

TOGETHER!

Youth Violence, Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Prevention

December 2007

TOGETHER!'s vision is that all young people in Thurston County communities are supported, healthy, safe and valued.

TOGETHER!'s mission is to prevent youth violence and substance abuse through awareness, advocacy and action to support youth and families.

For more information about **TOGETHER!** or its programs, contact us at:

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TOGETHER!
is a 501(c)(3)
non-profit organization.
All donations are tax
deductible to the extent
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Making a Welcoming Community: Hola; Annyeong; Tabé; Chào; Aloha; Czesc; Hello!

Our community is diverse and growing. Thurston County has experienced a virtual explosion of color, language and culture. We have grown by 31.7% from 1990 to 2000 (2000 U.S. Census Bureau data), and this growth continues through births, immigration and relocation.

These new residents strengthen and bolster our growing county. Moving to a new community, learning a new language and deciphering a new culture are never easy. This is especially true for newcomers who are low-income, seeking work, looking for affordable housing, facing significant language barriers and who don't fully understand American/Northwestern culture. In addition, other groups that have their own unique culture, such as tribal groups and the sexual minority community, also may experience barriers in navigating mainstream organizations and structures.

TOGETHER! is addressing diversity and population changes through a variety of actions that make Thurston County a more welcoming place. These include:

- ◆ Training for staff and volunteers around diversity issues
- ◆ Recruiting staff and volunteers from diverse communities
- ◆ Providing materials that are culturally relevant and in different languages
- ◆ Offering parenting classes in Spanish and English
- ◆ Providing mini-grants to address tobacco-related health disparities in minority communities
- ◆ Conducting community assessments to fill gaps in data on culturally diverse populations
- ◆ Partnering with agencies that provide services to diverse populations in Thurston County
- ◆ Providing capacity-building assistance to help organizations better provide services



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

TOGETHER!
PO Box 5329
Lacey, WA 98509-5329

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difference in
our community!
Give a tax deductible
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TOGETHER!

Mail to
P.O. Box 5329
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Things to Celebrate in December and January

December is Read a New Book Month

Celebrate this month by reading a new book to your child/ren or set an example and read a new book yourself. Contact your local Timberland Library to get recommendations on books, join a book group (all ages) or a reading club. Their website: www.trlib.org.



January is National Mentoring Month

This year's theme is "Share What You Know. Mentor a Child." Each of us - as individuals and members of organizations - can work together to increase the number of mentors in Thurston County. Consider sharing what you know by mentoring!

You can become a corporate leader in your community. Organizations can have a tremendous impact on young lives by sponsoring mentoring programs. A workplace-based mentoring program not only benefits youth, but your co-workers as well. It can create employee loyalty and build stronger community ties.

Your organization can also support mentoring throughout 2008 by:

- ◆ Donating in-kind gifts (use of space for events, etc.)
- ◆ Using the double omega (the universal symbol for mentoring; *shown above*) in your corporate communications
- ◆ Sponsoring a mentoring event
- ◆ Providing key leadership for local mentoring programs

For more information on how you or your organization can support mentoring at TOGETHER!, contact Jill Kawulok, 360-493-2230 ext. 18 or jkawulok@thurstontgether.org.

A Note From the Director. . .

This month I had the privilege of meeting some incredible people from across the country whose lives are defined by their passion for helping young people succeed. I listened to their amazing stories of working with youth in inner cities, in depressed rural areas, and in communities our size. When I returned, I reminded myself that these same passions exist in our own community, people who are committed to helping youth reach their potential.

We know that a key ingredient for youth success is a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, beginning at home with parents, grandparents, and other caregivers. Then it needs to extend to teachers, coaches, mentors, neighbors, youth workers, doctors, etc. Children and youth need adults to whom they can turn.

The responsibility is ours. We need to invest in youth holistically. They are a product of ALL of their environments, not just home or school or community. Our investment needs to begin before birth and continue throughout their childhood and adolescence. Otherwise, we run the risk of losing them to school drop-out, to drugs, to violence, to criminal activity, to failure.

What are we doing at home to encourage our own children? What are we doing in our neighborhoods, our schools, our community? Be that caring adult. Young people are our future. Let's also make them our present.

If you need ideas about what you can do, check out some of the other articles in this newsletter or call us.

Mary Segawa, Executive Director

Children Play More Safely in Smoke-Free Parks

With support from TOGETHER!'s Tobacco Free Thurston County program and their youth volunteers, the Tumwater City Council recently passed a resolution to make all city-owned and operated parks 100% smoke-free. Park-goers of all ages will now get to enjoy their favorite parks without the dangers of secondhand smoke, and children who are not exposed to smoking will see that smoke-free areas are the norm for outdoor recreation (especially important since youth look to adults as role models for behavior).

By making city parks smoke-free, Tumwater joins a growing number of cities and counties nationwide (including the City of Olympia) that are protecting public health by requesting that patrons not use tobacco on park property. Another benefit of this policy is reducing cigarette butt litter, which is the single most littered item in the world! Reports from jurisdictions with tobacco policies in place show a dramatic reduction in litter and, subsequently, maintenance costs. By requesting that park-goers refrain from using tobacco in Tumwater parks, the City of Tumwater is protecting children and adults who use the parks while saving valuable tax-payer dollars.

While promoting tobacco prevention and smoking cessation are important avenues to helping reduce tobacco use, policy change is also a valuable tool. It has a broad reach, it's sustainable, and it is low-cost. To learn more about creating smoke-free policies near where you live, work, or play, contact Meghan Sullivan at (360) 493-2230 ext. 17 or msullivan@thurstontgether.org.



Spotlight on Coalitions

As we know, major change only happens in our society when people rise up and work together towards a common goal. Events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott, led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1955, demonstrate how injustice can lead communities to come together and make change. Like Dr. King and other community leaders, TOGETHER! also has a dream. Our dream is that through coalitions and community-wide efforts, Thurston County will remain a place where young people are supported, healthy, safe, and valued.

Since 1989 TOGETHER! has worked to realize this dream by facilitating the formation of over fifteen youth and adult coalitions like the Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF), and the Lacey Area Youth Task Force. Currently we are working closely with several coalitions in different communities of Thurston County. These coalitions include:

Communities That Care® in Thurston County (CTC® Thurston County) is a county-wide coalition aimed at reducing youth problem behaviors and increasing positive youth development. CTC® Thurston County is made up of parents, youth, media, government, law enforcement, prevention providers, school districts, youth-serving organizations and others concerned with the well-being of our youth.

The Thurston County Meth Action Team works to educate and raise awareness about meth in order to reduce this dangerous drug's effects in Thurston County. This coalition has worked to decrease the amount of meth manufactured in our county. Recently the Meth Action Team has increased its collaborative strength by reorganizing as a Meth Action work group within CTC® Thurston County.

Communities Against Tobacco (CAT) Coalition brings people together from across Thurston County in an effort to reduce tobacco use and its impact on the health and economic well being of our community, especially among underserved populations. CAT brings culturally competent tobacco prevention and control activities to our community.

Tumwater United for Families (TUFF) is a coalition of youth-serving agencies dedicated to preventing substance abuse and violence in Tumwater. TUFF provides education classes for families and a scholarship program for youth to participate in healthy activities like enrichment classes, sports teams, and skills camps.

Faith Based Youth Development Coalition (FBYDC) is made up of faith-based and youth-serving organizations in Thurston County who want to see students succeed in school. Through their "Each Student Successful Initiative" FBYDC is reaching out to faith groups with concrete ways that they can contribute to the success of students in our community by providing *Strengthening Families* parenting classes, tutoring/mentoring, and respite foster care.

A Call for Champions

For the seventh year, TOGETHER! will recognize local champions who have committed extraordinary energy by volunteering to help children and youth.

This year's *Champions for Kids* event will be held Monday, February 25, 2008, at the Worthington Center, St. Martin's University. Businesses, organizations and other community groups are invited to sponsor a table for eight and select their own Champion to be honored. You may obtain *Champions* nomination information and reserve tables now by calling 493-2230, ext 11. Nominations are due no later than January 11, 2008.



TOGETHER! Resources Now Available:

- ◆ **Parent Resource Guide**
Listing of multiple resources for families needing assistance
- ◆ **Youth Volunteer Guide**
Listing volunteer opportunities for youth in Thurston County
- ◆ **Thurston County Tobacco Cessation Resource Guide**
List of local cessation providers
- ◆ **Game Smart Brochure: How Much Killing Power Is In Our Children's Hands?**
Helps parent make responsible decisions about children's video games
- ◆ **Meth360 Presentations**
Presenters help groups recognize the dangers of, signs of, and how to encourage others to refrain from using methamphetamine.
- ◆ **Strengthening Families**
Parents or care givers and their youth ages 10-14 are invited to attend this nationally recognized 7-week program series designed to build family strengths.
- ◆ **Parenting Wisely**
Families of at-risk pre-adolescents and adolescents learn through a self-guided video/DVD curriculum covering effective parenting skills.
- ◆ **Resource Library**
Community education resources on topics including parenting, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Upcoming Events

Forum: "Youth-on-Youth Abuse"
Bullying prevention information
December 11, 2007, Time TBA
Olympia High School

Documentary: "My Life's Notice"
Youth-created meth education video
January 11, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
Capitol Theater

Champions for Kids Celebration
Annual recognition event
February 25, 2008, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
St. Martin's Worthington Center

Special Thanks to:

- ◆ Tumwater City Council for their work in supporting smoke-free parks policy
- ◆ SPLAT! youth for their tireless work and for picking up butt litter
- ◆ All those individuals and organizations who supported the CAPACITY summer training mini-series, including: NPower, Northwest Training Institute/WWU, John Korsmo, SAFE Streets, Sheryl Siangco, MacCarthy Grant Solutions, the WA State National Guard, the WA State Dept. of Labor and Industry, Larry Adams, Alex Wright, Liz Heath, Christine Garth, the Non-Profit Insurance Program, Chris Youngblood, Pat Flannery, Peg Giffels and Bruce Reim
- ◆ Wanda Rochelle at Safe Streets for the Meth360 training
- ◆ Jessica Eskelson and the youth of YAYA Media for their work on the methamphetamine education video "My Life's Notice"
- ◆ Adam Fletcher of Common Action for his support of TOGETHER!'s youth engagement work
- ◆ Todd Caffey of Tumwater High School for his partnership in creating youth substance abuse prevention activities for Red Ribbon Week and Great American Smokeout
- ◆ Pawnee Brown for his dedication to and partnership on youth tobacco prevention activities
- ◆ Erin Riffe of ESD 113 for helping bring *Strengthening Families* to the Yelm community
- ◆ The United Churches of Olympia for their support of this fall's *Strengthening Families* class
- ◆ Mike Segawa for his presentation to TOGETHER! on "Effective People Skills"

Have you Heard the Buzz?

Could you or your teen pick up an alcoholic beverage and not even know it? Did you purchase what you think you purchased? Alcohol-infused energy drinks, a product of emerging concern, are manufactured to look nearly identical to their non-alcoholic counterparts (caffeinated energy drinks such as Red Bull, Rock Star and Monster). The alcohol-infused drinks are being marketed to youth and are sold at cheaper prices than non-alcoholic energy drinks! Add to these factors that the labels on these products can confuse clerks and parents, and it is easy to see why we should be concerned. Organizations nationwide are taking a stand on this issue, and TOGETHER! is taking action at the local level to educate the community... know what your kids are drinking! Check out the picture below to see if you can distinguish the alcohol-containing drinks from the regular ones – you may be surprised!

*Can you tell which of these energy drinks contain alcohol?
(Answer: the second and fourth!)
Image courtesy of the Marin Institute*



Building Sustainable Structures: CAPACITY

TOGETHER!'s CAPACITY team has completed its first year of service, providing over fifty agencies in the South Sound with training and/or one-on-one technical assistance focused on "Building Sustainable Structures." In working with these diverse organizations, the CAPACITY Team found them eager to increase their abilities to provide quality services to the youth and families of Thurston County.

We are now ready to launch a second year of capacity-building assistance, focusing efforts on "Building Sustainable Systems." Addressing the systems that support the delivery of services (administration, community engagement, and leadership development) now will free up time and energy to focus on youth and families in the future.

Specialized trainings will be provided in marketing, fund development and technology. Community forums will address community-wide systems as a means to develop healthy attitudes and behaviors among youth and families.

Upcoming CAPACITY Events

"Diversify Your Funding" - Training/Conference
January 9, 2008, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Location TBA

"Youth Forum: Abuse and Neglect" - District-Wide School Assemblies
February 5, 2008, 9:00 - 9:45 a.m., Intermediate Schools, 10:00-10:45 a.m. High Schools, Olympia High School

"Building Stronger Boards for a Stronger Tomorrow" - Board Training
February 23, 2008, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Location TBA, Rochester

For event details, please contact Ellen Nelson at (360) 493-2230 ext. 24 or enelson@thurstontgether.org.

Summer Academic Enrichment Program a Success!

This summer, TOGETHER! provided an opportunity for youth to learn new skills and further their academic studies. A new Summer Academic Enrichment Program, funded with a Thurston County Human Services Review Council grant, served low-income youth and children from the Olympia, Tumwater, and North Thurston Public Schools districts for six weeks. This program was held at Olympia High School and bus transportation was provided.

Goals of the program were to continue the education and social interaction of elementary age children throughout the summer break in an effort to strengthen academic interest and skills and to provide a sound platform for success in the 2007-2008 school year. Curriculum included reading, writing, mathematics, and natural science. Nutritious meals were provided at breakfast and lunch.

Students worked on academic subjects as well as social skills, good manners, and proper classroom behavior. One of their favorite activities was mental math, in which they practiced proper math terms and vocabulary to help learn how to "speak math." They also acted as scientists with demonstrations, experiments, and hands-on activities. Students learned about the solar system, solar energy, water and rock cycles, the oceans and the Earth's elements. The children really enjoyed learning in this fun environment. Parents were very pleased with this safe, fun, educational program and happy with the extra help their children received.

Youth Voices: TOGETHER! is Listening

Youth are at the core of TOGETHER!'s mission and have had active roles as coalition members and volunteers throughout the agency's history. TOGETHER! has recently been revisiting the way we engage youth in our programs by giving youth a more formal and substantive voice in decision-making processes. In a recent presentation to the TOGETHER! Board of Directors, Adam Fletcher, Director of Common Action (a local youth-advocacy organization) noted that youth empowerment comes from youth being partners in an organization as well as recipients of program services.

Engaging youth more broadly in planning and decision-making will also enhance the outcome TOGETHER! and its partners strive for: healthy, safe and valued youth who are more resistant to substance abuse and violence.

Activities that TOGETHER! is currently employing to foster youth involvement include:

- ◆ **Youth Engagement:** A committee is looking at ways to further engage youth throughout TOGETHER! programs.
- ◆ **Youth Advocacy:** Youth become community leaders through the SPLAT! (Students Protesting Lies About Tobacco!) youth coalition.
- ◆ **Peer Education:** High school teens become peer educators for younger students.
- ◆ **Youth Media-Making:** Through a partnership with YAYA Media, local youth created a meth education video. SPLAT! youth have recorded tobacco radio PSAs.
- ◆ **Community Garden:** The Evergreen Villages Community Garden project provides opportunities for youth to learn about gardening and participate in community-building activities.
- ◆ **Staff Training:** Staff participate in ongoing training in areas of youth engagement.
- ◆ **Communities That Care®:** A Youth Involvement work group is looking at ways to involve youth in the community prevention coalition.

To find out more information about TOGETHER!'s youth engagement efforts, contact Meghan Sullivan at (360) 493-2230 ext. 17 or msullivan@thurstontgether.org.

South Sound High School Staff Honored with Selecky Award



Patty May, prevention/intervention specialist at South Sound High School and long-time partner of TOGETHER!, was recently honored with the prestigious Selecky Award from the Washington State Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Control program. The award, named for Mary Selecky, Washington State's Secretary of Health and a strong tobacco prevention and control advocate, is given to a handful of individuals and organizations each year for making a significant contribution to tobacco prevention and control efforts in our state.

Patty May was recognized for her dedication in bringing tobacco prevention education to students within North Thurston Public Schools. After becoming concerned about youth tobacco use, Patty began a popular "quit smoking class" at South Sound High School. She also has supported students in attending leadership training on tobacco issues and creating school-wide productions for national anti-tobacco days such as Kick Butts Day.

Most recently, Patty has agreed to become the tobacco diversion class provider for all of North Thurston Public Schools (providing an alternative to fines for youth who are caught in possession of tobacco). Patty May consistently goes above and beyond her daily duties to positively impact the lives of youth.