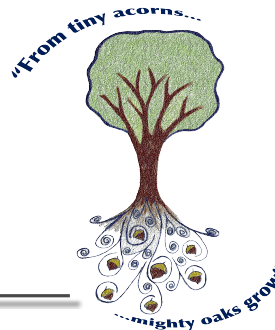


Oak Middle School

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Ann M. Jones, Ed.D., Principal
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Preston Karp is Shrewsbury's selection for Project 351 Ambassador for 2017. We became aware of Preston's service-mindedness soon after he began attending Oak Middle School. He surfaced as one of several team captains in his seventh grade team. Preston wrote emails and personally presented to the principal, a proposal for a team activity that would be created, organized, and facilitated by the team captains. The activity was approved and took place around Thanksgiving time. The focus of the activity was expressing gratitude. The teachers were very impressed with Preston's initiative and organizational abilities. He was able to bring a group's suggestions from initial ideas to a polished final product in just a few short weeks, while rallying the students around the activity.

From there, we watched Preston grow in his confidence and efforts to reach out to others. Preston became a peer mediator and a member of the student voice and Community Service and Leadership Club. As a peer mediator, Preston recently participated in a bullying awareness workshop at Bridgewater State College and presented his learning to both the Oak Middle School Council and to the Oak school leadership team. Both groups were struck by his ease in discussing the topic of bullying and peer conflict to adults along with some of his ideas on how to bring the message of kindness and tolerance to his peers in the school. His teachers note that he has emerged as a very natural leader on his eighth grade team. To Preston, leadership is not a popularity contest, it's a personal responsibility and a core value and his classmates recognize the genuine nature of his efforts.

Preston is also active in theatre in our school. He participated in plays and musicals in grade seven and is currently participating in our newest school play, "And A Child Shall Lead." His drama teacher explains how Preston embodies the characteristics of a Project 351 Ambassador, "To say that he has been an exemplary role model in the time that I have known him at OMS is a tremendous understatement. Always kind, with strong and fair-minded leadership, he has become a role model for his peers in the drama program and I am sure that it carries through to his regular school day. Over and over again I have observed Preston making choices that enhance not only his own learning, but the quality of the overall experience for the entire group. He recognizes and utilizes his strengths and acknowledges the areas in which he can grow, while consistently helping his peers to do the same."

We are honored to nominate Preston Karp and grateful that he is part of Oak Middle School. Truly, he makes OMS a better place!