

My Name My Story

MNMS Leaders Inspire.

MNMS Leaders are the heartbeat of our organization. In this edition of our newsletter we focus on one of our MNMS Leaders.

Mary Kathryn Larson, High School Sophomore, MNMS Leader at Chaminade College Preparatory, CA.

Hi, my name is Mary Kathryn (MK) Larson and I am a sophomore at Chaminade College



Prep. I chose that picture to the left because running is my life, and it is what I spend basically all my time doing. I have been a

leader in MNMS for a few months now and have gotten more out of it than I could have ever imagined. Not only do I feel like my work in MNMS has made a difference in the community, it has surely made an impact on me. With our motto being to inspire empathy and unity within the community, I have heard and experienced so many life changing stories.

A few weeks ago at a MNMS Unity Day, I had the opportunity to hear a man speak about his hardships growing up. He struggled with his weight, bullying, and especially stereotypes. This really hit home for me, for I grew up being largely affected by stereotypes and bullying as well.

Ever since I was born, there was always something a little bit different about me. I would make weird noises and do weird things with my body. My family would try to help me stop but it seemed impossible. Kids in my class had no idea why I was making these strange noises, and neither did I. They would make fun of me and laugh at me behind my back. And like any third grade girl, I took this straight to the heart. I would dread having to read or speak in front of the class and all I wanted was to be "normal". Around third grade, I was diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome. This is a condition in which the

mind has sudden impulses that are very hard to control. At first, I had no idea what this meant. All I knew was that I never had a chance at being "normal" again. I learned to live with this small set back I had and started to become more comfortable with it the more that I was open about it. But, life moved on and next thing I knew I had high school in front of me. At this time, most of my "tics" had become much more subtle, but I became so nervous that they would come back in just enough time to make me the weird kid in high school. I began to hear the many common jokes of kids this age about Tourette's. They would blurt random things out in class and then follow with, "Oh sorry! He has Tourette's!" To them, this was just a light hearted joke, but to me it was a painful reality that I feared every day.

Joining MNMS has made me the confident person I am today. After hearing many stories like my own, I realized that my struggles are so minor in the scheme of things. I found comfort in hearing other people's stories and felt inclined to help even more. By having a long journey of my own already under my belt, I feel like I can really connect to those that we strive to bring the My Name My Story values to. As a leader on MNMS, I have had the opportunity to lead Unity Day and Leadership Day just recently. At both of these days, I felt like I helped to live out MNMS goal of inspiring empathy and unity. It was amazing to see what a little bit of empathy can do to bring a community together. Joining MNMS was one of the best decisions I have made and I cannot wait to continue to learn, grow, and inspire through this organization~ M.K. Larson.

This Holiday Season ~ Support MNMS Make a Donation



You can now support MNMS by making a donation through our Fiscal Sponsor, Youth Venture, Inc. Click here to make a donation or for more information.



SPOTLIGHT

We would like to welcome over 50 new National MNMS Leaders. Check out the Wall of Fame.

We would also like to welcome MNMS School Clubs and their leaders at the following High Schools:

- El Camino, CA
- Enloe, NC
- Esperanza, CA
- La Reina, CA
- Notre Dame, CA
- Raleigh Charter, NC
- San Fernando Institute of Applied Media, CA
- Viewpoint, CA



MNMS@PDS Leaders will be wearing their custom MNMS shirts at their Hurricane Sandy Beach Clean Up! Contact Us to Order YOUR Custom School Club Shirts.



Farm Rich, selected MNMS as one of six youth led organizations in 2013 to receive a donation to further the impact of our work. Thank you Farm Rich!!!!



MNMS is proud to be an Affiliate Member of the CA Association of Student Leaders & CA Association of Directors of Activities. We will be in Booth 507 at the CADA Convention in March 2014!!

For more information on how you can create an impact in your school and community visit:

www.mynamemystory.org

Register Your MNMS School Club

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