

May 5, 2006



S.A.L.S.A. members and their advisors, back at school, with the Wellstone Award. Front row: Tien Tang, Kendra Allen, Joshua Holmgren, Tony Lusian, advisor Lisa Marohn. Back Row: Advisor Brooke Magid Hart, Wendy Haynus, Jillian Knight, Katie Lasota, Sam Higley. Not pictured: Sara Garth, Bethany Jorgenson, Deborah Covart, Carlie Jorgenson, Rebeka Linden, Rebecca Tetzner, Jennifer Nielsen

Spring Lake Park High School's "S.A.L.S.A." group receives Wellstone Award from the Minnesota School Counselors Association

Student Alliance for Leadership in Social Action, better known as S.A.L.S.A., a student organization at Spring Lake Park High School, received the Wellstone Award for outstanding service to young people for social cause and change in the political process. The award, named for the late Senator Paul Wellstone, was presented by the Minnesota School Counselor's Association on May 1. The group's advisors are Brooke Magid Hart and Lisa Marohn.

The nomination letter included the following about this special group:

S.A.L.S.A. is an after-school, extracurricular club open to all Spring Lake Park High School students interested in learning the skills of social/political action, and using those skills for social/political change.

Just as Sen. Paul Wellstone said that government is about improving people's lives, S.A.L.S.A. students work to create change in a positive way, to improve the conditions or situations in which people live, and to build awareness about issues of importance to its members. Just as Sen. Wellstone himself modeled, and urged others to do, S.A.L.S.A. strives to make the world and our community a better place for all of us. It is an organization that encourages students to find their passion and then to act on it in positive, effective ways.

S.A.L.S.A. students learn the skills and processes of social and political activism. They put those skills to work for the benefit of others in their school and in the local and global community. Each year, S.A.L.S.A. chooses projects that it will work on during the school year, including school, community and global projects.

Examples of recent S.A.L.S.A. projects include:

- Sponsoring a "Rock the Vote" campaign to register new voters to participate in 2004 national and state elections, along with raising awareness and understanding within the high school student body of the issues of importance in the campaign

- Sponsoring a voter registration drive to encourage all 18 year olds at Spring Lake Park High School to register and to vote in the upcoming local election in 2006
- Researching school lunch programs and working with the school district to provide more healthy choices in the school lunch program, based on issues of health and obesity
- Raising funds for tsunami and Hurricane Katrina victims
- Addressing the need for improvements in maintenance and upkeep of the Spring Lake Park High School restrooms
- Addressing the topic of racism with staff and students at Spring Lake Park High School and in the greater community by producing a film consisting of interviews with students and staff about their perceptions and experiences with racism

S.A.L.S.A. receives no funding from Spring Lake Park High School or any other source. They have no budget. The two advisors volunteer their time and materials to the organization. I

The members of S.A.L.S.A. are 9th-12th graders. They are diverse in every way. What they share in common is an interest in their world and in being positive change agents in that world. They are not required to be a part of any other group, to meet any kind of physical, academic, financial or other criteria in order to participate. They may join at any time throughout the year.

For more information, contact:

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