

# Lewis Leadership Program

@ John R. Lewis High School

LEADERSHIP

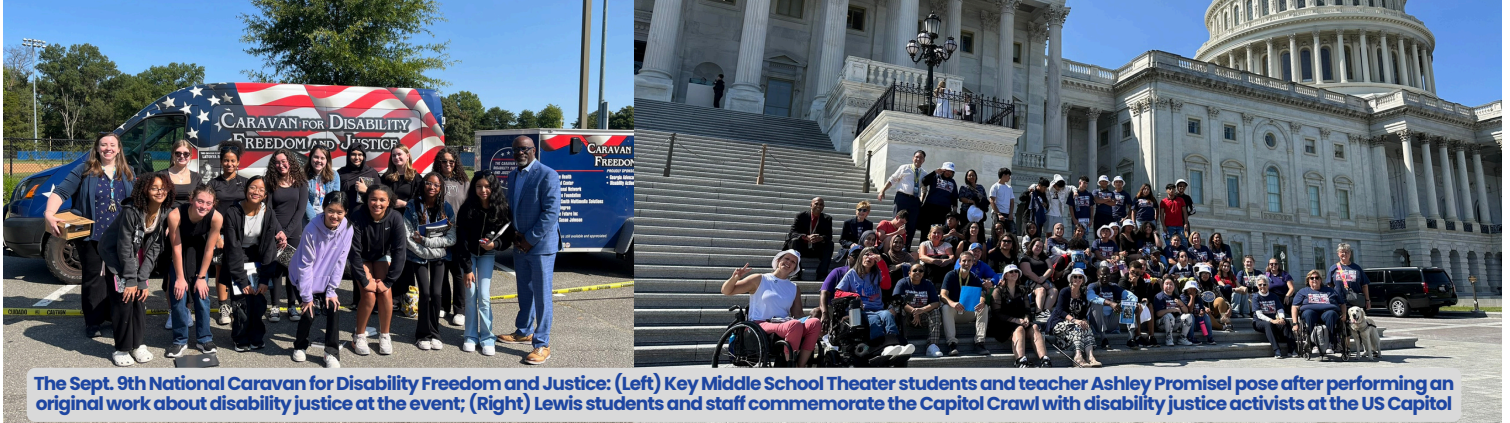
JUSTICE

SERVICE

ADVOCACY



## A Lighthouse for Student Voice and Civic Agency



The Sept. 9th National Caravan for Disability Freedom and Justice: (Left) Key Middle School Theater students and teacher Ashley Promisel pose after performing an original work about disability justice at the event; (Right) Lewis students and staff commemorate the Capitol Crawl with disability justice activists at the US Capitol

### MESSAGE FROM THE LEWIS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Now in its third year, the John Lewis Leadership Program has moved from a small pilot program to the heart of our school's culture. **Forty eight percent of Lewis's instructional staff has voluntarily partnered with us** to bring Lewis Leadership Program experiences to their students. **One in five Lewis students has participated in service learning** with the Lewis Leadership Program, and **131 students** have led their own community action projects. Real-world experiences like field trips and guest speakers have become the norm rather than the exception.

John Lewis High School is becoming a destination school for youth leadership and civic agency. Some highlights:

We are excitedly preparing to welcome up to **30 rising ninth grade transfer students from across FCPS** in the 2025-26 school year. Applications open in February.

Our school was selected as a stop on the **National Caravan for Disability Freedom and Justice**. On September 9th, students led inclusive, bilingual programming for more than 100 visitors, and then joined disability rights activists in Washington, D.C. [Read more.](#)

In October, our students led a community wellness initiative culminating with the arrival of the national **Mobilize Recovery Bus Tour** and a special performance by **American Idol winner Noah Thompson**: [video.](#)

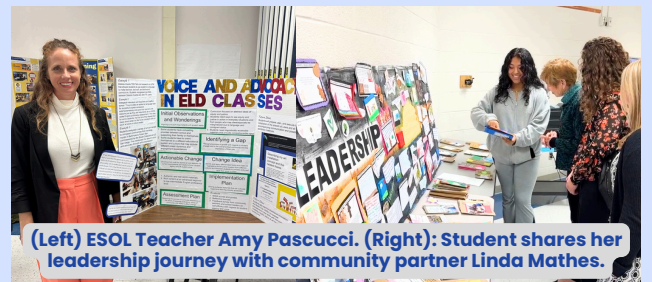
The curriculum resources our students and staff developed for the Lewis Leadership Program are helping young people take action across the nation, featured by the **National Museum and Center for Service** as its exemplar [K-12 Toolkit for Campus Museums of Service.](#)

One student recently shared the program's impact on him (translated from Spanish): "I started changing, I started talking more with people, gaining self-confidence, and losing my shame, losing my fear of speaking in front of people... I feel capable of being a leader. Outside of class... I can seem immature. But when I have a serious place like this, I'm a mature person, a person who is decisive, a person of his word, a person of character." Every student's pathway is unique. But each student we serve is finding personally meaningful ways to grow and take action.

Thank you for your continued support of our young leaders and their commitment to a better world.

### SCENES FROM OUR FALL EXHIBITION

Students, staff, FCPS leaders, and community partners gathered for a two-day showcase of learning and action on Nov. 8th and 9th. Teachers across subject areas shared their action research, reflecting on their experiences bringing leadership development to their classes. Students shared stories of their growth and impact as leaders through student-led community action projects.



(Left) ESOL Teacher Amy Pascucci. (Right): Student shares her leadership journey with community partner Linda Mathes.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Principal Alfonso Smith, and students



Community Working Group, School Board Member Marcia St. John-Cunning, Lewis Leadership Program Teacher Team, and Lewis Leadership Program's first graduating senior Zain A.

## PARTNERSHIPS AMPLIFY STUDENTS' IMPACT

It may seem counterintuitive, but adults play a crucial role in fostering youth agency. All Lewis Leadership Program community action projects are led by students and grounded in their ideas about our community's strengths and needs. But successful student-led projects are energized and amplified by the efforts of adult thought partners and supporters. Our fall 2024 community action projects positively impacted the world beyond Springfield because of our partners. In December, we kick off our [winter student-led projects](#) and invite any interested, youth-centered adult to join us!



Disability justice advocates and National Park Rangers join Lewis students and staff at the FDR Memorial as part of the National Caravan for Disability Freedom and Justice



American Idol winner Noah Thompson performs for student leaders as part of Mobilize Recovery's national tour



Community partners, including the senior staff of IntegrityM, participated in community circles on November 7th

## STRONGER CONNECTIONS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Our students are designing service projects that foster intergenerational connections. They value opportunities to collaborate with adults and younger peers.



Families and students from Lynbrook Elementary School joined Lewis students and Smithsonian educator Natalia Febo for a Hispanic Heritage Month service project.



Greenspring Senior Living Community's Black and White Shared History group supported Lewis students at our fall Exhibition of Learning, and have begun exploring opportunities for a collaborative service project.

## IMPORTANT DATES

**February 18th – 21st:** Week of Service and Advocacy Commemorating John Lewis's Birthday

**April 3rd 8:30 – 11:30:** Spring Exhibition of Student and Teacher Learning

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