

What Do Kids Need to Succeed?



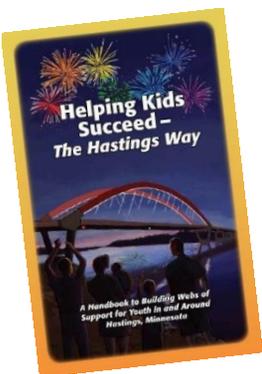
Hastings Youth Tell Their Stories

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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in collaboration with other community groups.

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



Hear from Morgan . . .



. . . a personal account of how youth overcome adversity

Learn about
Helping Kids Succeed –
The Hastings Way





MORGAN Morgan Christine Johnson has an infectious smile that lights up a room. She has a fun-loving personality. But life for Morgan hasn't always been easy.

counselors and teachers chose her to help other kids and the community. She was excited to help build webs of support to strengthen our community. The Helping Kids Succeed (HKS) model taught Morgan that every youth should have at least five anchors (adults) to make up his/her web of support. Morgan knew it was worth a try to get involved, to try to crawl out of the hole she felt she was in and get to a stable place.

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.

So she began her journey with HKS, going out into the community and talking about the model, gathering inputs for the *Helping Kids Succeed—The Hastings Way* handbook. She had no problem meeting with adult groups throughout the community and sharing what it's like to be a teen, what it's like to have challenges, and how she is building her web of support.

HKS gave her the courage to reconnect with the adults she pushed away when she was in an abusive relationship. Morgan realized that she had many potential anchors in her life that she didn't see and wasn't taking the time to look for them. One example Morgan gives is her mom. Morgan started trying harder with her mom and reaching out. She reconnected with her biggest anchor of all, her aunt. HKS changed Morgan. She felt empowered to share things with adults to help them “get it.”

Morgan has now entered a new environment—college in another state. She knows that she needs to add new anchors at college to her web of support and she has the tools to do that. Morgan now thinks about her future in a positive light . . . wanting to “fill the bucket” with amazing memories and live life to the fullest. **HKS**

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

Morgan was very young when her mom and dad got divorced. She lived with her mom most of the time along with her younger twin brothers. When Morgan turned six years old, her dad remarried and Morgan found it tough to fit in with her dad's new life. When Morgan entered middle school, her mom remarried but Morgan still had trouble feeling connected. A couple of years later, Morgan was devastated when she lost an uncle to suicide. Morgan was really close to her uncle.

As time went on, Morgan felt down all of the time and lonely. At school, it was tough for her to stay focused and she would shake with anxiety. When Morgan was a freshman in high school, a therapist diagnosed her with depression and anxiety. Things got better for Morgan until her 11th grade year when she was in an abusive relationship. Although Morgan ended the relationship, she was stalked and harassed. Her boyfriend had convinced her that she should not take her medications and not go to therapy—she spiraled to a very low place. At one point, Morgan posted on social media that she was ready to end her life.

With the help of several adults, Morgan did get the help that she needed. Although it was hard for her to juggle therapy and school, a special school counselor helped her balance things.

Things got better, but they weren't great. One day at school, Morgan received a message to meet in the counselor's office. The meeting was about the chance to be a leader in the community—Morgan couldn't believe she was hearing that her