

# Our Story

The My Name My Story 2013 Impact Report





The most powerful force on earth is a human soul on *Fire...*



My Name My Story



*This book is dedicated to our amazing MNMS Leaders. You are the heartbeat of the organization, the unsung heroes whose stories the world needs to hear.*

*We respect you for being changemakers in your communities because we know it is not always easy to stand up for your passions and put your head above the crowd. Know in your heart that your work is making a difference. Lives are being changed because of the stories you share. Youth around the world have a little more hope for the future, they believe more, succeed more, and come back to inspire the rest of us because of your leadership.*

*Today, we impact thousands of young leaders because we are surrounded by incredible family, friends, mentors, teachers, advisors, well wishers and The MNMS Community.*

*Thank you for an amazing 2013.  
In this book we share your incredible stories, but we also know there are millions of stories that still need to be told...*

Amit Dodani, Founder

## **Our Story**

### **The My Name My Story 2013 Impact Report**

The purpose of this Impact Report is part of My Name My Story's mission to share "One Million Stories that Inspire," as such, any content used is shared with that intention of inspiring empathy and unity in the global community.

We are thankful for all the contributions from The MNMS Community, Supporters and Friends.

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**Idea, Copyright & Content Owner: My Name My Story**

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The MNMS Team

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## My Name My Story

is a social leadership organization that inspires empathy and unity in the community.

We empower individuals to be **Changemakers** - to recognize and cultivate their passions through teamwork, leadership, and service in their communities.

Our motto, **Hope-Believe-Succeed-Inspire**, reflects the process that empowers the next generation of social innovators that are both driven and socially conscious. We believe that empathy is caught, not taught, and that when youth talk to youth - they listen.

We accomplish our goals through:  
**Storytelling** that allows people to relate their personal identities and experiences to a larger narrative.  
**School Clubs** that allow individuals to step into leadership roles and work in teams to develop their abilities.  
**Inspire Empathy Events** that bring the community together and motivate individuals to take action.

By encouraging young people to pursue their dreams while seeking out every opportunity to make a positive impact, we can work toward a world filled with empathetic leaders.

# MNMS 2013 Numbers

**In 2013, our stories reached 122 countries. The average viewer visited 5.02 pages and engaged with our site for 2 Minutes and 20 seconds!**

As of 2013 MNMS had  
14 School Clubs  
100+ National MNMS Leaders  
400+ MNMS School Club Members  
Impacting a student body of  
approximately 13,000+ Students



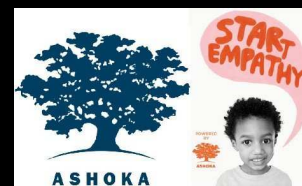
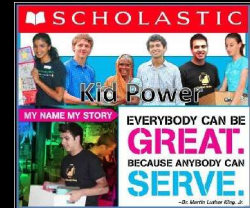
**As an organization, MNMS has donated over 12,000 books and 750 toys to underprivileged students and children's hospitals.**

We could give you more numbers, but numbers don't tell stories.  
The words that are shared on the pages to come will inspire and challenge you to find your passion and run with it.  
Read on, and be the change.



## 2013 Awards and Recognition

- Jan 31 KABC Channel 7 Cool Kids Award
- Feb 8 MNMS wins Free the Children / Amway We Day Contest
- Feb 18 MNMS filmed to be featured in Live Life & Win
- Feb 19 MNMS on Yahoo! Business News
- Mar 27 Amit Dodani speaks about MNMS at We Day
- Mar 27 MNMS on KOMO Channel 4 News in Seattle, WA
- Apr 2 MNMS featured on Woodland Hills Patch
- Apr 10 Ashoka's Start Empathy blogs about MNMS
- Apr 26 Recognition for Donation of Books to UCLA Olive View
- May 1 MNMS mentioned in NY Times "Young Movers, With a Passion for a Change" by David Bornstein
- May 17 MNMS wins Kohl's Cares Scholarship Store Level
- May 30 MNMS Banking on Youth Semi -Finalists
- Jun 3 MNMS @ PDS featured in Princeton Patch for book drive
- Jun 3 Jefferson Awards Youth Service Challenge: MNMS was 2nd place winner in Peace and Justice category for the Youth Service Challenge out of 3,000+ applicants.
- Jun 15 Ian Somerhalder Foundation Features MNMS
- July 1 MNMS receives Jefferson Awards for Public Service for Excellence in Program and Development and Implementation
- July 3 Peace Fund Radio Interviews Amit on the air as a "Hero of the Week"
- Aug 1 Scholastic, Kid Power features MNMS in their digital interactive book KIDPOWER
- Aug 9 MNMS selected as Peace First Finalist
- Oct 15 Amit wins Exchange Scholar to Represent MNMS at AshokaU 2014.
- Oct 17 FarmRich selects MNMS as 1 of their 6 youth led organizations to receive \$2,000
- Nov 7 Liberty Treehouse interview features MNMS. Host, Lu Hessian interviewed Amit about the MNMS "empathy mission..."
- Nov 15 MNMS is included in a special event at The Hudson, Los Angeles with New Profit & Peace First.
- Nov 17 MNMS is Included in "Bringing Youth to the Table in Bullying Prevention Policy Making" Resource by Peace First.
- Nov 25 MNMS recognized by Tyler Durman CASL Event.





Portrait of Thomas Jefferson  
© Peter Max, 2007

## JEFFERSON AWARDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE CERTIFICATE of EXCELLENCE



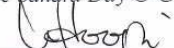
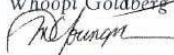
*Amit Dodani, My Name My Story, Excellence in Program Development & Implementation*

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE

  
U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell  
  
Teresa Heinz Kerry  
  
Michael Douglas  
  
Sam Beard



Co-Founders  
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis  
U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr.  
Sam Beard

  
U.S. Senator Harry Reid  
  
Justice Sandra Day O'Connor  
  
Whoopi Goldberg  
  
Awarding Organization



Portrait of The White House  
© Peter Max, 2007



**"Instances of bullying in our society are everywhere: kids get picked on for a multitude of reasons. However research shows that the higher an individuals awareness and empathy for others, the less likely they will bully..."**

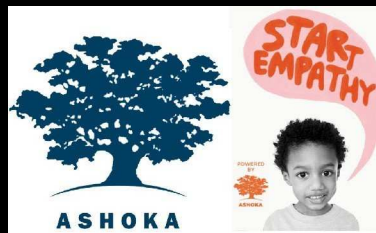
**My Name My Story teaches other necessary characteristics such as unity, tolerance, how to listen and help peer to peer."**

*Maryann D. Younger  
National Director, Jefferson Awards*

“Ashoka is so proud to partner with MNMS! We’ve recently profiled MNMS on both our StartEmpathy.org and AshokaU.org websites as well as selected Amit as one of very few Exchange Scholars at the 2014 Ashoka U Exchange, the largest global convening for social entrepreneurship in higher education.

The organization encapsulates the aim of an entity such as Ashoka in our relentless insistence on finding people with a fundamentally new vision of what is possible, whether they’re seasoned entrepreneurs such as our Fellows or changemaking high school students such as Amit. MNMS is equipping young people with the agency, confidence, sense of community, and most importantly, empathy that they’ll undoubtedly need in order to thrive in our rapidly changing world.”

*Joey Katona  
Global Empathy Project Manager  
Ashoka*



Ashoka is known for its relentless insistence on finding people with a fundamentally new vision of what is possible in the world. Since 1981, they’ve found and supported more than 3,100 leading social entrepreneurs in over 80 countries around the world, men and women with powerful new solutions to today’s most difficult challenges, who possess the skills and the drive to create entirely new patterns in their fields—from education to health to the environment. Today, they are working to shape what they call an “Everyone a Changemaker world”: in which people of every age are equipped with agency, empathy, teamwork, and the leadership skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world.



## My Name My Story

### Stories



### MNMS Leaders

### School Clubs



### Impact



### Inspire Empathy Events



*The following pages contain our story.*

*As you read the words and see the pictures, allow yourself to be transported.*

*Listen to the voices of the leaders that have chosen to be Changemakers in their communities.*

*Let them tell you why they have chosen to make a positive difference, and how every person is important in the process of Inspiring Empathy.*

YOU  
ROWN  
ANDY  
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ND  
A T

# MNMS @ Princeton Day School

Contributions by Devika Kumar



Proctor: **Maria Shepard**  
**30 members**

## NATIONAL LEADERS

**Ashley Abrams**  
**Chris Chai**  
**Helen Healey**  
**Uditi Karna**  
**Ritvik Khandelal**  
**Anna Kovacevich**  
**Devika Kumar**  
**Tarika Kumar**  
**Ben Multak**  
**Ava Nusblatt**  
**Katie Shih**  
**Jacky Sun**  
**Emily Um**

*"We have meetings once a week, the core leaders run our meetings. We start off every meeting fairly casual - this can be planning our next project or reading aloud a story. Our meetings are always very fun and we try to have everyone participate equally."*

This club has truly embraced every part of the MNMS lifestyle. They've pioneered and participated in a variety of projects that display leadership and a desire to serve that is incredibly powerful in a group of teenagers. Their first project, which really established their presence on campus, was a Book Drive for Anchor House, an agency for at-risk kids. They were able to collect over 1,800 books in crates set up all over their campus, and then held a "sorting party" for their team to count and organize the books while having a great time with new friends. With such a strong positive response to MNMS at their school, they were really encouraged to take their efforts out into the larger community, and make an even more personal impact. As the anniversary of Hurricane Sandy approached, they learned of Sandy Service Day. *"Sandy Service Day was a truly great experience because it allowed us to really affect our own community through a very traumatic time. Hurricane Sandy demolished a lot of our own state... so people are still building."*



We learned of Sandy Service Day about two weeks before the event and chose the activity "Painting Playful Playgrounds" in Surf City, NJ. The activity involved going to an elementary school and painting the blacktop with games and pictures, and assembling picnic benches. MNMS Leader Anna Kovacevich said, ***"All of the leaders tried something new that day. We honestly didn't know what to expect. At first, we were overwhelmed with the entirely empty canvas we had in front of us. However, we learned that by looking at the bigger picture, anything we paint on that blacktop would make the students happy- it would become part of every life of every student at that school. So, we had fun with it. It really was an unexpected delight. Who knew helping others could be so fun?"***





### Founding Leader DEVIKA KUMAR

Devika joined PDS in 7th grade, and was selected as Valedictorian for her middle school graduation ceremony. She also received the PDS Panther award for athletic ability in 8th grade. She is passionate about tennis, basketball, and track, and represents her school in Varsity Tennis and Basketball. She's also part of Mock Trial and Science Olympiad. She also tutors middle school kids in Spanish. Outside school, Devika is actively involved with Easter Seals New York, which is an organization that supports children with disabilities.



As their final event before break, MNMS @ PDS leaders decided to honor their own teachers and staff. *"We had a week to write as many letters as possible...Then, on the last day before break, in small groups and during free periods, members delivered the letters to their teachers. They tried to deliver the letters without having the teacher see them, so it could be more of a surprise!*

*A few of the teachers who received thank-you letters from us showed their gratitude. The photo teacher, for example, taped the letter on the bulletin board outside her office. Helen Healey has a great story of another teacher's reaction: **'Well, she received our letter and approached me in the hallway. She smiled and said that she was very touched to have gotten this letter and that it meant a lot that people were thankful for her. The goal was achieved- we made someone happier. It was also touching to have someone come up to me personally and thank me for it.'***





# 11 Year Old Lauren Leads the Way for MNMS @ Viewpoint

*Contributions by Lauren T.*



MNMS is a youth led social leadership organization committed to motivating young people to live an inspired life. At eleven years old, MNMS Founding Leader Lauren T. is leading the way in the MNMS community! This club has planned and executed a whopping four whole campaigns in the last three months! Their activities are exciting and engaging, and give the young people at Viewpoint a fun way to give back to their school and local community. Their first activity was a gesture of teacher and staff appreciation. *"We wanted to do something for them... and we also wanted to spread the word around campus about My Name My Story. So, we put the club name and website on candy labels, and gave out candy to our teachers."*

Next, MNMS @ Viewpoint came up with a unique Random Acts of Kindness week with a themed quote and call to action for each day. Lauren developed the entire week's curriculum and gave instructions to the teachers who read out the day's theme and examples of what students could do during morning announcements every day. All the MNMS @ Viewpoint leaders participated in this week, with Lauren leading by example. ***On Day 2, be kind to a stranger, she sat with someone she didn't know at lunch, and they became friends! On Day 4, give generously, she went through her closet and donated clothes that she wasn't using anymore. On Day 5, make a new friend day, she baked a cake and brought it to a new neighbor, and at the end of the week, she did all the things on the list to show her family just how much she appreciates them!***

After this event, this group of change-makers continued their campaign to inspire empathy. After hearing about the idea from a teacher, the MNMS School Club @ Viewpoint decided to make Rainbow Loom bracelets for a local children's hospital. They publicized the idea at school, got a group of students together and had a great time making the bracelets, which were twice as fun to make with the knowledge that they were going to **bring smiles to the faces of so many children.**

This group of high motivated kids is passionate about making a difference in their community. They actively seek ways to bring joy to others. When Lauren saw the Spark of Love Toy Drive held by ABC 7, she immediately wanted to be involved, knowing that it was a perfect cause for their MNMS School Club to support.. They collected toys to contribute to the drive, and were even featured on the local news for the work that they are doing!

Keep up the great work Viewpoint!

## **15 members**

Proctor: **Katie Hanks**

President: **Lauren T.** Vice President: **Alexa W.**

Secretary: **Quinn M.** Treasurer: **Keila K.**





Founding Leader EVELINA GODECKI  
I have passion for animals, volleyball, family, and friends. A passion that is a foundation for all of that is encouraging others in what they inspire to do. One of my family's achievements is rescuing 97 stray kittens. My dream in life is to become a successful sports manager. After that, I hope to be a math teacher and inspire students to have a love for the subject.

Over the summer, my sister and I came up with the idea of starting an acts of kindness club at our school. We went to talk to Mrs. Hobmann and she told us about the MNMS club. It was amazing not only because it was just like what we were planning to do but also because it was so much more.

When others encourage us, we gain an even stronger passion for the things we love to do, feeling a stronger purpose.



MNMS @ La Reina kicked off their school year with a Mix-It-Up Lunch for their middle school, the perfect opportunity for kids to tell their stories and get to know each other! This club has really embraced the idea that "when youth talk to youth, they listen!"

Inspired by the Mix It Up days that Chaminade had where everybody sits at the colored table that corresponds with a sticker on their nametag, we tried to imitate that as best as we could with our middle school. An announcement was made that every person would wear a shirt that corresponded with a color of their birthday (ex. if your birthday was in march you wore a yellow shirt). Evelina gathered 12 upperclassmen to wear their shirts and held signs with the birthday month. Everyone born in that month would sit with their MNMS leader with the same color shirt. We were then able to divide into teams for some fun relays and prizes.

I think that this was a really good way to make the junior high kids feel welcome. La Reina has 7th and 8th grade, and it helps them to know that they can be involved... especially with the high school.

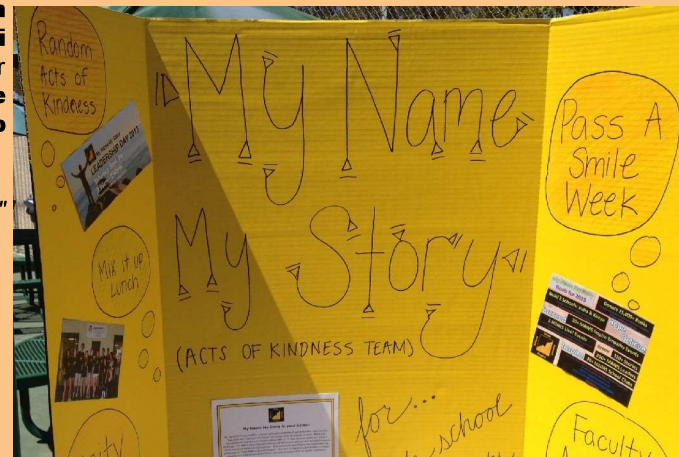
The MNMS @ La Reina School Club has continued to prioritize their youth as their focus this year. Evelina came up with the idea to write birthday and Christmas cards for the younger grades. During meetings we would pass out paper and markers, and everyone would make Christmas cards attached with candy canes or birthday cards. Certain people would then sign up to pass the cards out during homeroom.

With their focus on the next generation and their successful activities so far, we are excited to see what the MNMS leaders at La Reina will do next. It's a beautiful thing to watch leaders building leaders who are socially aware and engaged in their school community!

- 40 members**  
 Proctor: **Melinda Hobbman**  
 President- **Evelina Godecki**  
 Co-President- **Whitney Hunter**  
 Vice President- **Pearl Lee**  
 Secretary- **Annie Schohl** ~ Publicity- **Kelsea Valerio**

"We have meetings once a month at lunch, where we discuss future activities and plan for upcoming events."

**MNMS @ La Reina High School**  
*Contributions by Kelsea Valerio*

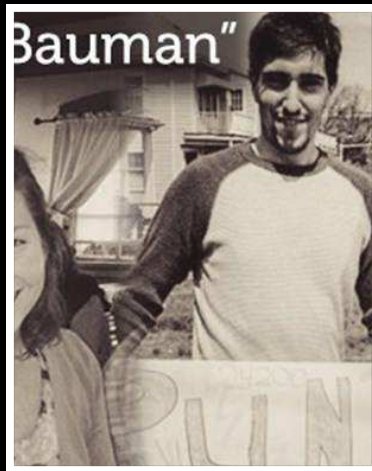


# MNMS In the Community



## **ADRIEL D'SOUZA**

"MNMS Cares for Boston" was an MNMS Hope Project to donate to various individuals that were impacted by the Boston Marathon bombing. The project was initiated and led by MNMS Leader Adriel D'Souza from Northern California. We supported Jeffrey Bauman and Marc Fucarile.



**“My Name My Story takes a powerful stance on empathy - another reason we regard this work so highly. Instead of targeting an issue and taking a negative stance (such as "anti-bullying"), My Name My Story powerfully employs positive messaging to emphasize a mission of inclusion.”**

*Josh Solomon  
Director, Peace First Prize  
Boston*

**"I Am Who I Am"**  
**Written & Composed by Alex Mansour**  
**Performed by Ronnie Mansour**



A girl walks into her house to see her parents there  
dads passed out on the couch, mom too deep in thought to care  
they've all been struggling, moneys tight these days  
tryin to get by, survive through different ways  
the next day the girl wakes up gets her stuff to go to school  
only to be teased and mocked for clothes that aren't cool  
the laughing and the meanness begin to seem like a bad dream  
she falls down on her knees and just wants to scream

I am who I am what you see is not me  
You may know my name but not my story  
the cruel words of bullies are the weapons of the scared  
Shake it off walk on proud and know that others care  
God made us all to be different and unique  
And I am so afraid to stand up and speak  
Inside all of us is the potential for glory  
And you could see it too, if you only knew  
My Name, My Story

A boy eats his lunch at a table all alone  
nobody else to talk to, just sitting on his own  
a group of guys walk by and kick the wheels on his chair  
he fights back his tears but just can't find the words to share  
no one wants to talk to the kid who can't walk  
he's so different, unlike the rest because he can barely talk  
but just because the boy is special just because he's rare  
doesn't mean you treat him in a way he's not fair

Life gets tough, you feel the fire  
find hope, succeed, believe, inspire  
you can never give up, when you think you've had enough  
push through it and ignore  
You feel like no one would care  
But there's no sadness that could compare  
So throw the hate down, and turn around  
you have so much to live for

I am who I am what you see is not me  
You may know my name but not my story  
the cruel words of bullies are the weapons of the scared  
Shake it off walk on proud and know that others care  
God made us all to be different and unique  
And I am so afraid to stand up and speak  
Inside all of us is the potential for glory  
And now you see it too, because you see the truth behind  
My Name, My Story...



## MAKAYLA ALLEN

Being a Founding Leader for MNMS is such a privilege and I am so happy that I have been able to discover this amazing club and bring it to my school. I truly fell in love with this club when I went to the MNMS Leadership Day ...especially when the 911 survivor spoke to everyone. Empathy, unity, teamwork, service, and leadership is a big part of my life and has been ever since a young age and I always knew I wanted to make a change and be a leader in my community. I've always had a strong motivation to do my best for myself and others and even the hard times in my life have just pushed me more to be more motivated to make a change. To achieve that dream I try to make a change in my early years to prepare me for my life ahead by trying to be involved in as much activities and things as I can to benefit myself and my community.

***"The Mix-It-Up Luncheon gave all of our students an opportunity to meet someone new and share interesting facts about ourselves that would help unite us and break down walls to create friendships... students had a great time playing our simple, yet fun games and getting to know each other!" MNMS @ Esperanza***

# MNMS @ Esperanza High School

*Contributions by Makayla Allen and Christian Delgado*



**25 members**

Proctor: **Cheryl Heller**

### **FOUNDING LEADERS**

President: **Christian Delgado**

Vice President: **Simran Patel**

Secretary: **Makayla Allen**

Treasurer: **Allyson Fuentes**

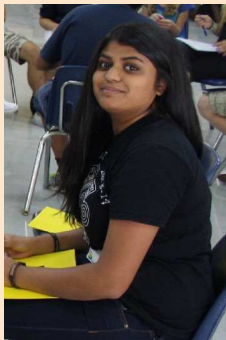
## **CHRISTIAN DELGADO**

My name is Christian Delgado and I am a senior at Esperanza High School. I love my friends, my family, and who I've become over the years. I have a passion for helping others and for dance; I hope to someday start a non-profit that takes dance to underprivileged communities and teaches them the basics of dance. My greatest dream in life is to be a psychologist; I want to help people understand themselves, their setbacks, and I want to inspire them to use that as a force to move forward and change lives through that adversity. MNMS inspired me through its raw passion for helping others, empathizing with others, and making a difference whenever possible... As I learned more and more about it, I realized how perfectly this club fit with my lifestyle; I had always dreamed of a club or organization that did exactly what MNMS has been doing.



Christian, Makayla, Simran, and Ally are teens on a mission. They championed the MNMS mantra "you can't hate someone once you know their story" and came up with a project that connected students across various grades and backgrounds.

They kicked off their school year with a Pass a Smile Week during Club Rush, to share the My Name My Story message with as many people as possible. They then partnered with an already existing program in their school to send teen leaders to Pio Pico, a local elementary school, to read to and bond with the children there.



Their first two events were small matters compared to their upcoming main event...

*"Simran introduced the idea of What if Week(WIW) to us... We managed to accomplish it by asking for the help of our school's ASB and our PTSA. These two groups are involved in school activities very similar to WIW, so we knew it was a perfect combination of people and leaders.*

*We broke the week up into five different "What IF?" questions... questions that addressed everything from respect for their campus to "What if everyone cared?" The week was full of all kinds of activities, including a compliment wall, a Mix It Up Lunch, and an assembly on texting and driving. Founding Leader Christian Delgado said, "Our Compliment Wall was just one of the few activities we held during our What If Week, & it worked out beautifully, to say the least. Each student was given a mailing label and offered the opportunity to give a direct, indirect, or general compliment to someone on campus. The compliments ranged from "You're beautiful " to "You are a great person!" & everyone's spirits were lifted after reading the positive comments that everyone had for each other. It's amazing how just a few words can make a world of difference!"*

The campaign was really intended to engage the whole student body, and to get them all excited to make a difference. *"It reflects the values that every student at school should hold every day. It gave more value to the term think before you do and really made the people involved in the week step back and look at their life from a new perspective."*

***"I believe it's safe to say that if anyone was impacted by the events held this week, it was those of us who planned it. We spent time planning the whole week and figuring out what worked and what didn't... we had been part of the domino effect that started a more empathetic and caring community of students."***  
**MNMS @ Esperanza**





with Demi Lovato



with Danny Romero



with Gary Peyton



with Tyler Durman





with Pete Carroll



with Luke Walton and Eric Dawson



with JR Martinez @ WE Day 2013



**Founding Leader MARIHA AKBAR**

*(pictured left)*

I've maintained a high GPA and am in the top 9% of my graduating class of 900+ students. I'm also on a selective planning committee for Relay for Life at El Camino. My dream is to one day manage my own business, and to have the skills and the mindset to succeed. I want to share my success with others and do philanthropy. I'm interested in MNMS because everyone has a story. I think being a leader is only possible by being a follower. Being a follower isn't necessarily a bad thing, and being a leader doesn't make you any better than anyone else. If you see someone else doing something that they care for and are passionate about, you should follow them even if it's not "popular" and not everyone agrees with you. Others may follow you... and you will become a leader.



**MNMS @ El Camino Real Charter High School**

*Contributions by Mariha Akbar*



**Founding Leader STEPHANIA INES**

*(pictured 3rd from the left)*

I would really like to make an impact in the community. Knowing that I'm doing something to make the world a better place, one person at a time... that's what I would like to do, bring the community into one. ...People in general don't really know anything about their community, their neighbors; sometimes they don't know themselves. MNMS helps them figure themselves out. As a teenager, I have seen others judge their peers when they don't even know them, and I think that MNMS allows you to open your eyes and see that others are going through difficult things, and that you don't really know them so you can't judge them based off of what you hear.



This club's story began with a Pass a Smile Week, an idea that leaders Mariha and Stephania found in the MNMS Resource Guide they were given at Leadership Day 2013. Struck by this idea, they were determined to capitalize on its easy execution and positive impact:

*"We first brought up the idea at one of our weekly meetings. Everyone seemed interested, so we went online and ordered a bulk of smiley face pins. We distributed them to each of our members... they went on throughout the week encouraging our members to pass on a smile to anyone they saw with the hope of having our entire campus smiling! **After class, a student saw my pin and told me that he wanted one. I told him that all he had to do was smile! He was a little confused at first, but once I explained our message to him he seemed impressed, and after talking to him about MNMS and about empathy, he went over and exchanged smiles with our Econ teacher, effectively explaining the same message to her. I was very proud of our progress after just two days.**"*

After the success of Pass a Smile Week, Mariha and Stephania decided to take on a Community Activity.

We first announced the book drive to our club members, and told our teacher sponsor to announce it to her students. She is an AP teacher, and was even willing to offer extra credit to her students who brought in books. We made flyers and posted them around campus and spread the word by talking to our friends and families. We even went to a local elementary school and got a few donations from them. We collected 300 books and donated them to Olive View Hospital and to our local public library.

One student said, ***"There are a lot of clubs out there about community service. I feel that this is more than that. In My Name My Story, you first get to know the people that you're working with, and then you work together as friends for a common cause."***



A girl named Dominique was also really touched by the MNMS School Club, and its message of teamwork and service: *Not only did she want to know what more she could do, she even wanted to read to people at the hospital. Although we didn't do that this time, MNMS opened her mind up to something... and she really enjoys being a part of it*

**13 Members**

**Proctor: Karen Ritchie**

***"We have weekly meetings to share stories, talk about upcoming events, and play games to inspire unity and leadership."***

Hi, my name is Ajay Dodani and I am 11 years old. Amit Dodani, my brother, is the founder of My Name My Story. The first time I heard about MNMS is when my family and I were driving back from my favorite restaurant and the "idea of the century" was brought up. First I didn't know if I could belong since I did not have an "overcoming story." Then my mom told me "my life is my story."

I knew I wanted to be a part of this movement, I just didn't know how. In 3rd and 4th grade I was the photographer of MNMS and although I only took pictures I am and was very proud about how it came out. When I entered 5th grade that is when I really started to get involved with MNMS. I became Student Body President and, when the devastating Hurricane Sandy swept the East Coast with powerful winds and harsh weather, I knew that I had to do something about it. And I did.

The Hurricane Sandy book drive was brought up to a student council meeting. I talked to the Student Council proctor and I printed out around 200 fliers to pass out. Somebody had to take initiative and start up the drive. So I took a friend with me to help start everything up. We went to the front of the school to pass out fliers to the parents that were picking up their kids. The best part about that is that when I left he brought someone and they continued on going! We also had a class competition to see which class collected the most books. Well, my class won and we got to have a pizza party!

After we collected and sorted the books, my class came together and we boxed the books and we shipped them off to a school in New Jersey, an organization in China, and to local schools in need of books. In the end, we collected 3,011 books in just two weeks! Collecting all those books was great, but the impact goes beyond that too. It was so cool to get a note from a teacher at the school in NJ after receiving the books: **"My students and I are so thankful to the organization for the generous donation. Now they have books to read at home, which will allow them to continue to foster their love for reading!" Brenda Rivera.** One of the kids in my class was interviewed for a middle school that asked him about community service, and he realized that this book drive was his first time doing any community service and he loved it!

While I was in 5th grade I did one more project. I made a Spirit Video for my school that included different kids in my grade talking about how much we appreciate what our school has given us. I thought it was a great way to get a lot of kids together to talk about something positive, while showing appreciation to our school.

I am really excited to be an MNMS Founding Leader. We had our first ever Leadership Day where I spoke to Middle School students like me. There, I featured my favorite thing I have done so far in MNMS: help a 4 year old do a book drive. I don't want to spoil it since he is featured right after me, but Tejas is an amazing kid and truly a hero.

# 11 Year Old Ajay is a Changemaker!







What could be more exciting than youth empowering youth? The story of young Tejas M. is a vivid illustration of what a huge impact one person can make, no matter how small he or she may be!



At four years old, Tejas watched his role models Amit and Ajay Dodani work in their respective schools to get youth passionate about talking to each other and giving back to the world around them. He decided that he, too, wanted to be a change-maker and do something positive for his community; so he called Ajay and learned the step by step process of how to conduct a book drive: who to call, what to say, how to say it, etc. He set a specific goal of 100 books, and began the drive at his school. The video here documents his entire journey- how he began his work, surpassed his goal, and personally delivered the books to the hospital with his parents.



After donating the books, the fire was lit within this little soul. In November, in the spirit of giving thanks, Tejas built a Lego police helicopter and said that he wanted to give it to a police officer, to "thank him for saving us from the bad people." His parents took Tejas down to the local police and fire stations so that he could tell the officers how much he appreciated the work they do to keep all of us safe.



In December, Tejas wanted to give Christmas gifts to kids that may not be getting any. He asked his parents help to find a way to do this, and they found two kids supported by a local Child and Family Guidance Center and bought new clothes and shoes for them, so that they would really feel special this Christmas!



Tejas's parents are so proud of their son, "Teaching empathy and nurturing emotional intelligence in a child is one of the most important jobs we have as parents..

The ideas that Tejas learns through MNMS are shaping his understanding of the world. Empathy is becoming cool when a four-year-old looks to an eleven-year-old for guidance and sees the importance of listening to others, sharing what we have, and giving back when we can.

## 4 Year Old Tejas is a ChangeMaker!



# Storytelling- MNMS @ Notre Dame High School

*Contributions by Andrew Mekhail*

MNMS at Notre Dame is set apart by its emphasis on sharing stories- an integral part of My Name My Story. They have made this the central element of their meetings thus far, and have most recently been moved by the story shared by their own Founding Leader Andrew Mekhail.

Notre Dame's MNMS leaders have always admired the body of work that has been built up from time by My Name My Story. They attended the workshop at Chaminade High School and were inspired to spread what they saw to their own school. They believe in the power of empathizing, and have experienced what can be accomplished with unity and leadership. They hope to continue to expand MNMS at Notre Dame and collaborate within and outside their community.

## **This is the story as told by Andrew:**

*October 30th, 2013;*

*Two days before my sixteenth birthday, one day before Halloween. It wasn't a particularly special or unordinary day. I went on a field trip with my T.V. Production class, granted. But other than that, school was average. I expected the field trip and knew I was going for a few weeks; perhaps that's why I was so unphased.*

*My mom picked me up from school and after some short errands we returned home. It became apparent on my street that things were not fully normal, but I could not diagnose what it was immediately. The first thing was that the sunlight looked different. It was shining through something, so the particles in the air were much more visible. As I got out of the car to get the mail, I smelled something. A barbecue. I see my dad frantically signaling for us to get out of the driveway. My mom figured it out first, but it was a matter of a second before I realized as well.*



**MNMS @ Notre Dame Founding Leader Molly Goss at Leadership Day 2013.**

*My house was on fire.*

*It was ominous how quickly after this epiphany that I heard fire ambulances. It was under five seconds, to be certain, but it was closer to two. The following hours would drag on. Countless contractors, firefighters, news reporters, and photographers would be in and out of the place I used to call home. It took over 100 firefighters and 2 ½ hours to put the fire out. By then, damage was severe.*

*Right from the beginning, we knew that our pets would be in danger. It only added to our grief and misery when we found out that not only had our two dogs passed, but they were in the room that the fire started in. Meanwhile, the cat could not be found. We were told it was also dead, but they could not produce a body.*

*That night, after the fire was put out, they allowed us to go inside and see if there was anything immediately salvageable. There were some things, but what struck me was the state of the house. It was no longer a home. It looked like the set of a horror movie. There were no lights; it was pitch black because the electricity went out. The only lights were from the fire ambulance outside, who had to maintain 24-hour watch for one day to confirm the fire would not start again, and the stars. Everything else was pitch-black. I never realized before that day how wet things are after a fire. The entire house was soaked, and water ran down the stairs as if every faucet and shower was turned on and left to run for days on end. That night was spent in a hotel room. It was as quiet as it could be. I have never felt so restless.*

*October 31st, 2013;*

*The first day of the rest of my life. Everything was different now. My life felt like it was split into pre and post-fire categories. The outlook changed-everything was difficult to do, and any moment of relief was followed again by the memory of what happened. Although I didn't go to school, I had to stop by to purchase new uniforms, and as I went to talk to my principal, the first thing she did was embrace me. This was my first interaction with her beyond an exchange of greetings. It was incredible how much love was present. I am still amazed by it. She refused to let me pay, giving me shirts and sweatshirts and the promise that Notre Dame would be here for me. This would become as factual as the fire itself, but I did not yet realize it. The last thing I did that day was shave my head. I still don't exactly know why I did that, but it was nice to get my mind off of things. It was also nice to have a physical change to match the emotional change.*



**100 members**

**Proctor:** Becky Faber

**FOUNDING LEADERS: Haley Gilford, Molly Goss, Andrew Mekhail**

*"We have meetings... once a month. they're run by the three (Founding) Leaders with students involved adding their thoughts and ideas."*

*November 1st, 2013.*

*Happy birthday to me.*

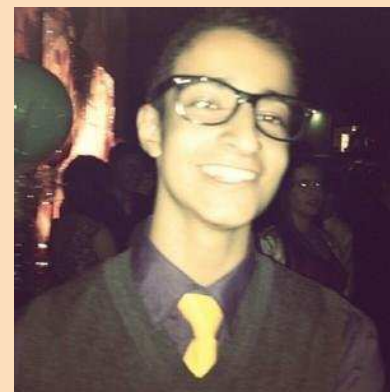
*I went back to school. We had mass for All Saints Day, and it was shocking how surreal the scene was. While everybody was exchanging peace, all I could do was stand there. It is a strange feeling to be miserable in a room full of happy people. Throughout the day teachers and students inevitably heard, either through the principal, the news, or hearsay. Sympathy poured in. People I did not talk to told me how genuinely sorry they were. And I felt it. The support was beyond measure. I felt loved, and though that did not affect my happiness, I felt loved. It was nice. It still is. I thought about my pets throughout the day; I couldn't get my mind off the subject. It didn't help when dogs and cats came up in one of the classes. I had to walk out of the room. I didn't want people to see my reaction. I came back a few minutes later. I thought about how after two days, they still could not find my cat's body. I realized that I had to look or I would hate myself forever. So after school, I went back to the house. I looked for an hour throughout the house. Nothing.*

*As I was leaving, I heard the slightest of noises, the kind that could easily be produced by your own head. But then I heard it again. At this point I was frozen. Another one. I recognized that noise to be my cat, meowing. To call it a meow is inaccurate; "mew" is better. It was incredibly quiet. He was clearly hungry and thirsty. I still have no idea how he survived. It was definitely a great birthday present.*

*Life continued to move forward. My family came to the conclusion that we would fix the house, but we would not move back in. We would sell it and start fresh. Currently we're in an apartment in the same city, and though it is smaller, it is because of this lack of room that we are physically closer. I think that contributes to the fact that we are now closer emotionally. It is incredible how important it is to be able to appreciate your family.*

*Before the fire, we took that for granted. It is important to appreciate what you have before it becomes what you had. In fact, the night before the incident, my dad and I got in a fight. It was trivial; I was three minutes late to the car. I don't know how I would live if the last memory I had of him was a petty fight. He easily could have been asleep, showering, passed out because of the smoke. His life is a miracle. I would not be who I am today if not for this fire and the soul-searching that took place in the aftermath. The support I got was love that burned much stronger than the fire. I am not glad the fire happened; I am not there yet. I doubt I ever will be. But I would not be me if it did not happen.*

*Whatever the reaction to a story, that instant when you connect with another human being and realize that your experiences can bring you closer*



**ANDREW MEKHAIL**

Andrew Mekhail is a sophomore at Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks, California. He is class president as well as an Ambassador for the school. He likes watching and playing basketball and soccer. Andrew supports the ideology behind My Name My Story and can personally attest to it. He looks forward to working with the organization.



### Founding Leader SUCHI TAILOR

I enjoy music. Very recently I took up singing and playing the guitar, and honestly I have yet to actually be good at either, but it serves as a perfect get away for me. I also really enjoy baking.

I think it's the prospect of being able to eat the finished product is what cheers me up the most.

I really enjoy working with kids. I think one of my more recent goals is to try and make sure that no child ends up going through whatever emotional turmoil I went through. If I can say that I've shown at least one person that you can come out of a depression a better person, then I've done my job. When I get older, I want to go into pediatrics.

A lot of times, people are summed up by what they wear, who they hang out with, what they look like, etc... everything is viewed in almost a two-dimensional "it is how it is" kind of way.

To me, the motto "Hope, Believe, Succeed, Inspire" is a process. You have to hope and have faith that whatever struggle you are facing will get better. You have to believe that you're strong enough to get through it, and come out of it a better person. Once you've succeeded at that, you have to inspire others and make them realize they can come out a better person too.

*A book drive seemed the best idea for the first project as a club... It seemed appropriate to donate books to Hope Elementary as this is a school Raleigh Charter already had relations with. Our first obstacle was trying to figure out how to advertise the book drive. We emailed all the teachers, put it in the announcements, and placed flyers around the school. We called Hope Elementary to set a date when our club could come read to the students. Hope Elementary is a small charter school in downtown that teaches many at-risk kids, many of who do not have access to a single book at home. I told them that we had gathered 117 books to offer from a school-wide book drive, and they were beyond thrilled!*

MNMS @ Raleigh took their book drive to the next level. After a successful book drive, they decided that they wanted to connect personally with the children who would receive the books, so they set up a time to go and read to the kids. The relationships they will build by going and meeting with kids one on one are incredibly valuable, and both the teens and the kids will have a new understanding of what it means to be part of a community of empathetic individuals.

*With the holidays just around the corner, we decided it would be a good idea to donate to people less fortunate than us... We decided to donate to a women's shelter. At this point, we had absolutely no money to do anything. We decided to hold a bake sale during lunch one day to raise money to buy toiletries for a local women's shelter. We raised over \$200 in just a 30-minute time span. We took the money and went to a local Target and Dollar Store to buy toiletries, goodie bags, and ties to put it all together.*

The work being done by MNMS @ Raleigh Charter is incredibly valuable, and motivating. They seek ways to personally interact and engage with people in their community who sometimes get passed over. The focus on the personal touch sets this school club apart; they are fantastic examples of change makers in society, and they truly strive to achieve a real connection with the people they work with.

### 12 members

Proctor: Barbara Solomon

President: **Suchi Tailor**

Vice President: **Akshatha Kiran**

Secretary: **Sumati Sridhar**

Treasurer: **Juhitha Chinthapatla**

*"We have general meetings every other Monday, and board meetings inbetween... (the President) runs the meeting, our Secretary takes notes, and our Treasurer updates everyone on the standings of our account."*

*"During the meetings that we are not planning, people will bring up stories that seemed most intriguing or inspiring to them, and we'll discuss them. These discussions have a tendency to briefly touch upon different parts of different stories."*

## MNMS @ Raleigh Charter High School

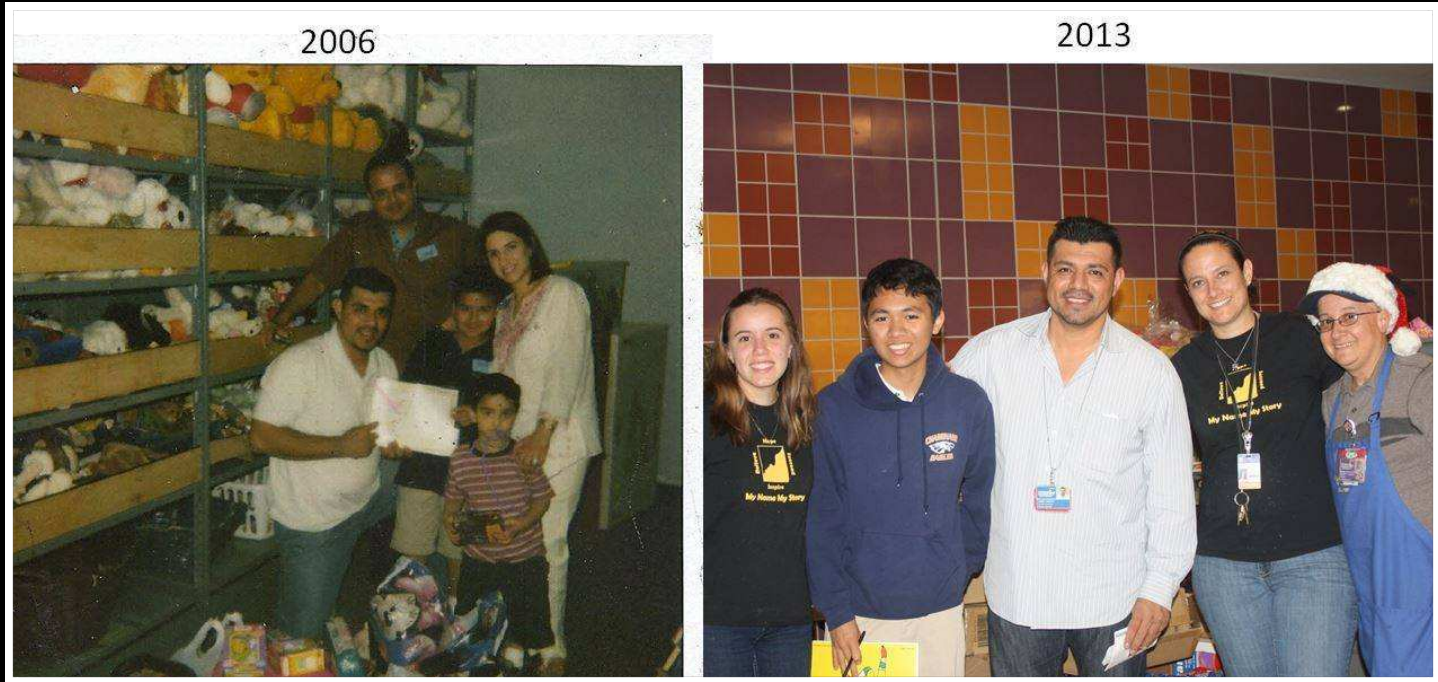
*Contributions by Suchi Tailor*





## Founders Memories:

"In 2006, my family and I dropped off some toys to the Children's Hospital during the holidays. Seven years later the MNMS @ Nade leaders dropped off 600+ Toys to the same volunteer! Giving is what makes the Holidays Happy!" *Amit Dodani*



"When I volunteered at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, I immediately realized that this was truly a special place. Hundreds of friendly volunteers filled every hallway and room, each of them sacrificing endless hours to assist the needs of the children. I spent much of my time alongside these people, and their tireless dedication inspired me to assist Children's Hospital by starting a toy drive."

*Kyle Pineda, MNMS @ Nade Leader*

SFIAM's innovative approach to education and their fervent desire to focus on the area's that specifically impact a student's life set this school apart from most. The mission of the school as articulated by Pearl Arredondo, "to empower kids to move beyond their circumstances", is so perfectly aligned with the MNMS ideology that we set up an Inspire Empathy event to expose the whole campus to My Name My Story at once.

Before the event, Ms. Arredondo and Ms. Castillo identified a few student leaders to see if they would be interested in joining the MNMS movement. Student Body President Adriana was already seeking a way to motivate and empower kids on her campus, and was extremely excited to find a vehicle with which to do so. By the time of the inspire empathy event, these leaders were eager and ready to learn the way to run an MNMS School Club.

**MNMS National Leader Sallie DeYoung** accompanied Amit to SFIAM, she shares her perspective below:

*"Four students from SFIAM contacted Amit Dodani and asked him to come out to their school to speak. Amit told his story and read another story from the website. He also introduced MNMS and his motivation behind starting this organization. I then began to explain the different kinds of events that a MNMS group can do in school and in the community. The five girls who loved the idea of a MNMS club were so excited for this event. They received t-shirts and certificates to show the school that they are the leaders of the new My Name My Story School Club."*



## 350+ Attendees

Proctor: **Dreena Castillo**


### FOUNDING LEADERS:

**Darline C.**  
**Mayra C.**  
**Stephanie I.**  
**Adriana M.**  
**Catherine R.**

*"I'm happy to be a part of this movement. Thanks for making it available to the students. I think they loved seeing a teenager doing great things and going places. A total inspiration for them, and I think they saw themselves in him. Empathy is a much needed characteristic to reduce the amount of bullying that occurs at a school, and it's something that children can learn and take with them and apply in their adult lives."* **Dreena Castillo, Counselor**



# Inspire Empathy Event San Fernando Institute of Applied Media



My Name My Story  
Inspire Empathy Event  
November 07, 2013

**An Essay from Founding Leader  
Adriana M.**

...I for one believe in all of you and my goal here is to stop bullying. I remember my first day of kindergarten- walking into class I was scared. Coming from Mexico when you're five years old is not an easy experience. I knew right away I was going to be an easy target to get picked on. It was hard for me in class because every time I tried to speak the kids would laugh at me. In school I had one friend but she had been made fun of too, because she was African American. I didn't understand how skin color is something to be made fun of. Growing up, I understood and started learning more and more about what bullying meant. I was surprised at all the different things bullies did. **My purpose in life is to help stop bullying.** I know that you think, making a change in the world is difficult.

Yeah, it might be hard but not impossible. The United States of America is not going to be a state known for bullying. We all have a voice, we just need to learn how to use it right. Speak up, don't be afraid, stop hiding your feelings, your emotions, or your own opinion. You need to stand up for yourself, and have faith. When I say bullying lots of you would think it's just being pushed around. That's not what bullying is all about. There are lots of definitions for bullying...I think that bullying is bad but I know at least once we've all asked ourselves- "Why? Why do they bully?" Well, what lots of you don't think of is the bully itself. They become bullies either because they have problems at home or with someone else bothering them. They can't help it but let it out on someone else.

**We have to help both the bully and the victim** My goal is for lots of schools to help prevent bullying. My Name My Story is an amazing club founded by Amit Dodani, a 14 year old freshman. All he wanted was to share his story with other people who would relate. That story inspired lots of students. This is his goal "To have an MNMS School Club in every school across the world and one million stories that inspire." Another club that has a great impact on me is Facing History and Ourselves. This club lets you express your feelings and emotions to let you know that are not alone. It helps us by guiding us to the right direction and to not make wrong choices. Come and join me, take a stand for bullying and help make a change.



# MNMS @ Chaminade High School Book Drives

In January, MNMS donated 1,400+ books to Teach for America, LA.



**“At Teach For America, we believe the key to an exemplary education system is leadership and we are working to build a team of leaders committed to creating change. It is our hope that by unleashing the leadership of our teachers, they will in turn unleash the immeasurable leadership potential in their students. Successful leaders know themselves, understand their own strengths and values, and operate with a vision grounded in those values.**

**MNMS, founded and led by Amit Dodani, accomplishes just that: helping young people understand their own stories as a launching pad for their own leadership development. We are honored to have partnered with MNMS in Los Angeles and look forward to partnering with them again in the future!”**

*Dana Gomez  
Director, Corporate & Foundation Relations  
Teach For America – Los Angeles*





**"In two months we raised over 7,000 books for several hospitals and local libraries. Most everyone has at least ONE book lying on their shelf that hasn't been read or perhaps has been read too many times; it's time to pass the story along"**  
**Melody Mohammadi**



In June, MNMS donated 1,200+ books to the UCLA Olive View Hospital.



MNMS donated 3,400+ books to KIPP, LA.



Holthouse, Carlin & Van Trigt (CPA Firm) supports the MNMS Summer Book Drive.





# MNMS @ Nade

The MNMS @ Chaminade story is extremely unique because this is Amit Dodani's high school. The Founding Leaders at this school have been involved with MNMS from its early days, and have had significant roles in many MNMS events, including running Leadership Day 2013!

This group of teenagers have believed in MNMS and its cause from its beginnings. Through their work and dedication, the idea of MNMS school clubs all over the country took shape, and in the past year they've successfully completed many projects and drives for MNMS.

In many ways, the 'Nade leaders have pioneered the MNMS movement. From something as simple as the first book drive to planning and executing a Unity Day Event, they have been resourceful and enthusiastic about My Name My Story and its growth.

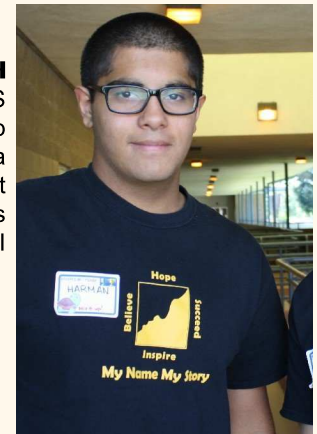


## **MELODY MOHAMMADI**

My name is Melody Mohammadi and my goal is to change one person's life for the better. The way to achieve this is by working with others, and looking to serve others before oneself. This summer I was given an opportunity and had the honor of leading the My Name My Story Book Drive. I was asked to lead the Summer 2013 Book Drive and seeing that it had such a huge impact and success the previous year, I knew I had my work cut out for me. MNMS has allowed me to pursue my goal of making a difference in at least one person's life. I love to help people, not for the sake of helping people. In a world blurred by so many distractions, we often forget about one another. A simple smile can make one who is having the worst of days feel warm inside. It's not hard to make a difference, one must know how to start, and My Name My Story has allowed me to build this foundation.

My name is Harmanjit Singh, I have been a leader of MNMS since the organization first began. The thing about MNMS that interested me the most was that I was able to help people in whatever way I wanted to. I did not just have to donate food, or volunteer a certain amount of hours, I was able to use my talents to help people. The motto means a lot to me because it shows me what the essential things are to do to help the community. Empathy is an important thing in my life because I believe that helping people that are in need is the duty of every person that is capable. As one of the first leaders of MNMS I know what it takes to be a leader and teach people the skills to help others, and I learned this only because of MNMS.

## **HARMANJIT SINGH**





**"From the very first time I viewed the MNMS website I knew I wanted to be part of this club, and when MNMS gave a presentation at my freshman orientation, I didn't want to wait any longer! Everyone that was part of the leadership team looked like such a family, and they were all so passionate about empathy and leadership. Right there I aspired to put this attribute of leadership in my own character."** Lexie Afradi



### **ARIANA LEXIE AFRADI**

My passions include surfing, performing arts, public speaking, public service, and leadership. I kept the Title of National Champion for Artistic Roller Skating three years in a row, I was part of a Mock Trial team that became LA County Champions, and I have done a lot of work for commercial and television acting. The reason I first became interested in My Name My Story was actually because of the website. I read the website and it was really amazing to me how people were not afraid to open up and share things that are probably not the most comfortable thing to share. MNMS was different, it isn't just a club that does community service and gets credit, or a club that has one narrowed down focus with no room to grow. MNMS is a community that can actually affect a person's character and moral views, as it did mine after the very first leadership day.

**This year, MNMS @ Nade was introduced to incoming freshman at their orientation, to kickstart their high school involvement. Many freshmen were thrilled at the opportunity to get involved and develop leadership skills while making friends and working in the community**



## **Freshman Orientation**



# Leadership Day 2013

***"On Leadership Day MNMS leaders explained the meaning of My Name My Story to schools who were interested in making a club. I feel that it was a huge success due to the fact that everyone left with a smile on their face and the motivation to start a club of their own. I brought two schools to the event and I showed them that they could help impact their schools by making a club. Both of the schools were very excited to start the club! I was in charge of the Group Projects workshop which is where we as students showed how we use our talents in order to promote MNMS."***  
- Emma Narain



Storyteller Judith Francis, 9/11 Building 2 Survivor

## ANDY BARKES

Being a part of the My Name My Story club gave me the opportunity to teach and learn about what leadership truly meant. MNMS has taught me that we really don't know what's happening in other's lives. MNMS serves as a helping hand in this dilemma by reaching out and teaching teens / young people in the community, how to express themselves and find others to help support them. I wanted to be part of MNMS to learn just how this idea of empathy could really change a community. MNMS has been one of the most positive impacts in my life. I'm also a soon to be Eagle Scout in my Boy Scout Troop.

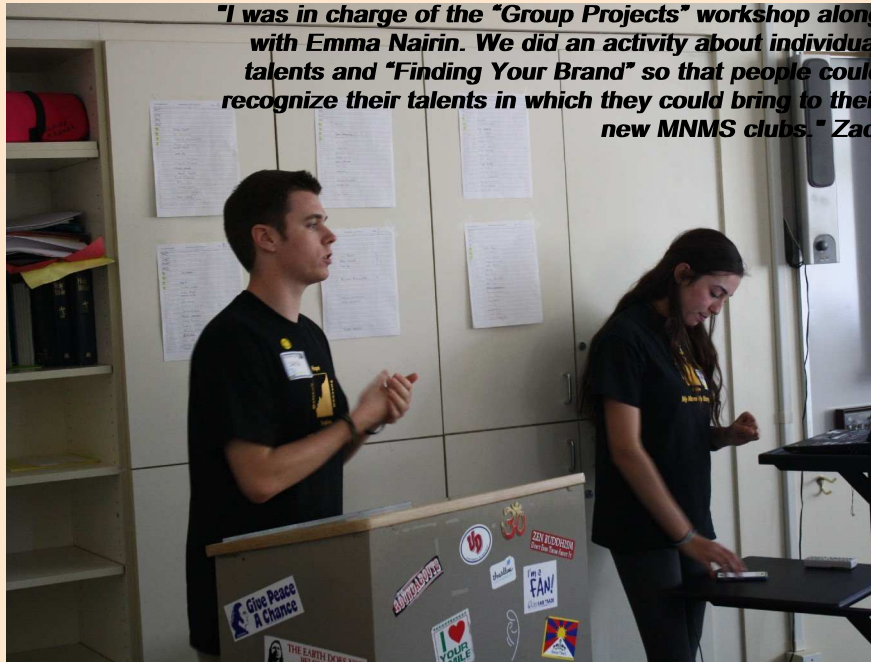
*MNMS is a club to Inspire /  
We're put out there to help  
these kids Desire /  
The passion, the want to  
express themselves /  
To not be lazy and get off the  
shelf /  
The leadership skills that we  
teach, are the best /  
MNMS sets you up on a path  
for success /*



*"Being a small group leader for the Leadership Day Event was an extremely fun and educational experience. Teaching my group members what it meant to be a leader and allowing them to express themselves, also taught me a lot about leadership in itself." - Andy*



***"I was in charge of the "Group Projects" workshop along with Emma Nairin. We did an activity about individual talents and "Finding Your Brand" so that people could recognize their talents in which they could bring to their new MNMS clubs."*** Zach



## ZACH NAHAS

The MNMS Leadership Day was a very big day in the MNMS national community. Planning for this event began months earlier in reaching out to schools and people to come to the day in hopes of getting new MNMS leaders.

At this event a 9-11 survivor spoke and the way she spoke and her story is something that I will never forget. Something that stood out to me at the end of the day is the new relationships and bonds that I felt with everyone in the room. I saw people talking with people they never met before and may never meet again, I know I still talk to people I met at the event. This is what I think MNMS is all about to me it's about community, and stories, and our mission statement.





### **ALEX MANSOUR**

I am a 16 year old junior at Chaminade High school. Ever since I was very young I've had a passion for music. I believe it's a universal language that evokes emotions in everyone and has potential to bring people, no matter their background, together. I hope someday to write music for cinema, scoring motion pictures and helping films communicate the story they are telling. My Name My Story is a wonderful organization that is truly making a difference in the world. I see it frequently in events and just general attitude at our school. The key word that I hear Amit stress is empathy, and actions of MNMS have gone a long way in giving a reminder as to a moral code. My personal favorite contribution of mine to MNMS is the song my sister and I wrote as a tribute to the ideals MNMS represents. The organization gave us a platform to present our passions, allowing us to use our gifts to create artistic expression as to the gravity of being kind to others.

### **MK LARSON**

My passion is spending time with others...I am a people person. I really have a passion for not only helping others to learn from my story, but to learn from other people's stories too. I have done many things relating to track, school, and family. To me, however, my best achievement is opening up about my Tourette's. I have really found strength through being confident in my disorder. I feel like I really have made a difference in a few people's lives through my story, and I hope to continue this throughout my life. I hope to get into a very prestigious college and continue on through nursing school. I love the smile that nurses and doctors have put on my face in the past, and thus I want to carry that on to others. I want to work with children, and hope to make the difficult time in their lives just a little bit better. Also, I dream to raise a family in the way my parents have raised me. I know I would not be the way I am today without their guidance, and I hope to do the same for my children.



**"I continue to be inspired by the development of leadership within a group of teens just by the simple practice of empathy and compassion toward one another. It is remarkable to see how many students want to tell their story, and more importantly, how many want to listen."**

*Andrew Williamson, MNMS@NADE Proctor*

**Damian lead the efforts to find a food sponsor for the event. Jersey Mike's from Stevenson Ranch generously supported his effort and fed a bunch of hungry attendees, making the Mix-It-Up luncheon a huge success!**



### **MANMEET GREWAL**

*(pictured center in the image to the right)*

There is no other organization in the world that is like MyNameMyStory. Some would categorize it as a community service group however, that does not even hit the surface of MyNameMyStory. One of the most important components of this organization is the fact that it is a club by teenagers for teenagers. This means that anything that happens within the club whether it is a book drive or unity event, it is completely organized and run by the students and teenagers themselves. This is why I believe that it has such an enormous impact.

In my case, I realized this during Leadership Day. There was a middle school student who was there alongside many other people from different schools across southern California. This student recognized me because, as he later told me, he actually had done a full project on my story. This exemplifies how widespread of an impact, just one story can have on people. The stories are one of the reasons that when we attempt to inspire empathy throughout the community we are able to really be successful. We are able to really change the course of someone's life for the better. Not only does MyNameMyStory make a tremendous impact in this way but it is also an organization that creates unity in every community.

### **DAMIAN SAVAS**

*(pictured center in the image to the left)*

My Name is Damian Savas, I am 16 years old and live in Los Angeles. At Chaminade, I play football, soccer, and participate in MNMS club activities. A lot of what I do revolves around the Chaminade community and the people inside it, and I really like how MNMS works to serve and unite this community. My passion in life is medicine, and I hope that one day I can become an orthopedic sports medicine doctor. There's a lot about MNMS that I found interesting at first, most interesting being that it was started by a kid my age. The fact that MNMS is almost entirely run by teenagers is incredible and shows that no matter your age, you can be a part of something good. This was the main reason I joined MNMS; there were kids my age doing charitable things I didn't know kids my age even did. It was an opportunity I did not want to pass up.

When I worked at Leadership Day I really saw the impact that MNMS had made. So many schools reached out at the opportunity to inspire empathy and leadership in their own communities, and it was awesome to be a part of. I am truly grateful to be a part of this organization.





# Unity Day @ Nade



"The MNMS Unity Day was very successful; we had around 80 kids on a Friday afternoon. We were a little unprepared for this event but I think we pulled it off well. This was the first time we saw a greater MNMS community at Chaminade. Many good ideas were shared here, and the event served as a model for how the structure of MNMS second semester would be. Again this event really showed what makes MNMS unique, taking a step back it was so easy to see the community and new friendships built. At least I felt like everyone felt safe to share and express themselves." Zach

"I am so proud of the impact MNMS has been making and I hope that it continues to grow. Leadership and Unity Day were a thrill to be part of! My partner and I had the joy of bringing together a group of strangers and creating new friendships! For my group's presentation I had to look to some of my own experiences in the past...to tell the group listening. I remember one of my group mates telling me how surprised he was that I had remembered his name all day. This just proved that people need to be reminded that they are worth paying attention to." Hannah



Storyteller Bobby Lebeda, the Speech Coach at Chaminade High School, shares his story through a powerful "spoken word" presentation.

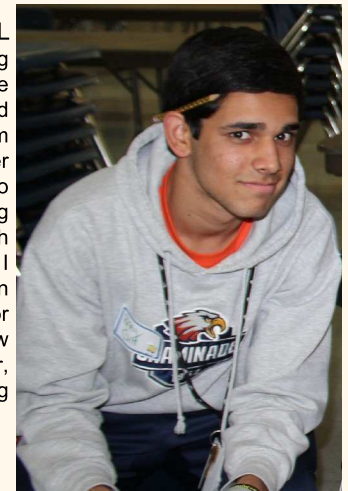


## DANNY EIDE

My passion in life is to constantly improve myself and become the best human being that I can be. Humans have challenges in whatever they venture, but working optimistically generally produces positive results. I am a strong believer in hard work... In life, I have been fortunate enough to get amazing opportunities, such as flying airplanes. I'm very proud of this aspect of myself, as it is very unique and skilled. I'm interested in MNMS because one of the main mottos that I live by is "Never Judge a Book by Its Cover". I started thinking this way when I heard the personal stories of people, and MNMS organizes these stories and spreads empathy in an amazing way.

## RHEY GILL

My passion is to play soccer. I've been playing soccer ever since I was three years old, and have never stopped enjoying it. I am currently a second year veteran on the Chaminade Varsity program as a starting RB. Apart from soccer, my other passion would be playing golf. Not only do I get to enjoy the beautiful, calm nature whilst playing golf, but I also love being with my dad. Being with my family is also a passion of mine, because I love the idea of staying close with people you can always trust, due to their everyday presence for me... Being a part of MNMS has helped me grow as a person... I love the idea of working together, and find MNMS one of the most heartwarming clubs due to their strong welcome!





### SHAWN GOLDMAN

My passion is trying to make a difference in the world. MNMS seemed to be a club that was different than all of the others. It provided people with inspiration and outlets for people who were struggling. It also gave me a good opportunity to help others and be a leader.



### HANNAH PONTURO

My passion is acting! I love getting the opportunity to tell stories through someone else's eyes and to see the world in different perspectives. It is also great therapy because I can connect my emotions/ experiences to the lives of someone else. My dream is to bring topics and ideas that are not so easily said to audiences everywhere. This new generation of kids/students who want to break the status quo and accept each other's differences is inspiring. I am so lucky to be part of an organization that is making a difference and stepping up to the call for action.





## Teacher Appreciation: Julie LaBelle

*"My job was to get as many people as possible to write letters to put in the book for our teacher Ms. LaBelle! My job was to get as much support as possible! As leaders we have to be up to do anything that is handed to us even if we only have 24 hours to do it. This made a huge impact on Ms. LaBelle because it showed the power of love for each other and I'm happy that we made it for her." -Emma*

### EMMA NAIRIN

I have been a MNMS leader now for 2 years and I was one of the originals which is a great honor. It's crazy to me that in two years we go from a little club meeting in Amit's house to a huge organization that impacts 100s of people. This has affected me because I feel that it's amazing the impact we can have on so many people and I'm so happy to be part of such an amazing organization. A big thing for me that made me change my mind set was winning a leadership award for girls at my school last year. Being side by side with Amit in this award really shows that I have done a lot considering that I was next to Amit who is a great leader.

Passion for me is described in two words, sports and family. My dream is to be a sports broadcaster for ESPN and have a family that loves each other just as much as I love mine. I believe that anyone can be a leader if you put your mind to it and become someone that people can look up to. I have leaders in my life who impact me in such positive ways and make me who I am. I hope that like these leaders I can do the same for others.



### MADELINE LARSON

I love spreading love and happiness around to everyone. When I know that either a joke, kind gesture, or even making fun of myself can make someone's day, that is when I feel the most joy within myself

In eighth grade I was fortunate enough to win the Future Leader of Chaminade Scholarship, where the Board of Admissions pick someone who they believe will leave a positive influence around the campus. I also received the MVP award for Varsity Cross Country my freshman year, and again in Track my sophomore year when I was the fastest underclassmen in the Mission League, and also was awarded All-League for my track season. Another achievement that I am proud of was being accepted onto the LIFE team on campus, a Catholic organization that chooses members to live out Chaminade's mission statement, and lead through our own communities around campus.

The aspect about MNMS that interested me the most is that it does not work for one specific cause or charity, we work to make a difference all around the world; through different communities, to make a difference in more ways than one.





# MNMS @ Nade Toy Drive



This December, we sponsored a Toy Drive. The idea came from a Chaminade Junior, Kyle Pineda, who had been looking for an avenue to have a Toy Drive at Chaminade and had contacted our Student Activities Director, Ms. LaBelle. MNMS @ 'Nade decided that we wanted to help Kyle and the Children's Hospital LA do a Christmas Toy Drive. We learned that the Children's Hospital Los Angeles will collect over 200,000 toys this holiday season and every toy will be gone by July. The toys that they collect are used to stock the many playrooms throughout the hospital and are also given to the children that are staying in the hospital.



Committees worked on logistics, advertising, and spreading the word. We kicked off the drive when we got back from Thanksgiving break and ended one week before our Winter Break. The sophomore class brought in the most toys because they had the strongest incentive. One of the sophomores had been in Children's Hospital Los Angeles for about a month and another girl in that class had been diagnosed with Lupus and would travel to CHLA for chemotherapy.

What seemed to be just a toy drive, ended up being an event that unified an entire class around two of their own peers.



## SALLIE DeYOUNG

I have always loved to be involved. I like to be involved all around my community and the lessons that my involvement has taught me are invaluable. Despite the free time I lose, despite the lack of sleep, despite all the stress I would never sacrifice any of the things I'm involved in. I am a Los Angeles County 4-H All Star, Student Council Entertainment Commissioner, Living in Faith Team Member, and recipient of the Los Angeles County 4-H Record Book Overall Achievement Senior Winner. MNMS offers leadership positions to everyone and emphasizes the point that anyone can be a leader if they want to.



### **KALYN KUNZE**

Being a part of My Name My Story has been an amazing experience. It has opened my mind to so many new things and given me confidence that I can lead. Leading the small groups at Leadership Day was an amazing experience as well. I loved getting to know the kids in my small group and teaching them that they can have the confidence to lead as well. It was so rewarding to watch them become inspired to lead a MNMS School Club at their school as well.



### **CONNER HOYT**

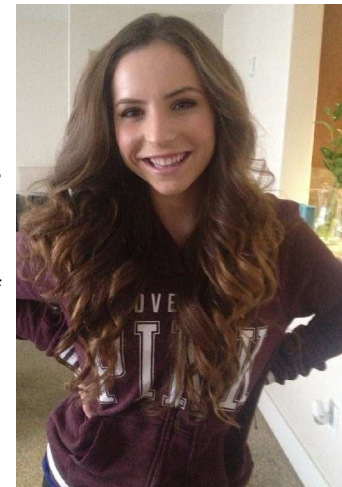
My passion in life is sports. Ever since I can remember, I have been intrigued by the idea of competition and obsessed with winning at all costs. When I was younger, I played soccer and baseball and was convinced that I could become a professional baseball player. As soon as I realized that this was a pretty lofty dream, I decided to strive for a career in sports journalism. As a self-proclaimed good writer/strong public speaker, I felt that meshing these skills along with my passion for sports would certainly serve me well later in life. I attended a World Leadership Forum in Washington D.C., maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.9 thus far throughout high school, and I also pride myself on my large sports memorabilia collection.

Last year, Amit had an interview at a local radio station. Knowing that I wanted to become a sports journalist via broadcasting, radio, etc., he decided to invite me to join him. I had the opportunity to sit in on his interview and get a glimpse at how things were done at a radio station. After Ethan Dettenmaier caught wind of my interest in broadcasting, he didn't hesitate to offer me an internship. After roughly 8-10 months working there, I can say that it was definitely a positive experience and without MNMS, it would have never been possible.



### **LINDSAY HOLCOMB**

At Chaminade, besides being involved in MNMS I am heavily involved in the drama program. I hold a few leadership roles that have taught me so much about organization and what it takes to be a leader. I hope to someday become a kindergarten teacher and inspire a younger generation. I have been apart of MNMS from the beginning and witnessing the organization evolve and being apart of the advancement was a significantly powerful experience.





*"MNMS in this year has had a huge impact not only in the Chaminade Community, but also in the nation. It is so surreal seeing how far it has come, gathering in Amit's back yard packing books with around 8 of us to a national club with over 14 schools involved... I believe that Student council and other clubs are exclusive. That is where MNMS comes in, anyone can be part of it, and anyone can get this sense of family from MNMS. Joining MNMS was one of the easiest decisions for me, Amit asked for help in the smallest ways and I always wanted to. It is a great organization and something I think everyone should be involved in." - Zach Nahas*





## AMIT DODANI

It was my personal story that inspired me to start MNMS. I grew up with a speech impediment, which really diminished my self-confidence and inhibited my true potential. I was able to overcome it through the help of my debate coaches, who had immense faith in me. The story of my weakness became my greatest strength.

At that time I realized that even though I was attending a middle and high school with a tremendous emphasis on diversity, acceptance, and some national anti-bullying programs in place, most of my fellow students tuned out these programs, because they were neither being harassed nor were bullies themselves - so it just didn't concern them!

At 14, I recognized this gap in empathy, and wanted to do something about it. So, with my family and mentors by my side, I started MNMS. And as a high-school student, I very quickly understood that empathy must be cultivated in a way that kids relate to. They have to see it as something that is "cool" in today's society.

It has been an incredible journey, and one of the best part of working on MNMS has been seeing other young students latch on to the cause and make it one of their passions. Many of our MNMS Founding Leaders, students who have started MNMS School Clubs, have lead their clubs and done amazing things.

However, the emotional impact extends beyond just our school clubs: we received an e-mail from a girl, someone we had never met before, who said that after reading the MNMS stories she felt "a new sense of hope in her life, didn't feel worthless anymore". I always say that if you can change even one single life in a positive way, you have made a difference, and doing that everyday through MNMS has been an incredible experience.



### **JULIE LABELLE, School Club Advisor**

Julie has been working with youth for the past 17 years, beginning her career as a Youth Minister with Life Teen, Young Life and Steubenville University Summer Conferences. In 1999, Julie moved to Littleton, Colorado where she worked for Life Teen at St. Frances Cabrini Church, counseling students following the deadly shootings at Columbine High School. After working with those students, Julie developed a new passion for working with youth and inspiring empathy. She returned to her home state of California, where she received her teaching credential and began working at Chaminade College Prep in West Hills. In 2004, she became the Director of Student Activities, a post she still holds today, and within two years started a Diversity Program to fulfill her desire to teach respect, acceptance, and unity. In the Fall of 2011, Julie (aka Miss LaBelle) met Amit Dodani when he was elected VP of his freshmen class. After hearing his passion and seeing the MNMS Mission, she knew this was something she was meant to be a part of. As School Club Advisor, she has helped to realize the vision for MNMS School Clubs, written the Resource Guide, planned and ran Leadership and Unity days, and developed a strong core curriculum for MNMS.

### **RA'IDAH NOOHU, School Club Advisor**

Ra'idah is proud and excited to be on the MNMS team. As a School Club Advisor, she works with MNMS Leaders and school administration all over the country to successfully establish and run MNMS School Clubs. Her passion is "human empowerment" and she feels that MNMS provides a unique and powerful tool to today's youth- motivating and guiding them to cultivate their passions into a skillset that can be used for their own future, as well as for their communities. With a degree in Religious Studies and International Relations from UC Irvine and a background in interfaith dialogue, Ra'idah has always been fascinated with the relationship between identity and community, and how that interaction can create a society that is morally conscious and innately empathetic. She enjoys musical theater and good food, and can be found at any given time with her nose in a book, emerging just long enough to try to make a difference in the world!





"A simple yet **powerful** program"

"I think the students loved Amit's speech and it really sent a **beautiful message** to the students about **empathy**."

*Katie Hanks, Activities Director*

"...a space for young people to **exchange stories and start clubs that aim to build empathy.**"

David Bornstein, Author & Journalist  
NY Times. May 01, 2013: Young Movers, With a Passion For Change.

"We were really **inspired** to start a club of our own. Thank you for taking the time to visit our school. We look forward to being an integral part of this amazing movement!" *Dreena Castillo, Counselor*

"Immediate feeling of **'safety'** and **inclusion** that was created in the space and time we were all **together...**" *Teacher*

"The whole event was extremely **positive and inspirational.**"  
*Geraldina Gerry, Teacher*

"We were so **honored** and privileged to have received our National Certificate of **Social Leadership** on behalf of the MNMS organization. We are so grateful for the **guidance** and support that we received from MNMS!"

*MNMS Leader*

"**Empathy** is a much needed characteristic to reduce the amount of bullying that occurs at a school and it is something children can **take with them** into their adult lives."



MNMS has been guided by many Adult Advisors and Mentors who choose to believe in the power of youth Changemakers in society. They come from every background: Social Entrepreneurs, Educators, Business Strategy, Marketing, Finance, Interfaith Studies, Social Media and Event Planning.

Each one of you pour your heart into writing our story, and even though you choose to put the light on us, know that we are forever grateful for all that you do for The MNMS Community.







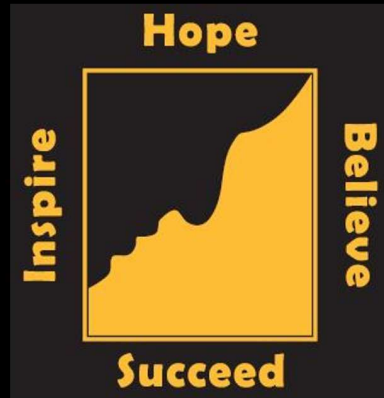
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