

# YOUTH RESOURCES OF SOUTHWESTERN INDIANA

## ENGAGING YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY SERVICE

### 2011 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT REPORT

#### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Friends of Youth Resources, we are so excited to bring you our 24th year-end report full to the brim with the amazing leadership development and community service our youth have been involved in through all four of our programs. During the 2010-11 school year, **over 1,715 youth** in Southwestern Indiana and Western Kentucky were directly involved in youth-led community service projects funded by Youth Resources! Thank you for supporting our future - our youth - through YR!

#### MAKE A DIFFERENCE GRANTS

- 921 youth volunteers led 22 community service projects funded by Youth Resources and implemented throughout the Tri-State.
- Youth volunteers involved with these projects were: 18% minorities, 29% economically disadvantaged, and 4% mentally and/or physically challenged.
- 5,073 people in the community were impacted by the youth-led projects.
- On average, each youth volunteered 5.8 hours for a total of 3,578 hours!

*"I know now that you don't have to be the most important, richest or smartest person in society to make a positive difference in the lives of others."*

Youth, especially those at-risk, benefit greatly from participating in volunteer community service projects. These projects have proven to develop young people's brainstorming, planning, budgeting, communication, teambuilding, grant-writing, evaluation, and leadership skills. Members of YR's Teen Advisory Council are trained to screen the grants which increases their awareness of community needs in all areas of Southwestern Indiana.

The Make a Difference Grants projects in the 2010-11 school year ranged from reaching out to families of incarcerated individuals; military support; literacy; helping less fortunate families; homelessness and hunger; helping with home maintenance and yard work for the elderly and low-income families; peer mentoring; neighborhood revitalization; and HIV/AIDS awareness.

A few highlights include: Bosse's Moderate Cognitive Disabilities Program students cleaned and prepared meals for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House; Glenwood Leadership Academy's third, fourth, and fifth grade students wrote letters, made holiday cards, and delivered potted plants to neighbors of their school; Resurrection's third and fourth grade students decorated pillow cases for Riley Children's Hospital; and Scott's fifth graders shopped for and delivered food items to three local homeless shelters and soup kitchens.



**GRANT RECIPIENTS WITH THEIR GREEN PROJECT.**

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## TEEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Teen Advisory Council made a positive impact on numerous community issues during the 2010-2011 school year due to record participation levels from youth in Vanderburgh, Posey and Warrick counties. Members of the council designed and participated in community service projects, shadowed local government officials, planned community wide events and so much more!

*"I have learned many leadership skills through TAC and gained confidence when meeting others and presenting in front of large groups."*

- 175 teens from every public and parochial high school in Evansville and Castle in Newburgh made this the largest TAC ever since 1987 and volunteered over 3,500 hours of community service through 117 projects!
- 99% of TAC members surveyed feel they have learned the skills necessary to become a better or more effective leader.
- Members reported personally gaining skills in leadership, decision making, organization, time management, brainstorming, setting goals and public speaking.

Female members planned the Opening Session and Breakout Workshops for the 1st Annual Young Women LEAD Conference in Evansville. The opening session was designed by the youth and incorporated an video presentation on Women in History. They also created a Breakout Workshop entitled "iGive, iLead, iChange" focused on developing and identifying personal leadership characteristics and styles among their peers. Due to the success of their presentations, they were invited to present at the conference in Louisville!

A successful event planned by the Marketing/Communications Committee was their 1st Annual Career Fair held during a meeting in April. Members met with local representatives from career fields in health care, law, and education to discuss potential paths for higher education and

have a better understanding of future job prospects. Some students were able to network with professionals in their areas of interest and have developed mentoring relationships!

Local community leaders were guest speakers and woke up early to share their stories with TAC members and inspire them to not underestimate the difference that they can make in their communities. A few who spoke to TAC are: Sheriff Eric Williams, Dr. Linda Bennett, Father Alex Zenthoef, and Aaron Opell.

TAC members consistently report through ongoing evaluations that they gain confidence, self-esteem, a supportive friendship network, brainstorming skills, public speaking ability, organization and leadership skills through programming efforts designed for youth members. Through peer-to-peer and adult-to-youth mentoring combined with an estimated nine month meeting cycle, these students have the ability to enhance their skills through a long term effort designed to increase civic responsibility.



**TAC MEMBERS POSE AFTER LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR CEDAR HALL EIGHTH-GRADERS.**

## VANDERBURGH COUNTY TEEN COURT

In the last year, Teen Court held 35 hearings, and the recidivism rate held steady with less than 10% who re-offended. The success of Teen Court is largely attributed to continued support from the Evansville Police Department, Vanderburgh County Sheriff's Department, and Vanderburgh County Juvenile Court who send referrals of students who can benefit from Teen Court's individualized attention. Teen Court also welcomed a refreshed partnership with the Vanderburgh



County Prosecutor's Office. • 167 youth volunteers completed 1,152 hours of community service. Student volunteers reported increased perception of positive outcomes, knowledge about the legal system, leadership skills, attitudes about law enforcement, obeying the law and new communication skills.

*"Teen Court got me more involved in my school and student life and made me discover my true self and opened a whole new door for me."*

- 35 youth offenders completed 342 hours of service through their dispositions. Juveniles reported improvements related to good decision making, communication with parents, participation in community service, making good grades, missing school, and not letting friends pressure them into making poor decisions.
- 100% of youth respondents surveyed were satisfied with Teen Court!
- 93% of youth respondents agreed that the Teen Court program helped them become more responsible.

Teen Court youth volunteers were given several educational opportunities outside of the courtroom including meetings with members of the Evansville Bar Association to learn about Discovery and Victim Impact; and an Indiana Court of Appeals Oral Argument at Ivy Tech Community College.



**JURY MEMBERS DELIBERATE DURING A TEEN COURT HEARING.**

## TEENPOWER

2011 celebrated the 20th year of High School TEENPOWER and the 10th year of Middle School TEENPOWER and has empowered over 2,650 teens to date! TEENPOWER is designed to strengthen youths' prevention and intervention skills, increase knowledge about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, build self-esteem, provide leadership training, and give them skills and tools to implement prevention-based community service projects.

- TEENPOWER 2011 had record-breaking attendance and impacted 367 youth and 62 college students and adults!
- Students from 40 different schools in 6 counties were represented.
- \$13,171 in TEENPOWER Prevention Grants was distributed in 2010-11 reaching over 7,000 people.

*"This has been a life-altering experience. I cannot even express its magnitude in words. TEENPOWER is the best thing on the planet. No exaggeration."*

The 2011 Youth Staff had 31 high school members who participated in leadership development trainings from January to June and decided this year's camp themes: "No Need to Act, Just Be Yourself" for High School camp and "Who Ya Gonna Call? TEENPOWER!" for Middle School camp. The keynote presenter, Justin Lookadoo, focused his message on making positive choices, staying true to beliefs and values, and increasing positive attitudes and healthy choices. Workshops at High School TEENPOWER covered the topics of depression, gateway drugs, and a new workshop 'Be Real' which allowed students to share their personal struggles and provided an environment to be supported and connect with others at risk and facing similar struggles. Middle School workshops covered the facts on drugs, peer pressure and positive choices, bullying, and perseverance.

Campers also met in Team Time daily and received training on teambuilding, identifying a school/community substance abuse related problem, developing a school project to combat that problem, and presenting their ideas to the entire camp. In the fall, the school or group that each youth represented can receive a grant to implement the project they developed at TEENPOWER. These projects reach and share the TEENPOWER message with 3,000-7,000 additional peers and community members each year!



**TEENPOWER CAMPERS SHOW SUPPORT FOR EACH OTHER AFTER 2011 CAMP VARIETY SHOW.**

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# THANK YOU YOUTH RESOURCES SUPPORTERS!

Reflects all gifts received between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011.

The number in parenthesis indicates the number of years as a Youth Resources supporter.

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## COMMITTED TO YOUTH

Since 1987, Youth Resources of Southwestern Indiana has involved over 145,134 young people in more than 2,790 service projects. The youth directly served among all of the programs range in age from 6 to 18 and represent the socio-economic, ethnic and cultural diversity of the region.

YR supports its work through contributions from individuals, businesses, corporations, foundations, and local and state government grants.



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# YOUTH RESOURCES COMMUNITY INVESTMENT REPORT

TEENPOWER – TEEN ADVISORY COUNCIL – TEEN COURT – MAKE A DIFFERENCE GRANTS