

SSI 2009 Annual Banquet

Mission and Vision

“Taking Root Downward, Bearing Fruit Upward”

James Muffett

Many of you in this room know about SSI because you've been there! We've been at this for 15 years and worked with thousands of high school students. Would all of the SSI Alumni in the audience please stand, along with our chaperones? Let's give them all a round of applause.

For those who have not experienced SSI, let me take a moment for a description of this exciting program.

SSI is built upon the idea that the best, and maybe the only, way to learn something ...is to do it! For example, I have discovered that you cannot learn citizenship from a text book.

So, our program places high school students in high-level, real-world simulations in which they actually become leaders for a week. In this highly charged and competitive environment they learn critical thinking, strategic planning, teamwork, communications and public speaking.

We now have 4 areas of focus with eight different tracks that provide a wide range of experiences.

Our Legislative Track includes a House of Representatives and a Senate with real bills, caucus meetings, committee hearings and a debate on the actual House Floor in the Capitol Building. The Mock Trial features teams of attorneys arguing for the prosecution and defense in a criminal case heard before a real judge, with a defendant, expert witnesses and a jury of their peers. The Moot Court lawyers actually present their arguments before a panel of appellate judges in the Supreme Court Chamber in Lansing. In the Business Simulation, teams of Student Executives guide their 40 million dollar company through eight years of production, sales, marketing and finance decisions as they compete with other teams in the market place. We also have an exciting Media Track. The Print Journalists publish a newspaper each day during the week and the Broadcast Team produces a Newscast on Wednesday and Friday. Students are not only actively engaged in their “leadership roles” but it is made even more realistic when they read about themselves in the newspaper and see themselves on the nightly news. It's absolutely amazing.

And undergirding it all is our Biblical world view instruction that teaches them that their faith must be integrated into every area of life. We present a solid biblical View of citizenship, law, culture and business. Our goal is to break down the false dichotomy between sacred and secular and to demonstrate that we are Christ's Ambassadors in every field and every arena of life.

High school students are just not learning that truth in many other places.

It's exciting to see the spark in the eyes of so many of the students who attend. Many tell us that their lives are never the same, and that is exciting. We've produced a short video that features just a few of those young people who, although now out of high school, still want to be a part of the program that profoundly influenced their lives. The video you are about to see was filmed and produced by SSI students and alumni.

Video: “SSI Alumni Give Back” View [HERE](#).

The young man who produced that video is here tonight. Jeremy Barancik, will you please stand up so we can thank you for such an excellent job.

Part of the fruit of SSI is the excitement, passion and commitment to Christ that we see in them immediately. But now, with these many years under our belt, we are seeing the long-term results, and they are awesome. National and state leaders are being developed and many of them are eager to give back to SSI.

A few weeks ago, my friend and SSI Board Member Ron Reed shared a scripture with me from 2 Kings 19:30, which says that the Remnant of the House of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. After the political upheaval last year people keep telling how important SSI is. In fact, I often hear the phrase, "Now more than ever." I believe that. It took 182 years to build the Notre Dame Cathedral. The people who designed it did not live to see it completed. Talk about sowing in faith! I believe in what I call the displacement theory of transforming culture. I want to fill every seat of decision making in our society with a unit of light, to replace a unit of darkness. That's overly simplistic, but you get what I mean. Young college students 40 years ago in 1969 were part of a rebellious mob with radical ideas that have now become "the norm." We must invest in a new generation of leaders and we must reach them before they get to College. More than 70% of college students who were Christian when they enter the university lose their faith in the process. I have had students tell me that SSI actually prepared them for the intellectual attack on their faith at college.

This is not a game, and we are not interested in just having a nice program that students enjoy. We are very intentional about this mission and we cannot do it alone. We need your help.

I am going to ask you to make a significant investment to strengthen and deepen our root system for SSI, so that we can continue and increase our fruit bearing capacity!

This is a Fundraising Banquet, and I am not ashamed of that fact. I want to ask you tonight to join the SSI alumni, chaperones, volunteers and staff who are sacrificially giving their time and talent and what treasure they have.

Will you join them and plant a seed tonight? You have the power to make our root system deeper and stronger by making a generous contribution.

But, for us, this is not just about a nice program; it's about the next generation, the kids, and the future. It's about the fruit in their lives that God is giving through the SSI programs.

What is our need? Our operating budget, trimmed by 20% this year due to the economic hardship being experienced by so many of our donors and supporters, is \$340,000. Were blessed by revenues of around \$90,000 from student fees for our Summer and Onsite Programs. That leaves us with an operating budget need of \$250,000 to raise each year.

I have never asked for that much money from anyone. But God, through the generosity of folks like you, has been faithful to meet our needs and tonight we're asking Him, and you, to help us go above and beyond.

That amount, divided by the 400 people who are here tonight is \$625 per person. I know that many of you cannot give that all at once tonight. I also know that many of you could afford to give 50 times that amount toward this exciting ministry.

Did you know that amounts to just \$52 per month, or just \$1.75 per day. At that rate, the banquet tonight would meet all of our needs.

Just so you know our per-person cost of the event tonight is approximately \$25. Everyone can participate and everyone can help us make this our most successful fundraising event ever.

It is in our hearts to:

1. Restore our Onsite Program back to where it was last year before our budget cuts.
2. Develop the Ambassador League with a goal to see this powerful leadership development Program expanded to schools throughout the state and beyond.
3. Create an active SSI Alumni Association that would harness the energy and talent of our alumni and provide ongoing training for them. We would Onsite invest more in these young leaders post SSI.
4. Focus on Outreach through the Greatest Story Never Told and other seminars.

Your contributions and pledges will make a huge difference. I am going to ask you to give financially tonight —to make an investment in these young people. This is an important moment...and the reason we are all here.

I hope you are as excited as I am about the fruit, and will consider making the most generous contribution or pledge that you can possibly make tonight.

Through your gifts, you are saying to these young people, "You have a future. You have a purpose. We believe in you. You can be a powerful influence your culture. You are an Ambassador for Christ! "

That is what this evening is all about.