

# OASL Funding Support Proposal



## The Ohio Association of Student Leaders - Proposal Highlights

- GRF 500297
- Funds to be used to provide equity in opportunity and representation
- Provide 50% off year round scholarships to students within Ohio
- Reduced costs for all programs for every student in Ohio
- To hire one staff member full time to be able to travel to schools, provide schools resources and measure data
- Funds to also be used to provide resources to schools and teachers for sustained success.
- Compared to many programs, OASL can work with every middle and high school in Ohio.
- Students can go through the program for 6 years and have a unique curriculum each year.

## OASL's Mission

The Ohio Association of Student Leaders is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Ohio's middle and high school students identify and develop their leadership capacity to make positive change in their schools and communities. Our year-round leadership development programs focus on topics such as group dynamics, diversity and inclusion, self-esteem, authenticity, visioning and goal setting, organizational skills, collaboration, and community-building. Using experiential and active learning methods throughout our summer camps, weekend retreats, conferences, workshops, and peer-to-peer education opportunities, OASL programs boost student knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to lead with purpose. OASL students cultivate positive relationships and connections with diverse others, feel and show empathy, and make responsible decisions for themselves and their communities. Created by students, teachers, and administrators back in 1953, we continue to design and facilitate our high-impact educational experiences specifically for the developmental needs of youth leaders in partnership with educators and schools across the state.

## Why does OASL Need Funding?

OASL believes that all students have leadership potential, and at the same time recognizes that access to developing that potential is limited for many. We want to make sure that any student interested in growing in their leadership practice and learning how to collaborate with others to make lasting change has the opportunity to do so. We believe that as an organization formed, grown, and led by Ohio's educators, with leadership development curricula designed specifically for youth leaders, we are well-equipped to meet the leadership development needs of Ohio's diverse student population. We are committed to expanding and diversifying access to our programs.

We believe that until there is equity in opportunity and representation, all students miss out. Though we strive for affordability, the costs associated with attending our events can create a limiting factor and accessibility issue for some schools and students. Further, there is a lack of funding provided to administrators, teachers, students, and student activity advisors for leadership development opportunities. OASL will work to connect with school administrators, counselors, and teachers in all Ohio schools to create and sustain awareness of our programs and demonstrate how they positively impact students, schools, and communities. All student leaders in Ohio deserve awareness of and access to the opportunities provided by OASL.

## What Financial Support Does OASL Seek?

The Ohio Association of Student Leaders is seeking funding to provide equitable opportunities for students and school districts across Central Ohio. The funding will be invested in two main ways; reducing student participant costs and investing in outreach, school resources/curriculum and data.

The funds will be used to cover scholarships for students and ultimately to reduce the registration costs and provide greater program access to students. For every program we run, costs include items such as facilities, program materials, curriculum design, administrative fees, staff training, meals, technology, and other equipment. For overnight programs, we are also incurring housing costs, conference and event fees, etc. If we have organizational funding to cover these operational costs, we rely less on registration fees and can therefore reduce costs to individual students. As needed, funds will also be used to provide direct student scholarships. This could include OASL contribution of scholarship money to help a school cover the cost to send their students. It could also include full sponsorship of students in need who do not have any additional support from their family, school, or community. Additionally funds will be used to invest further outreach and engagement initiatives. Lastly as we grow further we would like to move one of our part time employees to full time to travel to schools to provide resources, retreats, workshops to our schools to grow the overall program. Same time use data to make clear decisions on program impact and how we continue to grow.

# OASL Funding Support Proposal



## **OASL Business Model**

OASL offers year-round leadership development programming that consists of week long summer workshops, weekend retreats, and single day events. OASL also provides resources, training, development opportunities, and leadership experiences for both students and educators.

The registration fees associated with our programming cover organizational costs that include programming, supplies, facilities, volunteer staff training, and insurance. The work of the organization is primarily conducted on a volunteer basis, with our four leadership team members receiving stipends for their administrative work on top of their volunteer commitment. The positions receiving stipends include our Executive Director, Director of Senior High Programs, Director of Middle Level Programs, and Director of Advancement. Outside of these four positions, our staff team includes high school students, college students, and adult educators who volunteer their time and talents in order to reduce overhead costs.

OASL's revenue is generated through annual school membership fees, participant registration fees, and individual donations. Additional funds obtained from events help keep the costs of future events at a minimum for students and their families. In recent years, we have been fortunate to receive a few moderate corporate grants and have hosted annual benefit events. Please refer to our submitted budget for more specific and detailed revenue and expenditures.

The funding we receive from State Funds and other sources would allow us to further reduce program registration costs to create more equitable opportunities for students and their families while at the same time ensure financial stability of our organization.

## **What makes OASL Unique?**

As a youth leadership development organization, OASL stands out with our expertise, design, and impact. OASL offers a long-term, developmentally sequenced leadership development curriculum over the course of a student's entire middle school and high school experience, in some cases expanding into their post-high school/college years. Each of our programs (summer camps, retreats, workshops, conferences, etc.) features multiple levels of programming with rotating topics and activities that grow with students as they grow in their knowledge and skills. Upon completion of certain programs, students can apply to serve as a member of our volunteer staff team, facilitating programs and mentoring their peers. This, too, is a valuable continuation of skill development.

OASL programs go beyond personal development and focus on the importance of group and community development, emphasizing that leadership is not about position or personal gain, but about collaboration for making positive change. We maintain a diverse network of educators, business leaders, community organizers, and other subject matter experts that help us keep our curriculum, facilitator training, and organizational initiatives aligned to this greater leadership purpose. We also continuously update our curriculum to match the evolving needs of students, schools, and communities. Within recent years, we have increased our focus on equitable leadership, social identity, implicit bias, community organizing, and action planning. We also update our curriculum to incorporate the latest Ohio Department of Education's Social Emotional Learning Standards and the Whole Child Framework.

OASL's leadership team is a group of talented Ohio educators, including a school counselor, a high school teacher, an elementary school teacher, and a 20-year classroom teacher/nov full-time leadership development professional. Our program directors are all OASL alumni, going back to their own middle school years. Our adult staff members come from a variety of professional backgrounds with years of facilitation and youth development experience. Our peer education model includes a team of thoughtful, responsible, engaged high school and college students who help with program facilitation. With the expertise of our leadership team combined with the talent of our extended network, OASL's commitment to and preparation for training Ohio's student leaders is unparalleled.

Finally, OASL stands on 68 years of experience in the youth leadership education and development world. Our longevity has resulted in an enormous group of alumni that extends across the globe who, without hesitation, credit OASL for contributing to their personal and professional success, fond memories, and lifelong friendships.

# OASL Funding Support Proposal



## **What does success look like?**

Over the next three years, OASL is committed to a 50% or more growth of Ohio middle school and high school involvement. When more students - and students from diverse areas and identities - are learning about leadership in community together, their capacity for engaging in leadership for social change increases, and they have greater opportunity for developing transformative relationships (Dugan and Komives, 2010; Rocco, 2017). Access to engaging, transformative leadership development is lacking in diverse communities like those represented in urban and rural areas of Ohio. Increasing access to OASL programs in the state means better serving populations of students that are historically left out of leadership education and development opportunities. In addition, we know that developing student leaders for positive social change requires opportunities for dialogue across difference and experiential learning that includes diverse perspectives. If we are to make real, lasting change in Ohio's schools and communities, increased engagement amongst Ohio's diverse student population is crucial.

Students reflect on and self-report their newly discovered personal strengths as a result of their participation in our programs. Due to the coronavirus, 2019 was the last time we hosted in person events. While we're proud to have pivoted our programs to online and virtual platforms in 2020, we know the greatest learning and growth outcomes occur when students are face-to-face. We eagerly look forward to our return to site-based events as soon as it is safe to do so. In 2019, 98% of respondents reported positive growth outcomes from their experience in our programs. The following were most often identified as their greatest area of growth after participating in our programs:

- 56% named that their greatest improvement was in the area of self confidence.
- 31% reported their greatest improvement was in their comfort voicing opinions, communicating with others and/or speaking in front of a large group
- 35% felt their greatest area of improvement was in their ability to be more outgoing, vulnerable, make connections with peers and strangers
- 25% reported that the greatest improvement was in being more kind, considerate, empathetic and inclusive of others

We receive a great deal of qualitative feedback from our students and alumni alike about the ways in which they feel empowered, challenged, motivated and inclusive as a result of their experiences in our programs.

We take pride in our programs and their impact. We are committed because we believe that what we do matters. We want to reach more students to better equip them for personal success and service to others. We energize and embolden our students with our mantra, "What is learned here, leaves here." As a result, OASL students and alumni positively impact their schools and communities by utilizing the relevant, necessary, and in-demand skills and attitudes we develop and foster.

**OASL**  
**Funding Support**  
**Proposal**



**Want to learn more and connect?**

**Contact:**

**Anthony Paletta**  
**Director of Advancement**  
**[anthony.paletta@oasl-oh.org](mailto:anthony.paletta@oasl-oh.org)**  
**440-382-6922**



# OHIO ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT LEADERS

Since its founding in 1953, OASL has been offering year round leadership development programming to middle school and high school students across the state of Ohio. OASL aims to positively impact and elevate student leaders in all organizations, clubs, athletic teams, and school groups. OASL empowers students to discover their passion and develop their capacity for leadership for one common goal: to create positive change in our Ohio schools & communities.



**Anthony Paletta**  
Director of Advancement  
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440-382-6922

## Program Levels

The Middle Level (ML) program is for current 6, 7, and 8 grade-students. The Senior High (SH) program is for current 9, 10, 11, 12 grade students. Each level offers 3 years of rotating programming, which allows students to participate in the organization for 6 years with unique programs.



## All Students Welcome

OASL programs positively impact and elevate student leaders in all organizations, clubs, athletic teams, and school groups. Program content is relevant across contexts, helping all students learn to serve, connect, and inspire their peers, families, schools, communities, and the world.

## Annual Calendar

**September: Leadership at the Point**

- 1 day event, Cedar Point

**October: Middle Level Madness**

- 1 day event, Central Ohio

**November: Fall Retreat**

- 2 day/1 night event, Central Ohio

**February: Winter Retreat**

- 2 day event, virtual event

**March: OASL State Conference**

3 day, 2 night event, travelling locations

**July: Summer Workshop**

5 day, 4 night event, Capital & Ohio University

Scan this code to learn more about OASL in 3 minutes, and follow us on social media!



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## Our Purpose

- To provide opportunities for student leaders to develop and effectively utilize the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to set and achieve positive goals, to feel and show empathy for others, and to make responsible decisions for oneself and one's community; to encourage the practice of good citizenship
- To provide a medium of exchange for ideas and activities
- To provide opportunities for student leaders to establish and maintain positive and diverse student relationships
- To partner with and assist individual schools and student organizations in matters directly related to student leadership development including effective communication, teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, resilience, and perseverance.

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



"OASL also provided an incredible, diverse network of thoughtful people, who I still count on, learn from, and laugh with today. Of all the professional organizations with which I have been involved, OASL remains the most impactful—by a wide margin"

**Daniel C. Kosich**  
**Mechanical Engineer**  
**J.D. Candidate**  
**Akron, Ohio**

"As a middle and high school student, it provided me the opportunity to work collaboratively with students from diverse communities, taught me how to engage in respectful, transformative dialogue, and helped me identify my own capacity for engaging in leadership and develop the self-efficacy to use my voice for change at quite a young age. Ultimately, my experience in OASL set me on a life-long journey to study leadership and a commitment to helping people develop more equitable, inclusive leadership beliefs and practices."

**Dr. Melissa Rocco**  
**Affiliate Assistant Professor and**  
**Leadership Studies Program**  
**Manager**  
**University of Maryland**

"The focus of 21st century skills like critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and communication will serve students well no matter what field of work they enter. OASL fills this need in a fun, engaging way and pushes students to take risks and be the best they can be."

**Laura Calaiacovo**  
**Medina High School**  
**Educator & Advisor**

"I turned from a B/C student to an A student, going on to graduate high school as Valedictorian and college Magna Cum Laude...[OASL] made me assertive yet introspective. It taught me to be self-motivating and how to overcome challenges."

**Neelam Modi**  
**Proctor & Gamble,**  
**and Business Owner**

Anthony Paletta  
Director of Advancement  
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# OASL TESTIMONIALS



"The content I led through OASL established me as "a leader of leaders" and made me a more competitive candidate when I sought employment after graduate school."

**Leslie Gress**  
**Genetic Counselor**  
**Medical Science Liaison**  
**Guardant Health**

"As an advisor and father, I attribute a great deal of her Leadership skills learned to the training that she received at Ohio Association of Student Leaders activities and the leaders that she was exposed to."

**Scott Cross**  
**Port Clinton High School**  
**Educator & Advisor**

"OASL is a community of young leaders who truly are aiding in changing the world whether it be in one life or many. It helps shape character, meet new lifelong friends, and understand and set goals for anything you are trying to achieve."

**Robert Bucheit**  
**OASL Alumni**  
**Cincinnati, Ohio**

"OASL changed the trajectory of my life. As a child who grew up in Appalachia, there weren't many opportunities for growth in the areas of leadership and communication. More importantly, there weren't many role models to benchmark my life around. OASL gave me a place to grow..."

**Patrick Klein**  
**Belpre High School '01**  
**iBELIEVE Foundation Founder**  
**eFuse Chief Strategy Officer**

"OASL creates hardworking, compassionate leaders who can in turn create positive environments in their schools and communities."

**Paly Modi**  
**Berea High School '00**

"I attribute my passion for striving to embody servant leadership and confidence to act as a change maker to OASL."

**Christine McCue**  
**Mason High School '11**  
**Senior Manager**  
**Children's Miracle Network**



# OASL TESTIMONIALS



I could talk at length about the impact the Ohio Association of Student Leaders has made in my life. As a middle and high school student, it provided me the opportunity to work collaboratively with students from diverse communities, taught me how to engage in respectful, transformative dialogue, and helped me identify my own capacity for engaging in leadership and develop the self-efficacy to use my voice for change at quite a young age. Ultimately, my experience in OASL set me on a life-long journey to study leadership and a commitment to helping people develop more equitable, inclusive leadership beliefs and practices. I have been a university professor and higher education administrator for over 15 years in the discipline of leadership studies and field of leadership education. When I earned my PhD in 2017, I dedicated my doctoral dissertation to OASL. That dedication is below:

To the delegates, staff members, coordinators, board members, volunteers, and all “magic-makers” who are a part of the Ohio Association of Student Leaders. It is you who showed me as a child the value of meaningful, authentic, supportive, real relationships, and the vital part they play in the joy and challenge of leadership. In so many ways, it is your influence, spirit, and love that has carried me to this place and this work. “We are the lucky ones; some people never get to do all we got to do...” I hope that in even some small way, what is written here helps communicate the importance of our work (and play) to develop the kind of leaders who build a more compassionate, prosperous world for all.

I continue to volunteer for OASL and can confidently say that the organization continues to do this good work while adapting to the needs of today's middle and high school students and advocating for positive social change in partnership with Ohio's schools and communities. Every student in Ohio deserves the opportunity to engage in the supportive learning and development community provided by OASL educators and programs. I would be more than happy to further discuss or share my experience. You can reach me at [melissa.rocco@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.rocco@gmail.com).

Melissa L. Rocco PhD  
Affiliate Assistant Professor and Leadership Studies Program Manager  
University of Maryland

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



When my student council advisor required me, a 7th grader newly elected as secretary, to attend training at the 2001 state conference of the Ohio Association of Student Councils (now the Ohio Association of Student Leaders), I had no idea how much the trajectory of my life would be forever changed. I had never been in a space that centered youth this completely, inherently valued their insights, and laid the foundation for them to go out into the world carrying what they'd gained to improve their own communities at home long after the training experience ended. After that, I participated in or volunteered at more than 30 events through high school. In those experiences, I learned how to communicate complex ideas clearly – with both empathy and conviction. I gained a sense of what it required to build true community and shared purpose among people who had vastly different lived experiences. I practiced my speaking skills, and more importantly I exponentially grew my listening skills by learning to always lead with curiosity, be unafraid to ask questions that go deeper than the surface, embrace not knowing or having all of the answers figured out, and model honesty. I made many mistakes, yet I was given space and opportunity to do that in an environment that was safe, encouraging, and celebrated mistakes as part of the formula for success. OASL's programming was the first place where I not only heard about how much kindness matters but saw it consistently manifest in every action. The ethics that were instilled in me through this organization still guide all of my decisions, actions, and professional work as an educator, social worker, and advocate in a very fundamental and tangible way every single day.

As a teenager, my time with OASL taught me about hyper-localized and nonpartisan civic engagement as I played roles in drafting strategic plans; developing programming; coordinating event logistics around housing, fundraising, and transportation; and meeting with elected officials and businesses to cultivate trust and collaboration. This organization does not solely instill the importance of dreaming big in today's young leaders – it empowers youth to build the toolkit, the capacity, and the tangible skills to act on those dreams, to work tirelessly toward desired results, and to intentionally bring people with them along the way. Thanks to OASL, I understand how leaders in formal and informal roles set climate and culture in the spaces they inhabit by advocating for themselves and for those who are feeling unheard or left behind. The Ohio Association of Student Leaders breeds – on a scale of thousands per year – a commitment in young people to live in service to a greater good, and to do what one can to make a difference on both small and large scales. Ohio needs and deserves the future that can be led by those whose hearts and minds are touched by, challenged, and fertilized by this organization.

Molly Dull  
Director of POSE Foundation in Chicago, IL  
Elyria High School  
Class of 2007

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



My name is Scott Cross and I have been the advisor for Port Clinton High School Leadership Council for 18 years. I am writing this letter in support of the Ohio Association of Student Leaders (OASL).

OASL has provided leadership training opportunities to many of my members through Super Saturday's, OASL State Conference, in which we were to host last year but couldn't because of COVID, Winter and Fall Retreats, Summer Workshops and Leadership at the Point. My students were able to meet Student Leaders from across the state of Ohio, developing friendships that have blossomed over time. I witnessed my students go to their first OASL event, then ask when the next event is that they could attend. The magic of OASL can not be explained, but the positive energy that OASL instills in the students that they touch is unspeakable, but as an advisor I can see the impact OASL makes on my students.

As a parent, I have witnessed OASL through my daughter, Hannah, who is a Senior at Port Clinton High School, and who is a member on the OASL Board as a Senior High Representative. Hannah went to her first OASL event as sixth grader, attending Leadership at the Point. As a seventh grader she again attended Leadership at the Point, the State Conference then stated she wanted to go to Summer Workshop. Hannah went to Summer Workshop by herself not knowing any other delegates. My wife and I dropped her off at the Wright State University, and when we said, "goodbye" she was crying by Connie Miley and the Workshop staff took her under their wing and made sure she was fine. We did not hear anything from Hannah her whole week at workshop until we picked her up on Thursday. When we picked Hannah up, she was excited to see us, but again she cried because she did not want to leave her "new family" at OASL. I have witnessed Hannah grow from a quiet, meek young girl, to a high school Senior that has been the Captain of her Tennis, Cross-Country and Swim team this year and be the President of PCHS Leadership Council. I attribute a great deal of her Leadership skills learned to the training that she received at Ohio Association of Student Leaders activities and the leaders that she was exposed to.

OASL is a great organization and one that I am proud to say that I am affiliated with. The more support OASL receives the more lives that can be impacted.

Sincerely,

Scott E. Cross  
Advisor Port Clinton High School Leadership Council  
Parent to a High School Senior associated with OASL

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



The Ohio Association of Student Leaders (OASL) was a pillar to my personal growth, starting in middle school and throughout my high school years. This program transformed the person I am today, leading to heightened success in both personal achievement and professional development. I attribute my passion for striving to embody servant leadership and confidence to act as a change maker to OASL.

OASL provides students with real-world opportunities to learn and grow as leaders in a safe environment from a young age. With the organization's commitment towards creating a learning community, OASL shapes future generations of leaders. My experience is one of many who seek guidance to understand the impact that one individual can make on society. The tangible skills I learned from OASL gave me the foundational knowledge needed to develop my leadership skill set as I continued to grow, compassionate about making a difference in the world around me.

I would advocate for all students to attend OASL events and workshops to have the meaningful experience I did. The benefit that OASL had for me expands beyond words and is demonstrated in my day-to-day actions that provide a positive impact on my community, career and network.

Christine McCue  
Manager Children's Miracle Network

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OASL introduced to me a framework, which has yet to let me down in my personal and professional life.

The practical skills from OASL planted seeds of a growth-mindset, self-awareness, intelligent collaboration, and mentorship. These tools have helped me work through hardships, and successes. OASL's workshops and conferences have helped me to embrace and learn from failures and lead onward to achieve new objectives. OASL also provided an incredible, diverse network of thoughtful people, who I still count on, learn from, and laugh with today. Of all the professional organizations with which I have been involved, OASL remains the most impactful—by a wide margin.

This approach to leadership development can be categorized as: deeply valuable to, and transformative for young people, across all socioeconomic backgrounds and demographics. OASL tools and skills have brightened the lives and future possibilities of thousands. And on top of all that, OASL shows young people that we can work together despite differing backgrounds, and stands as an immensely credible, practical model of how to build a brighter future for Ohio, and the USA.

Daniel C. Kosich  
Mechanical Engineer | J.D. Candidate

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



In 1993 I started Roehm Middle School in Berea, Ohio. I was a shy and quiet girl and often felt lonely and insecure as the only Indian girl in the school. That all changed the moment I discovered OASL. After attending a 2 night OASL retreat in the winter of 6th grade, I was transformed from that reserved girl into a confident young leader. I felt empowered to make a difference in my school and community by running for my school's executive board. I went on to becoming class president each year from 8th grade through 12th grade. As a leader in my school I strove to create an environment similar to the countless OASL events I attended each year - an environment where all were welcome and included, differences were celebrated, children felt safe and had self confidence to achieve their goals, and everyone worked together to help our school and community. I carried these values, which I learned from OASL, through college, my career as a teacher, and my life as a mother.

OASL creates hardworking, compassionate leaders who can in turn create positive environments in their schools and communities. This kind of leadership in our youth is essential for future generations and should be available to all children. However, the cost of attending may prohibit many interested students in attending. Statewide funding to this organization improves accessibility for all students across the state. OASL lifted me up and had a profound, long lasting, positive impact on my life. All children should be given the opportunity to be a part of this extraordinary organization.

Paly M.  
Berea HS class of 2000

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"OASL single-handedly propelled my leadership skills and growth during the most transformative years of my education. I wouldn't be the person and business professional I am today if it weren't for the time, people and programming I was exposed to at OASL."

Paul King  
Mansfield, Ohio

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



OASL changed the trajectory of my life. As a child who grew up in Appalachia, there weren't many opportunities for growth in the areas of leadership and communication. More importantly, there weren't many role models to benchmark my life around. OASL gave me a place to grow, find elite friends who were goal-oriented like myself, and allowed me to see what it was like on a college campus. I am forever indebted to this organization as it was the single reason that I have had success in my life when tackling things like a large university, entrepreneurship, and continuous change.

Patrick Klein  
Founder of The iBelieve Foundation  
Belpre, Ohio

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When I began attending OASL (then-OASC) events in 2006, it started as an incredible opportunity to exchange best practices with other schools. Beyond that, I soon learned how I could create a network of student leaders from around the state and even briefly deep dive into the lives of other Ohio families, so different from my own, while being hosted for a weekend convention. But OASL leveraged the initial sparks of interest into cultivating passion amongst its members in leadership theory and its practical applications. For me, this was life changing. After graduation, I went on to take that OASL curriculum to develop workshops and lessons to share with fellow students at my university. Even today, more than a decade later, I find myself referencing the materials I learned in OASL activities to effectively manage my team at the office. I can confidently say that without OASL, my high school, college, and professional experience would have been nowhere near as enriching and successful as they have been, and I hope more Ohio students get the opportunities that I was so fortunate to have.

Eric Michael  
Engineer for Google  
Graduate of Harvard University  
Solon High School

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



OASL has impacted my life beyond measure - both personally and professionally. As a student attending OASL programming in middle and high school, it taught me critical pillars of being a leader like communication, conflict resolution, and situational leadership that enabled me to diversify my experiences within my school community. OASL helped enrich my learning experiences in a way that enabled me to qualify for one of the highest scholarships and go to college at low cost. Being active in OASL also significantly expanded my worldview beyond my hometown: it gave me direct exposure to see how people grew up in different parts of the state and learn from their lived experiences which helped me develop empathy, deep listening skills and become a better teammate. Additionally, my OASL friends became some of my most supportive relationships in middle and high school, helping me to navigate successes and losses through those formative years. My OASL group is still one I call upon today - nearly 20 years since we all first met - in moments of joy, sorrow, and growth. Without OASL, I doubt I would have been poised for such success going into higher education or had a support network that pushed me to be my best.

I also was lucky to be a facilitator of OASL programming for 10+ years after experiencing it first hand. As a facilitator, I led high schoolers through activities on goal setting, strengths assessments, problem-solving, and communication. The content I led through OASL established me as "a leader of leaders" and made me a more competitive candidate when I sought employment after graduate school. When I entered the workforce, part of the role my new manager quickly tapped me to fill was one that would lead company wide team engagement activities to help adults communicate better, lead with empathy, and have fun doing it. OASL gave me a toolkit not just for my development, but for the development of others. Leading "workshop days" at companies I've worked for is something I have done over the course of my 10+ career in healthcare and biotechnology, including at some of the leading healthcare firms in the Bay Area. People who attended ask how I learned these "activities" that foster "a-ha moments" f even in corporate settings... the story starts with: "well, there's an organization in my state called OASL." OASL's impact is immeasurable in my life - first as a student, then as a facilitator, and now in "corporate America." It's helped me navigate and bring impact to the teams and companies I've been a part of through the years. Now, as a parent, I only hope my children and those in the community can have the opportunity to experience OASL and its life-changing programs.

Leslie Gress  
Genetic Counselor & Science Liaison - Guardant Health  
Valley Forge High School  
Class of 2007

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



OASL even taught me how to drive a manual... but really it did. Hi all my name is Robert Bucheit and as a young student I was gifted an opportunity that would indeed change my life forever. And no, it wasn't to learn how to drive a manual, but it was how I learned. Looking back there were several instances that people and programs stepped in and helped shape the person I've become today, nothing stands out more than the OASL. For me, I had a principal and advisor who saw more in what I had to offer and sought out my ability to unlock my potential. OASL is a community of young leaders who truly are aiding in changing the world whether it be in one life or many. It helps shape character, meet new lifelong friends, and understand and set goals for anything you are trying to achieve. As we are in unprecedented times and without writing a novel I will say this, every great leader at one point had someone, something or both that put them on their path to amazing accomplishments. OASL was mine, and I think it would be a great opportunity thru your help to be a part of a student's great opportunity, and one of the many steps to realizing their full potential.

All my best,

Robert Bucheit  
Business Owner  
Cincinnati, Ohio

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Leadership training for teens is a passion for me and I am so thankful that I have been involved in the Ohio Association of Student Leaders so that my students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful leadership training. Some kids are natural born leaders but even those that are not can improve their skills to become amazing leaders and role models. The focus of 21st century skills like critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and communication will serve students well no matter what field of work they enter. OASL fills this need in a fun, engaging way and pushes students to take risks and be the best they can be. Their programs have helped my students become confident, strong leaders at Medina High School and beyond. So many of my students progress to college and assume leadership roles from clubs and professional organizations to fraternities and sororities, and I know it all started with OASL. After teaching for 28 years and seeing my Student Council leaders become contributing members of our society and take on huge roles in the real world, I know that the OASL programming works and makes an impact on decision making and helping students to become their best selves.

Laura Calaiacovo  
Medina High School  
Student Council Advisor



# OASL TESTIMONIALS



To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of your consideration to approve future funding to the OASL organization.

As a mother, grandmother, retiree and adult OASL staff volunteer, OASL has had and continues to have positive impact on me. However, I am most grateful for the positive influence it has had on my family and friends. Especially my son...whose adult resume resonates all the values, leadership skills and team building experiences which has helped him succeed personally and professionally. Through his lifelong OASL connections he still contributes to the organization. He is just one of many, many grateful adult OASL staff ... paying it forward and making a difference in our state's younger generation.

Fortunately, I can afford to extend this opportunity to my grandchildren. However, the current cost to send one's student to an OASL workshop is unaffordable for many parents. Especially, those with larger families who do not have the income or additional monetary support. Our state has a responsibility to offer affordable leadership development opportunities to all students. This will generate a positive impact in our Ohio's families, schools, communities, churches and government.

It was not until I attended my first OASL summer workshop, I understood the true meaning of the OASL "Magic" my son experienced at the age of 13; why at the age of 43 he still has such a love and passion for this organization. Unfortunately, providing this leadership opportunity comes with a price tag to fund the cost of housing, food, salaries and supplies. The staff: high school/college students, adult staff and the OASL Team serve as true servant leaders. Their time, energy, passion and love for OASL is provided freely out of gratitude. Without them, the OASL "Magic" and impactful OASL experiences would not exist. Their dedication and contributions to Ohio students are "priceless". OASL is dependent on their strong, experienced leadership staff. It is essential to OASL's success to build a feeder group of future OASL staff leaders.

Your financial support for OASL will open the doors wider to more Ohio students. I respectfully ask your generous support for the needed funding requested.

In gratitude,

Joanne Coudret  
OASL Adult Staff Volunteer

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



This letter is to advocate for OASL (Ohio Association of Leaders, formerly OASC – Ohio Association of Student Councils) to receive state funding and support to help the organization reduce costs, offer more need-based scholarships and, in short, help more students have the opportunity to participate in the life-changing OASL experience. I do not use the term, "life-changing" lightly. Looking back on my experience, OASC stands-out as the catalyst in my early years that has shaped me into the person I am today – 30+ years later. In fact, OASC's impact on me has been so profound, that it influences my perspective, actions and interactions still today.

As a sixth grader, I had the benefit of an older brother that had forged a path for me to follow by being an active member of OASC and encouraging me to join. I participated in day-long OASC workshops, attended weekend-long OASC retreats and anxiously looked forward to the week-long OASC summer camps. Middle school, for me, was a formidable experience because of OASC. I, like so many sixth graders, was smart, but did not have drive, ambition or direction. There was little that excited me other than playing outside with friends and watching TV. OASC, and the teachers and mentors that led these organizations and shepherded me to apply myself, awoke in me the desire to become a leader, volunteer, have a purpose and vision for myself and my life.

I turned from a B/C student to an A student, going on to graduate high school as Valedictorian and college Magna Cum Laude. I joined other organizations – Chess Club, Drama Club, Key Club, Art Club, Mock Trial and so many more out of genuine interest and became officers in several of them. I joined cross country and track despite not having much athletic talent but did it because I wanted to challenge myself. I volunteered in the community at art fairs, hospices and hospitals to feel the warmth and joy of giving. I was elected class president all four years of high school, ran for Student Body President at Miami University and came in just short of winning office but remained active and went on to become a Student Trustee on Miami University's Board of Trustees. OASC transformed me into someone that wanted to challenge and better myself and the world and those around me. It made me confident yet caring. It made me assertive yet introspective. It taught me to be self-motivating and how to over-come challenges.

I remained intimately involved with OASC through-out high school as a counselor and returned as a volunteer once I graduated college. The organization has remained as powerful and impactful to the students I watched come through the program as it was on me. I saw in these students, the same lost child that I once was, transform before my eyes. The impact the organization had on my life compelled me to encourage my nieces and nephews to participate as well. It was heart-warming to watch them undergo the same transformation that I and the other students go through. I can share countless stories of how they went from the same, undriven students to becoming innovators and leaders in their schools and in their careers afterwards – starting businesses, implementing change in their communities and standing up for their values and beliefs in the face of adversity.

For me, I had a successful career at Procter & Gamble and start my own independent consulting practice thereafter. I have faced challenges through-out and expect I will continue to do so, but I also expect that I will persevere through them; and I can attribute my grit to the lessons OASC taught me.

Even beyond my professional life, I find the values and message of OASC to still reverberate in my actions today. Earlier this week, while watching a TV show with friends (social distanced), the show depicted previously marginalized students that had miraculously become "popular" and exacting revenge on another student that was "popular". Objectively, it was funny, yet I found myself saying to the group, "...I don't agree with this; you don't blow-out someone else's candle to make your own burn brighter." A lesson learned at OASC and lived every day since then. This is not something a 42-year-old man says...but it should be, or rather, it should not have to be. Because this is a lesson learned in one's early, formative years. For this lesson and the thousands of others that OASC taught me, I am grateful and fortunate. I wish for more students to have the same fortune.

Sincerely,

Neelam S. Modi

Procter & Gamble and Business Owner

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



OASL has such a special place in my heart and I struggle to put this feeling into words but here it goes.

I can say personally it has been OASL and its training that has allowed me to grow and develop into the confident young woman I am. My journey with OASL began in sixth grade when I attended my first OASL workshop hosted at Cedar Point. From there I attended weekend retreats, state conferences, and four-day summer camps. It was these events that helped and supported me as I struggled to follow my moral compass and worked to discover who I was and who I wanted to become in an ever-changing school environment. Think back to your middle and high school years full of peer pressure and add in the stress of today's social media and I am sure you can feel the stress and pressure of this time frame. I am sure you remember not knowing where to turn at times or how to properly and effectively set goals, let alone have a plan to achieve them. This is why I am so thankful I found OASL. It has helped me discover my strengths, but more importantly it pushed me to face my fears and insecurities in a safe and supportive environment in order to grow into the person I have become. It taught me how to be an effective communicator, which includes how to be an active listener. I can confidently lead small group activities, as well as plan and implement large group activities and events. OASL has opened up so many leadership opportunities for me and others involved! OASL was and still is the difference maker in my life.

Molly Fenik  
Elyria  
Class of 2020

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Throughout my OASL experiences, what has impacted me most is how it has allowed me to accept myself and grow more and more throughout each of the past 6 years I've been involved. When I came to my first OASL event, I was extremely quiet and afraid to open up for almost the entire week. With each event I came back to, I began opening up more and more and realized that this fear of opening up was not as bad as I once thought. The magic of OASL kept me coming back until I became comfortable enough to always be myself, in and outside of OASL events. I still am a very quiet person and for a long time that was something about myself that I wished I could change at some points. That changed throughout my staffing experience where I learned that I don't have to be perfect to make a difference, I just have to be me. I honestly don't know what person I would be today without all the amazing people and experiences OASL has given me that will last a lifetime.

Nick Bardash, Olentangy Orange High School  
Class of 2021

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



OASL has impacted me in more ways than I could have imagined and elements of its programming continue to seep into more parts of my life. OASL taught me how to effectively communicate. I now understand that one of my weaknesses is listening and it is now something I work on daily. I have learned how to ask questions that will move conversations forward instead of talking about the same few sentences in different ways. OASL has given me the courage to lead and take steps toward my dreams that I would have otherwise thought impossible. It has taught me that I am valuable and worthy and that no matter what my dreams are, they are achievable. OASL is a community of people there to believe in and encourage students. Some of the people I have met at events have changed my life forever just by believing in me. It has also taught me how to design and lead small group sessions. For example, I am the Vice-President of my National Honor Society Chapter. I design the meeting agendas and conduct the majority of the meetings. Thanks to OASL and my role as a staff member I understand how to effectively lead these sessions and be productive in a professional setting. It has also provided me a group of like-minded individuals who build me up and never tear me down. Thanks to OASL I know I will attend medical school in just a few short years, a dream I have had since I was a little girl. Like so many other OASL has brought me out of my comfort zone and helped me to serve those around me. These are a few of the ways OASL has impacted me and I would not be who I am or where I am today if I had not gotten involved with this organization five years ago.

Emily McWilliams  
Nelsonville-York High School

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OASL has opened my eyes to what it means to take risks. From dance parties to being emotionally vulnerable, I saw time and time again that taking a productive risk was always worth it. These productive risks have helped me in many aspects of my life. Not only did it make me become a better leader, it freed me from letting fear always control me. Though I still work on it everyday, OASL has given me the tools to take risks and has shown me what lies on the other side: growth.

Sankalp Agrawal  
Mason High School

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



The Ohio Association of Student Leaders has had a tremendous impact on my life since I attended my first state conferences and summer workshops in middle school. I have not only been able to create long-lasting connections and friendships, but I have also had the opportunity to learn valuable leadership skills I apply in my daily life. When I attended my first OASL summer workshop I cried when my parents dropped me off because I was scared to be away from home for the first time, but by the end of the week, when it came time to go home, I was crying because I did not want to leave all of the new friends I had made. Today, as I attend senior high workshops, and prepare for my future after high school, I feel ready because of the skills OASL has taught me including, but certainly not limited to, people-building skills, empathy, and communication. When I reflect on my time I have spent at OASL events I am thankful for the accepting atmosphere they have created for all students, and I feel honored to have been a part of such a life-changing organization.

Hannah Cross  
Port Clinton High School

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The OASL is one organization that I have not regretted joining. Being a part of the OASL was a big move for me because I didn't know a student who was a part of the organization. After being spoken to by my student council advisor, I decided to give it a shot and I was amazed. Different people from all over Ohio come together to grow together and have a fun time. One of the big things I like about the OASL is its ability to include fun in lessons. Unlike other camps where you'll feel like it's all about learning, OASL isn't that way at all. They include talent shows, fun competitions, lessons that let your imagination run wild, icebreakers that you just cannot resist, and so much more. The people are so amazing that you feel like you've known them for a long time and you could share anything with them. I've learned valuable life skills like teamwork, team building, people building and so much more just from OASL events. Most importantly, I've made life-long friends from OASL events.

Leslie M.  
Whitehall City Schools

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



OASC (OASL) is undoubtedly one of the most important and enduring influences in my life.

I entered middle school in 1988 as a shy, meek, student of color who was afraid of his own shadow.

Later that year, I vividly remember sitting in the audience listening to a handful of my peers run for the school-wide Student Council Executive Board (i.e., stand up in front of the entire student body and give a speech) and thinking too myself how I would NEVER have the courage to do something like that. That summer, I found myself at my first OASC workshop. My life changed forever. In a short period of time, I found my voice and worth, a passion to serve and lead, the courage to speak my voice, and as an added bonus, my love of the dance floor! Later the following school year, I worked up the nerve to stand before all of Roehm Middle School and make my case to serve on the Student Council Executive Board. To my surprise, I was elected Student Council President.

The following year, I went to a different high school from most of my classmates. I ran and was elected to my Freshman class leadership board. The year after that, my family moved and I started at an entirely new high school. I immediately immersed myself in various activities, including joining the football team, which I had no business of being on. Why? Because I had always wanted to play football, but had never before had the courage to do so. Later that year, I ran against a popular incumbent classmate and was elected and re-elected to serve as Junior and Senior Class President. Throughout high school, I served as a student counselor for various OASC programs.

After high school, I had the good fortune of attending Harvard College - in no small part, I'm sure, due to the aforementioned experiences. There I served in leadership roles with several student organizations including as Co-President of the South Asian Association, the largest student group on campus. At graduation, I was selected to give the Class Day Speech. Both during and for several years after college, I served as an adult counselor at OASC summer workshops.

After graduation, I have worked at several marquee corporate names including two renowned Wall Street firms. In between, I spent two years getting my MBA at the Harvard Business School. Today, I run my own real estate investment firm and sit on the board of several non-profits.

All of this is to say, there is zero question in my mind that each of the opportunities afforded to me above, were either a direct or follow-on effect of my first summer at OASC workshop and reinforced by the skills and experiences - such as servant leadership, active community involvement, finding one's true self and voice, public speaking, and being vulnerable - that I was exposed to and given the opportunity to practice, refine, and model for others during my years of involvement with OASC. Next to my parents and a small handful of very impactful teachers and mentors, there has been no greater positive influence in my life than OASC.

I can think of no better investment in the youth and civic future of Ohio than making the magic of OASC (OASL) more affordable and available to all of our student leaders.

Sincerely,  
Sharmil M.  
North Royalton  
Class of 1996

# OASL TESTIMONIALS



OASL has undoubtedly shaped the person I am today. I walked in shy and insecure about who I was, but through the countless friendships, skills and lessons I gained from OASL events I started to gain the confidence required to become a student leader. Events like State-Conference, Fall Retreat, and of course Summer Workshop taught me a myriad of lessons; from the simple lesson of being kind, to the idea of becoming a world changer, OASL has helped start my journey to make a positive impact in the world.

Azhaan A.  
Mansfield, Ohio

**Want to learn more and connect?**

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