

# MINDANTIX AND POSITIVE ALLY CHAMPION FOUR LIFE SKILLS FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

Creativity consistently tops the list of “soft skills” employers seek in new hires because it is foundational to key leadership skills that bolster organizational success. The need for creative thinkers and doers has fueled many trends in education, including prioritization of the 4Cs—communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity—and project-based learning. Many formal and informal learning centers now teach 21st century skills by giving students space to explore and experiment.

Positive Ally is an after school academy that helps elementary students master a variety of life and leadership skills through academic reinforcement, organized sports, and extracurricular activities. To refresh and augment its existing curriculum to address the academy’s four focus areas, Positive Ally partnered with MindAntix to develop a program that incorporates real-world learning activities to teach the following:

## **Communication and Interpersonal Skills -**

Developing strong interpersonal communication skills to help lay the foundation for successful teamwork

## **Critical Thinking and Decision Making -**

Teaching students how to make informed decisions by analyzing the information surrounding a particular situation

## **Coping and Self-Management Skills -**

Practicing empathy skills in order to help students learn from one another’s unique experiences and manage their own feelings and emotions

## **Health and Wellness -**

Encouraging students to remain in charge of their own health and wellness by understanding the relationship between diet, health, and disease

**Positive Ally** is an after school program that serves over 200 students per day from grades K-5



**"IT HAS BEEN WONDERFUL  
COLLABORATING WITH  
MINDANTIX WHO HAVE  
DEVELOPED FOR US A UNIQUE  
SET OF COURSES DESIGNED  
TO CHALLENGE AND  
PREPARE STUDENTS WITH  
21ST CENTURY SKILLS."**

**-Aman Narula  
President, Positive Ally**

# Today's Students, Tomorrow's Leaders

Over the course of four weeks, students meet for 45 minutes daily to work on activities that teach real-world applications of the four life skills. The activities are age- and skill-level appropriate, with a variety of tailored content for students from K through 5. Through a combination of project-based and inquiry-based learning—which challenge students to become independent thinkers by posing questions, problems and/or scenarios for students to solve—the program takes a hands-on, minds-on approach to learning that includes:

## Communication and Interpersonal Skills

During a series of activities, students become a team of reporters sharing breaking news in their community. Students begin by learning the different elements of a successful news story and then work through a series of exercises to learn best practices for selecting, developing, and presenting the news. Students work together to practice a variety of communication skills that include storytelling and public speaking, and create a short video of their news presentation as a final project.

## Critical Thinking and Decision Making

Within this discipline, one of the most popular lessons is a game-based activity that teaches students spatial reasoning—the capacity to think about objects in three dimensions and draw conclusions about those objects from limited information. The challenge is for students to develop 3D models from 2D sketches. To do so, students must think about a variety of ways to deconstruct the models and how to move objects between the two different dimensions. For example, students must sketch the outline for a 3D cube on paper before cutting and folding it into the 3D model.

## Coping and Self-Management Skills

A series of lessons help students practice empathy so they learn from each other's perspectives. For example, one student-led activity is centered around three tasks, where the students are asked to close their eyes and imagine a scenario as it is described aloud. Students are prompted to act out a similar situation to help them identify the emotions of those in the story and brainstorm ways to help. After self-reflection, the students participate in a group brainstorming activity to share their ideas with peers to develop a unified plan to best support those in a similar situation.

## Health and Wellness

Students participate in a series of science experiments that focus on teaching the elements of nutrition, which is the relationship between diet, health, and disease. The final project tasks students to develop a meal plan that meets specific dietary restrictions. For example, one of the most studied diseases is diabetes. Acting as dieticians, students explore the causes and resulting symptoms of this particular health issue, and develop a full day's meal and exercise plan to help a diabetic remain healthy.

In addition to partnering on curriculum development, MindAntix also provides ongoing online and in-person trainings to equip Positive Ally instructors with best practices for increasing student engagement and participation in the program.