

PURPOSE OF THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter has been created in an effort to spread awareness of New Hampshire Teen Voices, and it's monthly meeting of the Youth Advisory Board, or YAB. The Youth Advisory Board is made up of youth in DCYF/DJJS care, youth that want to be a part of something that creates positive change for in-care youth in New Hampshire. As a result of YAB efforts, significant outcomes have been achieved, and participating youth found the process both rewarding and empowering. By publishing a quarterly newsletter focusing on YAB activities, it is the hope of both youth and staff that news of upcoming events and initiatives will generate even more interest and participation from staff, providers, and youth alike.



NH Teen Voices, DCYF/DJJS Youth Advisory Board

We are a group of diversified youth from across the state of NH between the ages of 14-21. We encompass both the child protection system as well as the juvenile parole and probation system. We all come from different situations and have spent different amounts of time in care. We are committed to making positive and effective change in the state of NH. If you are interested in coming to check out a YAB meeting ask your CPSW or JPPO or contact the Adolescent Worker in your area. A list of Adolescent Worker locations and contact information is on page 3.

Our next meeting is: Wednesday Aug. 5th 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm UNH Memorial Union Building in Durham

INSIDE THIS EDITION

- ◆ Purpose of this Newsletter
- ◆ Mission Statement
- ◆ Youth Article
- ◆ Current Initiatives
- ◆ Upcoming Events
- ◆ Adolescent Program
- ◆ Angela's Advice

YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVE

My name is Erin and I am 17 years old. I am the activities coordinator for Youth Advisory Board and currently reside in a foster home in Salem, NH. I came into care at 13 years old. At first it was scary and then I went to my permanent home and everything turned out great. Five years later, I still live in the same foster home, which I like very much. I have a bond with everyone at the house and that makes the living easier. I see two members of my family, my mom and aunt, which DCYF has helped to make possible. I also have a job and friends that I am faithful to.

Youth Advisory Board, also known as YAB, meets every third Wednesday of each month (once a month) in the Dolloff Building in Concord, NH. There are a number of youth and staff working on projects, whether it be separate or as a whole group, to help youth in care. Youth come from group homes and foster homes as well as other situations. I find that the youth enjoy coming here and putting forth their ideas without having to worry about it. I also think they see it as a break. I personally have made a few new friendships at YAB. YAB is a real board. It is very organized and we even have officers of the board. Everything is done in an orderly fashion always. We

try to get more people to come to our meetings because the more effort we have, the more changes we can make.

Our biggest and current project is putting together the Teen Conference, which will be held in Durham, NH, at the University of New Hampshire :). This is an all day event where a huge group of teens and staff take part in workshops to better their lives, speakers, icebreakers, prizes, and lunch. This year we will be having Gorilla Theater. YAB chooses the host, color schemes, what workshops there will be, prizes, and the icebreakers. The teen conference is on August 13th, 2009.

Youth Advisory Board is a powerful group that I can say I am proud to be a part of and will continue to be a part of.

.....

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Along with continued planning for the upcoming Teen Conference, YAB youth have been working on several initiatives designed to help youth in care. There are three ongoing groups: Career and Education, Community Service, and lastly State and Federal. The following are summaries of current ideas youth are developing.

Career and Education Development:

This group has recently taken on the project of creating a handbook for youth in care, which would be provided to a child in DCYF or DJJS care when they enter placement. The goal of having a handbook like this would be to both let youth know what rights they have while in placement (a bill of rights for children in care), as well as to help them navigate through the system. First, the bill of rights would tell youth that, for example, they had the right to ask questions of their CPSW/JPO when things were unclear to them. In terms of navigating through the CPS system, a list of important telephone numbers would be provided (CPSW/JPO/CASA), as well as explanations of things like the Court process. Information about Aftercare Services through DCYF, confidentiality, and information about public assistance could also be provided. In terms of research for this project, youth and Adolescent Program staff have been reviewing examples of handbooks from other states, including examples from Pennsylvania, New York, Texas, Mississippi, Maryland and California.

Community Service:

The Community Service group has pursued the cause of raising money for the Animal Rescue League of New Hampshire. The group has created a series of cardboard

boxes, decorated them to promote the raising of money for the cause, and placed them in the youth's foster or group home, with the hope that foster family members and/or group home visitors and staff will stop and make a donation. Adolescent Program staff have also taken part in the project, with the goal of having a donation box in every district office.

State and Federal Initiatives:

This group has taken on the development of a job shadowing program, which youth in care could participate in, with the goal being to explore possible career paths, and gain the confidence necessary to pursue these fields. Questions have been raised as to which youth in care would be eligible for the program, and to the nature of the program itself. For example, should the program be based on a competitive application process, similar to the Tuition Waiver Process? Should grades be a factor in who is chosen? Would the age of the youth be a factor? Is liability an issue? Youth, with the help of adolescent program staff, have presented the idea to DCYF administration, and staff and youth are currently working together in trying to answer these important questions.

*-In addition, YAB members are currently considering how best to spend the \$388.00 that was raised for the Foster Parent Association when Adolescent Program Specialist Robert Rodler and Adolescent Worker Patrick Parkinson, along with YAB President Jenny, bravely jumped into the icy waters of Boston's back bay this past February, taking part in the Polar Plunge. And yes, we are recruiting participants for next year's event.....Don't be a wimp!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, September 16th, the YAB will be meeting at **Camp Spaulding** in Concord, NH, and will be taking part in a **ROPES course**. This is an outdoor obstacle course which presents challenges to overcome, and requires teamwork. This promises to be a lot of fun!



5th Annual DCYF Teen Conference.

"Teamwork Makes the Dream Work".

August 13 2009- 8:15 to 5 pm.
UNH Durham, Memorial Building



Click on the picture to access the web page

On **October 4th, 2009**, YAB will be sending participants to the annual **NAMI walk** in Concord, NH. NAMI, which stands for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, holds this event in an effort to raise money for those suffering from Mental Illness. Please come and take part in this great cause. More information will be available at nhteenvoices.com.

ADOLESCENT PROGRAM

What is the DCYF Adolescent Program?

Are you between the ages of 14 to 21 and living in foster, group or relative care? Are things like finding a job and a career, going to a college/ career training school and eventually getting your own place important to you? The DCYF Adolescent Program can help! In addition to great opportunities like NH Teen Voices and the annual Teen Conference the Adolescent Program can connect you to the people, programs and resources that will help you:

- Find a job and discover careers that match your skills and interests
- Apply for college/training program and find ways to pay for it
- Learn independent living skills
- Locate transitional living and other post care housing options
- Access financial assistance for driver's education, security deposit etc*
- Access financial assistance and guidance after you leave care*

* (Must meet specific eligibility criteria to qualify for financial assistance)

There are two ways to get connected to the DCYF Adolescent Program. You can ask your caseworker to connect you with an Adolescent Worker or you can contact the Adolescent Worker in your area. Adolescent Worker location and contact information is below.

Berlin-Stacy Moody 752-7800 x347
Claremont-Harmony Mason 542-9544 x376
Concord-Laurie Emerson 271-6248
Conway-Nancy Moore 447-3841 x339
Keene-Jackie Waldvogel 357-3510 x783
Laconia-Karen Cohn 524-4485 x357
Littleton-Kathy Kark 444-6786 x353
Manchester-Adele Gallant 668-2330 x327
Nashua-Patrick Parkinson 883-7726 x508
Portsmouth-Shawn Blakey 433-8324
Rochester-Kathleen George 332-9120 x145
Salem-Rosy Gammad 893-9763 x357

Adolescent Program Specialist -Robert Rodler 271-4706

"ANGELA'S ADVICE"



Hello Everyone! My name is Angela Nuzzi, I am one of the college counselors at the Center for College Planning (CCP). With the help of DCYF and all the adolescent workers, the Center for College Planning has created a special program focused on helping Foster Youth & Youth-in-Care plan for all things college!



The program, called STAR (Students Transitioning and Achieving Results) focuses on helping students make a successful transition from high school to postsecondary education. Post-secondary education, or school after high-school, can include Professional/Certificate programs, 2-year Community College or 4-year College.

This past year, STAR offered free workshops, college fair dinners, financial aid nights and a conference to Foster Youth and Youth-in-Care throughout the entire state. This year we hope to continue our programming and work with even more students.

To find out about upcoming STAR events, contests, workshops, scholarships, admissions and financial aid information go to our website at www.NHHEAF.org/STAR.asp. If you click on the STAR logo you will find an easy to read calendar that you can print.

Be on alert, STAR has two great events coming this September- College Fair Dinner Events at both UNH in Durham and Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester. Keep checking the website or contact me personally at star@nhheaf.org for dates and times!

Summer Contest Alert!!!

HEY! High School Juniors and Seniors, would like to write for our BLOG?

- Do you think about going to college?
- Do you like talking, texting or e-mailing your friends sharing everything about your day?
- Do you like giving advice to your friends?

Then show us your SKILLS and win a cash prize and a year-long internship as a writer for www.JoeCollegeBlog.com

How To Enter:

1. Write a Blog/journal entry on the following topic:
Why do I want to go to college?

HINT: the goal of www.JoeCollegeBlog.com is to offer advice and let students know they are not alone in the college search process.

2. E-mail your Blog to **STAR@nhheaf.org** - include your name, age and grade in school

Deadline:

All entries must be received by **09/01/09**. A winner will be picked by 09/15/09

