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Builds academic and social success with kid-friendly, outcome-focused programs.
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weaving a safety net for our community's youth

THE future is NOW



Frederick Alliance For Youth

**VOLUME 2
SPRING
2010**

Reading well is a key to success

Reading well is a key to success—in school, and in life. Thanks to a generous grant from Verizon and the Comcast Foundation, youth at the Frederick Alliance for Youth's Club Explore program have the chance to improve their reading skills through an innovative new program called Reading Plus®.

In partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Frederick County, the Alliance is able to provide this computer-based reading improvement program for Club Explore's young participants 3 times per week. Led by Boys and Girls Club staff member Sandra Dau, Reading Plus® teaches and reinforces key skills in struggling readers such as making inferences, predicting outcomes, drawing conclusions and recalling details.

According to Program Director Mimi Zee-Six, Reading Plus® has a proven track record of increasing young readers' comprehension and vocabulary, as well as improving standardized test scores.

"A recent study out of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) states that 95 percent of poor readers can be brought up to grade level if they receive effective help early. And the earlier the intervention, the better. The Reading Plus® approach fits that bill—plus it's something our kids really look forward to and enjoy."



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“People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses or the problems of modern society.”

—Vince Lombardi

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LEADING THE WAY

“My father was a carpenter, and he used to tell me when I was younger ‘you can’t do a job without the right tools.’ That took years for me to understand, but that’s what our work with the Frederick Alliance for Youth is all about. We are attempting to equip these families with the tools they need to be successful, tools to improve their lives and to change the entire community. We are not trying to provide temporary support here. We are reaching for long term change that trickles throughout the community.”

The staff and volunteers of the Frederick Alliance for youth are dynamic community leaders who have been hand-picked to make the organization’s vision for our community a reality.

Q Tell me about your experience with volunteering in general.

A I was fortunate to be raised by very generous people, and I think that’s where I first witnessed what volunteering was all about. The volunteering my parents did wasn’t highly visible stuff—they would just do things that people needed to be done, quietly and behind the scenes—that’s the kind of people they are.

Much of my involvement with youth has been on the baseball field where I have coached for the

past ten years. I think working with kids in a sports setting is a great opportunity to provide valuable life lessons that can stick with young men and women through adulthood—there’s a lot to be learned on a ball field in two hours.

I’ve volunteered with the United Way of Frederick County, and the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, where I have been matched with two young men for the past 13 years.

The relationships these young men and I have built is a very important part of my life. I don’t even think of it as “volunteering.” I would just say that there is no more rewarding experience than having a young person tell you that your time and input made a difference in their life.

Q How did you get involved with the Frederick Alliance for Youth?

A I got involved because someone asked me if I could help. When I know a need exists, if I can help in any way, I feel it is my responsibility to do so.

Q What outcomes would you like to see as a result of the Alliance’s efforts?

A The obvious outcomes, of course, are less crime, higher attendance in school, higher test scores and grades, and stronger families. But I think our vision is even bigger than that: we want these children and their families to have a place they can go where there are people they can turn to for guidance and hope, where they can go for direction and advice, not a hand-out. Where they know that someone believes in them, and is willing to help them improve the quality of their lives.

Q If you could instill one quality in our youth, what would it be? Why?

A You said quality so it would be an easy answer: character, or in other words, doing the right thing when nobody is looking. It’s that simple.

More Fun at Our Club Explore!

I ♥ Art!

Part of a well rounded life is exposure to the arts. In fact, research points to a strong correlation between involvement in the arts and achievement in the classroom.



That's why the staff at the Alliance was excited to offer our youth the opportunity to explore the power of art through a new activity called Young Rembrandts[®]. Funded through a grant from the Community Foundation, Young Rembrandts[®] is a weekly class that teaches basic drawing skills, art techniques and vocabulary.

"Art is powerful," says Alliance staff member Kathy Harding. "Sometimes, children who struggle in other areas really excel in art. Offering a program like Young Rembrandts[®] helps identify those kids so they can be encouraged to build on their talents, and grow in confidence and self esteem."

Banner School Opens Karate Program to Club Explore

There's a good reason why so many youth are involved in karate. Much more than just "self defense," the mind-body discipline of karate is an important practice in concentration, leadership, and self-restraint. So when Banner School offered to make room for five kids from Club Explore in their after-school karate program, the line formed fast!

"Our kids love going there," says Alliance staff member Cinthia Raez, who transports and accompanies the Club Explorers to Banner twice weekly. "The instruction they receive is fun for them, but it is also very structured—so it's a very stabilizing influence on them. We're seeing kids improve in the areas of focus and concentration—and confidence."



"Resilience involves the ability to solve problems by developing strengths and overcoming difficulties...at-risk children in particular need problem-solving skills in order to level the playing field and allow them to fully develop all of their intelligence."

—Brendtro & Larson, *The Resilience Revolution*



explore
discover
grow

Childhood should be a time of exploration and self-discovery. To learn about their strengths and capabilities, young people need exposure to a wide array of activities. At Club Explore, the staff works together to ensure that each child has a chance to participate in things that will encourage growth and development in 7 categories:

1 Character Building & Leadership

2 Education

3 Health & Life Skills

4 Creative Arts

5 Sports, Fitness & Recreation

6 Technology & Media

7 Cultural Integration

focused solutions can produce **big** results



At the Frederick Alliance for Youth, collaboration is key. When there are existing programs and services for youth that share our vision already in place, we look for ways to work together. Our goal is to weave a tighter safety net around our community's children by focusing on the three main areas of their lives: schools, homes and neighborhoods.

Schools



Helping our youth achieve academic success is one of our most important goals. Our staff works closely with the teachers of our youth to gather information on daily homework assignments to be completed. One hundred percent of our youngsters take part in our closely-supervised, after-school Homework Club, as well as tutoring and enrichment activities that build on what is being taught in school.

Because we are open every day after school and through the summer, the goals our staff sets for each of our Club Explore kids can be addressed and tracked year-round.

Homes



Because a child's success starts at home and grows from there, our staff also reaches out to the adults in their lives through a family mentoring program. Our staff works with the entire family to help them address challenges that could stand in the way of them realizing their full potential. Some of the areas our staff helps families with include:

- Helping to foster an open and effective relationship between school and home.
- Providing communication assistance to those for whom English is a second language.
- Identifying specific community resources and helping to navigate them.

Our goal is to give families the tools they need to support themselves and each other.

Neighborhoods



To encourage a healthy sense of community in the Hillcrest and Waverly neighborhoods, the Frederick Alliance for Youth staff plans activities that engage the entire family. We coordinate frequent Family Nights where our families can share information and begin to provide support to one another. We also encourage parental involvement on our field trips, during which our participants' families can interact and get to know one another.

Visits from our local police through the Police Activities League (PAL) are helping to foster stronger, friendlier relationships between our youngsters, their families and law enforcement.

Goals of the Frederick Alliance for Youth

1

Help children achieve maximum academic success

2

Build stronger neighborhoods

3

Give families the tools to support themselves & each other

4

Reduce Juvenile Crime

IN THEIR WORDS

“We felt shy when we first got here,” says Emily, the more outgoing of the two. “I didn’t know if I wanted to stay, but the teachers made me feel good really fast. Now, I come here every day and all through the summer. I don’t ever want to miss a day.”

“Every day we get help with our homework,” ventures Gina quietly. “And after we’re finished, we do something fun. My favorite thing was when a lady came and showed us how to make pottery.”

While the twins focus on how much fun they have at Club

Explore, older brother Eric is more introspective.

“My favorite subject in school is history, so I loved going to the Smithsonian last year. I don’t know if I would have ever gotten there without Club Explore. If there’s homework I don’t understand, the people here help me figure it out. My grades are getting better, and that makes me feel more proud. I’ve gotten to take piano lessons, and next week I test for my yellow belt in karate.”

“I think my sisters and I are really lucky that we get to come here,” he says. “I wish everyone could come to Club Explore.”

Twins Gina and Emily Gyanfi are second-graders at Hillcrest Elementary. Big brother Eric, 11, is in fifth grade. All three children have been in Club Explore since the program’s inception over a year ago.



Through a Parent’s Eyes



“Our children’s education doesn’t stop at 3:30 in the afternoon when they leave school. At Club Explore, they are working on a reading program, and getting help with homework that can be difficult to understand. Plus, they have the chance to learn things we are not able to teach them, like computers, music, karate, and

art lessons. Everything they do here is helping them to grow up to be better able to reach their goals and live a good life.”

“The staff is so caring and knowledgeable. They have helped us to help ourselves, and to help our children. We consider them our mentors, too.”

Natives of Ghana, South Africa, Emilia Bimpong and Jacob Gyanfi moved from Silver Spring to Frederick in 2006.

2010 Comedy & Magic Spectacular Offers Fantastic Variety

The Frederick Alliance for Youth is proud to announce its first major fundraiser: The Comedy & Magic Spectacular! Coming to the Weinberg Center on Saturday, March 20th at 7:00 p.m., the show offers excitement, fun, variety, clean comedy, magic, joy, juggling, animals, music, wonder and a chance to be with the family.

Master of Ceremonies, producer and director R. G. Smith spends countless hours reviewing audition videos and traveling the world in search of the best acts for this show—the 2010 Spectacular is worthy of his outstanding reputation. This year's show features:

Ardan James



A featured performer in the Las Vegas review *World's Greatest Magic Show*, Ardan James has opened for such stars as Randy Travis, Kevin James, Howie Mandel and Ray Romano, and has performed in over 40 countries around the world.

This animated illusionist combines his skills as a ventriloquist, mime, juggler and magician into great entertainment!

The Reed Sisters



Jessica, Shayna and Mandy Reed combine illusions, comedy and drama to amaze audiences all over the world. Recently back from performing in France, the group's high-energy act will delight the entire family.



Stoil & Ekaterina



Adding international flair to the show are Stoil and Ekaterina. Originally from Bulgaria, this husband/wife team combines magic and the very popular art of "quick-change."

Stoil was trained as a magician, Ekaterina as a ballerina. They have settled in the United States and now work everywhere from Las Vegas casinos to major theatrical events around the globe.

Jessie & James Present Mutts Gone Nuts!



For 25 years, the husband-and-wife comedy team of Jessie and James have entertained audiences from Las Vegas to Tokyo. The couple spent 3 years with Lee Greenwood at his theater in Pigeon Forge, TN, followed by 7 years as a feature act at Dolly Parton's Theaters in Myrtle Beach, SC and Orlando, FL.

Get ready for some laughter as they light up the stage with their slapstick, juggling and tightrope routines. Their popular "Mutts Gone Nuts" act features six rescue dogs doing some zany stunts that will have you rolling in the aisles with laughter!

To purchase tickets, call the Weinberg Center box office at 301-600-2828, or purchase online at www.weinbergcenter.org.

Tickets are \$20.00 for Adults and \$15.00 for children under 12.



...with a little help from our friends!

The Frederick Alliance for Youth is thankful to the Ausherman Family Foundation for the funding support needed to launch what we feel is one of the most innovative youth programs available. Additional Community support for the Frederick Alliance for Youth got off to a promising start this year with the presentation of two contributions from local organizations:

The Comcast Foundation



Josh Booke, Director of Government Affairs for Comcast's Beltway Region (Right) with Scott Alexander, CEO of the Frederick Alliance for Youth (Left)

A \$16,000 grant from the Comcast Foundation will be put to good use in our after school and summer programs. A portion of these funds will allow an increased number of elementary and middle school students in our after-school programs who are struggling with reading to participate in the *Reading Plus* reading intervention program. The remainder of the Comcast grant will be used to strengthen the Media and Technology education portion of the after-school and summer programs.

“Since technology is such a popular and vital vehicle of learning for today’s youth,” said Scott Alexander, CEO, “this funding will support the development of the skills needed to create a student-generated newsletter and Web site, including the writing, photography, designing and editing.”

“Comcast is committed to partnering with local organizations to strengthen the communities that we serve,” said Fred Graffam, Regional Senior Vice President for Comcast. “We are proud to support the Frederick Alliance for Youth in their efforts to make a real and meaningful difference in our local communities.”

Fraternal Order of Police



Pictured from left to right, Front Row: Mary Barry, Board Member, Frederick Alliance for Youth; James Harris, President, Frederick County Deputy Sherriff's Lodge #102, Fraternal Order of Police; Paula Biser, Chair, Board of Directors, Boys & Girls Club of Frederick. Back row: Scott Alexander, CEO, Frederick Alliance for Youth and Michael Pugh, Board Member, Boys & Girls Club of Frederick County.

The Frederick County Deputy Sheriff’s Lodge #102 of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) split the proceeds of their 2009 Golf Tournament between the Frederick Alliance for Youth, and the Boys and Girls Club of Frederick County. Each organization received \$2500.

“We respect the efforts of the Frederick Alliance for Youth to help the young people of our community resist negative influences. Providing our youth with structured, goal-oriented programs after school and in the summer-- and reaching out to mentor their entire families-- is an approach that we believe will achieve long-lasting and life-changing results.”

Your support is an important piece of the puzzle, too.

Want to get involved? Give us a call at 301.696.0911! And please remember: we're funded completely through community donations, so please consider a 100% tax-deductible gift. Make your check payable to the Frederick Alliance for Youth, or visit www.frederickallianceforyouth.org to make an online gift through our secure Web site.

Thank you!

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

– Frederick Douglass

Announcing....

A Benefit for the Frederick Alliance for Youth

2010 COMEDY & MAGIC SPECTACULAR!



When: Saturday, March 20th at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Weinberg Center for the Arts

Tickets: \$20/adults \$15/children under 12

To purchase tickets, call the Weinberg Center box office at 301-600-2828, or purchase online at www.weinbergcenter.org.

Details Inside!



Frederick
Alliance
For Youth

1150 Orchard Terrace
Frederick MD 21703

