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empowering women
ywca

St. Paul

For Friends, Members and the Greater St. Paul Community

Winter 2010-2011

education matters

Families Hit the Books to Break the Cycle of Poverty



Education is a family affair. Both Elhadj and his mother, Aissata are attending college. Elhadj is a freshman at Normandale Community College and Aissata is currently attending Rasmussen College.

This fall the Transitional Housing Program (THP) celebrated an important accomplishment. Three families enrolled in the program had teens heading off to college! The new freshmen were enrolled at Normandale Community College, Moorhead State University and the University of Minnesota.

Why is it such a big milestone? “Homelessness often disrupts education,” explains Jana Curiel, Housing & Supportive Services Manager. “Kids who have experienced homelessness are more likely to drop out of school or have to repeat a grade.” While enrolled in THP, families receive supportive services to help strengthen academic achievement. Title One tutors are on-site twice a week and youth also are eligible to participate in YW Reads and Project Able at the YWCA.

However, it’s not just the kids who are hitting the books. Currently, 21 moms are attending school or training programs. “They really run the gamut,” says Curiel. “We have moms doing everything from working to complete their GED to pursuing their nursing degree from St. Kate’s University.” If women need additional academic supports to reach their goals, they work with case managers to identify community resources to meet their needs. They can also access the Title One tutoring offered onsite for math and language arts.

Congratulations to all the THP families who are working hard to invest in themselves and their futures. It’s a privilege to play a small role in helping you to make such great strides!

THP creates a path out of homelessness for women and their children. Families spend up to 24 months building skills and stabilizing their lives while living in one of three YWCA THP sites. For more information and a virtual tour, please visit ywcaofstpaul.org/thp.html.

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within our walls

A Glimpse at Programming and Happenings



Students from IMPACT had the chance to participate in a college visit to Winona State University organized by the LEAP Forward Collaborative. As luck would have it, one of their panelists was DeShawn Woods, a former IMPACT participant!



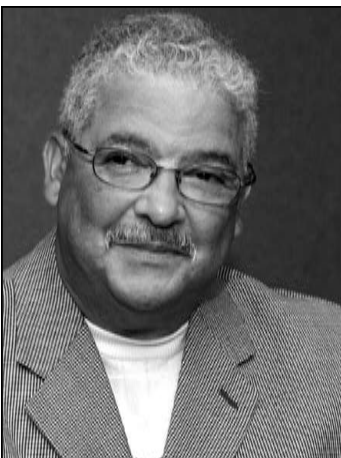
YWCA St. Paul helped organize the LEAP Forward Collaborative's Back to School Event where families enjoyed free entertainment, a resource fair, meal and even backpacks stocked with school supplies. Nearly 500 backpacks were distributed! Special thanks to World Vision, Timberwolves and Project Voice for making the event possible!



Mayor Chris Coleman (right) and YWCA's Director of Workforce Development, Tom Ellis were pleased to welcome more than 100 people to help celebrate the launch of YW Works at the Open House held on October 30.

giving thanks

Generous Support Helps Make Dreams a Reality



Executive Director, William L. Collins, Jr.

The phone lines at the YWCA were extra busy on October 19 as our Board of Directors took to the phones. No, it wasn't a crisis or a pledge drive, we were simply calling to say, "thank you." Although we can't possibly call every person who makes a difference for the women, children and families we serve in one night — every year we make a list and set out to thank as many as possible.

If you didn't receive a call this year or elected not to pick up, I just want to take the opportunity to thank you for your support. Whether you donated your time, holiday gifts for families in need, warm winter clothing or made

a financial contribution to help cover program expenses — you made a profound difference. Thanks to people like you, women, children and families made life-changing strides every day.

You made it possible for families to get their children out of foster care, for young people to graduate from high school and for homeless families to have a place to call home. Although you may never meet the people who you help, I can tell you they are touched and grateful for your support. In the words of one participant, "Thank you for your generosity, I never dreamed that someone who had never met us, could care so much for me and my son."

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the YWCA St. Paul, thank you for reaching out to the families we serve. With your help, we helped more than 1,274 people to change their lives for the better during 2009. Together, I know that great things are possible.

Happy Holidays to you and yours,

wrapping up holiday cheer

Celebrate the Season at the Holiday Wrapping Party



Attendees at the 2009 Holiday Wrapping Party.

The mistletoe's been hung. The presents are here. Please join us in wrapping the bounty this year! Join us Saturday, December 11 as we gather to celebrate the season and wrap holiday gifts for homeless women, children and families.

For weeks, the "elves" have been busily working to make holiday wishes come true. Generous members, donors and friends have provided holiday gifts and financial support to ensure there is something for everyone currently enrolled in YWCA Housing & Supportive Services programs.

As the holidays grow near, we need both your nimble fingers and holiday cheer to help us celebrate our community and wrap gifts for more than 100 individuals. "Every year, the community really reaches out to the families in need," says Kelly Flodin, Community and Donor Relations Specialist. "The wrapping party is a fun way to celebrate. We have refreshments, holiday music and all the wrapping supplies — the only thing you need to bring is yourself. Please mark your calendars and RSVP today!"

The Holiday Wrapping Party will be held at 375 Selby Avenue from 10 am – noon on Saturday, December 11. To RSVP, please call Kelly Flodin at (651) 265-0722 or email kflodin@ywcaofstpaul.org.

Special thanks to Ecolab for supporting holiday activities at the YWCA St. Paul and making the Holiday Wrapping Party possible.

threesixty journalism

Helping Youth Tell the Stories of Their Lives

Over the next several weeks, youth from the YWCA's Youth Achievers Program (YAP) and IMPACT Program will be working with ThreeSixty Journalism — a youth journalism program based at the University of St. Thomas. Working with local journalist, Ruben Rosario, youth are learning fundamentals like: reporting, researching and writing articles; following current affairs; and evaluating the media's influence on the world around them.

Youth are enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn from an accomplished and respected reporter. "I like how real Ruben is," explained Andre, a participant in the YAP. "He talks about things that are interesting to us and that are happening in our community."

Following breaking news is a new experience for many participants. Recent indictments have spawned many lively discussions, as stories about violence, drugs and gangs were exposed very close to home. In addition to developing their reading, writing and researching skills, youth are practicing active citizenship and learning about career opportunities in journalism and communication.

"It's a great opportunity for our young people," explains Christina McCoy, Director of Youth Development. They get a chance to have their voices heard and also to be published."

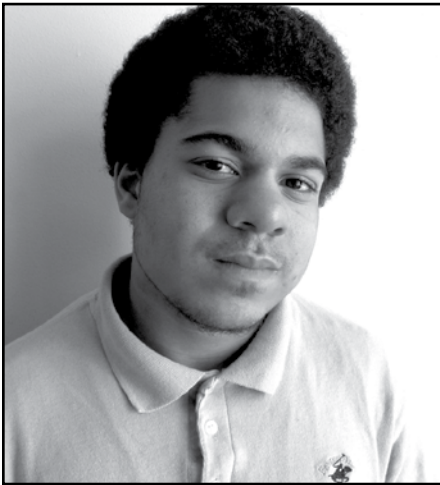
ThreeSixty Journalism is a youth journalism program based at the University of St. Thomas. To learn more, please visit threesixtyjournalism.org.



Journalist Ruben Rosario helps youth to build skills and explore community issues.

celebrating success

A New Start and a Bright Future



De'Elante is learning your past doesn't have to determine your future.

At the YWCA, DeElante found a new start and a chance at a brighter future. At 16, he struggled with school, had the tendency to make poor choices and was hanging out with the “wrong” crowd. He got to know IMPACT staff while he was participating in the Ramsey County Evening Learning Center (ELC) for youth on probation.

Upon successful completion of ELC services, DeElante began attending IMPACT’s Life Skills and Career Investments programming where he soon emerged as a natural leader. When he learned of an opportunity for summer employment at the YWCA, he eagerly applied for a position. He was candid about the choices he had made and the struggles he had encountered, and hoped that through his work he could help youth to follow a different path.

Based on his strong application, interview and references, DeElante was offered a position working as a Program Aide with the 8-10 year-old boys in the Youth Achievers Program (YAP). As the summer progressed, he became an important part of the team and enthusiastically took on additional responsibilities. Whether providing academic enrichment, leading activities on the playground or pitching in wherever he was needed — DeElante always urged the youth he worked with to make good choices and to take their education and friendships seriously.

Today DeElante continues to attend IMPACT, where he participates in College Club. He also serves as an ambassador for the program by sharing his experiences with potential enrollees. He reports good attendance and performance at school, and is looking forward to the opportunity to attend college.

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This newsletter is a publication of the YWCA St. Paul. For more information on YWCA programs and services, please call (651) 222-3741 or check out our web site at ywcaofstpaul.org.

This document is available in alternative formats.



YWCA St. Paul is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

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