

GIVE.

ADVOCATE.

VOLUNTEER.

Council for Health Action & Promotion: Project for Teens

Thanks to the generosity of donors in the greater Mankato area, in 2008 United Way was able to add several new programs, including Project for Teens (P4T), a program of the Council for Health Action and Promotion (CHAP).

P4T is a volunteer peer education program in which high school students are trained as peer leaders and are provided with information, skills, and tools that they can use to help younger kids navigate the challenges of teen life. Over 800 students in the Mankato area schools took part in this program during the 2007-08 school year. P4T learning experiences include interactive activities to engage youth audiences (skits, role plays, small group discussion) and seek to reflect audience age, experience, and values.

Think of **WE** before me.

The Greater Mankato Diversity Council - Prejudice Reduction Workshops (PRW)

The greater Mankato area is made up of people of various ages, different cultures, varying economic levels, and so many different attributes that make us a diverse population. How do you build a community where the attitudes and actions of its people foster mutual respect for all members of the community?



Well one thing that the Greater Mankato Diversity Council does to achieve this mission is to train local community members to facilitate discussions with youth at the Mankato area schools. These discussions are known as Prejudice Reduction Workshops (PRW), and their purpose is to teach respect, and emphasize knowledge and not hurting others.

The lessons that the kids interactively experience progress from kindergarteners exploring the concepts of "same" and "different" to high schoolers dealing more directly with stereotyping, prejudice and the wide range of diversity found in the community. In the 2008-09 school year the PRW workshops will be facilitated by nearly 80 community volunteers who will have undergone 25 unpaid hours of training, and will reach nearly 9,000 students in the Mankato area schools in grades K-12.

What's the importance of taking the time to get to know someone who's different from us? The results of the PRW for 3rd graders never fail to illustrate an important lesson: Each student is given 15 minutes to "get to know" a banana they've been given. Then they tell the other students about their banana: its name, its family, what it does for a living, what its hobbies are, show the pictures they've drawn of their banana, etc. You wouldn't believe it, but after this exercise, the kids are able to pick their own banana out from a whole group of bananas. Tell them they can now eat their banana? Forget it! After getting to know the intricacies of their banana's personality, the last thing they could ever do would be to hurt their banana. Illustrating to kids in this way how important it is to take the time to get to know someone who's different from themselves makes all the difference in whether we feel indifferent or connected to someone.

And what's the lesson we all learn? It's knowing we're all in this together and when we reach out a hand to one, we influence the condition of all.

This past school year, 40 Mankato area high school students volunteered with the P4T program as Peer Leaders. This is an amazing group of young people that are very passionate about connecting with younger age peers. The following comments reflect the positive experience and impact P4T has on the students that volunteer to serve as P4T Peer Leaders. When asked "What have you enjoyed most about being involved with P4T?", Peer Leaders have shared:

"Holy cow! Having an influence on kids! You are living high school right now - the kids really look up to you. It makes you want to try harder to make a good impression."

"Making these younger kids feel more confident and that they aren't alone."

"I really liked working with the kids and being a role model for them. Now they know who I am so next year they won't be as scared and have at least some familiar and friendly faces (in high school)."

"I think that being a part of P4T not only benefits the kids we talk to but also us."

Providing opportunities like these for our youth to connect not only empowers the youth

Looking for Volunteer Opportunities?

Well United Way's partner agencies are looking for you, too! Our United Way website now features Volunteer Solutions, a Search Engine where you can link up with LOCAL volunteer opportunities. You can search by **date**, by **specific agency**, or by **area of interest**.

Interested in being a Group Mentor at the YMCA? Or using your green thumb to beautify community gardens with RSVP? Or applying your marketing savvy to ARC's publications? You can search these opportunities and more!

Simply go to our website, www.mankatounitedway.org, then click on the drop-down box by Volunteer - Give Your Time, and select **Community Volunteer Opportunities** to begin your search.

Upcoming VINE events at the Summit Center

Some informational sessions are coming up at the Summit Center (518 S. 5th St. Mankato) this week. Please call the Summit Center, 345-5262, to register.

Just for Boomers! Tonight (Monday, July 21) from 5:30-7:30 PM the film, "Caring for your Parents," will be shown which draws attention to today's struggle to keep parents at home, tensions between siblings, and the complexity of shifting caregiver roles. The film is immediately followed by "A Conversation about Caring," a 30 minute panel discussion led by medical correspondent Dr. Art Ulene. There is no charge for the program. A catered supper will be available for \$7.

Making Choices about Living Arrangements - On Wednesday, July 23 from 9:30-11:30 AM, VINE's professional staff will help participants explore the continuum of living arrangements available to older adults, evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of the various choices available, and help older individuals and their families to become savvy consumers! Cost is \$5.

Update: Ready! for Kindergarten

The pilot classes for United Way's 2008 Initiative, Ready! for Kindergarten took place this spring at Jefferson and Franklin schools, Carlson Craft, and the BEC Library. 80 families attended on behalf of 94 children.



It says a lot about the value of the program that all of the families who participated said they wished to come again and would recommend it to their friends. In fact, in order to accommodate all of the families who want to return, and to allow additional families to participate, two additional classes are being added to the 2nd series of classes which will take place in October.

Parents and caregivers who participated this spring were asked to evaluate the classes based on the following criteria: Course Content, Instructor, and Overall. The pilot program received an overall score of 4.5 on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest).

with more confidence, but builds a stronger community. It takes everyone in the community working together to create a brighter future.

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

Been to our Website lately?
www.mankatounitedway.org

If you or someone you know is interested in signing up for this fall's classes, some limited space is available. Please contact Kelley Olson for more information, 388-5045 or kolson1@isd77.k12.mn.us.

2009 Campaign Kickoff Event

Mark your calendars!

Greater Mankato Area United Way's 2009 Campaign Kickoff will be held on **Friday, Sept. 12th** from **8-9am** at the **Alltel Center**.

Already have a **LIVE UNITED T-Shirt**?
Be sure to wear it to Kickoff!



WE ARE ALL PEOPLE. CONNECTED, INTERDEPENDENT, UNITED.

Greater Mankato Area United Way, 101 N. 2nd St #100, Mankato, MN 56001
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