to send to people who lost their homes in such disasters.

Informed Leaders

From the beginning of the 21st century, our era has been called the information age. Thoughts and ideas spread through so many various channels such as the radio, television, and internet. More and more do outlets spread and expand, allowing for levels of connectivity unimaginable in decades before. We live in a day of information, when someone can find out nearly anything they might need to know in the matter of seconds, when we can educate ourselves to become better citizens at levels unlike ever before.

But is that what we really do? We all have the choice to pick what sources of information we focus on. Hundreds of channels

are on television; millions upon millions of websites are on the internet. We live in a place with a rich experience, but also one where we can easily avoid so much of what matters in the world. Who cares about the news? Who cares about what goes on in the world? Wouldn't you rather go online and talk with friends or play a game?

There is a great danger to the ignorance that we may find ourselves in the years to come, leading us to become apathetic to those who need a helping hand or those who need guidance and care.

We must never allow ourselves to become ignorant. Regardless of life's distractions and freedoms, we

need to stand with a voice, a voice that speaks with clarity and no misjudgment, a voice that speaks with only light and no darkness. To do that, we must learn. We are often called the future leaders of the world, but we too can be the leaders of today. We must learn to stand as active members of society, to know that everything from our welfare and education to that of our friends and neighbors rests in our hands, and we must strive to make a difference, to make the world a better place.

- Faraz Yashar