

# What Do Kids Need to Succeed?



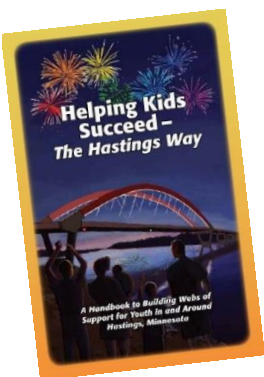
# Hastings Youth Tell Their Stories

Tight webs of support help youth develop resiliency. This web is made up of "protective factors," guiding youth to make good decisions and to grow to be healthy, principled, and successful.

The supportive adults ("Anchors") in a young person's life offer both tangible and intangible protective factors – which we call "strings" – to guide their growth and development.

The Hastings Way initiative gathered inputs from around our community. These inputs have been compiled in a handbook for use by adults and youth throughout Hastings. The handbook is full of great ideas for strengthening webs.

A web with many strings provides a strong safety net, with anchors providing authentic caring and high expectations. Every youth in Hastings needs a strong web! Join us in making that happen.



**GET THE  
HANDBOOK  
READ IT  
APPLY IT  
PASS IT ON**

## Hastings Teen Key Opinion Leaders



Our youth leaders are playing a key role in designing, developing, and implementing activities that support the Helping Kids Succeed – The Hastings Way initiative

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Funding by United Way of Hastings  
in collaboration with other community groups.

**A donation of \$5 per handbook  
is appreciated**



Hear from Hanah . . .



. . . a personal account of how youth overcome adversity

Learn about  
Helping Kids Succeed –  
The Hastings Way





**HANAH** Hanah Martin is a 2013 graduate of Hastings High School and is currently pursuing a degree in law enforcement. Hanah intends to become a police officer. Hanah has come a long way.

When Hanah was in the fourth grade, her parents divorced and she moved with her mom, two brothers, and sister to Hastings to live with her grandparents. Although only nine years old, Hanah was the oldest and felt responsible to help her family by watching her siblings so her mom could get a job. To make life more challenging, her grandma suffered from Alzheimer's disease and her mom was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis.

Hanah looks back at going to school in Hastings as feeling lost and uncertain. She was so shy and hesitant to reach out to other kids. The only adults Hanah had in her life were her mom and grandfather. She didn't naturally connect with other kids, much less adults. Slowly she started to play with kids her age, mainly the boys because she really liked sports. And, like so many other kids, Hanah found that her interest in athletics opened the door to getting connected.

In the fall of 2012, Hanah's life reeled when a teammate from her soccer team lost her life in a car accident. About a month later, a classmate took his life. Classmates and teachers at school were grieving. The evening that her classmate was buried, a good friend of Hanah's took his life. There was so much grief at her school and in the community. Hanah recalls the feelings she had when she would see the empty desks of her classmates at school. The entire community was overcome with sadness at the loss of such young lives.

Many community groups were pulling together to support the community and a special meeting was planned with youth and community leaders. November 12, 2012 changed Hanah's life for the better. She was invited by her school principal to a gathering that was to impact lives of kids and help out at Hastings High School. She attended the Helping Kids Succeed (HKS) meeting, hoping it would open a new door for her. She listened about the web of support model and how every teen should have a minimum of five trusted adults in his/her life. This made sense and Hanah began to think of her own life. Hanah knew her mom was there for her, but her mom was always working and she didn't want to bother her. She longed for an older sibling . . . one that

she could learn from and could help her with everything that was on her mind and the challenges that she faced. Feeling alone, Hanah often kept her feelings to herself. The community gathering, where there were both teens and adults, helped her realize that she didn't have enough adults (anchors) in her web of support.

HKS has impacted Hanah because she could relate to needing more anchors. HKS has given Hanah tools that make it easier for her to talk with adults about her needs and get things done. She gained more anchors! HKS gave her the confidence to pursue college. She is the first in her family to go to college. She did it all on her own . . . applying for college, filling out the financial aid forms, figuring out where she would live. She credits what she has learned from HKS in helping her pursue getting a higher education.

The shy Hanah from elementary school has grown into a woman with goals to have a better life. Hanah's quiet demeanor still remains, but she now has the confidence to speak up and looks to make things better. As her mom deals with the progression of her MS, Hanah recalls what her mom has taught her—to live life like it's your last day.

**HKS**

***More youth stories at  
www.unitedwayofhastings.org***

# Strong Webs of Support

More than 50 years of research proves tight webs of support between teens and caring adults lead to success in school, acceptance of others, and avoidance of alcohol, drugs and violence.

***Strong webs of support are a better indicator of eventual adult success than income, demographics, race, or a wide range of other factors.***

"Webs of support" come from 5 or more adult anchors in a youth's life. Anchors:  
1) care for the youth's well-being, and  
2) expect more of young people than they expect of themselves, and  
3) guide youth into achieving those expectations.



Hence, the Rule of Five!

Webs are built at home, school, church, on a team, on the job, in quiet conversations, etc. Kids need adults in their lives more today than ever before.

Adults must focus on growing the positive attributes we want to see in our young people, and in the next generation.