Helping Young People Thrive Amidst Uncertainty

Stephanie Malia Krauss ELO Innovation Invitational 3.11.2025



About Me

Educator & Coach in Phoenix
Social Worker & School Leader in St. Louis
Parent in Southern Illinois

School House to White House Coast-to-Coast Littles to Bigs



"This is a challenging time to be young. Kids are growing up amid pandemics and other health scares, economic crises, extreme weather, divided politics, violence, extremism, and more. Global problems are personal and proximate.

Fear for the future and worry for the present is palpable. Young people must keep living and learning during historic firsts at times when we are struggling to cope ourselves."





Growing Up Amidst Uncertain Times

How are young people? How are their families?

How are you?

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Drivers of Uncertainty

- Overtapped
- Overworked
- Overstimulated
- Overwrought

= Overwhelmed!







Digital And Disruption Natives

Tech Dependent

Kids only know life with smart technologies, social media, and online games.

Digitally Divided

Kids experience huge differences in connectivity and digital access.

Hyperconnected

Kids seamlessly enter and exit virtual life. They are dual citizens.





Used to Extremes

Kids have only known a life of divides and disparities because of power, politics, pandemics, and more.

Survivors of Volatility & Violence

Kids are growing up in an age of mass violence, volatility, constant change, and other life-threatening problems.

Strong and Powerful

Kids are proximate to our most complex, global problems. They may become our most powerful changemakers.

What does it take to build a life you love, and thrive in uncertain times?







Young people could live longer than ever. Living longer doesn't always mean living better.

The reality of longer lives means we must extend our ambitions beyond "college and career ready" to encompass what it takes to endure and enjoy a 100-year-life.

Long | Livable | Lovable

Preparing Young People for the Future

From Jobs to Journey

Durable

Equip kids with knowledge and skills that are difficult to outsource or automate.

Lovable

Times are tough. Kids should be able to do work they enjoy, and that they're good at.

Livable

Ensure kids are ready for jobs that provide the work, wages, and wellness conditions they need.

Transferable

The market is rapidly changing. Students should be equipped with knowledge and skills that can transfer to new jobs.

Whole Life Thriving Practices



MEET BASIC NEEDS



PRIORITIZE MENTAL HEALTH



INVEST IN PERSONAL INTERESTS



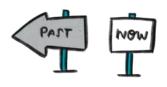
NURTURE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



BUILD COMMUNITY
+ BELONGING



EMBRACE IDENTITIES & CULTURES



PAST + THE PRESENT



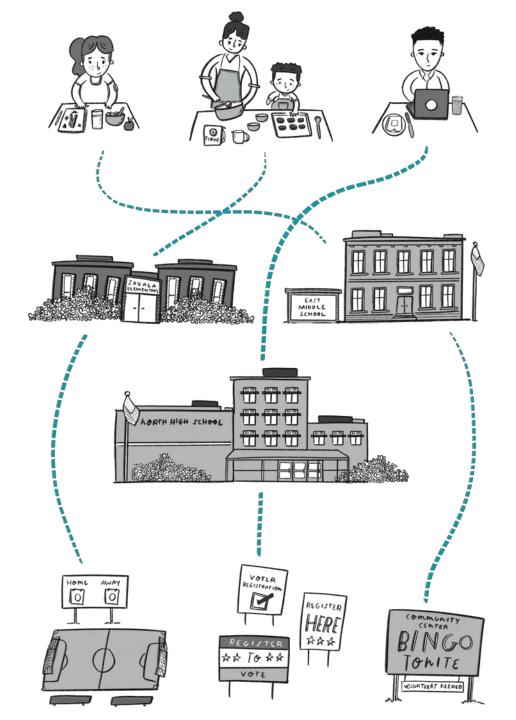
ACT WITH A-100 YEAR MINDSET



BE A FORCE FOR GOOD



SEEK AWE





- Exposure
- Exploration
- Experimentation
- Enjoyment
- Expertise

We get to help children find their "Element," as Sir Ken Robinson called it—the space when kids are "doing the thing they love, and in doing it they feel like their most authentic selves. They find that time passes differently and that they are more alive, more centered, and more vibrant than at any other times."

The joy of doing those things will inspire novelty and creativity, strengthen identity and purpose, activate accomplishments and pride, and offer ongoing enjoyment and well-being.

















Investing in Personal Interests as a Pathway to Whole Life Thriving



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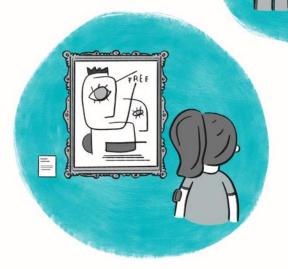


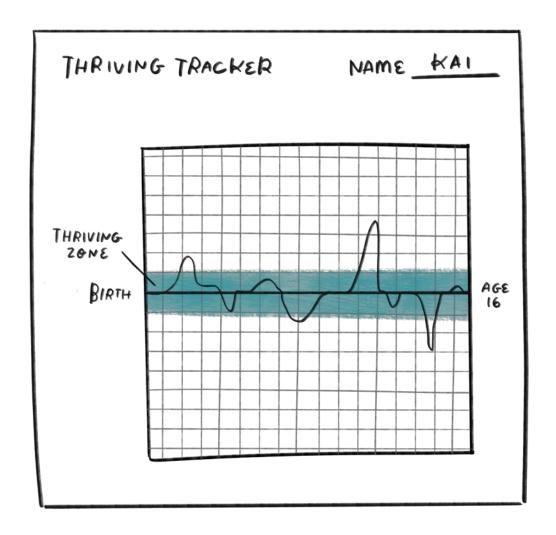
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"Thriving is not something to be achieved or accomplished; it is a state of being that young people move in and out of. Events, experiences, and having too much or too little of certain resources will bring young people in and out of their thriving zone."

SAFE AND SUPPORTED LIVING WITH
JOY AND PURPOSE

ROOTED AND CONNECTED



LEARNING AND GROWING

HEALTHY AND HEALING