



Dear Marianne,

Since late June I have been working with the Stone Soup Leadership Institute and I can honestly say that my life has been affected. Before the Institute I was just living day-by-day. While I had passion to change the world, and make society a better place, I had no source of structure and no direction to actually become the leader that my community direly needs. I had all of these ideas but I had no clue where or how to direct them. I was 18 years old, going into junior year of high school and I had no clue what I wanted to do with my life.

That all changed once I attended the Institute's Leadership Summit on Martha's Vineyard. I went through the intense leadership training that connected me to a mentor and the structure that I desperately needed. At the Summit I was encouraged to deeply reflect on exactly what I wanted to do with my life, in terms of a professional career. Then I was coached by my mentor to develop a five-year-plan to simplify my goals step by step. Thanks to the Institute's Summit I was actually able to check off some of the goals from my list -- and even start working on new ones!

Since the Summit, the Institute has invested in my ongoing leadership development. I've learned how to direct my energy and passion. I'm also learning how to take charge of a situation, even when no one else wants to.

Most importantly, the Institute helped me to look in the mirror and realize that I'm someone -- someone with a bright future in front of me. It has helped me to realize that I'm a leader. I can now be one with confidence.

The Institute also helped me get in touch with my second voice. I have always been somewhat of a writer but I now I am utilizing my hidden talent in order to truly voice my mind. This is something that I've never taken seriously. I've never seen there is a way I could help my community while doing something I love. This I all owe to the Stone Soup Leadership Institute, so with all of my heart and soul. Thank You.

J'Anthony Smith • August 8 2016