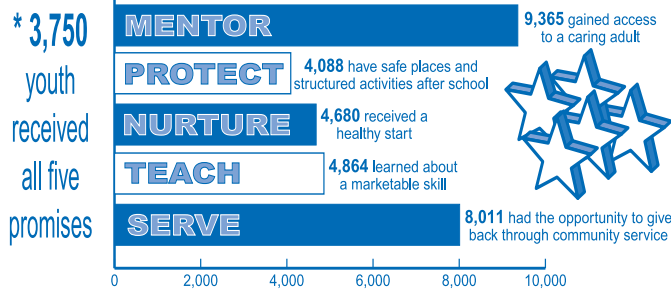


Promise

Spring 2000
newsletter

MINNEAPOLIS PROMISE FOR YOUTH: ACTING ON COMMITMENTS

Minneapolis Promise for Youth was founded over three years ago on the commitments of local organizations to provide young people with one or more of the five goals of America's Promise – the Alliance for Youth: Mentor, Protect, Nurture, Teach, and Serve. Since that inception at the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in April of 1997, it has become a standard for all youth development programs, thanks in part to over 70 commitment makers who now report the following results:



In all, to date over 13,500 young people have received one or more of the five promises.

This milestone would not have been possible without the help of outstanding community commitments such as these:

- **Cargill** sponsored the training and implementation of multimedia resource centers in three Minneapolis alternative schools, and one Boys and Girls Club located in North Minneapolis, to help prepare youth for post-secondary education and/or potential careers. In addition, The Cargill Foundation refocused its grantmaking priorities to invest in organizations and programs that help educate socio-economically disadvantaged youth in the Minneapolis area.
- **Girl Scout Council of Greater Minneapolis** committed to increasing the magnitude of community service by developing a council-wide project called "Fit for Each Other" to increase physical activity among older adults. Launched in August of 1999, 400 girls in 41 troops are working on this community service project.
- **U.S. Bancorp Piper Jaffray's "Think Big!"**, a mentoring initiative, has served 32 at-risk middle school students with 50 volunteers working as mentors, Junior Achievement teachers and job shadow participants. Attendance has improved and suspension has dropped for participating students.

Minneapolis Promise for Youth is our local initiative to address the goals of America's Promise- the Alliance for Youth. Every young person should have the confidence, character, competence, and connections needed to live a healthy, fulfilling life and contribute positively to society. Too many of our young people do not.

Across our nation, communities have joined the America's Promise movement, led by Colin Powell, to ensure that young people have five fundamental resources in their lives:

MENTOR
Ongoing relationship with a caring adult

PROTECT
Safe places and structured activities

NURTURE
A healthy start

TEACH
Marketable skills through effective education

SERVE
Opportunities to give back through community service

Minneapolis Promise for Youth has stimulated community efforts for and by youth to develop these five key assets in their lives. This newsletter provides an update on current developments.



United Way
of Minneapolis Area

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- **Longfellow United for Youth and Families**, a neighborhood organization, has provided 166 youth in their south Minneapolis neighborhood with mentors, marketable skills, and community service opportunities.
- **Project Luther**, a partnership of five Lutheran churches, two north-side neighborhood associations, two community-based organizations, and a faith community foundation, provides five after school enrichment programs 2-4 days a week. To date, 498 children have participated in the programs.
- **United Way of Minneapolis Area** has invested over \$1 million to expand the use of volunteers in eleven agencies. So far, 1,000 volunteers have been added working in the five goal areas, and over 1,000 young people have benefited.

Youth Involvement

The goal of Minneapolis Promise is to create a lasting legacy, and give youth the opportunity to lead and design programs for other youth. Six mini-summits were held in 1999, at the five Minneapolis Beacon sites in north Minneapolis and in the Phillips community in south Minneapolis, to once again engage youth leadership toward the five promises. Partnering with the Beacons, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, the Minneapolis Redesign, the Phillips Youth Council, and many community-based organizations, the youth mini-summits accomplished the following:

- Approximately 1,450 Youth, grades 3-12, attended the six Youth Summits in 1999.
- 120 youth leaders, and 30 community, school and business partners, were involved in the planning and implementation of the Youth Summits.
- Over 50 community organizations connected youth and families to resources related to the five goal areas in their neighborhood.

Citizen Involvement

Minneapolis Promise provided training and facilitated networking among agencies to increase their capacity to utilize more adult and youth volunteers. The newly-created Volunteer Resource Center of the Twin Cities will continue to ensure that agencies are aware of the five promises to youth while continuing to involve youth and adult volunteers as much as possible.

Minneapolis Promise for Youth partnered with the Minneapolis Public Schools in November 1999 to host a Community Conversation about ways various community groups have, or will help fulfill, the five promises. In addition, on February 2nd and 3rd, Minneapolis Promise co-hosted The Power of One: the Dire Need for Mentors for Youth. This interfaith event, featuring Rev. Buster Soaries, included a youth rally, a gathering of clergy, and a call to action for current and potential mentors. This series of community gatherings was presented by the McKnight Foundation's Congregations in Community along with Minneapolis Promise and Twin Cities One to One/The Mentoring Partnership.

What lies ahead?

Minneapolis Promise for Youth will continue its focus on the long-term results of an increased commitment to youth through partnerships, funding and volunteerism in the following ways:

- Increasing **youth leadership** in all aspects of the services and activities that affect them.
- Encouraging **sustained commitments of corporations and non-profits** focused on the five promises to youth through integration into the cultures of those organizations.
- Documenting and communicating results and on-going needs in **the five fundamental resource areas**.
- **Transitioning the work of Minneapolis Promise for Youth** to on-going organizations by June, 2001.

For more information on any aspects of the work of Minneapolis Promise for Youth, please call Nathalie Pyle, coordinator, 612-377-9596.

Crossing the Bridge of Communication at YouthSpeak 2000



Last month youth of the Twin Cities area were given the unique opportunity to connect with adults who make the decisions that affect their everyday lives. YouthSpeak 2000, an all-day event intended to create an open dialogue between powerful decision-makers and the youth of the Twin Cities, took place May 13th at the Hubert H. Humphrey Center of the University of Minnesota. Over 150 individuals came to the table to discuss crime, health and discrimination against youth, and to provide solutions that reflect the concerns of both youth and decision-makers.

Facilitated focus groups of high school age students assembled in the morning to fine tune their ideas on the issues and learn how to present them with assurance, and be responsive and respectful to the ideas of others. In the afternoon, these groups each convened with a decision-maker according to topic of interest, and had an open discussion about the concerns and realities of being a young person in the Twin Cities today.

By the close of the day, youth left knowing that their voices had been heard and will have further impact in the way youth concerns are dealt with in the future. Decision-makers left with a wealth of knowledge of what it is to be a teenager today, gained from

a segment of their constituency with whom they rarely connect. And all had the feeling that the mission of the event, "to build a bridge of communication and strive to give youth confidence in themselves and their voice" was accomplished. Sanja Partalo, member of the Mayor's Youth Council, and a youth facilitator at the event, commented, "This event has unified caring young people in the most positive way possible. It has really been a motivating experience!"

YouthSpeak 2000 was developed by the Youth Heroes Program of United Way of the Saint Paul Area in partnership with Minneapolis Promise for Youth, United Way of Minneapolis Area, the Minneapolis Mayor's Youth Council and What's Up? information line, the Center for 4H Youth Development, and the Minnesota Alliance with Youth.



Sanja Partalo (at podium) Leads a Youth Discussion.

Youth On A Mission To Assess Agencies

Minneapolis Promise for Youth is conducting a youth-led assessment of youth-serving agencies called "Youth on a Mission". The purpose of this assessment is to encourage youth-serving agencies to see themselves through the eyes of the young people they involve and serve, and to inform agencies of the quality of customer service they provide to youth—what works and what needs improvement.

This assessment will take place until the end of the year, and is funded through a grant by The Minneapolis Foundation. An overview of the assessment includes developmental training, visiting agencies, evaluation and feedback to agencies, and evaluation of the overall process. Examples of the agencies to be assessed include park centers, community centers, community education sites and agencies such as

PeaceJam Inspires A New Generation



Nobel Peace Prize Winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel (right).

On March 7, 2000, Minneapolis Promise for Youth co-sponsored a dialogue between 200 youth and adults on peace-making at the Minnesota History Center. PeaceJam is an international education program built around leading Nobel Peace Laureates who work personally with youth to pass on the spirit, skills and wisdom they embody. The goal of the program is to inspire the next generation of peacemakers who will transform their local communities, themselves and the world.

This year's PeaceJam included a discussion with Adolfo Perez Esquivel, an Argentinean and 1980 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for human rights activism. An art project on the importance of peace and the sources and consequences of violence was also on display.

Minneapolis youth participant Jessie Pfleiderer stated after the event, "Mr. Esquivel was one of the most inspiring men I've ever met. You come to realize that Nobel Peace Prize winners are real people – not just some figure on a pedestal. His story changed the way I look at other people's situations. I admire and look up to him more than I ever could look up at a figurehead."

Other PeaceJam partners included Avodah B'Yachad – Service Together of the Jewish Community Relations Council; Center for 4-H Youth Development; Minnesota Department of Children Families and Learning; the International PeaceJam Center; Minnesota Alliance with Youth; Minnesota Office of Citizenship and Volunteer Service; Minnesota PeaceJam Center at Compass Institute; Perpich Center for Arts Education; The George Family Foundation; Triarco Arts and Crafts; and You're the One Who Can Make the Peace.

the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club. Says Harold Mezile, President, YMCA of Metropolitan Minneapolis, "The youth-led assessment is a very innovative process that we are putting together here in Minneapolis that gives young people a chance to have a voice in programs and services that are provided by youth serving agencies. This is an excellent opportunity for them to impact the way services are given, to evaluate services and give feedback to leadership in organizations on how well their organization does in providing

services to youth."

Twenty young people from various communities in Minneapolis, and ranging in age from 13 to 16 years old, have taken the leadership in the development and implementation of the assessment. Says 13-year-old Youth on a Mission member Christina Jacobson, "Youth should feel important enough to have a voice in whether or not an agency is really helping the youth that they are serving."

For more information on Youth On A Mission, Contact Neva Walker, 612-340-7464

University of Minnesota



to Become a University of Promise

The University of Minnesota, which has been working closely with Minneapolis Promise for Youth and has long worked with children, youth, and families in a variety of ways, will now become a University of Promise. In the words of Dr. Robert Bruininks, executive vice-president and provost, "It is now time to align many of our current efforts with several new ones under the unifying theme: Realizing the Promise of the University for the Children and Youth of Minnesota."

Multiple efforts directed toward the five promises of America's Promise will be coordinated across several colleges, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, and many other programs and outreach efforts of the university. The university intends to connect its students around the state in helping young people fulfill those five promise goals in their lives. The university will focus educational research on building a deeper understanding of the five resources youth need to succeed, and how they can be effectively and appropriately nurtured at different ages and in different communities. The university also hopes to add value to the national America's Promise movement through research on best practice and outcomes in youth development.

The University of Promise effort is being lead by Dr. Dale Blyth, director for the the Center for 4H Youth Development and Dr. Martha Farrell Erickson, director of the Children, Youth, and Family Consortium.

*For more information on the U of M commitment,
contact Jenny Keyser, 612-625-7591*

New Promise Fellow

In late December 1999, Erin McCarty began a year of service with Minneapolis Promise for Youth as an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow. McCarty, the third Promise Fellow to devote 1,700 hours of service to Minneapolis Promise for Youth, works on youth involvement and development, and will plan several events throughout the year.

McCarty has worked on the development and implementation of "Youth on a Mission", a youth-led assessment of youth serving agencies; assisted in planning the Interfaith Youth Rally, a call to action for mentoring; and helped plan and recruit youth for PeaceJam 2000 and YouthSpeak 2000. Says McCarty, "I'm really enjoying my work so far. It's a great opportunity to work with and empower youth, and to get to know the network of organizations in the Twin Cities and all the great things that are being done."

In exchange for her year of service, she will receive an education award and a modest living stipend. McCarty is an honors graduate of Colorado State University, and brings to Minneapolis Promise for Youth her experience working with the Girl Scouts and in various child care positions. She also brings her strong desire to gain and apply knowledge about youth development and empowerment.



*AmeriCorps Promise Fellow
Erin McCarty.*

Phillips Youth Council Facilitates Change



*Phillips Youth Council Member
Alessandra Williams.*

One of the hallmarks of the work of Minneapolis Promise for Youth is promoting and facilitating youth leadership and involvement in all aspects of the services and activities that affect them. An example of this youth leadership is the Phillips Youth Council. Organized in early 1999 by the Phillips Community Futures Coalition and Minneapolis Promise for Youth, the Phillips Youth Council was started to help youth develop connections with resources, take ownership and have a voice in their community, attain self-fulfillment, and provide a positive change in the Phillips community.

The first major undertaking of the Phillips Youth Council was a youth mini-summit on November 20, 1999. The highlight of this summit was a series of dialogue circles based on Native American peace circles. Facilitated by Youth Council members, the dialogues focused on racism.

Alessandra Williams is a 15-year-old member of the Phillips Youth Council. She says, "Working with the Phillips Youth Council has taught me the importance of responsibility and leadership in my community. I have taken on the leadership role of helping the younger ones in the Council. I help them to participate, learn new things, and be cooperative and respectful towards others. And I hope they are able to do the same for other kids someday."

The Phillips Youth Council continues under the leadership of the Phillips Whittier Governor's Afterschool Program, organizing initiatives to address community issues and planning more activities for youth.

For more information on the Phillips Youth Council, contact Lucy Douglas, 612-871-3367



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