



## ***STAND & SERVE Member Stories and Testimonials:***

In May of 2010, Peer Solutions conducted a survey of 30 past S&S members dating back to 1998. 100% reported a positive impact of S&S currently in their lives and are still involved in this type of work. Below are some of the stories we received. THANK YOU

1. *Anthony: "I joined S&S in 7th grade. S&S has done a lot for me. I could go there to escape the harsh things life threw at me. Community service and peer educating did so much for the person I've become. S&S gave me tons of resources and pointed me in the right direction. When I was a younger member I was taught lessons and given factual information on good and bad going on around me. Things are happening in the world that I have the right to know about including how to do my part to fix them and deal with them in positive ways. Although I'm in a different state and different place in my life, I still catch myself using the things I've learned over the 6yrs I've been a part of the S&S family. This organization is built on hard work, good, genuine people and tons love." 4/2010 Anthony is now 20*
2. *Mo: "STAND & SERVE has given me the opportunity to experience what it feels like to open my heart to others. Not only because the amount of gratitude received is tremendous, but the feeling of helping and fixating the community to become a better place is overwhelming altogether. STAND & SERVE has changed my perspective on life itself. I benefited greatly from the amount of knowledge each and every person has in the club itself. By doing so, I have altered my lifestyle around demonstrating respect as the norm. It not only benefits myself and makes me a better person, but also makes the people around my community much happier overall as well. Mo-2009 City of Tempe Diversity Award Winner joined S&S in 2005. 4-2010*
3. *Tonia: "STAND & SERVE opened my eyes about what was REALLY going on in the world around me. I was aware about all of the problems that existed but was unaware of the solutions until I explored them with S&S. Being a part of this group empowered and enabled me to be a part of positive change and help others to do the same. The S&S mission isn't something that leaves you when you leave the club. It is a permanent mindset of social responsibility that stays with you for life." Tonia joined STAND & SERVE in 1999, is still with us and is now the Teen Director at Westside Community Center. 12-2010*
4. *Heather: "STAND & SERVE encouraged me to think about consent, violence, and community building in new ways. My time as a Peer Educator with STAND & SERVE gave me firsthand experience in working with diverse groups to make change. Working with STAND & SERVE played a major role in the way I came to understand gender and sexuality, and was foundational to my becoming a feminist. Years later, I am pursuing a graduate degree in Women's Studies and Policy, and often apply what I learned through working with STAND & SERVE." 4-2010 Heather joined STAND & SERVE in 2001*

5. Michael *“Through high school, STAND & SERVE provided plenty of opportunities and settings - for enrichment, education, projects, etc. While all of these were incredibly worthwhile, the organization's true accomplishment was (and is) bringing people together through service. It took me the last few years to truly understand the gifts I was given through the opportunity to help others, and it has changed my life. I now look forward to the years ahead as exciting because of all the people that need help! As a future educator I desire to help those around me in the same way as Stand & Serve - by showing how beneficial service can be, not only to those who receive, but those who serve. 4-2010 Michael joined STAND & SERVE IN 2002.”*
6. Shya: *“STAND & SERVE gave me a voice. It helped kids have a say in what we thought the world should look like. It helped us learn that the world can be a beautiful place it just has to start with use spreading the norm. The norm is respect, we have to respect ourselves and others that's the real start to a peaceful world. 4-2010. Shya joined S&S in 2006 and currently serves on Peer Solutions Board of Directors.*
7. Jeanette: *“I joined stand and serve in 2004 STAND & SERVE has done more for me than words can describe. it has brought me lots of great opportunities to make positive changes in our community but more importantly it has taught me how to help solve problems in our society at large and it's just been a lot of fun!! STAND & SERVE has changed my life by teaching me to how to see problems from their underlying causes.” 4-2010. Jeanette currently serves on Peer Solutions Board of Directors.*
8. Aleisha: *“STAND & SERVE did so much for me! Through the experiences and opportunities that I got in that club I got to see life and the world from perspectives that I would never otherwise know. Through stand and serve I learned at an early age that empathy can change someone's life, or even the world. I learned that there is beauty and something to respect in every person, no matter how different from me they may be, all I have to do is take the time to look. Stand and serve shaped me as a person and helped me to develop the skills to look at all the trouble there is in the world today and still have hope that I can make a difference.*

*STAND & SERVE helped me to realize my passion in life - working with underprivileged children. Through my experiences volunteering at community events, helping battered women and their children, and working with other people in poverty I fell in love with the spirit and joy that these children show under unbelievable stress. Through stand and serve I was able to experience Camp Any town, which helped me to connect with young adults who inspired me because of their courage to overcome tremendous obstacles and still find success in life. From those experiences I decided my senior year of high school that I wanted to make my career out of teaching in impoverished communities. After graduating from Sacramento State I joined Teach for America and moved to Gallup NM and am now in my third year of teaching kindergarten to children from the Navajo Nation. I am a big sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern NM, and feel like my life has a purpose. I have a job that I am passionate about and can do my part to make a difference in the world. I feel very much like my experiences and work with Stand and Serve in high school helped me to find that passion and purpose early in my life and so helped me to get to where I am today. It is one of the most prevalent forces that shaped the path that my life has taken and for it I will be eternally grateful. Oh and that is not to even mention the life-long friends that I made in the club. Sarah, Megyn, Marinate, Cady and Lindsay should get their own book for wonderfulness! 4-2010. Aleisha joined STAND & SERVE in 1999.*

9. Irais: *Today in America people think it is normal for violence to exist, luckily there is a really good program to help the youth of today with their problems that program is called STAND & SERVE or*

peer solutions. I am writing this because I think that we are really doing a good job to improve the way people view things. One of our behavioral statistics is that 90% of behavior is learned through modeling, and I think that is very true because I have experienced it in my life. When I the age of 13 I was a total rebel and I hated my life even though I have everything I thought I had nothing, and I had the baddest most influential friends in the world. One night I was with a friend that was not a very good friend and d I saw her doing drugs so I thought that if she was doing it then it was the right thing to do so I started doing drugs with her. The last time I did drugs was when my best friend Renee was shot and killed because of drugs that really hit my life hard and impacted it but I still had problems after that even though I wasn't doing drugs I was still drinking and hanging out with bad people that thought it was normal to have bad behavior. Then I got into stand serve and it completely changed my life I never thought that being there would help me so much but it has and I really thank them for that they gave me the chance to grow that no one had ever given me in my life I finally had the chance to prove myself to everyone that I really had genuine feelings and that I really cared and I didn't just want to do it to relapse because that was never my intention. Today I am a changed person and I am going through what I went through when I was 13 with my brother who is 13 lucky for him I will never let him fall I will always be here to hold his hand through the problems that he has and I will always be here if he ever needs me. I want to thank Jennifer Rauhouse for believing in me and giving me a chance to show that I really can make a difference in people's lives and it is all thanks to her she has showed the power I really do have and how I can use it in a non-violent way. STAND & SERVE is a community based club that helps the youth by using awareness as the key by showing the bad in our own community and by having fun while doing it. I really know that stand and serve can change any one's life just like it has changed mine just ask yourself one question have you done something nice for someone today? Well guess what I do something nice for someone everyday by being in stand and serve I change people's lives for the better. 6-2010. Irais joined STAND & SERVE in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and is graduating from high school May 2011.

10. Mary-Kate Glen - There are so many aspects of my life and so many aspects of who I am as a person



that have been influenced by STAND & SERVE. I remember going to meetings as a 14 year old and hearing the phrase "demonstrating respect as the norm". The really radical thing was that those were not just words thrown around by adult club leaders; I saw the words lived out in the way students were accepted, empowered, and listened to. More and more I saw it rubbing off on myself and my peers. Jen came to speak and dialog about sexual violence with a freshman dance class I was in. For many of us it was probably the first (and maybe the only) time when an adult would talk honestly and compassionately with us about rape, abuse, cycles of violence, and power dynamics. But the most important message we heard was "it is NEVER the victim's fault.

When Jen first said that to the packed classroom of mostly females, it felt revelatory. For some, those words were like a healing salve on open wounds. That talk changed my awareness. Being involved with STAND & SERVE normalized more than respect for me. It normalized the idea that I could do something positive in response to how infuriatingly messed up the world is. That

*empowerment is life changing, especially for youth who are in the process of putting together who they are, and who they want to be. STAND & SERVE normalized the idea that one of the most powerful tools we each have for enacting change in the world is the way we interact with others. I learned that I wanted to be the change I wished to see. STAND & SERVE offered the opportunity to start figuring out how to do just that, at soup kitchens, shelters for women and children, community building events, etc. What is critical to note here is how STAND & SERVE is all about NORMALIZING this idea of empowerment. Creating change in the community is something wonderful, but decidedly NORMAL. It's not just for mythic figures like Mother Theresa and Cesar Chavez, it's accessible to young people of whatever race or religion or class or gender identity!*

*STAND & SERVE has influenced my life long after graduating high school. It taught me to look closely at dynamics in my relationships. It gave me the language to communicate empathetically with others about important and sometimes painful issues. It's helped instill in me the conviction that all people deserve respect and dignity; that despite systemic forces of oppression, we CAN and WILL work for that dignity to be acknowledged. I feel like I've come full circle now. I am currently working as an assistant farm manager with an organization called F.R.E.S.H. New London in Connecticut.*

*The work of this organization is to empower broad participation in transforming the food system into something healthy, just, and sustainable, that is accessible to all in the community. I work with high school students on two acres to raise organic produce that is marketed at half the cost of conventional produce through a mobile market bringing organic food to neighborhoods with little or no access to fresh produce. The food is also distributed through local social service agencies who purchase shares of produce each week and make it available for free to clients. This is something revolutionary, getting fresh organic produce to folks coming to the food bank and WIC office. But I think the most pivotal aspect of the work is that it's the local high school students who are making the change in their own community. When they see the families in their own neighborhoods getting access to good healthy food, it's tangible evidence that they are not powerless, they can make a difference in creating more equitable access to resources, healing the land, healing the community.*

*I am so grateful to all the people working with STAND & SERVE who helped change my life. It gives me goosebumps to think of all the lives touched by S&S and Peer Solutions, all the stories of change and empowerment that continue to have a ripple affect we could never fully comprehend. I hope to keep the ripples going further and further with the youth here at F.R.E.S.H. 4-2010 Mary Kate joined STAND & SERVE in 1999. She also drew the hand in the Demonstrating respect as the norm logo.*

11. Sarah- *STAND & SERVE is one of the most meaningful things I have ever been a part of. When I look back at high school, being in STAND & SERVE is truly one of my fondest and proudest memories. We were concretely working towards promoting greater understanding and doing our part to lessen violence and disrespect--and as long as those things exist and happen we were going to talk about it and encourage others to speak and dialogue as well. I wrote about S&S in my college*

*admissions essays. That is how proud I am of what we set out to do and what we did in S&S. I will try to find them and send them to you, if even just the excerpts about S&S and can write more-- but this is just straight from the heart. 4-2010. Sarah joined S&S in 1998*

12. *Catherin - I just watched Dr. Yellin's video. It made me contemplate the impact STAND & SERVE has had on my adult life. I could never fully express my gratitude for the work you do. S&S gave me the chance to be the person I am today. I didn't know what it meant to be passionate about ideas, ideals, or people. S&S showed me all three. It taught me something I knew instinctively and craved, but couldn't have put a voice to without you. While in the club, I have to admit, it was difficult to understand its importance. At the time, I remember thinking that it was too small to truly make a difference. Little did I know. With all of my heart, I can't imagine my world without it.*

*Regardless of personal background, S&S expected the same out of everyone, love and respect. As a child, that was an empowering idea. It meant that I wasn't valued based on my surroundings, my upbringing, or my family's economic status, but rather my heart and soul. Growing up in a neighborhood where expectations for kids were low and resources scarce, S&S gave my very being validation.*

*S&S showed me how to care. As an adult, my work deals with issues of sexuality and feminism. Both issues are complex and often challenging to talk about or explore. S&S encouraged discussions on difficult subjects in a way that wasn't present in any other part of my life. This encouragement has truly shaped my view on the world and the way I verbalize (or visualize) my opinion of it. The club taught me to be confident. It taught me that respect really can be the norm and not to apologize for that. S&S lit a fire in me that will certainly take a lifetime to extinguish. I am a different and far better person having been a S&S member. Thank you. It feels good to let you know how much you have meant to me! Catherin joined STAND & SERVE in 1999.*

13. *Megyn: STAND & SERVE has taught me so much about healthy living, like learning how to love myself and others, how to actively listen to someone, how to appreciate all people for who they are, to recognize the good in everyone (especially people who have hurt other people), how to practice empathy, and so much more. S&S has also taught me what to say and what to do when a friend discloses to me that they have been harassed, assaulted or abused. This is an extremely important skill to learn because most times when someone has been assaulted or abused, the first person they will tell is a friend, and having the knowledge to tell a victimized friend that what happened to them is not their fault, that I believe them, to have empathy for them, and posing the right options for what to do next, are the first steps for someone I love to be able to heal and overcome the abuse that they experienced. Unfortunately, these skills are not taught in a regular school curriculum, and I am SO thankful to S&S and Jennifer Rauhouse for providing these lessons to me while I was in school. I have been able to counsel and assist an alarming number of friends and peers to get the right help that they need after experiencing trauma because of what I learned in S&S. I will always and forever be a member of STAND & SERVE, and have shaped my own personal values and beliefs from what I*

*learned and experienced while in STAND & SERVE. 4-10 Megyn joined in 1999, served on staff and now lives in Florida.*

## **Recent Quotes from STAND & SERVE Members include:**

*“S&S brings people with the same ideas and views together. It shows how many people really care about the world.”*

*“By teaching other kids about violence and why it was wrong, as well as how to prevent it, I think we helped them to go out and help put an end to it.”*

*“S&S causes the students who are in it to become safe responsible bystanders & speak up when something is wrong.”*

*“S&S helps the community find a resolution to problems and sends a message to respect one another.”*

*“They put the truth out there and make a change through that.”*

*“I joined to learn more of my community and also to be more active in it. To stand up in what I believe in and help out the community.”*

*“I try to understand other’s culture and that there are issues underneath that don’t show.”*

*“I learned to stand up to what’s wrong, and I am not afraid to speak. My friends do it too.”*

### **What elementary & middle school participants say about S&S (May 2006)**

- I act better and I know what to look for in friends and in life.
- I am a lot nicer to my sister.
- It made me feel wanted.
- I haven't cut myself. To not hate myself but to love myself.
- I am not as mean.
- I learned to be a responsible bystander.
- Makes me think more positively.
- I am more respectful of others.

### **What high school participants say about S&S (May 2006)**

- I can better communicate with others. I'm more confident.
- It has made me more accepting of others.
- That's its good to do community service because it helps the whole community.
- It makes me feel important and that I can help people. It's a good feeling.
- I have learned to be more kind and appreciate life.
- It's changed how I see the world as well as improved my self value.
- I try to understand others culture and that there are issues underneath that they don't show.

- I like the way we talked about things that can harm your life, and how to avoid those signs of depression, substance abuse, and suicide.
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### **What Peer Educators say about S&S (May 2006):**

- I feel really good to contribute to positive social change because I believe that what we show the kids is going to have a positive change in their lives.
- I feel like I helped younger kids know more about what to do when they have problems. I feel like they actually learned and had fun.
- I felt that I got a lot out of helping kids and teaching them about drugs, depression and suicide.
- I feel that being a part of this organization, we were able to better children's lives in the future. We gave them the mind set and tools to be a contributor to society.
- I feel we taught these kids a lot about respect and how much violence hurts others so that now the kids will know how to prevent it.
- By teaching these kids about violence and why it was wrong, as well as how to prevent it, I think we helped these kids to go out and help put an end to it.
- Just by having the kids with us instead of on the streets, we prevent chances of violence. Also, they will be more considerate and peaceful from now on.

### **What parents have to say about the impact of S&S on their children (May 2006)**

- My daughter respects herself more and is learning the ability to stand up for herself. She uses examples from S&S at home when there are problems instead of getting mad.
  - My daughter has increased self-confidence and leadership skills, and a strong voice against injustice.
  - My son is more open and willing to help others.
  - My daughter learns right from wrong, and she thinks of others.
  - My daughter is passionate about S&S and I like that.
  - I know that my daughter is changing her attitude towards things, being more respectful and knowing how to do things differently.
  - My daughter is very happy to be helping her community. This experience has wrought a positive change in her.
  - My son is better able to deal with conflict by choosing other avenues. S&S taught him how to think more instead of just reacting.
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