

Jessica

How did you get into your seat tonight? Did you follow the person in front of you and hoped they would find a good seat or did you take charge and find one on your own while the others followed? That simple decision determined right away what type of person you are. To give you a little taste of what I have learned in the Rising Stars program, I will explain to you the three types of people we talked about in the first chapter of the book. There are Enhancers, Neutralizers, and Diminishers. The first group of people that I want to talk about are enhancers. The Rising Stars book states that the word enhance means to improve. Enhancers fit this exact description. They are the people who take charge in everything like being the captain of a colorguard or lead school events. People can talk easily to this person to get good advice. Enhancers put other people first before themselves. They are the complete opposites of the other two types of people. Next, I want to talk about Neutralizers. The books definition for neutralize is pretty self explanatory. To neutralize means to cancel out or make ineffective. A neutralizer doesn't help a situation or improve. They are more reserved and follow the crowd. Their opinions are easily influenced. They wouldn't be good people to turn to for advice. The last type of person is the Diminisher. When I first read the definition for this person I thought of Helga from the cartoon Hey Arnold! To diminish means to lessen or take away from. This person blames everyone else for their mistakes, doesn't show honest emotion, and abuses others to get their way just like Helga. Anyway as I was saying, every person falls into one of these categories. What the Rising Stars program has taught me is that I am an enhancer, but I am not perfect. No one is, and no one will be. A good goal to reach for is to become the closest to perfect as an enhancer as I can be. With the help of Rising Stars, I was able to get that far, but I still have a bit to go.

As my speech draws to a close I want to save this last part to thank some people. First off I want to thank Ms. Leiden for teaching the program after school on Wednesdays for us. You never lost patience with us when we didn't get the 9 horses in the stalls exercise and without you we wouldn't be sitting here like the rising stars we are. Next I want to thank my other peers in the Rising Stars program. Andrea, Deidre, Angela, Summer, Rickie, Jen, Sam, and Trista, you may not know it but you have all helped me one way or another and I wanted to say thank you to all of you. Finally I want to thank Mrs. Winter and Mrs. Eberheart. Without you two introducing the program to us and giving us this wonderful opportunity we wouldn't be such wonderful leaders like you two. Being a Rising Star wasn't easy. It took a lot of work and dedication. A lot of people dropped out at the first meeting. This just goes to show how special this program is as well as the people who have been a part of it are.

Jen

Through the rising stars I've Learned that anybody along with the right skills and the willingness to try and try again can become an effective leader. I've learned so much thanks to this program.

I've also learned to set goals and manage my time, yet I found myself writing my speech during practice yesterday. I guess maybe I work good under pressure.

My self esteem was like non-existent when I joined the Rising Stars and now I found I have a higher level of confidence in myself, I'm not afraid to speak my mind and to tell people how I feel.

I have strengthened my friendships with those I knew and gained three new friends one of whom I would never have met if it wasn't for the Rising Stars program. Mrs. Liden would have been another teacher, another face, yet she became a person who lit the path way for 10 girls all of whom will go on to become a better person in some way. I know thanks to rising stars I will, but I'm not sure how just yet. The thing is I know I can because the skills I've learned in rising stars will stay with me for the rest of my life growing and helping to shape the person I will become through out high school and into my future nothing can stop me now.

Andrea

I would like to start off my speech by saying thank you Miss Leiden for molding us into better leaders. You dedicated your precious time on every Wednesday to be with us to teach us the ways of becoming better leaders. You stood by us the whole time and guided us to be better leaders just like a mother who is teaching her children the ways of the life. You helped us through problems that seemed impossible at the time but you made it into a reality. We all teamed to get through everything together as well as having a connection that anyone that wasn't in the program could ever experience. To you I want to say thank you as a teacher, mother, and a friend.

I would secondly like to thank Miss Winter and Miss Everheart for bringing this eye opening experience to our school and my fellow friends. I think I speak for the group when I say that this is a great program and its nothing we could ever learn in a classroom.

Lastly I just want to say that I've learned so much from this program and I also know that this has made

me more of a leader than a follower. I also believe that this will make me a better mother for my daughter. I can now teach her that you can be a leader and set goals in life and be able to follow them. These skills that I've learned I will be sure to pass on to people that I know.

Trista

Hello family, friends, faculty, and rising stars students. We are here today for our graduation. I think that we all have come a long way from where we had started especially for me. The rising stars program had lasted for about 3 months now. This wasn't just a program that you just sit and just hear someone talk and do nothing but sit and listen. We actually got to do activities and we had to think out of the box many of times. This program had you read the chapter that you were assigned and answer the questions at the end of the chapter. Then at the following session we had to answer more questions on how much we know about what we read. I learned a lot with the rising stars program. At first I had very little self-confidence in myself. Within the last couple of weeks I started to gain more self-confidence. We dealt with time management, and it really helps. I realized that I had extra time then what then what I actually had and all the extra time I had just using it on useless things when I had time to do other things. I met many new people I never met before like Deidra, Andrea, Sam, Jenn, Angie, and Jess. And people I already knew but became really good friends like Rickie, Summer, and Miss. Leiden. To some people Miss. Leiden was not just a teacher but also a friend that everyone can talk to and we all appreciate it. I have also learned that when you have to make a choice for the whole group that would be the best for everyone. I also learned that what it actually takes for someone to be a leader and it doesn't have to be a president, cheerleader, football player it could be anyone it could be you. And a leader is made not born to be a leader. Look at Abraham Lincoln; he didn't have the best of everything. He lost and failed in many things and gained some things. Some of them that he lost his race for the legislature, and then elected to legislature, lost for race for speaker of the House of Representatives, also lost in congress. Then after many other mistakes he had done he became a president of the United States. He had many setbacks and he never gave up for nothing and when he lost or failed he learned from his experience. I learned a lot from the Rising Stars program. I would like to say thanks to Mrs. Eberhear and Mrs. Winter for selecting our school to hold this. I would also want to say thanks to Miss. Leiden I really appreciate the time and effort you put forth into this program. And that you had a hectic schedule to work around between Rising Stars and the track and you did really well at it. And so thanks Miss. Leiden for being the one to do this program. You did great. Thanks.

Rickie

Throughout the Rising Stars program I have learned many things. Not only did I gain more self confidence in myself, I also gained self esteem. This program helped me to set and achieve my goals. The type of goals we had to set were “smarty” goals which means specific, measurable, attainable, realistically high, target date, and yours. Setting goals this way helps you to see what the consequences and benefits of your goal are. Also in this program we had to rate ourself on a wheel to see where you rated in each category. At the beginning of the program I felt social was my lowest area. But now on graduation day I feel that it is now the least of my worries. This program has taught me a lot and I am very happy I joined this program. I would like to thank Ms. Leiden for being there for us no matter what. She truly was a great help. Also, I thank Mrs. Winter and Mrs. Eberhart for bringing this program into our school because without them none of us would be Rising Stars.

Samantha

Some of the things I learned while I was in this program was 1)How to cope with my fears. 2)Some of the other things was We all have different opinions. Even leaders have hard times. Another thing I learned way to become a leader you have to know what to do. Some of the people that I met in the program for the first time was Trista and Angela and Deidra and Andrea. The people that I know from before I learned a bit more about. My favorite lesson on turning solutions into actions. In this lesson we learned how to deal with our frustration. When we don't achieve that one goal that we want we get mad and frustrated. In the program we learned to deal with our fear by doing it. Also in that lesson people are afraid of being rejected so they try to fit in by doing stuff that they are doing like drinking and smoking. I want to thank Ms. Leiden for taking her time out of her days to be with us.

Angela

What's Rising Stars? It's a question I've answered many times. My answer being “a group for developing leadership skills.” But Rising Stars has become so much more to me.

Rising Stars has become a source of confidence, positivity, and companionship. And Miss Leiden and the girls brightened my Wednesdays and widened my outlook on life. This program provided valuable lessons from goal setting to achieving. But more important, it gave me a chance to build friendships with these wonderful people. I enjoyed the lessons and the people. And I can honestly say I'm taking a lot away from the experience. I've learned that there are some things I can change. And others, I simply have to accept, such as the past. Failure is also a thing to accept because without it I, nor

anyone else, has motivation to improve. So, what is Rising Stars? It's a developmental program. Because, as it turns out, Rising Stars doesn't just help you develop leadership skills. It helps you develop yourself.

Deidre

Rising Stars showed us that we all had the qualities and potential in us to be leaders. It showed us to step up and not to be afraid to take control of a situation, not to be afraid to show our feelings, to reach for our goals, not to be afraid to fail, but to keep trying to succeed. I am grateful that I could have the experience of being in such a wonderful program and would like to say thank you to everyone who made it possible!

In joining the Rising Stars program, I wasn't really sure what to expect. I wasn't sure what the program was about and what would be expected of me. During the first initial meeting we met 2 wonderful ladies, Ms. Winter and Mrs. Eberhart, who explained what the program was about and also inspired us to continue the program. At the end of the first meeting we received the necessary materials needed for us to continue the program and also go to talk to Miss Leiden who would be teaching us throughout the remainder of the program. The first meeting went great and I was ready and waiting for the next meeting. Throughout Rising Stars program we learned many qualities that I feel anyone and everyone could use in becoming a model person. The qualities I learned will help me to handle situations better, leading to positive decision making and overall, I feel a more positive and better outlook on life.

Summer

The crowd roars around you, screams your name and praises you for your accomplishment. You've just scored the winning point for your team, graduated high school, or been elected for president. No matter what the accomplishment you've done it on your own by setting a goal and planning each step with care. You've overcome fears and obstacle that may have stood in your way. You did what you wanted to, and worked hard to get it.

This is what being a rising star is all about. It helps you to learn so many important ways to be successful no matter what you want to succeed in. No goal is a small one and nothing is too high. You can do whatever it is that you dream of, but only if you work hard and try your absolute best. I can only begin to tell you how much I learned during the time I spent in Rising Stars. At first it seemed as though it was the same things that they tell us year after year in school, but as time went by, each

meeting helped me to better understand how to achieve my goals and overcome my fears.

Other than the things we teamed from our books, I have also gained a few friends in my life. I became pretty comfortable around all the girls that were in the program. Angela is one of the sweetest girls I have ever met and I am really grateful that we met. Jen, Sam and Trista were three girls that I knew but wasn't really acquainted with, and through rising stars I grew closer to all of them. As for Rickie, J-moo, and Andrea whom I've been friends with for the most part of my life, I got to know them better and team more about them. All of the girls were special in their own way and we all have a lot in common.

Miss Leiden, who I wouldn't have ever met otherwise, is one of the greatest teachers we have at NC. Instead of criticizing and yelling she relates to our problems and does her best to help us out any way she can. She has a great personality and is fun to be around. I would have to say that if I had to choose a person to be my role model, it would be her and I am sure the rest of (the girls agree)

Being a rising star is a hard thing to explain, but I show my feelings best in my poetry, so here is a poem I wrote. I dedicate it to Miss Leiden.

“Being a Rising Star”

Rising above the pressure

Doing all you can

Stress and confusion

But you always have a plan

Helping others, and your self

Being your own best

Never giving up a chance

Ready for any test

A rising star is strong

sets goals to plan their life

No matter how hard things get

They make it through the strife

A rising star isn't perfect

But gets up once more

A rising star never stops

But is waiting at opportunities door

A rising star is honest

A rising star is true

And the highest of all the stars I know

Miss Leiden this is you

Like a mother

you've passed on your trait

Not looks, but even better

The chance for every one of us to be great.

Thanks Miss Leiden for being there for us, and doing your best to lead us. It really has been fun and we are all grateful.

Summer

I don't think we would be standing here today without a lot of work, dedication, and of course our leaders. Miss Leiden, Mrs Eberheart, and Mrs. Winter. These three wonderful ladies deserve a cruise through the bahamas for promoting and helping us throughout the entire program but because we can't afford something that great, we came up with something all our own and we hope its just as special. Miss Leiden, Mrs. Eberhart, and Ms. Witner, will you pelase come up here so that we can give you the gratitude you deserve.

Angela

Miss Leiden, we present you with these flowers as a symbol of our gratitude. But, they symbolize more than gratitude. Because, just as these buds blossomed into flowers, we've become leaders. Growing more into leaders with each trait that leaders possess.

Poem Read by Missy Leiden, facilitator, to her Rising Stars

Keep Believing in Yourself, by Unknown

There may be days
when you get up in the morning
and things aren't the way
you had hoped they would be.

Reach For Your Stars
That's when you have to
tell yourself that things will get better.

There are times when people
disappoint you and let you down,

but those are the times
when you must remind yourself
to trust your own judgments and opinions,
to keep your life focused on believing in yourself

and all that you are capable of.

Reach For Your Stars
There will be challenges to face
and changes to make in your life,
and it is up to you to accept them.

Constantly keep yourself headed
in the right direction for you.

It may not be easy at times,
but in those times of struggle

you will find a stronger sense of who you are,

Reach For Your Stars
So when the days come that are filled
with frustration and unexpected responsibilities,
remember to believe in yourself

and all you want your life to be,
because the challenges and changes
will only help you to find the goals
that you know are meant to come true for you.

Thanks for the memories
My Rising Stars

