

A group of young people are shown from a low angle, holding hands in a circle. They are outdoors, with green trees in the background. The image is split into two main sections: the left side shows a young woman in a white t-shirt looking upwards, and the right side shows a close-up of hands being clasped together. A white text box is overlaid on the right side, containing the title and organization name.

Creating Hope and Resiliency Through Youth Leadership Academy

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS)

Foster & Homeless Youth Education Services Department

Amanda Meeker

Student Services Specialist

Safe & Healthy Kids Department

Brent Smither

Program Coordinator

&

Josh Blecha

Program Coordinator

A photograph of a person wearing a white button-down shirt, pointing their right index finger towards a screen. A white rectangular box with blue horizontal bars at the top and bottom is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text 'About Us' in blue.

About Us

- Learn about the development of the Leadership Academy for Foster & Homeless Students.
- Learn about the Strength Based Assessment used to identify students' strengths and how to use this information to build students' skills based on their strengths.
- Learn about the leadership strategies and activities used by facilitators of the Leadership Academy.
- Participate in a guided leadership activity demonstrating strategies used with students.
- Learn about the connection between leadership training and volunteerism through You Matter Day.
- Learn about data collection to evaluate effectiveness of program.



Objectives



Development of Leadership Academy

Leadership Academy

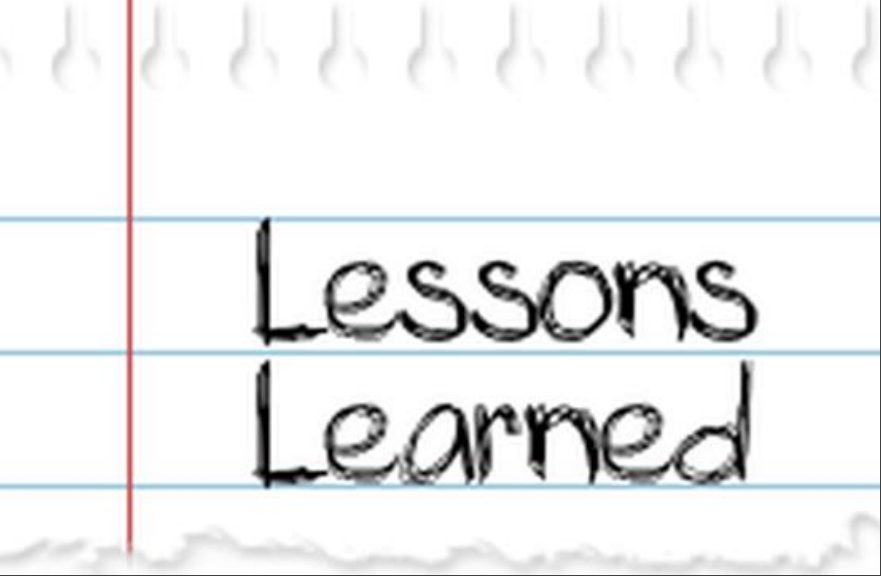
The Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Leadership Academy has been in existence since 1999. In 2021-22 school year, the Foster & Homeless Youth Education Services Department partnered with the Leadership Academy to create leadership specific for foster and homeless youth.

Collaborative Partners

- FCSS Safe and Healthy Kids Department; Leadership Academy
- 4 Fresno County School Districts
 - Fresno Unified
 - Clovis Unified
 - Sanger Unified
 - Central Unified
- 21 total sites

Identification of Students for Cohorts

- Identified districts/schools with willingness to participate.
- Schools identified students to participate.
- Students who agreed to commit to the cohort for entirety of program were selected.



Lessons Learned

- We must make an impact earlier than High School. How?
 - Create an agreement that outlines expectations of staff/students
 - Stabilize cohorts at no more than 25
-



What do we want our students to walk away with?

For students to walk away with a strong belief that they are special AND unique, and like everyone else, has something amazing to contribute to this world.

INTRODUCTION

How do you accomplish monumental goals? Cultivate monumental expectations!

what?
GOAL

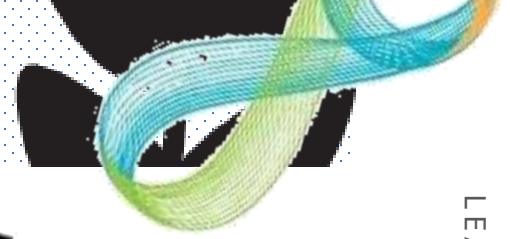
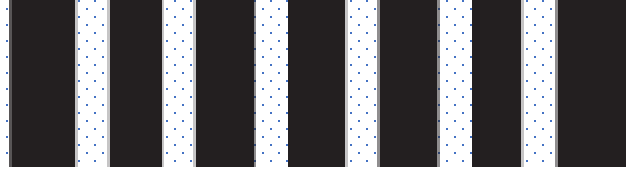
WHY?



**SCOUT
ISLAND**

**OUTDOOR
EDUCATION
FACILITY**

Where?



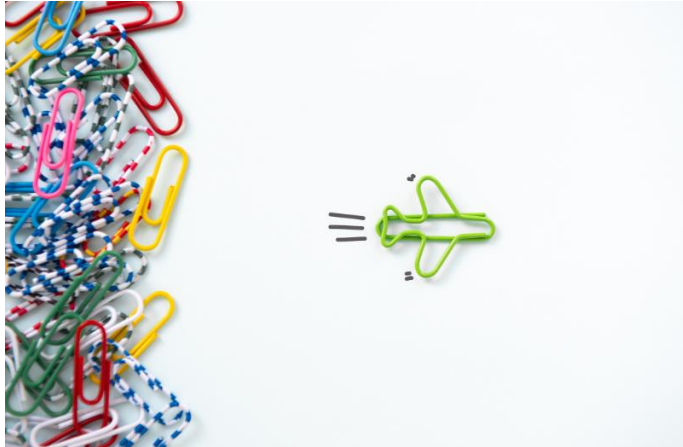
LEADERSHIP COHORT

HOW

LEADERSHIP

STRENGTHS
AWARENESS

DECISION
MAKING



LEADERSHIP; STAGE 1/2
STUDENT LEAD
CHALLENGE BY CHOICE

PHILOSOPHY



POSITIVE & CONSISTENT FACILITATORS
OUTDOOR/INDOOR TEAMBUILDING
FOOD/WATER/BADGES

ENVIRONMENT



SERVICE LEARNING
CLIFTON STRENGTHSFINDER

*CONTENT
FOCUS*

HIGH SCHOOL COHORTS

VS.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COHORTS

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Strengths Awareness
- Project Based Learning
- Life Skills
- Daily Themes













HIGH SCHOOL

- Strengths Focused
- Reflective Practices
- Vulnerable Spaces





BOTH

- Unconditional Positive
Regard

CliftonStrengths®



34

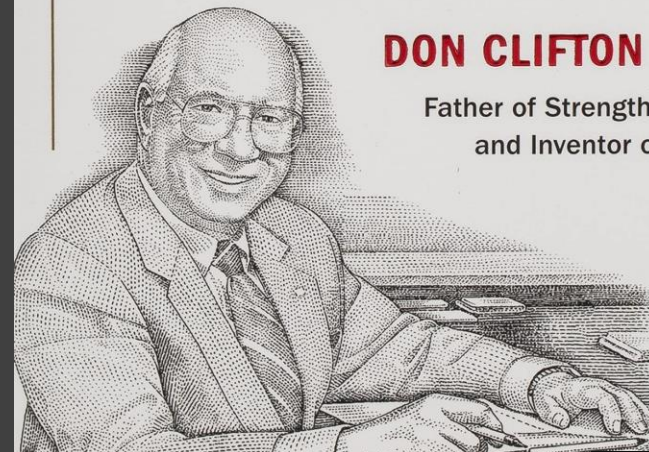
5

YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCES
WHO MADE YOU
WHO RAISED YOU

Strength Based Assessment

STRENGTHSFINDER 2.0
FROM GALLUP

Discover Your
CliftonStrengths



DON CLIFTON

Father of Strengths Psychology
and Inventor of CliftonStrengths®

Includes the
CliftonStrengths®
assessment

A close-up photograph of a piece of white lined paper with a red margin line on the left. The words "Lessons Learned" are written in a black, cursive-style font across two lines. The paper is slightly wrinkled and has some faint smudges at the bottom.

Lessons Learned

- Take assessment as part of the first day
 - Have required technology and codes ready
 - Have adults ready to support
-

The Four Domains of Leadership Strength

Executing	Influencing	Relationship-Building	Strategic-Thinking
Achiever	Activator	Adaptability	Analytical
Arranger	Command	Developer	Context
Belief	Communication	Connectedness	Futuristic
Consistency	Competition	Empathy	Ideation
Deliberative	Maximizer	Harmony	Input
Discipline	Self-Assurance	Includer	Intellection
Focus	Significance	Individualization	Learner
Responsibility	Woo	Positivity	Strategic
Restorative		Relator	



We all lead in very different ways based on our talents and our limitations. Serious problems occur when we think we need to be exactly like [any other] leaders.

STRENGTHS



**KEEP IN MIND: Students have their strengths
identified at this point**



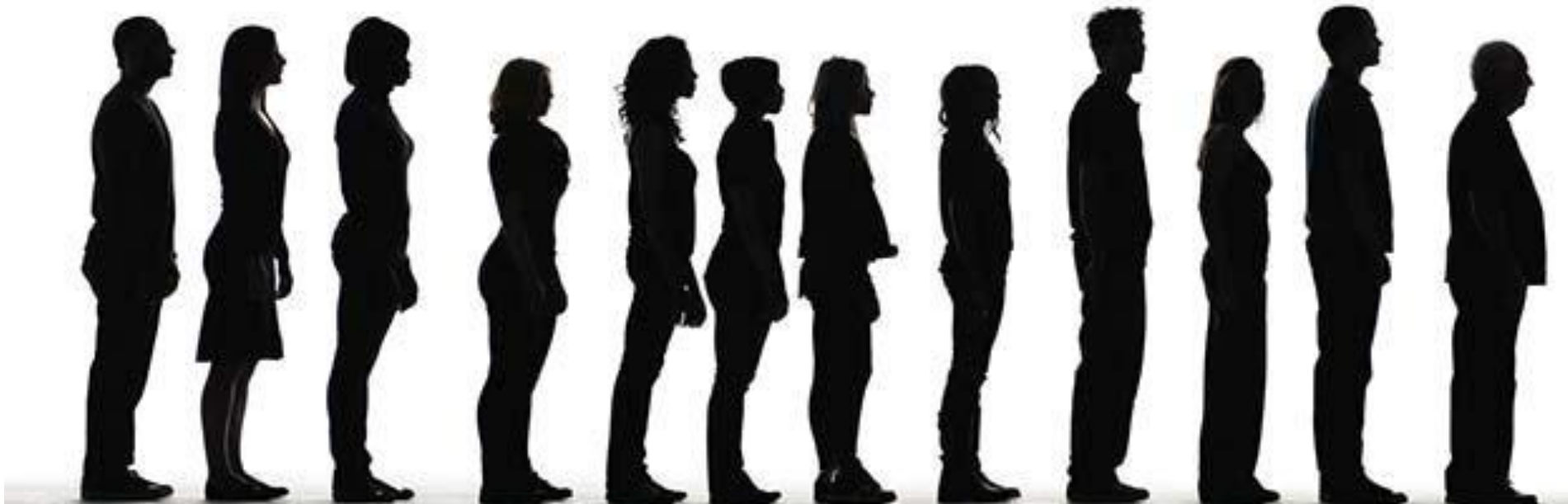
Activity time



“Talent Lineup”



Talent Line Up



Do you introduce yourself or wait for the other person?

I introduce
wait! ----- I like to



You are asked to participate in a competition.

I am winning!-----Do we have to?



My closet is organized...by color and
item

What? Why!-----Yes, it has
to be!



I usually wait or don't share my
opinion

Totally Me!-----I share
immediately!



I start projects no problem but have a hard time finishing them

Yep, that's me!-----I have to finish the project!



If I see someone by themselves

Who?
them!



I include



*Debrief: Why is an activity
like this useful?*

When leaders explore deep within their thoughts and feelings in order to understand themselves, a transformation can take shape. They know which kinds of people they work with and which kinds they have to try harder with to appreciate. Self-knowledge is foundational to effective leading.



Activity time



“Signatures”

Who?



Winner!



If you spend your life trying to be good at everything, you will never be great at anything.



5 CLUES TO TALENT

Teachers who make a difference in the lives of their students seem to be aware of their innate strengths. These teachers feel like they are in their element and keep their students engaged and focused. But how can you figure out your natural talents? And how can you leverage them into becoming strengths? Here are 5 clues to discovering your talents:

ROCK
YOUR
STRENGTHS

Yearnings

are felt early in life. It can be characterized as the "pull" or magnetic attraction that leads you to a certain activity. Ask yourself: To what kinds of activities are you naturally drawn?

Rapid Learning

shows talent in the context of a new challenge. It's the speed at which you acquire a new skill, or gain knowledge. Ask yourself: What kinds of activities do you seem to pick up quickly?

Flow

happens when you become so engaged in an activity that you lose track of time. The activity may be new, but you instinctively know what comes next. Ask yourself: In what activities do you automatically know the steps to be taken?

Satisfaction

are those experiences where the emotional and psychological rewards are great. These are the activities you "get a kick out of doing." Ask yourself: What activities give you a kick, either while doing them or immediately after, that you want to do again soon?

Glimpses of Excellence

are flashes of outstanding performance that you or others have observed. It can be simple activities: creating collaborative lessons or dealing with a difficult parent. Ask yourself: During what activities have you had moments of subconscious excellence when you thought, "How did I do that?"



WE ARE MAD TO KNOW

1^{start} / 4^{end}
2PM
REVEAL

GENDER REVEAL MYSTERY / HOUSE WARMING

tea party

FRESNO
355 E DEER CREEK LN
93720

SEPT
22ND



CAN YOU HELP THE BLECHA'S SOLVE THE MAD HATTER'S GREATEST RIDDLE?

A HOUSEWARMING GIFT IS NOT NECESSARY BUT A VINYL RECORD WILL KEEP THE NIGHT GOING RIGHT

THE

MASTER

KEY

PROJECT



STOO
crew





PUCKER UP RANCH



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Responsibility	Woo	Positivity	Strategic
Restorative		Relator	





Activity time



“Molding Your Strengths”



STRENGTH RESPONSIVE ACTIVITIES

meets the needs of all in the room

Other examples:

Larger group interaction (talking)

COMMUNICATION/WOO

Individual/Pair Work

INTELLECTION/RELATOR

Games/Problem Solving

STRATEGIC/RESTORATIVE/COMPETITION

Share outs/stage time

SIGNIFICANCE/INPUT/ACTIVATOR

Reflection/Prompts

DELIBERATIVE/DISCIPLINE

SCOUT ISLAND

HUNTERS
CAMPING - HUNTING
PROHIBITED IN PARK

PROPERTY
ZONE

POSTED
NO HUNTING
NO CAMPING

POSTED
NO TRESPASSING
KEEP OUT





strengths story

EACH STUDENT HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE OUT HOW/WHY THEY BELIEVE THEIR STRENGTHS MANIFESTED THE WAY THAT THEY APPEAR IN THEM.

WHAT DID WE DISCOVER?

- Support staff enjoyed it as much as the students!
- Attendance maintained for the duration
- Students wanted to share their story
- There were themes to the strengths that this group had





TOP STRENGTHS FOUND IN THIS COHORT

FUTURISTIC
DEVELOPER
COMMAND (4%/33%)
ADAPTABILITY
RESTORATIVE
INCLUDER
POSITIVITY

GROUP OF 12525357 RESPONDENTS

Achiever	4039040
Responsibility	3494805
Learner	3345875
Relator	3288225
Strategic	2733337
Input	2497393
Restorative	2469714
Empathy	2437545
Harmony	2384053
Adaptability	2213989
Developer	2207718
Positivity	2199491
Individualization	1938876
Futuristic	1766657
Communication	1627619
Belief	1616675
Analytical	1583457
Consistency	1576471
Intellection	1569824
Connectedness	1568837
Includer	1559453
Ideation	1531958
Arranger	1496894
Woo	1432888
Competition	1426701
Deliberative	1361463
Maximizer	1257197
Context	1174818
Activator	1116090
Discipline	1032102
Focus	882528
Significance	723043
Command	597423
Self-Assurance	474626





STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student: “It was a great experience! I truly felt I learned about myself in a unique way and I will take those lessons with me in life. It was a lot of fun to bond as a group. I felt really connected to the people around me, and it was a welcoming environment. I learned a lot about myself and I’m really happy I went.”

Student K: “This was the best workshop I’ve attended during my time here in blank district. I often don’t attend events, they just aren’t my thing. This workshop was different because I have never considered what my strengths were, in fact, I am often told how I am lacking in something not why I matter. People mean well but when they find out you have life experiences that are challenging, they talk to you from a place of deficit. Yes, my life is hard, but I am valuable, and I can offer the world a lot. I am so thankful I got to attend and would invite everyone to be as lucky as I am. “



STAFF FEEDBACK

I am not sure who I need to shout this out to but I wanted to make sure I acknowledged and thanked you for allowing CWSHS students to attend the Scout Island Leadership Cohort yesterday. My students had an amazing day and are excited for the April workshop. The focus on strengths and how their individual strengths are gifts that they give to the world is a much-needed message for these kids who have such hardship and chaos at home. They spend a majority of their day in survival mode but this workshop got them to think about the influence and impact they can have on the world around them. Your above and beyond communication, and support is amazing and I'm so thankful to get to partner with you. If you need anything from me or have additional opportunities we can't wait to take part in them.



Evaluation of Program

Data Collection Survey

90%

Increased their **KNOWLEDGE** of their strengths and how to lead



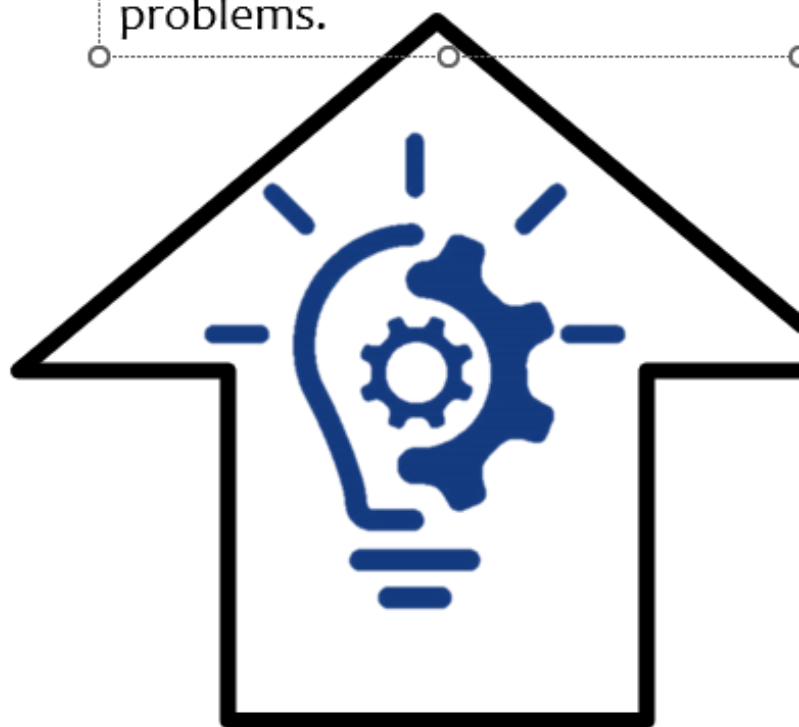
86%

Increased their **BELIEF** in their ability to lead, collaborate and serve others.



86%

Increased their **SKILLS** to lead, set goals and solve problems.





**Thank
You**

QUESTIONS?

LEADERSHIP

STRENGTHS
AWARENESS

DECISION
MAKING