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HEROES IN THE HALLWAYS

“A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is brave five minutes longer.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson suggests a hero is no braver than any ordinary man or woman, it’s just that they are brave for “five minutes longer.” Who is your hero? Maybe it’s your parent, a teacher, spouse, child, or someone you know who overcame insurmountable odds. The best heroes are not the ones in comic books or movies leaping over tall buildings or flying into outer space. The best heroes are people that we see, know, and trust. The real people who do extraordinary things, or perhaps they do ordinary things in ways that consistently honor and serve others over time. Teachers who regularly give all they have for their students are heroes. School leaders will quickly stand and applaud teachers as heroes, but these same leaders are reluctant to call their own work heroic. We believe teachers, staff members, school leaders, and students can all

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The best heroes are people who we see, know, and trust.

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be real heroes. Our hallways are filled with current and potential heroes!

We don't need superpowers to be a kid's hero!

What we need is to be there for them. Kids need us to invest in them, come alongside them, and empower them. They need to know that we care for their well-being and future. School leaders often get sucked into a vortex of doubt and disbelief, fearing that they don't have the ability and power to truly move a school forward and make a difference in the life of a kid. Just the opposite is true! Our schools and kids are going to be successful if we commit to being hero building leaders dedicated to preparing kids for their unknown future.

We don't see exemplary school leaders as heroes who are superhuman and therefore faultless, immune to pain and failure, or inaccessible to others. Just the opposite, they are highly relational, focused on servant leadership, resilient, fierce, relentless, and tireless advocates for kids. These advocates for kids and staff are the heroes who are making real, sustainable, and positive change for their schools. It's leaders like this who we seek to empower, encourage, and inspire with this book so that they can continue the great work of hero building and leadership in their schools.

Hero-building leadership is dependent on collaborative leadership. It's not about one leader driving the school forward but rather a collaborative focus of leaders committed to the mission of building heroes. Hero builders are leaders who understand that collaboration is key to success, the foundation of growth, and the heartbeat of progress for the work of creating hero students who will change the world. In *Collaborative Leadership* (2017), Peter DeWitt writes, "Collaborative leadership includes the purposeful actions we take as leaders to enhance the instruction of teachers, build deep relationships with all stakeholders, and deepen our learning together." It's this type of leadership that hero-building leadership strives to build on and nurture. Faculty, staff, students, parents, and

other adults who engage in hero-building leadership nurture, develop, and build students who are the heroes for their community, region, and the world. Our students are the young heroes who will transform our world and serve to bring about positive change for generations. We passionately believe that if the schools don't get things right, the world never will.

You Don't Need Superpowers to Be a Kid's Hero is written to inspire extraordinary school leaders who equip and empower their students and staff to do amazing things. This chapter will tell the stories of school leaders doing heroic things for students. These heroes in the hallways are daily making a difference in the lives of students and staff. They are working tirelessly to be advocates for kids, to innovate learning, to strengthen community partnerships, and to make the tough and courageous decisions to move their schools, learning, and students forward.

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These stories span the country and include elementary school, middle school, and high school from urban, rural, and suburban settings that include students as diverse as the communities represented. They feature leaders who are advocating for kids in a way that empowers and inspires. We hope you will enjoy reading the stories of these school leaders, be encouraged by their work, equipped by the strategies they're using, and inspired to continue doing amazing things for your students, staff, and community.

All of these leaders would humbly say they are just showing up every day to do what's best for kids. If you were to ask their students, parents, or staff, they would say they have a real hero in their school's hallway. As you read their stories, it may remind you of a real hero who influenced you. Their leadership may be a significant factor in your calling to make a difference as a school leader yourself.

Principal Makes House Calls



Principal, Mr. Matthew Moyer—Rupert Elementary School, Pottstown, PA

Twitter: @MoyerMatthewD @PrincipalsofL

I'MPACT Program Makes House Calls

(385 students in preK through Grade 4: 74 percent economically disadvantaged; Demographics: 34.2 percent White, 33.4 percent African-American, 17.6 percent Hispanic, 12.6 percent multiracial, 1 percent Asian, 1 percent other)

Our first school leader sheds light on the importance of looking deep inside and seeing what students and staff bring to school by connecting with students and families in their lives beyond school. This leader values and understands the importance of understanding the invisible backpack and helping faculty and staff gain an understanding of the lives our students lead and how their lives affect the ways we learn and relate together. Learn more about the invisible backpack and looking deep in Chapter 2.

Imagine being an elementary school student at home watching your favorite cartoon or playing ball with your sister when a knock comes at the door. Your parents answer the door, and it's your school principal and teachers. Principal Moyer and Rupert teachers visit students at their homes as part of their school district's home visitation program called I'MPACT (I'M Pottstown Action Community Team).

Principal Moyer and his faculty/staff members wanted to recognize the kids in school who weren't getting recognized for whatever reason.

"The team visited students from prekindergarten to fourth grade to congratulate them and their families and to acknowledge the students' success during the first marking period. The program's mission is to 'celebrate learning.' It develops positive communications between the school and families by building relationships with community members. The team makes door-to-door visits to surprise students and their families with certificates of achievement and I'MPACT winner shirts. Students are congratulated for their hard work, citizenship, and positive behavior." The I'MPACT team consists of teachers, support staff, parents, and administrators from Rupert Elementary School.

Principal Moyer said, "This is a tremendous program that allows us to not only recognize positive behaviors in our students but gives our staff the opportunity to meet students and parents outside of the school building in an environment that is conducive to promoting positive relationships.

As I look at these youngsters that we are recognizing, it reminds me that they are the reason we say 'Proud to be from Pottstown.'" (Brandt, 2014)

Principal Moyer shared, "Each grade level selects one student. We try to select the children who don't normally get recognized, like children who had a lot of improvement in some area. We strive to recognize the kids that always work hard and give their best."

In a neighboring school district, a retired elementary principal would visit the homes of each kindergarten student to welcome them to the school, meet their parents, and read them a story from a book. Dr. Ron Christman served as the principal of Gilbertsville Elementary School in the Boyertown School District. He had close to 200 kindergarten students who he scheduled these home visits with. At the end of his visits, he would give the students the book. Even years later, there are students in the community who still have that children's book on their bookshelves and an eternal memory of a principal who left an indelible mark on their young lives and the start of their education.

It's principals like Matt Moyer and Ron Christman who are going the extra mile for their students, and they are advocating for kids through their actions. Principal Moyer and Christman understand the need to look deep inside the hearts and minds of kids to help them be successful in school. In Chapter 2, we dive deeper into how school leaders can do this and share how to support and help students who are experiencing trauma, how to connect and see all students in the school, and how to develop the hidden strengths of children. Plus, we will share how to nurture and build a culture of relationships, resources, interventions, and wisdom.

Manufacturing Our Future



Principal Darci Pollard

Twitter: @ACSCougars

Andrew Carnegie Elementary School

(631 Students: 82 percent economically disadvantaged; Demographics: 97.8 percent African-American, 1.4 percent Hispanic, and 0.8 percent other)

This courageous leader was not satisfied to perpetuate the belief that the information economy was beyond the reach of her female students.

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Her leadership created a space where students could not only gain skills for coding and computer science, but also where they cultivated attitudes and habits that reminded them to break through glass ceilings and barriers. The "Black Girls Code" club was a community of learners dedicated to learning resilience and building grit. We talk more about how hero-building leaders create these kinds of opportunities for their students in Chapter 6.

Principal Darci Pollard and her staff are committed to engaging students through the use of technology. They understand the power technology has to equip and empower students for the future. Their school is equipped with Chromebooks, but Darci and her team didn't believe they were using them to their fullest potential. They were searching for ways to engage all students, especially their girls, in coding. Darci and her faculty believe that coding is the language of the future and that the students of Andrew Carnegie Elementary School need to know and understand the basics of coding.

In an effort to engage girls with coding, Principal Pollard and her faculty started a club called, "Black Girls Code." This club became a huge hit with girls, and they signed up to learn coding in a fun and engaging way. The girls use Ozobots, which are small robots to teach coding and creativity. They also use Scratch coding, which is a programming language and online community where children can code and program through the power of stories, games, and animation. Scratch builds creativity, collaboration, and systems thinking through a fun and interactive digital tool for students.

Now, the Black Girls Code club is hosting a family STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) night for families to learn what the girls and school are doing around STEM and technology. Students of the Black Girls Code club searched out funding for the event and worked to plan the STEM night for parents.

Black Girls Code is an organization based out of San Francisco that has the mission to increase the number of women of color in the digital space by empowering girls of color ages seven to seventeen to become innovators in STEM fields, leaders in their communities, and builders of their futures through exposure to computer science and technology.

Principal Pollard partnered with the University of Chicago, UChicago STEM Education Program, to build the Black Girls Code club. By doing this, she was able to get university volunteers and students to help out,

had access to university technology, and it provided the girls with role models who were coding as college students.

Principal Pollard shared, “The Black Girls Code club has been great for our school. Girls are now empowered to learn coding. Most importantly, they are learning leadership, creativity, problem solving, and collaboration. I’m so proud of our girls and all they have done to strengthen their learning.”

Principal Pollard and her team are modeling the practices showcased in Chapter 7: “Go Big or Go Home! Empowering Students to Be Global Game Changers.” The girls at Andrew Carnegie Elementary School are global game changers in their school and community.

We commend Principal Pollard and her team for courageously breaking down historical barricades to engage students in learning. She understands that it will take alien and out-of-this-world ideas to challenge and shatter the status quo for her students to grow, lead, and learn. Learn more about breaking down historical barricades to learning, thinking differently as a school leader, and training as a hero in upcoming chapters.

Telling Your School's Story



Principal Boomer Kennedy

Twitter: @BoomerKennedy

Forbush High School

School Twitter: @ForbushHS, Forbush, NC

(923 students in Grades 8 through 12: 37 percent economically disadvantaged; Demographics: 78 percent White, 18 percent Hispanic, 3 percent African-American, 1 percent other)

Boomer’s story reminds us that it’s okay—even necessary—to venture into territory we have not mastered in order to help our students and staff. Frequently, leaders feel the pressure to only lead in areas where

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they are considered to be experts. Boomer (and Bill and Dave) knows this superhero CEO-saves-the-day mentality is not what we need in our schools. If we want our students to believe failure is a part of learning, and we all keep learning, we need to take steps like Boomer did. He saw an authentic need to tell his school's story, and he took the risk to make it happen. Find more information about taking leadership risks in Chapter 8.

Boomer Kennedy and his team understand the importance of leveraging social media to tell their school's story. Even as a young principal, Kennedy doesn't consider himself a techie or digital leader, he came late to the game regarding social media. He learned and grew in this area because he saw the power of social media to showcase the work of his students and staff. He realized one of the most powerful tools to brand his school and to tell his school's story required him to jump into social media headfirst.

Principal Kennedy shared his journey of growing in digital storytelling to tell his school's story in a recent article from the Chase Learning blog. In the following text, he provides insights into his journey.

"My colleagues may find this surprising, since I am pretty active on Twitter now, but I was not one of the first people to jump onto the 'social media' bandwagon. I never got into Facebook, and I was slow to show interest in Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat. However, social media is a powerful tool that schools, principals, and teachers should be utilizing. If you are not, you are missing out on opportunities to promote your school, communicate with your stakeholders, and grow as a professional.

First, social media tools are a great way to communicate with parents and students on a regular basis. Announcements, special events, upcoming activities, and even weather updates can be shared immediately using any social media platform. Social media is also a great way to 'show off' your school and the accomplishments of your students. My assistant principals and I manage our school's Twitter account, which is also linked to our Facebook account. We try to post and retweet sports scores, classroom activities, club ceremonies, and other student accomplishments throughout the week. This is a great way for your school to 'tell its story' while also boosting school and community pride. Many students and parents are using these platforms, so it only makes sense

for schools to meet them where they are. I highly recommend a free app called 'Buffer' that allows you to schedule posts days, or even weeks, in advance. Buffer is compatible with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, making it easy to link multiple accounts so that you save time while reaching an even larger audience.

Lastly, I highly recommend that teachers and principals use social media platforms to connect with fellow educators. Twitter is a great avenue for sharing ideas with educators from around the world. There are so many great blog posts and articles that are shared on Twitter and other social media platforms; it's like free professional development for teachers and principals! Moreover, it is important for our students to see appropriate social media usage. Many of our students do not know how to maturely participate in an online community, so it is vital that we, as educators, utilize these platforms in a manner that models responsible digital citizenship. Sharing articles and ideas, encouraging meaningful dialogue, promoting our schools, communicating upcoming events, and showing off the accomplishments of our students is a powerful way to do just that."

Boomer Kennedy

Boomer shares a powerful reminder to us all on how we need to continue to grow and develop our skills to further the work of our students, staff, and school. He couldn't let his fears or insecurities get in the way of showcasing the awesome work of his students and staff. He was courageous enough to learn something new, to admit that he needed to grow, and to take action to improve in this area.

Boomer understands the importance of showcasing student and staff voice and choice that is discussed deeper in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, we provide school leaders with examples on how to enhance their school's ability to listen to student voice and to increase student choice opportunities in the school. Mr. Kennedy also understands the need to lead courageously by admitting that he needs help and taking the necessary steps to improve as a leader. We discuss this deeper in Chapter 8: "Be Courageous: Risking It All for What's Right." In Chapter 8, readers learn how to lead with courageous fortitude, the power of authenticity, the need to ask for help, and the skills to have courageous conversations in order to transform your school.

Leading by Example



Principal Darrell Webb

Twitter: @DocWebb1911

Turner Elementary School in Caddo Parish School District, Shreveport, LA

School Twitter: @tigerpride2017

(1,063 students: 92 percent economically disadvantaged; Demographics: 87 percent African-American, 5.9 percent Hispanic, 5.0 percent White, 2.1 percent other)

Darrell's story touches on several aspects of hero-building leadership that create value for his students and staff. You can read more about unleashing the voice and choice of students in Chapter 4 and learn to build resilience and grit for your students in Chapter 6. Darrell's story is all about the authentic, vulnerable, true-to-life leadership of serving others that we discuss in Chapter 3. His unconventional, out-of-this-world approach is an idea we explore in Chapter 5.

Darrell Webb is an innovative leader who understands the importance of leading by example. He models what he expects from his staff, and he works to build trust with everyone in his school. Darrell understands that leadership is more than just a title, it's a consistent and persistent focus on servant leadership committed to the success of every kid in his school. This school year, his team created a welcome video for students entitled, "This Is the Year." The video shows students and staff working together to make this the best year ever. Visit our website to view the video at www.chaselearning.org/herobuilding. This video is one testimony of his school's dedication to the success of every child and an example of Darrell's leadership, which is focused on leading by example.

Principal Webb shares, "A leader without a vision is like a car with no wheels; you won't get very far." Any successful leader led with and was able to communicate his or her vision. According to Maxwell, "People buy into the leader before they buy into the vision." I have experienced this greatly in my first years in leadership. For my first year as principal, a few teachers bought into my vision from my communication of the vision and from what they knew about me in general. It wasn't until my third year that I began to see a stronger investment into my vision from

my stakeholders. It took proving myself to my staff and getting them to buy into me first. I feel a large contribution of this buy-in was due to me leading by example. I am the first on campus and many days the last to leave the campus. I expect my staff to be on time, so I am always on time. I report to duty every morning and afternoon as well as during lunch. I teach lessons, watch classes for teachers, work weekends with teachers, change trash can liners, serve food in the cafeteria, and eat with teachers/staff. I even performed my first dance in front of an audience for my staff and students. I spend about 15 percent of my day in my office. As a leader, you have to be visible and relevant to your staff and be approachable and positive. We all know the saying, "When momma ain't happy, nobody happy"; well that same saying applies to the school principal. As a school leader, we set the tone for the school. To want a positive staff who has fun with the students, we as leaders have to be positive and fun to work with first. I want a leader who is out here with me in the trenches and not afraid to get his or her hands dirty. As a school leader, we have to be humble and serve in the same trenches we are leading.

Culture Wins Out!



Principal Mariah Rackley (2018 NASSP Digital Award Winner)

Twitter @MrsRackleyCCMS

Cedar Crest Middle School, Lebanon, PA

(1,150 students: 38.4 percent economically disadvantaged; Demographics: 80 percent White, 12 percent Hispanic, 4 percent African-American, 2 percent multiracial, 1 percent Asian, 1 percent other)

Principal Rackley understands a school can't move forward without a healthy, positive, and collaborative focus on what's best for kids. She understands one of the best ways to value students is to listen to them. Hopefully we can all recall a time when we felt that we were truly heard and understood. What a powerful experience. Mariah's hero-building leadership is helping to create a culture where students are heard, and

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their ideas are brought to life. Enjoy her story, and learn about more ways to unleash the voice, choice, and agency of students in Chapter 4.

When asked to share about school culture and how she is working with her staff to nurture a positive, caring, and student-centered school culture, Principal Rackley provided the following response:

"Culture is a crucial part of our job as administrators. It has to be at the core of all that we do while being fostered and cultivated. Culture does not happen by accident. It takes commitment, vision, and dedication to a common goal and belief system. Leaders have to model our expectations for our staff. Kindness, respect, compassion, humanity, positivity, risk-taking, grace . . . our students and staff become a reflection of those fundamental values that shape our culture.

We strive to provide a student-centered culture that is safe and supportive where we celebrate success, risk taking, and innovation. We have high expectations for student achievement and staff performance. We recognize the importance of a growth mindset to constantly improve our practice and think differently about how we 'do school.' Most importantly, we keep our focus on our STUDENTS—in every decision.

Over the past few years, I have become a firm believer in student agency, but it is an incredible paradigm shift. If you have established a culture that values student success and encourages risk taking and individual pursuit of skills, interests, and aptitudes, then choice is a next logical step. Whether you call it student agency, student voice, or student choice, the foundational concept is the same—taking advantage of student interests to make learning meaningful and relevant.

Think about how we, as leaders, engage in activities and projects differently when we are interested, motivated, and invested in topics that are personally significant and relevant! What if we give students the opportunity to learn in ways that are meaningful and make sense to them? What if we allow staff to select professional development topics that connect to their passions and their teaching assignments?

In our school, we have created a community service/outreach opportunity for all of our students and staff members called Falcons CARE (Cooperation and Respect for Everyone). Our groups are student selected based on common interests, beliefs, passions, and sparks. It is a time of connection, community, teamwork, citizenship, and thoughtfulness about the 'greater good' that exists outside of Cedar Crest Middle School. Our groups work with community groups like local nursing

homes, animal shelters, our Mini-THON committee, and Domestic Violence Intervention (DVI), to name a few. Our students take on projects like landscaping our campus, quilting for DVI, canning for Mini-THON, and supporting our military. We educate our students about service animal organizations, healthy relationships, childhood cancer and its impact on families, and so much more! Our students learn tolerance, acceptance, compassion, and kindness. We teach our students how to make a difference in our world. They gain insight to the most important life lessons of valuing people as individuals and understanding humanity.

Success breeds success! Students and staff connecting over common interests, experiences, and passions improves your culture. A thriving, positive culture where students and staff are encouraged to grow and take risks inspires high achievement and student success. Connections to other people build an environment where people feel safe. When students and staff feel empowered to take risks, innovate, create, and explore new learning, academic success soars! When students are achieving at high levels in a student-centered environment where LEARNING is the priority, the culture blossoms into a place where students and staff want to learn, work, create, innovate, excel, and succeed together. Connections, culture, choice . . . they are interrelated in an intricate dance that evolves as the goals in each of the three areas are realized.

At the end of the day, I have learned that the most meaningful lessons we teach our students do not come from textbooks. The most important things students learn are those lessons we model—how to be kind to others, how to care for each other, how to be members of a community, how to respect others, how to be a good citizen. I hope students and families leave Cedar Crest Middle School confident that we helped them to be better people, better humans. Our students will change our world—we hope our influence makes their impact a positive one!”

Mariah Rackley

Just like the other principals featured in this chapter, Mariah doesn't consider what she is doing as anything heroic. She's doing what she believes is best for kids, this is exactly what a hero-building school leader does.

Mariah's story probably inspired you to consider ways to improve the culture and climate of your school. Read more about unleashing student voice and choice in Chapter 4 and true-to-life leadership in Chapter 3.

Authentic Leadership



Megan Black, Assistant Principal

Twitter: @MaBlackOW

Olathe High School, Olathe, KS

(2,413 students in Grades 9 through 12: 32 percent economically disadvantaged; Demographics: 55 percent White, 24 percent Hispanic, 12 percent African-American, 4 percent Asian, 4 percent multiracial, 1 percent other)

Megan reminds us that hero-building leadership principles are timeless. As generations of new leaders emerge, and seasoned leaders step away, we share the passion and responsibility of creating the best spaces for our students' success that we can. This is the work for everyone in the school, and Megan offers some great reminders for ways to create this powerful culture for our students. See how John Wooden's work connects to our schools, and how this young leader has set a true-to-life example we can all learn from. Read more about authentic leading in Chapter 3.

Megan Black is a young school leader focused on growing and learning. She loves her work at Olathe High School and understands the need for authenticity as a school leader. Veteran school leaders can learn a lot from this millennial school leader—we certainly have! Her passion, authenticity, and focus on working hard is admirable. Assistant Principal Black has grit, and she is willing to do whatever it takes to lead students to success. Megan shares two lessons that she learned about authentic leadership that is committed to working hard for kids. Below are excerpts from Megan Black's recent blog post for the Chase Learning blog:

We millennials get a bad rap for our lack of authenticity, as many people don't perceive us as genuine. Starting in college, my leadership role model has been John Wooden. So, ironically, I'm taking my cues from one of the greatest, most authentic leaders, born in 1910. Each lesson is a quote from Wooden, and I'll elaborate on what they mean to me as a school leader.

Lesson 1: Nothing will work unless you do.

This is a lesson that my parents taught me very early on in my life. If you're not willing to work hard and better yourself every day at the

things in which you strive to be successful, then don't be surprised when you fall short. As a school leader, it is important that teachers can expect that you will work as hard as you can on the things in your charge. Part of being an authentic leader is being a person willing to take any challenges head on. This can present itself in many different forms, especially depending on your role in your school. In our building, each assistant principal has distinct responsibilities. Mine come in the form of curriculum and instruction. Each member of our admin team puts in hours and hours of hard work specific to their responsibilities. We value hard work, and we don't stop until the job is done. I love that about our team. For me, hard work looks like:

- Collaborating with teachers on mission, vision, and goals
- Providing top-notch, personalized professional development
- Learning as much as I can, as often as I can
- Providing resources and feedback to teachers

Lesson 2: Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.

This is one of my favorite quotes by Coach Wooden. It's his way of saying, "When life hands you lemons, make lemonade." Every single day, we are faced with stressful situations. Every single day, we could let that stress bog us down and start to make us truly unhappy, and nobody wants to work for an unhappy leader. As administrators, we see students who really struggle. It may be behavior, academics, mental health, a trauma-filled student, or any combination of the above. We also navigate stressful situations with other adults in the building and work to find resolution for all. There are days when you get to your desk at 4:00 pm and feel truly beaten down. We've all been there. But, if at the end of the day, you know in your heart that you did well by students and staff in the building, things have a way of working out. Now, back to Lesson 1—things don't necessarily "work themselves out." They work out because of the hard work we put into each situation in our care. Here are the biggest takeaways from this lesson:

- Keep a positive outlook, there is always a way to successfully navigate through a given situation. Your positivity has to be genuine, or people will see right through it.

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- Reflection is key. If you feel like you didn't make the best out of a situation, change your actions for next time. The most authentic leaders are the ones who learn from mistakes.

As a young leader, I hope to make it clear to students and staff that I genuinely care about them as people and that I will work hard day in and day out to see through our mission. It's important as a young leader to focus on values that transcend generations. The things I mentioned: hard work, making the best out of any situation, and genuinely listening to others, even those who disagree; I hope they speak to a leader of any age.

Megan Black

If you asked Megan if she was a hero, she would say that she is too young or that she's just doing what she thinks is best for kids. But, this talented millennial is wise beyond her years and practicing hero-building leadership on a daily basis. The students at Olathe are blessed to have her as their assistant principal.

HEROES ARE BUILT

Heroes are built, not born. Being a hero takes a conscious and intentional focus on committing to something higher than yourself. It requires you to put aside your own wants, sacrifice for the greater good, and have a tireless commitment to improving the lives of others. We are not calling school leaders to some fictitious and unreachable level of leadership; just the opposite. We challenge you to live out the words of this book and to work every day to be a focused, tireless, and vocal advocate for kids. By doing this, you are working on hero-building leadership that will create an extraordinary school for your students. It's close to impossible to be committed to hero-building leadership and not have your school become an extraordinary school. Schools reflect their leaders. If the leaders in the school are dedicated to hero-building leadership then the lives of students and everyone in the

school will be strengthened. Our kids, and our schools, are hungry for leaders who are committed to hero-building leadership.

The culture of hero-building leadership is collaborative at its core, we cannot do this work alone. Be intentional in building a team, schedule collaborative leadership time, and commit to doing this work together.

Hero-building leadership nurtures a school culture that values everyone, is committed to success of all members of the school culture, and strives to challenge everyone to fulfill their dreams and aspirations. This type of culture needs intentional leadership and focus to maintain a steady level of growth and nurturing.

Hero-building leadership is meant for all leaders, not just the principal team. Teachers, school counselors, para-educators, and all additional support-

The culture of hero-building leadership is collaborative at its core—we cannot do this work alone.

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ing staff are encouraged to read this book and practice hero-building leadership principles. We encourage you to work together as a diverse school leadership team to complete the Hero Training at the end of each chapter. If you really want to take your hero-building leadership to the next level, consider having a collaborative book study with students and work through the Hero Training activities at the end of each chapter with students, staff, and parents.

We close out this chapter with a powerful quote from one of our favorite poets, Maya Angelou. Let this quote challenge all of us to be heroes who focus on making sure every child feels valued, encouraged, and empowered.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

—Maya Angelou

HERO SIGHTING

“Actively working towards developing positive teacher–student relationships becomes a primary goal, one that establishes your professional standing, and allows you to have a strong effect on the lives of your students” (Hattie & Yates, 2014, p.19).

Reflect with your team. What stories about creating relationships can you share? What impact have you and your staff had on the lives of the students you serve?

Take some time to consider a powerful story that describes the impact you or a colleague has had with one of your school's students. Try to condense this story into a short video, podcast, or written piece that can be shared (or read) in three minutes or less. Creating a collection of these stories helps others see what heroes look like in the school setting and reinforces the culture of hero-building that will transform your school.

HERO TRAINING

Use these activities to nurture your skills. Even better—gather with your team to embed these skills in your work and empower your students to become heroes that change their world.

Hero Training for this chapter is all about telling your story. This kind of exercise can be a powerful type of professional learning (Ramage, 2007). It also provides powerful material to explore beliefs and communicate with a wide range of stakeholders.

1. Work with your team to create and write your school's story. Write the story in 250 words or less, and then share it out with everyone in your school.
2. Who are the heroes in your school? Take time to celebrate them and elevate them for the work that they are doing on a daily basis.

3. Host a superhero day in your school by encouraging everyone to wear their favorite superhero outfits and celebrate the work of the student and staff heroes in your school.
4. Showcase your school's story in a Tweet.
5. Create a one-minute video that features your school story, and post it on social media like Instagram, FB, or Twitter. Be sure to include #HBLschools.
6. Work with your team to draw a picture that represents your school's story. Share the picture with your students, staff, and on social media.
7. Do a storyboard or comic book style version of your story by capturing the key elements with simple visuals. Use your storyboard to inform your other story formats.

Visit our website at www.chaselearning.org/herobuilding to view videos of Heroes in our Hallways—Examples of School Leaders and what they are doing.