

Young Professionals Auxilliary Board formed at UNC

On Tuesday, May 15, the newly formed Young Professionals Auxiliary Board (YPAB) held a wine and cheese meet and greet to learn more about United Neighborhood Centers. The YPAB will assist UNC in outreach to a younger demographic as well as support for fundraising and special events. An enthusiastic group of young adults aged from 21 to 40 heard from UNC Board President, Kevin Rogers, Executive Director Mike Hanley, and other staff about the agency and expectations. Also in attendance were board members Betty Burns, Lou Shapiro, Peter Cupple, Dan Ginsburg, Carmen Ofelia, and Ken Knelly (UNC board liaison to the new board). The new group members are: Alysia Scazafabo, Carolyn Tugend, Carrie Hodovanec, Dan LaMagna, Eric Weinberg, Eric Rogan, Gerard Hetman, Greg Evans, Jaime Weinschenk, Jay Weinschenk, Jeffrey Eckenrode, Joe Gluba, Jonathan Kalasinski, Jude McDonough, Julie Brakeva-Phillips, Lauren Greenwood, Michael Muller, Patrick Scanlon, Paul Batyko, Ryan Alpert, Ruth Koelewyn, Sarah Fortunato, Tim McLain, Jr., and Val Kiser. The next item on the agenda for the new group is a tour of the UNC facilities to help give them a broader perspective of the agency.

Annual Mardi Gras Celebration expands in 12th year

The Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel was transformed into New Orleans on February 17 as UNC celebrated our 12th Annual Mardi Gras Celebration. The event was presented by PNC Bank, Bank of America and Sanofi-Pasteur, and benefited UNC's emergency food and clothing bank Angel's Attic. The event featured fortune tellers, entertainment by Doug Smith's Dixieland All-Stars and plenty of gaming tables, such as blackjack and poker, were available that guests could play to earn chips for a chance at the grand prize of a 3 day, 2 night vacation to Cove Haven Entertainment Resorts. Sharla McBride of WNEP, a sports anchor, also hosted the money wheel all night. The grand prize was won by Dr. Peter Cupple. A silent auction and basket raffle were also held at the end of the night. Over 200 people attended the Mardi Gras festivities this year.



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.

UNC NEWS

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Youth photography participants get spotlighted

Shutterbugs, UNC's youth photography group, have been riding high lately. Local space has been provided for their artwork displays and the students are selling their pieces. First Friday, held each month at a variety of venues downtown, features art, music and performances from local artists. Shutterbugs now has a regular display each month at the Ritz Theater. First shown in February, the group has been thrilled by seeing the reaction to their work. Students run the tour of their gallery, interacting with those viewing the prints. April Holgate, the Illumination Youth Arts coordinator at UNC, said she required her students to spend time at their displays as well as time being "inspired by others. It's great for them to hear compliments from others," she said. "They feel really empowered." Be sure to check out their work at the next First Friday. If you would like to support this work, the group is in need of any used digital cameras, camera supplies, picture frames, lighting equipment, props, backdrops, new SD cards or gift cards to buy photo supplies or for photo developing.



An example of a student's work as part of the Shutterbugs Photography program at UNC. The program currently has over 25 local middle and high school students participating.

True Colors Alliance launches anti-bullying PSAs

Over the course of the past few months, a group of 15 teens from the True Colors Alliance had been working with two local production companies to create two public service announcements based on discrimination and anti-bullying. On March 24 and 25, this group shot and filmed their creations at Abington Heights High School. A rap, written by two of the members Miranda Chemchick and Terry Thompson, was showcased through a viral video.

The PSAs were developed through the work of UNC's youth and communications departments, 25/8 Productions and Blackout Design and were funded by the national organization Advocates for Youth. The agency held a launch party for these videos, as well as the ones they created with the NEPA Rainbow Alliance's "It Gets Better" project, on May 4 at the Shamrock Radio Theater. Students also talked about their own experiences with bullying. To see the videos these teens

created, go to www.youtube.com/uncnepa.

UNC celebrates National Volunteer Week



UNC celebrated National Volunteer Appreciation Week during April 15-22. Over 120 older adult volunteers throughout the four senior centers—Mid Valley, Carbondale, South Side and West Side—were honored for their commitment to volunteering with certificates.

State Representative Kevin Murphy presided over the ceremony at West Side. All volunteers with 50 or more hours of service were recognized at a dinner on April 15.

Additionally, SCOLA recognized their 63 volunteer tutors at a special dinner on April 18 and Community Services held a luncheon for Angel's Attic volunteers.



**JOIN UNC FOR
THE 1st ANNUAL
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UNC NEWS

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Letter From the Executive Director

Summer is almost here and the children at UNC are filled with anticipation and energy as they eagerly await the last day of school. You may have heard, funding cuts over the past few years finally took their toll at Project Hope as we prepared to cut the program from five weeks to four weeks and limit the number of children to only 350 down from 533 served last year. I am happy to report the good news that The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation has offered UNC a \$50,000 grant each year for two years, which has filled the deficit gap and has made Project Hope whole again. As I write this we are busy calling the families on the waiting list and beginning registration once again.



The summer months seem to be consumed with Project Hope, however, as you can see from this newsletter that there are many things happening throughout the agency and many partnerships formed which help support our programs including the Taco Bell Foundation, the Darden Restaurants Foundation (Red Lobster, Olive Garden and Longhorn Steakhouse), and the Cinemark Theaters to name a few. One of the most exciting things is the new Auxiliary Board that has been formed at UNC and consists of 24 young professionals who are interested in getting involved in the many and diverse programs at UNC. Their interest and enthusiasm has been inspirational. If you are interested in joining, please call Nancy Dressel at 570-346-0759.

All this is good news in difficult times and is an indication of the value our community sees in the programs we offer-- programs that have been made possible for the past 89 years because of friends like you.

Thank you.

Michael Hanley

Students aid Bellevue with playground

The Bellevue Childcare Center of UNC will soon have a new playground thanks to a group of University of Scranton students. Students competed for a Lowe's Grant and won \$2,000 for the playground, which will be built this summer. The efforts were led by student Caitlin Dolan and the University's Students in Free Enterprise group. The group of students is continuing to look for more funding to help purchase more playground equipment.



Willow Apartments welcome tenants

The Willow Apartments, the first project completed by UNC on Cedar Avenue in Scranton, welcomed its first tenants in February. The complex is now home to four families and will soon house the offices of the Elm Street Revitalization Project, as well as SCOLA.



Around the Agency

Cinemark Theaters hosted a weekend-long fundraiser for UNC that tied into the release of the popular movie, "The Hunger Games" in April. Patrons were asked to donate food items or money to raise awareness for hunger. The event collected 5 barrels of food and raised over \$750 for Angel's Attic.



PNC Bank has donated funding for UNC to continue its First-time Homebuyers' Club throughout 2012. Topics include budgeting, credit, predatory lending and more. The sessions are held multiple times during the year and are offered in both English and Spanish.

The Coalition for Aging Services of Northeastern Pennsylvania recently hosted their 13th Annual Networking Breakfast where attendees were asked to make a donation in lieu of a registration fee. The Coalition chose United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania's food bank, Angel's Attic, as the recipient of their collection. Officers of the Coalition presented the check to UNC.



UNC's Executive Director Michael Hanley was invited to attend a housing forum at the White House on April 18. Mr. Hanley joined senior Administration officials and fellow leaders from PA to discuss programs and initiatives to help struggling communities that have been hard hit by the housing crisis.

The Elm Street Revitalization Project recently announced their summer event schedule. The 3rd Annual Farmers' Market will kick-off on July 14 and continue every Saturday through October at the Scranton Iron Furnaces. A South Side community-wide Yard Sale will be held August 4. Lastly, community volunteers will sponsor art and recreational activities every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday during July and August in Connors Park.



UNC was the recent recipient of grants from two separate local restaurant chains. First, the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens generously donated funding for the agency's Leaders in Training Program. In addition, Darden Restaurants, which operates establishments such as Red Lobster, Olive Garden and Longhorn Steakhouse, funded UNC's food bank with a \$5000 donation. Also, UNC is now part of Darden Restaurant Harvest Food Program where un-used, unopened product is donated to local food banks to support community members most in need.



Over 60 student from St. Clare/St. Paul's School in Scranton joined forces with UNC during the United Way's annual "Youth Day of Caring" event to volunteer their time working with seniors, holding clean ups and yardwork.



Students from Dunmore Elementary School held a food drive for UNC that coincided with the district's 100th day of school. Over 10 barrels of food and paper products were collected from kids in K-6th grade.



UNC joined forces with agencies such as AmeriHealth, Friends of the Poor and EOTC to host a health fair at the Valley View Terrace housing development on May 22.



Students from the University of Scranton donated boxes of books to UNC's three childcare centers- Bellevue, Green Ridge and Progressive- in March.



Volunteers from Blue Cross of Northeastern PA visited the Mid Valley Senior Center to celebrate Mother's day with a special lunch and other recreational activities. All mothers were recognized.



Penn Foster hosted a fundraiser for UNC's Angel's Attic entitled "A Day Without Shoes". Employees paid to go shoeless for the day as part of a national campaign started by shoe company TOMS.