

History is filled with well-known examples of strong female leaders: Joan of Arc, Mother Theresa, Sally Ride, Lindsay Hyde. Who's Lindsay Hyde you ask? Just give this **Harvard University** junior a few years and she'll make sure you know not only her name but the name of every women leader throughout history.

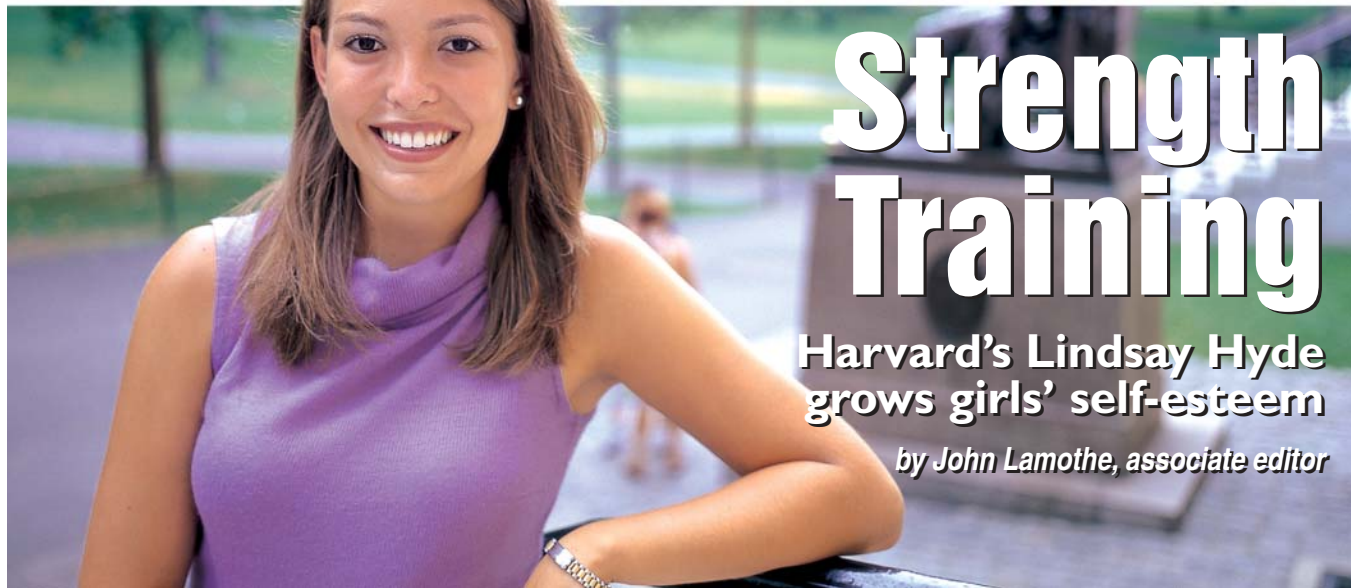
Hyde, 20, is the founder, director, and grant writer for "Strong Women, Strong Girls" (SWSG), a non-profit, after-school program that pairs young adult women with small groups of low-income, minority, and at-risk girls in grades three through five. The curriculum, created by Hyde, uses the study of

technical. A lot of it I didn't understand," she says. "As I shared my experiences with my friends at school, they also said it was something totally out of the realm of anything they had ever dealt with."

With the thought of her grandmother in the back of her mind and a desire to inform her fellow students, Hyde created the Organ Donor Project. The project's purpose was to provide easy, accessible, high-quality information to teenagers about the need for organ donation. Hyde wrote an organ donation education curriculum for grades 3 through 12, including an informational video and a workbook. The curriculum now has spread across the country and into schools in Malaysia, Australia, the

10 "countdown-to-success" skills. "If girls can develop this skill-set, they'll have the tools necessary to feel confident in the classroom, to feel confident in their extra-curricular activities, and to feel like they're able to express themselves," Hyde says.

As a senior, Hyde ran SWSG at a local elementary school and received rave reviews from faculty and members of the local community. However, it wasn't until the following year when Hyde moved to Harvard that the program really took off. "In just two years, the program has grown from one site to eight in and around Boston, and the number of Harvard students volunteering has grown accordingly," says Judith Kidd, Harvard's assistant dean of public service.



Strength Training

Harvard's Lindsay Hyde grows girls' self-esteem

by John Lamothe, associate editor

historical female leaders to develop critical thinking, leadership skills, and most importantly, self-esteem in young girls who may not have strong female role models. "It's important for girls to have role models to look up to," Hyde says. "They need people that they can say, 'If Sally Ride can become an astronaut, and this is how she did it, chances are I can do something similar in my life.'"

But to tell Hyde's story correctly, you have to travel back to her freshman year in high school, long before she conceived Strong Women, Strong Girls. Her journey toward a life of community service was sparked by terrible news: Hyde's grandmother would go blind if she didn't receive a corneal transplant. "The information the doctors sent home with us about organ donation was very

United Kingdom, and Ireland.

"My grandmother did in fact receive her corneal transplant, and as a result, was able to watch me walk across the stage on my graduation day," she says. Although the Organ Donor Project was a huge success, Hyde noticed something very troubling while she worked to get students involved in her program. "The boys in my classes had confidence that they could do as good a job, if not better, than I had done, but the girls usually said, 'I think it's really great what you're doing, but I don't think I could do it,'" she says. This lack of confidence led to Hyde questioning why many girls seem to have a low self-esteem, and in the summer between her junior and senior year in high school, she created the Strong Women, Strong Girls curriculum.

"Throughout my life, I've had tremendously strong female role models," Hyde says. "I've always had someone around to tell me, 'You can do it; I believe in you.' I realized that that's not something every girl has in her life." For that reason, Hyde created a program that not only teaches young girls the skills needed to succeed but also gives them tangible role models to look up to. Each SWSG class begins with the girls learning about a historical woman leader who exemplifies one of the program's

"Sometimes, the more driven students in the service world worry me. You never know what their motivation is," says Maria Dominguez, a deputy director at The Phillips Brooks House Association, the governing body for Harvard's extensive community-service program.

But Hyde's motivation behind creating and running SWSG has nothing to do with building her resume. "As I've gotten to know Lindsay more, I've realized how genuine her motivations are. Helping the girls is ultimately her goal," Dominguez says.

On top of doing everything it takes to run a large service project, Hyde finds the time to mentor a group of SWSG girls herself. "It comes down to making decisions about what's most significant," Hyde says. "I feel most passionate about my kids. They're with me for such a short period of time, and I feel I have a very limited window to make a huge impact on them." Ultimately, Hyde plans to turn SWSG into an independent, non-profit organization. **SL**

Contact Hyde at lhyde@swsg.org, Kidd at jhkidd@fas.harvard.edu, and Dominguez at mdoming@fas.harvard.edu. Visit SWSG at www.swsg.org.

Read the full story on Lindsay Hyde and SWSG at www.studentleader.com

Hyde's Leadership Tips

- **Enthusiasm is highly contagious.** So be sure to enter each situation you encounter with full enthusiasm.
- **Optimize your opportunities.** Work hard to recognize and maximize opportunities that come your way.
- **Get a planner.** I didn't ever use a planner until this year and now I don't know how I ever lived without it.