

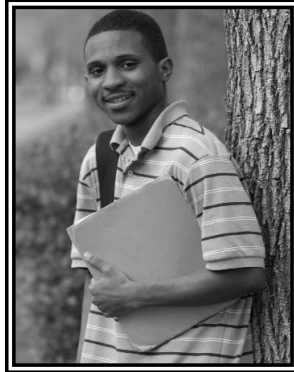
## Lutheran Social Service's Peer Education Providing Vision for Life

What are your goals and dreams? What are the obstacles that get in your way? Where do you want to be in five years? What will help you get there?

Good questions. They come right out of some of the finest books on leadership, including one by Frances Hesselbein, business leader, and former CEO.

Lest you think that such concepts are only directed at business leaders and graduate students, think again.

Students trained in Peer Education through Lutheran Social Service are applying these same concepts in high school and middle school classrooms in Minneapolis to help kids avoid paths of pregnancy, make good decisions and see a bigger vision for what their life could be.



“Peer Education gave me confidence to go out and become a leader,” said Darrius Hubbard, the first of five children in his family, who will attend college. Without Peer Education, several personal hardships may have led him down the wrong path, he said. Darrius explained that he “moved around a lot” as a child, and has never really had a permanent place to live. But he has gained problem-solving skills and support from Peer Education to get around those hurdles.

When life gets him down, he leans on his support team in Peer Education, whom he considers part of his family.

In Peer Education, students like Darrius are trained to teach their classmates about goal-setting, good decisions, communication and self-confidence, using tools like time lines and role-playing.

Once shy, Darrius can hardly believe that he read his own words of poetry before the student body this past year, and delivered a speech with confidence, to a panel of professors at the University of Minnesota.

One of his most surprising revelations: he discovered that he’s a good teacher. His goal is to use that gift to help show other kids the way to a better life.

“These kids are amazing!” said LSS Peer Education Coordinator Chicka Merino, who meets with peer educators weekly throughout the year. “Even with some pretty daunting obstacles in their lives, these kids show us that they can become exceptional leaders when we invest in them. All kids need that in their lives.”

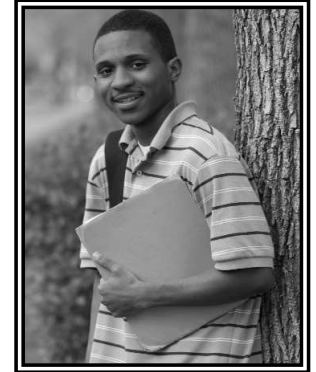
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## “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is the tree of life.” - Proverbs 13:12

At Lutheran Social Service, we see many people looking for hope. That search leads in many directions, youth seeking shelter, seniors looking for a nutritious meal, refugees looking for a fresh start in a new country, couples looking for a child to adopt, and counseling for a financial crisis. Each of these people feels a burden that makes their heart ache.

Our mission is to ease that burden by providing hope and avenues to fulfill their specific need. It is our joy to work with each individual who comes to one of our services looking for help and hope. In fact, LSS has come to regard our entire mission as itself a movement – a Movement of Hope.

It is our goal that each individual feels Christ’s love in the midst of the situation we are helping them with. With their needs met, those we serve take a step closer to being a “tree of life,” someone more fulfilled, in a position to employ their own assets as part of their community.

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide hope for more than 100,000 people every year and help them fulfill their longings. We offer a wide variety of social services throughout the state of Minnesota. Our services include:

- Adoption
- Assisted Living
- Disaster Relief
- Financial Counseling
- Housing
- Mental Health Counseling
- Refugee Services
- Senior Services
- Services for People with Developmental Disabilities
- Youth Services

For more information about LSS and any specific service, please visit our website at: [www.lssmn.org](http://www.lssmn.org).



*Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota serves all people regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, handicap or age.*

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