

Teen Conference a Success!

*My name is Cat and I'm 18 years young. I have been a youth in foster care for the past 15 years. I am also a member of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB). Every year, we have a Teen Conference for youth, ages 14-20, who are currently in or adopted through the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) or Division for Juvenile Justice (DJJS) care. We just had our fifth Teen Conference this past summer at which I was a speaker on the youth panel. I have attended all five Teen Conferences. I like to go because it's a lot of fun, a great learning experience and I always meet new people. **Teamwork Makes the Dream Work** was the title/theme for this year's conference, which was held on August 13, 2009, at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. There were about six different workshops to choose from to attend. Some of the workshops have been the same for the past few years, such as the application process for college and financial aid, but that's because the YAB believes that they are very important. I found these workshops very helpful.*

I plan to attend the conference next year and I look forward to renewing old friendships and establishing new ones. I am excited to attend the workshops offered and I expect the conference to be another positive experience for me.



Erin, age 17, gets advice about her future from the foster care fairy during Gorilla Theater skit.

On August 13th, the 5th annual DCYF Teen Conference was held at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. Over 100 youth attended and received information on topics such as college planning, Aftercare Services, and Job Corp. There were many speakers, including New

Teen Conference
continued on page 4

Ropes Course

In September, Youth Advisory Board Members, as well as Adolescent Program staff, took part in a ROPES course at Camp Spaulding in Concord. Child and Family Services (CFS) manage Camp Spaulding, and CFS staff guided participants through the ROPES course (Thank you CFS!) A ROPES course is a series of outdoor challenges that require teamwork and communication in order to be completed, and

Ropes
continued on page 2

In This Issue

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Teen Conference..... | p. 1 |
| Ropes Course..... | p.1 |
| Next YAB Meeting..... | p. 2 |
| Angela's Advice..... | p. 3 |
| Ask The State..... | p.4 |
| Current Initiatives..... | p. 5 |
| Contact Information..... | p.6 |

all were successful in completing the challenges presented. Youth who took part in this event were asked to describe their experiences. Here's what Kathleen C. wrote:

My time at the rope course was a lot of fun! I liked how we all worked together as a team.

There are things that could have gone better. People could have stayed more focused on the person who was talking. Also, individuals should have been more active. But I really like Y.A.B.

I think that the Ropes Course was a good idea. I also liked it because I love trying new things and challenging myself. Also, the support was awesome! We all worked together, which just made us stronger as a team! It made me feel really good to help people and to encourage everyone to do the ropes. Everyone did awesome! Even when people weren't doing the course, they were all helping in their own way!!!



Youth and Staff navigate one of the Low Ropes course elements

New Hampshire Teen Voices

Goal of Newsletter

This newsletter has been created in an effort to spread awareness of **New Hampshire Teen Voices**, and its monthly meeting of the Youth Advisory Board, or YAB. As a result of YAB efforts, significant outcomes have been achieved and participating youth have 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.

New Hampshire Teen Voices DCYF/DJJS Youth Advisory Board

We are a group of diversified youth from across the State of New Hampshire who are 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 New Hampshire.



Our next meeting is: Wednesday, December 16th, 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm at Dolloff Building, Governor Hugh Gallen State Office Park, Concord.



Adolescent Program

NH Department of Health and Human Services
Division for Children, Youth and Families
www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DCYF/adolescentprogram.htm
603-271-4706 or 1-800-852-3345 x 4706 (toll free in-state)
7-1-1 (NH Relay)

Department's Mission Statement

To join communities and families in providing opportunities for citizens to achieve health and independence

Nicholas A. Toumpas, Commissioner



Angela's Advice

by

Angela Nuzzi, College Counselor
The NHHEAF Network Organizations

Hi Everyone! I hope you are all having a great Fall!

This is the time of year when students are back in school and starting to think about the future. Some students know exactly what they want to do...while others aren't quite so sure. Well, either way, I recommend taking a career quiz to get some insight. Those of you who have met me know I call these 'cupcake' quizzes. I love to take quizzes in magazines to find out what type of cupcake I am (chocolate with pink icing extra sprinkles!). If you want to know what career might suit your skills and talents, why not take one of STAR's FREE quizzes at www.bridges.com. Simply e-mail me at STAR@nhheaf.org to get the code and password.



For those of you who know that a professional/trade school, 2-year college or 4-year college is in your near future, have no fear because STAR is coming to a District Office near you to help! I will be visiting District Offices this winter to help students file all their financial aid forms, start the scholarship search and talk about all the financial options available. If you are interested in meeting with me, talk to your Adolescent Worker about when I will be in your area or keep checking the STAR calendar at www.nhheaf.org/STAR.asp for dates and locations.

Thanks to everyone who participated in STAR's summer blogging contest. We have six finalists for our two paid blogging internships. Check out our blog at www.joecollegeblog.com on December 1, 2009, look on the left hand side and click on "Rising STARS" to see the first ever college blog from New Hampshire youth-in-care.

Lastly, I want to give a **SHOUT OUT** to all the students who have come to STAR college events this fall. Over 120 people have attended our events that have been held at UNH, Southern NH University and our NHHEAF offices in Concord. Many of the participants walked away with important information about college and great prizes!! So thanks for attending and I am hoping to see even more of you at upcoming STAR events. For a complete listing of all our STAR events, go to www.nhheaf.org/STAR.asp and check out the STAR calendar.



Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Deputy Commissioner Mary Ann Cooney and Director Maggie Bishop of the DHHS Division for Children, Youth and Families.

Youth also took part in icebreakers designed to facilitate communication as well as to have a little fun before informational sessions. The highlight of the day was the presentation of Gorilla Theatre, which was very well done and a big hit. Skits were presented which showed difficult circumstances youth are likely to face regarding subjects such as drug use, teen pregnancy, sexuality, and self-image. The day concluded with a Youth Panel discussion, with both current and former youth in care sharing their experiences in the child protection system. Former youth in care also spoke about their lives/experiences after DCYF placement, and gave advice to current youth in care.



Youth and staff dance to the Cupid Shuffle!

Ask the State

*“Does DCYF pay for most of college expenses for all schools in New Hampshire or just the State schools?”
Erin, age 17*

That is a great question and very timely with the college application season upon us. DCYF Aftercare Services and The Tuition Waiver for Foster and Adopted Children are two programs available for college bound youth formerly in placement through DCYF or the Division for Juvenile Justice (DJJS).

DCYF Aftercare Services is a voluntary program that assists eligible young adults in their pursuit of education, employment, housing and well being goals. Aftercare Services includes Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds that assist with “cost of attendance items” such as tuition and fees, room and board, books and child care expenses. ETV funds are available whether you are going to a state school or private college here in New Hampshire or if you are going to college in another state.

The Tuition Waiver for Foster and Adopted Children Program provides a limited number of tuition and fee waivers to eligible young adults attending a New Hampshire State school. New Hampshire State schools include the following: the University of New Hampshire, Keene State College, Plymouth State University, Granite State College and the Community Colleges formerly known as the TECHS.

Beginning January 1st 2010, you can apply for both ETV and the Tuition Waiver.

- For ETV funds you should complete a College and Career Training Assistance application available at the New Hampshire Teen Voices website: <http://www.nhteenvoices.com>.

- To obtain a Tuition Waiver for Foster and Adopted Children application you can go to the New Hampshire Postsecondary Education website at <http://www.nh.gov/postsecondary/financial/index.html>.

You can also request either application and get assistance in completing them from your CPSW, JPPO or the Adolescent Worker in your area. A complete list of Adolescent Worker contact information is **located on page 6**.

Current Initiatives

YAB members, in conjunction with Adolescent Program staff, continue to pursue initiatives designed to help youth in care, as well as provide community service for the upcoming holiday season. Here is a look at new developments.

Election of New YAB Officers

On November 18th, YAB elected new officers:

President- Katie C.

Vice President- Erin G.

Secretary-Issac W-

Activities Coordinator-Tommy M.

(Cassie R. will be assisting the Secretary and Activities Coordinator)

Education and Career Development

The Education and Career Development group continues to focus on a long-term project designed to help youth in care, as development of the YAB Youth in Care Handbook continues. Members of this group are currently reviewing examples of handbooks from other states and trying to combine various ideas to create a guide that best fits the needs of New Hampshire youth. The handbook would be provided to all youth in Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) or Division for Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS) care when they enter placement. It would be a way for youth to know what rights they have while in placement (a bill of rights for children in care), as well as a way to help them navigate through the state system.

Federal and State

This group is developing a survey for youth in care, asking youth their opinion about questions being asked during DCYF site reviews of residential facilities. The main question being asked is: "Are DCYF site reviewers asking the right questions of staff at residential facilities when these facilities/group homes are reviewed for compliance?" DCYF conducts reviews of all residential programs, to make sure youth living there are being provided what they need, and are being properly taken care of. This survey will provide DCYF with information directly from youth at these facilities, to make sure their experience in care is as good as it can be.

Community Service

The community service group is focusing on service related to the upcoming holiday season. The goal for November is to make holiday cards for those folks currently receiving mental health treatment at New Hampshire Hospital. These cards can be given to patients expressing best holiday wishes, and can also be created for patients to give to their loved ones or others in their lives. In December, the group is going to conduct food drives in all the district offices in New Hampshire, and the items collected will be donated to the New Hampshire Food Bank. These efforts will hopefully help those less fortunate over the holiday season and beyond.




Happy Holidays !

Adolescent Worker Contact Information

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