



Whittier sophomore wins title at statewide leadership conference

HAVERHILL – Jennifer Lynch, 16, has always been pretty confident, but after attending a leadership weekend with 90 other sophomores chosen from across the state for their poise and dependability, she feels pretty unstoppable.

Jennifer participated in MassSTAR (Masachusetts STudents Accepting Responsibility) Citizenship Conference June 4-6 at Lasell College in Newton. The weekend is sponsored each year by the



Massachusetts Youth Leadership Foundation who seeks to recognize, teach and empower leadership in high school sophomores. The goal is to provide them with tools to create positive change in their schools and communities. One sophomore from every Massachusetts-accredited high school is invited to participate. Jennifer was selected by her guidance counselor.

“We talked about how no matter how big the problem is, one person can make a difference,” she said. “I learned a lot and made a lot of friends.”

With guest speakers and panel discussions, the presentations focused on how to move forward in their schools with community service projects. “The message was, you may be put down and discriminated against, but that’s okay, you just keep going,” she said.

While at the conference, Jennifer was appointed as Assistant Director of the Northern Region of the MassSTAR Delegation and will help the regional director organize future meetings and support the projects of other members. That puts her in line to take over as regional director when the current one graduates next year, she said.

“We learned there are no barriers,” Jennifer said. “You have to be optimistic and outgoing, take criticism well, ask for help when you need it, and don’t think you can do everything on your own. You have to be open to others’ ideas.”

One project she is interested in pursuing at her own school is a “Whittier Green Team” she said. There are many green initiatives at Whittier, and she would like to pull them together under one organization, she said, so everyone understands what is being done.

Jennifer is a Health Occupations major at Whittier and recently got a part-time job in nutritional services at Anna Jaques Hospital. She plans to study pediatrics in college and perhaps pursue a career in child psychology. She is the daughter of Kevin Lynch and Dawn Bowden, both of Haverhill.

“It was a true honor to be chosen for the conference,” she said. “I was so proud to walk around with my tag that said ‘Whittier’ on it.”