

United Way of Morris County



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

Winter 2010



YEA and DSACS Spread the Word about Engaging the Student Voice



Snow was falling outside on January 28th, but that did not stop nearly 50 Morris County community members and middle school staff from attending **Putting Children First: Engaging the Student Voice**.

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Middle Schoolers LIVE UNITED at Youth Summit Day

Over 100 middle school students from across Morris County gathered at the Ukrainian American Cultural Center of New Jersey on October 23, 2009 for the third annual **Youth Summit Day**. At the daylong Summit, students participated in team building and problem-solving exercises to help develop their leadership skills. [Read more!](#)



"We are thrilled with the continued success of Youth Summit Day," said **Liz Warner**, YEA Team Leader at United Way. "Once again, the students were insightful, engaged, passionate, and inspiring. The YEA team cannot wait to get to work on next year's Youth Summit." Stay tuned for more details!

The students also received a special **Cyber Connections Web Project** presentation from **Eisenhower Middle School** students. Eisenhower has been working with YEA and a local web developer to design a website by middle schoolers for middle schoolers. The site - **LivLife** - is scheduled to launch this year. [Click here](#) to see the video Eisenhower

Upcoming Events

Mentor Training

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

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Family Ice Skating Event

Thursday, March 25, 2010

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Culturally Diverse Children and Families: Improving our Responses to Suspected Maltreatment

Friday, April 30, 2010

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Tell a Friend about our ENewsletter!

Do you know someone who is passionate about helping our young teens? United Way of Morris County's Youth Empowerment Alliance is bringing together schools, agencies, corporations, government, and community members to collectively address these problems. Click below to forward this newsletter and engage people you know in this conversation.

► SPREAD THE WORD

Questions about YEA?

students made documenting their experience.

If your school is interested in getting involved in the Cyber Connections Web Project, email [Liz Warner](mailto:Liz.Warner@unitedway.org) or call 973.993.1160, x107.

Join the Movement! Take the YEA Challenge!

Looking for a way to engage students' voices at your school? Take the **YEA Challenge!**

YEA is asking students across the county to identify an issue at their school that is important to them, develop a solution to the issue, and implement the solution school-wide. We want students to lead the way in creating social change among their peers.

This spring, YEA is inviting all participating middle schools to share their story - research, planning, implementation, challenges, and successes. Have your students document their experience and share it with other middle schoolers in Morris County.

For more information, email [Liz Warner](mailto:Liz.Warner@unitedway.org) or call 973.993.1160, x107.

I CAN Middle School Mentoring Project off to a Great Start

YEA helped kick off the **I CAN Middle School Mentoring** pilot project in October. The new four-tiered mentoring project, developed in collaboration with **Morristown Neighborhood House, Frelinghuysen Middle School, and Empowerment Solutions**, is helping better connect Morris County's young teens with the community and across generations.

Students are meeting weekly with mentors of all ages, and will begin a group service project in the spring. The mentoring project will finish at the end of the school year.

Meredith Kirsch of United Way member agency **NewBridge Services** is volunteering her time to mentor a seventh grade student. "As a recent graduate of Providence College, my life has changed from student to young professional. This transition left me feeling at a loss for ways to occupy my free time. Mentoring has helped fill that void while benefitting my community."

The I CAN project is touching the lives of mentors and

Email [Liz Warner](mailto:Liz.Warner@unitedway.org), United Way of Morris County's **Youth Empowerment Alliance Project Leader**, or call 973.993.1160 x107.



United Way of Morris County is working to advance the common good by focusing on EDUCATION, INCOME, and HEALTH. These are the building blocks for a good life - a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health.

Our goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place. Together, united, we can inspire hope and create opportunities for a better tomorrow.

That's what it means to **LIVE UNITED.**

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mentees alike. **Jaeshawn Moore**, a seventh grader at Frelinghuysen Middle School, is excited to be a part of this pilot project. "The I CAN mentoring project is helping me academically and making me more active in my life. I am looking forward to learning a lot from my mentors," said Moore.

We still need mentors! If you are interested in participating in I CAN - this year or next year - email [Liz Warner](mailto:Liz.Warner@youthempowerment.org) or call 973.993.1160, x107.

YEA and DSACS Team Up to Create Lasting Changes in Morris County Schools

YEA and Rutgers University's **Developing Safe and Civil Schools (DSACS)** program are moving ahead with plans to foster social change in Morris County's middle schools. Last spring, nine Morris County middle schools signed on to participate in the DSACS project. To-date, all of the schools have taken the first step of this project by self-assessing their staff, faculty, and students. Currently, the schools are engaged in data review meetings to interpret the results, providing an excellent foundation to ensure the students' emotional and social needs are being met.

There is still time to get your middle school involved in this process! Email [Liz Warner](mailto:Liz.Warner@youthempowerment.org) or call 973.993.1160, x107 for more information.

Legislation Will Make Social and Emotional Learning a National Priority

Congress recently introduced the **Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act** to promote the integration of social and emotional learning in schools across the nation. If passed, this new legislation will authorize the US Department of Education to establish programs and allocate funds to:

- Establish a National Technical Assistance and Training Center for Social and Emotional Learning
- Provide grants to support evidence-based social and emotional learning programming
- Conduct a national evaluation of school-based social and emotional learning programming

"In today's increasingly competitive economy, our children deserve more than an academically challenging environment - they need the 21st century skills of creative thinking and problem solving," said Congressman Kildee (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood,



BECOME OUR FAN ON

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Did you know?

80% of middle school students witness bullying in schools

50% of middle school students know someone their age who is purposely hurting themselves

50% of middle school students do not know where to go for help with a problem

30% of middle school students do not feel safe in their environment

You Can Help YEA!

The community's enthusiasm and commitment to YEA has been inspiring. As we embark on a new year, YEA is reorganizing its teams to make the greatest impact on Morris County's middle schoolers. Now is the perfect time to get involved!

Join a YEA team today --

- * Mentoring
- * Event Planning
- * YEA/DSACS

Elementary and Secondary Education.

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* Parental Engagement

Want to learn more?
Email [Liz Warner](mailto:Liz.Warner@uwmorris.org) or call
973.993.1160, x107.

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Volunteer Spotlight

Judy Rawla



Meet **Judy Rawla**, chair of the **Cyber Connections Web Project**.

Judy is Program Director at **Deirdre's House**, a United Way of Morris County member agency that serves Morris County children who are victims of abuse and neglect, or who have witnessed domestic violence. Judy began volunteering with United Way in 2004 and is also a member of the Kids on Track Action Team.

Thank you Judy for all you do to help YEA shine throughout the community!



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