

LIONS QUEST



A Program of Lions Clubs International Foundation

## Success with Lions Quest Interview with Teacher Karla Defore

Karla Defore Interview  
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Karla teaches leadership and world history at Wellington High School.

**Q: Could we talk about your community and what some of the issues are that the youth here are facing?**

A: Some of the things that Wellington kids go through the same things that kids go through everywhere. They have issues with bullying and peer pressure and drinking and other behaviors that would maybe be detrimental to them. So trying to overcome those and settle into better behaviors, better habits. So it's hard to get through adolescence without being faced with some of those poor choices. But we're trying to give them alternatives and how to avoid some of those poor choices.

**Q: How does the Lions Quest program addresses those issues and helps students make better choices?**

A: I think that Lions Quest gives them other alternatives. It gives them what else they could do with their time. It gives them a sense of their place in the world. I think many times the students are, they don't realize how they impact the world. They really feel inconsequential like not even a number. They just feel like the world doesn't begin

until you're 18 or 21 or whatever. It and so they don't see themselves as a part of the world that can impact the world in a positive way. So this gives them, Lions Quest gives them that out, that I can do something and not only can I do it in my mind, but I can, I can physically make something happen. I can make a change in the world.

**Q: How has Lions Quest Impacted yours students? How did the students used to deal with challenges or how did they interact with each other? And how do they do it now that they've participated in Lions Quest?**

A: Well I think one of the main things that I see is the students have a sense, have a perception of what they can do. And how, how they impact their own future. And I don't know that they really had that before. I don't think that they, I think they just floated along especially we use this, we use the Lions Quest in our freshmen class. And so the purpose of that for us is for them to get started on the right foot so that they you know see that their choices have consequences good and bad. And so going through Lions Quest curriculum gives them that grounding to go through the rest of their high school experience. Gives them that sense of accomplishment. And that's one thing that I think is really great about the project is because they really do it. And I don't know how it's going to work out. And I don't have the answers; you have to go find them. And for them that sense of accomplishment, that sense of pride in my work, that sense of that I can do something that I put my mind to is pretty important. I mean it sets the stage for lots of other accomplishments down the road.

**Q: Do you also think that because you offer Lions Quest as freshmen, that you are able to help them make smarter choices when it comes to peer pressure, to drugs, to bullying?**

A: I do, I think that just giving them a voice in their freshmen year where you know whatever we talk about in here is, it's open. You can bring up topics that are hard to talk about, teen pregnancy. It's hard to talk about when you're 14 years old. And we can talk about that and be open and honest and it does give them I think just a sense of security that there are people in this building that care about them. That want them to succeed in life. That want them to feel like if they do have problems that this is a place to solve problems.

So I mean I think Lions Quest does that. It really gives them a place to feel like they have some voice.

**Q: What do you like about using the Lions Quest curriculum?**

A: The Lions Quest curriculum speaks so much to the part that school, regular school doesn't seem to get to. You know we have to you know we have to teach, we have to teach math. We have to teach reading. We have to but we seem to neglect maybe even the spirit and the soul of the student and how the rest of their life is going to be. We have given them the skills to have a job. And I think we do a pretty good job of that, but we sometimes forget that your job isn't going to be everything about you. You've got to have the skills to deal socially with people. You have to have the skills to,

to make your community. That the community needs you. And you have to be part of it. And so I think that's the part that Lions Quest does that, that I don't see anywhere else.

**Q: How important are service learning projects for your students as part of the Lions Quest Program?**

A: It's the hardest; the service learning part is the hardest for the teacher. It is so hard for the teacher because it's so hard for the students. They have to think of all the questions that might come up. And you just have to guide them. So the service learning is there part, their creativity, their problem solving. They're really putting skills that are useful in all parts of your life into a project. And then the outcome of the project being a service to others is just like the cherry on top. It just really is, it's that make you feel good bit of it. The skills that they get to use are, are amazing. And other people are benefiting from it. So then the way that makes you feel is so important I think.

**Q: How important is social emotional learning and how does Lions Quest bring that into the classroom?**

A: My social studies books don't speak to social emotional learning at all. My daughter's math books don't ever talk about that. And so it really is kind of the only place that students have an outlet and have time. I mean just the time to examine themselves, to examine the outside world. To put themselves in their spot in the world. This is really the only time of, the only time of the day that they get for that. So I think it's really important for them to be able to have the time to examine who they are, what they're going to be doing.

So the Lions Quest curriculum gives them the social emotional learning that they don't get in their other classes. It really pulls them together, gives them the emotional outlet and lets them examine who they are and where they belong in the world. And how they can impact the world.

**Q: What Leadership skills the students learning through Lions Quest?**

A: So when the students get to the point where they've examined all of their you know we've looked at what the problems are in the world. We've looked at how you know what things are we're passionate about. And what then they're to the point where they're choosing a project and they're having to get to the nuts and bolts of it. And that's where students leadership really shines. And I've had some wonderful stories of students that you wouldn't think of as leaders. As you know they're not the straight A math student. They're not the you know they're not but they've, they're able to voice their ideas and they're able to have that you know sometimes they just know how to do things and other students don't know how to do. And so it gives them the opportunity to be a leader where it doesn't matter if you have an A+ in math. So you know they haven't always had an opportunity to be a leader. So then um, they see themselves as a role model. And maybe they've never had the opportunity to be a role model before. So I think that it does have a ripple affect. Well if I can you know if I can be a leader in this setting, what other settings can I be a leader in? And a lot of students, we have a second class I guess if you will, after our Lions Quest class we have a leadership class. And, and a lot of the mining for, the leadership class comes out of those Lions Quest classes. They have the good feeling of how it feels to be involved in those projects. And how it feels to

have success in that way and giving back. And they like that feeling. And they, and they want to be part of it.

**Q: What would you say to a teacher who's considering becoming Lions Quest trained?**

A: Well I think even if you aren't teaching Lions Quest, that the material is, is really valuable for just every class. I mean you can, you can pull in those types of you know just the study skills. You can pull in the how to treat other people. You can pull that in without teaching it as a class like we do. I really think, I think teaching as a class is the way to go. I just think it is the way to go. Make sure that every student is exposed, we expose them daily. This is their daily class. They are going to be in Lions Quest every single day for a semester. And I just think that that's how I would approach it. I just think we do it right.