

The Benefits of MSAT

By Tim McMullin, reprinted from Update, January 2007

What Masons in New York are accomplishing by offering Masonic Student Assistance Training to school teams.

As a state coordinator of the Master Mason Student Assistance Program here in New York State, and as a retired school principal, let me review the benefits to a school, a school district, and the entire community served, when a school takes advantage of the MMSAP training. The Newman-Stecher workshops are preparing school-based teams to help young people who are involved with, or in danger of becoming involved with some of the twenty-first century's biggest dangers to young people – alcohol and drugs, violence, gangs, or bullying. There are students who suffer from depression or young people who are missing school... in short, there are young people at risk of becoming a burden to society, and every school sees these problems.

How are young people and their families helped by the student assistance process? First of all, a trained team works on each problem presented, and, folks, "we" are smarter than "me." But it isn't just a team well-intentioned teachers and counselors working together. A school-based, life-skills intervention plan will be developed by the caring members of the trained team for each young person. That plan will be school-based, but not developed in a vacuum. The development process will involve parents as well as the student, and include, if necessary, referrals to agencies outside the school. The MMSAP teams will systematically review and monitor the plans. Bottom line...70% of those students who are referred will take advantage of the resources, and will get back on track, to become productive, contributing members of society.

What do we mean by productive? Consider this: recent reports from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and California continue to show the effectiveness of the program. MSAT-trained schools experience higher test scores, improved attendance, decreased violence and bullying, fewer disruptions, better behavior, fewer referrals to the Committee on Special Education (CSE), decreased substance abuse, increased promotions, more graduations, and more confident teachers. Wouldn't a school community benefit from any of the above? Wouldn't your child's or Grandchild's school?

The results of MMSAP training are starting to come in from jurisdictions across the country. These numbers indicate that MMSAP makes a difference. For example, we have learned that, in just one year, for every teacher and counselor who is MSAT trained, seven young people will be helped. For the typical team of six educators, that means forty-two (42) students in that school will be helped each year. Speaking as a principal, if we could effectively intervene with forty young people engaging in at risk behaviors, in just one year the school climate would change dramatically, and we could move closer to the goal of every child growing up strong, safe, and free.

We Masons care about young people who are at-risk, we sponsor the most effective and comprehensive program, and we know that every MSAT team that is trained is going to help young people get back on track.

That's what I call making a difference.

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Sponsored by New York Masons to help schools help young people at risk
Email MSAT@nymasons.org or call 1 888 694 0511 if you would like to get a school involved.

Watch the MSAT video at: http://www.johnsonrauhoff.com/msap/mmsap_video.html

For more information, e-mail Tim at MSAT@nymasons.org or call 1 888 694 0511

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