

## Momentum Blog #3 - Our Experience at Anna Mckenney

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*Alex F. teaching at Anna McKenny*

We went to Anna Mckenney during our second week of Momentum, initially for a 7 hour Anti-Bullying presentation. Our presentation was for the leadership students of the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes. The longest presentation we had given prior to this one was only six hours. During both the planning and presentation we were nervous to add another hour to what we already had. Not knowing if we would be able to succeed, we still went with it and it turned out wonderful. The students were incredibly attentive and vocal during small group discussion as well as during other serious activities. We were able to delve deep into what the students had held in for months, and even years. The courage and bravery shown in the act of being vulnerable in front of their peers created an atmosphere that not only encouraged those around to share what was on their heart but also to share what was difficult to talk about. I was in shock. I couldn't fathom how many children had come from broken families.



*Stronghold activity*

All throughout my life I had felt I never got enough and was always comparing myself to someone who was better off. Being exposed to children who shared about their tragic family situation made me feel selfish for how I had thought before. In comparison to the life of these kids, I was living a life of luxury. It not only made me feel guilty, but I had the realization that I need to show gratitude for my life, my family, and for those around me. I want to be a parent who will love and fight for my children. No child deserves to go through being raised by a single parent. No child deserves to be raised around alcohol or drugs. It hurt to hear these stories because I couldn't tell the students "I know how you feel" or "It's going to be alright". Who was I to say those words when I have gone through nothing close to what they had gone through or who am I to tell them that the uncontrollable problems in their lives will find resolve? Anna Mckenney opened my eyes to the potential that I continued to see so vividly in the students that were at Anna Mckenney as well as all other schools we presented to before and after that.

Alex G.