

True Colors Alliance creates anti-bullying campaign and videos



UNC's LGBTQ youth advocacy group, the True Colors Alliance, recently took part in a local anti-bullying campaign spearheaded by the NEPA Rainbow Alliance. Seven members of the youth group were filmed both as a group and individually to tell personal stories

about why they choose to support these causes and offer hope for things to get better. The "It Gets Better" project has been recognized nationwide and its mission is to show LGBTQ youth what other peoples lives are like who are openly gay and offer messages of hope for what the future may hold. To learn more about the project, go to itgetsbetter.org.

The youth who participated will join with other local community members and groups for one large video sponsored by the NEPA Rainbow Alliance that will publically launch sometime in March 2012. In addition, as part of a grant through Advocates for Youth, the True Colors Alliance are currently in the process of professionally creating two of their very own PSAs.

Cedar500, Hitchner and other UNCDC project updates

The first steps in the Cedar Avenue Housing Revitalization Initiative have been completed with the opening of the Willow Apartments. Located at the corner of Willow Street and Cedar Avenue in South Scranton, the Willow Apartments are affordable housing for four working families. Construction on the remainder of this project in the 600 block of Cedar Avenue is expected to begin in the spring.

UNCDC is also excited about the progress of construction at the Hitchner Apartments. Renovations are progressing at the site in West Pittston, which is expected to be completed by October of this year. Once complete, the Hitchner Apartments will provide much needed housing for families in this Luzerne County community that was hard hit by the recent flooding.



All questions regarding this publication should be referred to Allison Woody, Communications Coordinator, at awoody@unc-nepa.org. If you wish to no longer receive this newsletter, please contact Bob O'Brien at (570) 346-0759.

United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern PA
425 Alder Street Scranton, PA 18505

UNC NEWS

Newsletter of United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania



Winter
2012

Volume 16 Issue 1

Thanksgiving program serves over 1500 local families

United Neighborhood Centers' 32nd Annual Thanksgiving Feed-a-Friend Food Basket Program served over 1500 families this year, distributing a holiday meal full of all the trimmings for those most in need this past holiday. About 250 volunteers came together with UNC staff at St. John Neumann Church in Scranton on November 22 and helped to stuff, hand out and, in some cases, even deliver food baskets to registered families throughout Lackawanna County.

Volunteers came from such organizations as Bank of America, Old Forge High School, McCann School of Business, Northeast Intermediate and many more. UNC also has helping groups that sponsor a number of families and personally deliver them to the client's home. Some of these helping groups included Marywood University, the University of Scranton and Scranton Preparatory School.

If you would like to see a full slideshow of pictures from the day's events, please go to UNC's Flickr page which can be accessed through our website.



Students from Valley View High School volunteered their time to help UNC pack and distribute food baskets to those most in need as part of our Thanksgiving Feed-a-Friend program.

UNC named "Non-profit of the Year"

UNC recently won the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce's "Non-profit of the Year" award at their annual SAGE Gala held at the Mellow Theater. UNC was recognized for, among many things, revitalization work in South Scranton, a continued vast array of community programs and the decision to merge with SCOLA.

Christmas Toy Store provides community gifts



Over 2000 toys were donated to United Neighborhood Centers through our partnership with Toys for Tots, as well as through community members and organizations. The gym at the Progressive Center was filled for our annual Toy Store.

United Neighborhood Centers held their annual Christmas Toy Store giveaway to help families put presents underneath the tree for their children during these tough economic times.

On December 20 presents were distributed throughout the Carbondale region and on December 21 families who participate in Project Hope and our Childcare programs were invited to receive a toy at the Progressive Center. Parents were also treated to a slideshow of their children at 2011 Project Hope Summer Camp. Lastly, the general public were invited to receive toys and stocking stuffers on December 22.

Thanks in part from community donations and a delivery from Toys For Tots, UNC helped families in need this holiday season by distributing over 2000 toys.

Elm Street Project creates South Side Business Alliance



UNC's Elm Street Revitalization Project recently began their newest initiative, the South Side Business Alliance (SSBA). The SSBA will support the development of early-stage and growing businesses located in South Scranton through activities connecting innovators,

entrepreneurs and leaders with one another, as well as through financial services and training support. The SSBA will partner with the University of Scranton's Small Business Development Center to offer educational training and assistance.

Membership in the SSBA is free for any business located in South Scranton. UNC recently hosted two meetings where interest was wide-spread among many different types of businesses such as clothing boutiques, auto shops and childcare centers. Funding support for this initiative is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation.

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Scranton, PA
Permit No. 328

UNC NEWS

Letter From the Executive Director

These are difficult times to say the least. Federal and State budget cuts continue to strain our ability to provide programs and services to the most vulnerable people in our community. Families who have fallen on difficult times due to loss of employment can no longer count on a social safety net, which has been in place for decades, to help them maintain some sense of stability until their circumstances change. Children who are living in difficult situations: foster care, dysfunctional families or just facing the difficult teen years can no longer assume that community agencies will be there to lend a helping hand to assist in homework or tutoring or just to provide a safe place away from the dangers of the streets and the challenges of peer groups moving in the wrong direction.

As you can see in this newsletter, UNC continues to provide a comprehensive array of services to help families, children and senior citizens during times of crisis as well as provide programs and services to help them attain self sufficiency and independence. At the current rate of budget cuts, especially at the state level (the third cut in twelve months was just announced) it is unknown how much longer agencies such as UNC can hold on.

UNC is fortunate to have a generous and broad base of support in our community, yet this is not enough to support the current breadth of services. What is needed is a change in the philosophy of the state and federal government, a philosophy that one sector of society must be protected at all costs and mega corporations with healthy bottom lines cannot afford to contribute their fair share. A balanced approach must preserve the safety net while providing the incentives for the growth of a healthy business community. Only this will lead to a balanced recovery. The current path is leading toward disaster for a significant portion of society, a disaster that will take a generation to repair. This is not the vision of a nation that provides opportunity for all while protecting those who cannot care for themselves that I believe you and I share. I hope you will join me in encouraging our government officials, both state and federal, to adopt a philosophy of opportunity for all citizens regardless of their station in life.



Michael J. Hanley

UNC hosts new Fall Family Festival

On Columbus Day, UNC hosted their first annual "Fall Family Festival" which served as the kick-off to our newest program— Family Learning. Children from the neighborhood and our three childcare centers spent the afternoon creating arts & crafts, dancing, playing in the bounce house and learning about literacy. The Albright Memorial Library, one of UNC's partners in the program, also brought the BookMobile and handed out free books to kids.



New board member welcomed

The Governance Committee of the Board of Directors of UNC recently appointed and welcomed a new board member for 2012. Jane Oppenheim is a native of Scranton and is a well-known and respected community leader, as well as a former member of the Board of Directors for SCOLA.



Around the Agency

UNC took part this past holiday season in the annual "Festival of Trees" fundraiser held at the Electric City Trolley Museum to benefit Toys for Tots. The tree created by our employees was voted as the 2012 People's Choice Award winner at the event's reception.



The Older Adults department of UNC is making plans to honor senior center volunteers during Volunteer Week to be held April 16-20 at each of our four locations- Mid Valley, Carbondale, West Side and South Side. In addition, volunteers will be recognized and celebrated at a dinner on April 15.

UNC celebrated and took part in the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 16 held throughout the city of Scranton. Children from our Progressive and Bellevue Childcare Centers were led in a series of activities from our Leaders in Training program. All of the activities focused on diversity and equality and included a march to downtown. Additionally, Mae Washington, longtime UNC employee, was recognized by the Greater Scranton MLK Commission as the 2012 Leader of the Year.



United Neighborhood Centers recently received two grants. The TJX Foundation, an off-shoot of the company T.J. Maxx, donated support to our Leaders in Training program. In addition, the McGowan Charitable Trust became a partner with the Language Partnership initiative, helping UNC expand class offerings to four days a week.

The Elm Street Revitalization Project recently hosted their annual Ethnic Carol Sing. Groups such as Shiloh Baptist Church, La Voce and even UNC senior center members took part in the singing held at Hickory Presbyterian Church. Elm Street members also hosted a youth community design contest about the future vision of South Side. Sahara Wharton, a 7th grade student at DePaul School, was the winner.



UNC was the host of two neighborhood information forums attended by community members looking to make Lackawanna County a safer place. First, the Pennsylvania Downtown Center came to South Scranton to talk about how to begin a proper neighborhood watch. Second, Edward Brennan, an attorney from Pottsville, Pa., presented a seminar on the recently enacted "Blighted and Abandoned Property Conservatorship Law". This law allows a court-appointed third party, such as a non-profit, to take control of a blighted property.



UNC's Spotlight Youth Theater recently completed their second performance of the year by hosting two showings of the "Jungle Book" at the West Side Senior Center on December 10 and 11. Over 30 community youth were involved in the production.



Members from a freshmen design class at Marywood University recently designed and created over 70 hand-made wooden toys that were donated to UNC's three childcare centers.



Old Forge H.S. student Miguel Rosa used his senior project to help collect food for Angel's Attic. Over 80 kids from NEIU-19 participated in the Victory Village Sports Challenge at the Riverfront Sports Complex.



Members of Parker Hill Community Church in Dickson City, along with board member Ken Knelly, recently hosted another food drive to benefit Angel's Attic. The group brought over 27 barrels of food.



Rose Terranella, a member of the West Side Senior Center, recently celebrated her 100th birthday with UNC and Mayor Chris Doherty.



UNC's Progressive Childcare Center spent the day at the St. Francis Soup Kitchen stocking the food pantry, interacting with clients and transporting clothing to the Blue House shelter.

UNC NEWS, Winter 2012

Donating to United Neighborhood Centers is a wonderful way to remember or honor a friend or family member. A card will be sent to the recipient or family acknowledging your donation and you will receive a letter from UNC acknowledging your gift. Donations can be made online at uncnepa.org, over the phone with a credit card, or by check to UNC, 425 Alder Street, Scranton, PA 18505.

In Memory of Francis P. Hanley

Anonymous
Ms. Dawn Brennan
Ms. Maureen Bucci
Ms. Elizabeth A Burns
Mr. Joseph A Caputo
Ms. Wendy Cleland- Hamnett
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Condron
Ms. Barbara Cunningham
Mr. Ralph Curtis
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis and Cynthia Donahue
Mr. F.J. and Mrs. Elaine Donahue
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald and Judith Donahue
Mr. and Mrs. Charles and Nancy Donlin
Dr. Christopher J and Mrs. Nancy S Dressel
Mr. Paul F and Mrs. Rosemarie C Fahey
Ms. Priscilla Flattery
Ms. Margaret M Gerrity
Mr. and Mrs. Francis and Marianne Gilmartin
Mr. and Mrs. John and Catherine Greybosh
Mr. Rob Grimm
Mr. and Mrs. David Hawk
Ms. Eleanore Huddy

Ms. Margaret Kovacic
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph and Peggy Miller
Mr. Robert and Mrs. Glenda O'Brien
Ms. Gertrude O'Donnell
Ms. Marlene Parks
Prysm, Inc
Mrs. Donna Veater

In Memory of Tanya Edwards

Mrs. Marlene Edwards

In Memory of Irene Cianfichi

Joy Greenwald

In Memory of Edward Novick

Joy Greenwald

In Memory of Yolanda Saita

Mary Ann Tolerico

In Honor of Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Ledoux

Jo Ann Fremiotti

Leaving a Legacy Can Make a Difference

You can create a fund and leave a legacy in remembrance of a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion with a legacy gift through the establishment of a fund or by designating UNC as a beneficiary of your will, trust, insurance or retirement plan. You can also create a legacy donation through an IRA Charitable Roll-over. Donating once is a great help—leaving a legacy makes a significant impact on UNC's ability to continue its mission to work together with neighbors to provide services and create opportunities which empower individuals and build strong interdependent communities. For more information, contact Nancy Dressel or speak with your financial planner.

Cut along dotted line and return to UNC.

The duty of helping one's self in the highest sense involves the helping of one's neighbors.

Samuel Smiles

*What do I owe to my times, to my country, to my neighbors, to my friends?
Such are the questions which a virtuous man ought often to ask himself.*

Johann Kaspar Lavater

When strangers start acting like neighbors... communities are reinvigorated.

Ralph Nader

Your donations support many different programs at United Neighborhood Centers. One of the programs that relies on your support is our camp, Project Hope. Each year over 500 low-income children get to enjoy 5 weeks of fun at Camp St. Andrew. Inner city kids get to experience all the outdoors has to offer from canoeing to rock climbing to swimming to typical summer sports. In addition to all the great outdoor activities, children also have educational instruction time. Last summer, Project Hope provided a camp experience to a very special little boy:

In the early spring of 2011, UNC's Director of Childcare received a phone call from a mother who was wondering if we accepted children with special medical needs into Project Hope Summer Day Camp. She explained that she lived in one of the local housing developments and had an eight year old son who was awaiting a kidney transplant. He had a catheter which needed to be cleaned several times a day and a bag that would need to be emptied. She told us he was quite self-sufficient at the process but would just need to be reminded by a staff person.

She had contacted several programs for summer activities, but none was willing to accept the responsibility. She was told that we had never had anyone with his particular medical need at camp, but we would gladly work with her to see if we could accommodate his special need. UNC put her in contact with our camp nurse and she addressed his particular needs. The little boy attended camp and went swimming and boating, did arts and crafts, played with his friends, and even attended the overnight sleepover. He now has a new kidney and is eagerly anticipating going to camp once again this year.



You can only imagine what it would be like to be a mother to a child like that and have limited options. Your generosity makes not only great summer experiences possible for local children, but lots of great experiences year round. Our youth programs provide a wealth of physical, academic, and cultural opportunities. Thanks to those who choose to give to United Neighborhood Centers, not only are lives being enriched, but children are given hope. Thank you to our donors for inspiring and changing the lives of our local youth!

FOOD PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED—



Although our food pantry is well-stocked with canned goods, we are in desperate need of other items. The following food items can be dropped off at the Community Services Building on 410 Olive Street in Scranton: macaroni & cheese, spaghetti, tomato sauce, peanut butter, jelly, tuna fish, rice, soup, spam, stew, chili, crackers, and small boxes of powdered milk.

Cut along dotted line and return to UNC.

I WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

NAME: _____
 PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 DONATION AMOUNT: \$ _____
 (Check payable to UNC, 425 Alder St., Scranton, PA 18505 or credit card.)
 Credit Card: MC VISA Discover Card
 # _____ Exp. ___/___/___

I would like my donation to benefit:

- General Support Youth Programs Crisis Programs
 Family Programs Adult Literacy Programs Senior Center Programs