

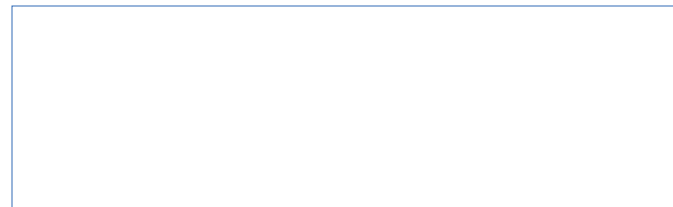
ANNUAL UNITED WAY KICKOFF

United Way of Central Ohio kicked off its annual appeal on August 23rd at the Short Stop Youth Center in the Short North. To show their enthusiasm this year, they had a talent show and a very good time. Thanks to the caring power of contributors, United Way is improving people's lives and building a stronger community for all of us. Huckleberry House has benefited from United Way with MARC+ and other programs. Learn more about how your investment achieves lasting results at www.uwcentralohio.org. The campaign will run until November.



IF YOU NEED US...

- ◆ For information on any of Huck House's programs, please contact our Administrative Offices Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 5:00 at 614-294-8097.
- ◆ For information regarding volunteering or contributions, please contact the Development Department at 614-298-4103 or sign-up on our website.
- ◆ For immediate help in a crisis situation, call our 24-hour HOTLINE now at 614-294-5553.



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THE HUCK HOUSE VOICE

GREEN LIGHT PROJECT

The headline on the National Runaway Switchboard website reads "Family issues remain top reason for running from home." Most teenagers at Huck House ran away or were kicked out of their homes as a result of a conflict with their parents. [See inside for "Why Kids Run"]

One in seven youth will run away from home before the age of 18. Statistics indicate that even if a youth isn't thinking of running away, they probably know someone who has or is contemplating the prospect. Family problems do not discriminate. Problems affects all genders, races and economic classes.

November is National Runaway Prevention Month and to raise awareness around issues that runaway youth face, Huck House will be leading the **Green Light Project** for the third year. Huck House will distribute thousands of green light bulbs to homes, neighborhoods, organizations, etc. We want communities to light their porches green for the month of November.

By participating in this small gesture, you are showing teens that Columbus cares about them and wants them to be safe. Last year, Huck House distributed about 5,000 light bulbs. With

your support, we hope to double that number this year!

The goals of the **Green Light Project** are to promote safety for teens and to educate people. Because without the support of adults, teenagers have the odds stacked against them.

The kick off for the Green Light Project will be held on October 21 at Easton Town Center. We will give away light bulbs and educational materials throughout the day in the main area of the mall in front of the indoor food court. (continued page 3)

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

A volunteer is anyone who can help to distribute light bulbs to their co-workers, neighbors and friends. Volunteers can also pass out light bulbs at selected Kroger stands on Saturdays, distribute light bulbs in communities, help to organize their own neighborhoods, etc. Please contact Kyra at kcrockett@huck-house.org or call 614.298.4104. Or sign-up online!



FALL
2006



Inside this issue:

- ◆ Why do kids runaway?
- ◆ COA Accreditation
- ◆ HH MARC+ Program
- ◆ New Website Info
- ◆ Get Your Green Light Bulbs

LEARNING LIFE SKILLS WITH MARC+

I'm sitting with Matt Wood. He is the one-man show of Huckleberry House's MARC+ Program. MARC+ (Mentoring and Resolving Conflict Positively) is a 9-week course teaching conflict resolution. But don't confuse this with some anger management class. MARC+ is teaching necessary life skills that young people can use throughout their lives.

For nine weeks, young people between ages 12 and 18 learn tools they can use to improve behavior. Wood works to "encourage discussion and allow the students to learn from each other. We role play, and they learn practical skills that can be used immediately after leaving the class." When the students go out and use these skills right away, they see results and gain the confidence to keep trying.



MARC+ Coordinator, Matt Wood, teaching one of his sessions at the Franklin County Courthouse.

Okay, well maybe they do learn some anger management. But, there is so much more to it. It is in-depth management of conflict and arguments such as: hints to de-escalate arguments, listening skills, and understanding empathy and where the other person is coming from. They also learn to understand body language to know what can either improve a situation or make it worse.

Most of the students attending the class are recommended by teachers, guidance counselors or principals. These are kids that may be "on the borderline of success or failure who have been ineffective in dealing with conflict," says Wood. The kids might be having conflict with their teachers, parents or peers. Classes are usually during school hours but also during after school programs, summer day camps or

at behavioral centers. Most recently, there was a new class for kids on probation from juvenile court. For these kids, it is a chance for them to show they want to make a change for the better.

Many good things are happening for MARC+. It is listed as one of the approved and accredited programs for Columbus Public Schools. It has really been a great advocate for Huckleberry House and all the other services HH offers. Kids are more aware of what is out there for them and they can spread the word to their friends.

MARC+ is proving to be successful and needed. When Wood joined the program in the spring, he held the most sessions (15) before summer break. Last year, 205 students completed the program. Teachers and guidance counselors from 29 schools have called all summer to book sessions for this school year. MARC+ is needed not just because there are so many kids having so many conflicts, but also there is such a need to learn these basic life lessons. Resolving conflict and learning how to handle difficult or uncomfortable situations is something everyone can benefit from.

What Wood likes the most is that "the clients see the need for MARC+ and want more of it. I've seen first hand how MARC+ is so necessary and that the kids get a huge benefit." He's looking forward to reaching out to new groups of young people this fall. In the meantime, he'll have to settle for the flood of phone calls to schedule classes.

(from page 4) Teen Silence

It can be so very hard for some teens to explain what is going on with them. Sometimes, it is hard for parents to hear their teen in the middle of busy lives, or the struggle to manage their own situations. Teens may feel that what they have to say is too upsetting, too scary for parents to hear. Sometimes families have become so used to yelling and constant conflict that it is hard to hear anything else. At these times, the action of running away may speak louder than any words that teen could find.

NEW IMPROVED WEBSITE!

Check out the website for the following updated information:

- ◆ New volunteer sign-up information
- ◆ Find a list of items needed for donation
- ◆ More updates for events and things coming soon!
 - ◆ The Green Light Project
 - ◆ Turn Around Columbus Youth (coming in April 2007!)
 - ◆ Contribute online and save your envelope and stamp (coming soon!)
 - ◆ Sign-up to receive your green light bulbs to distribute in November



FULLY ACCREDITED!

We are pleased to announce that since July, Huckleberry House, Inc. has been accredited by the Council On Accreditation (COA). COA's program of quality improvement is designed to identify providers that have set high performance standards for themselves and have made a commitment to their constituents to deliver the very best quality services. Huckleberry House is proud to be recognized as one of these outstanding providers. Thank you and congratulations to all the Huck House staff who dedicated a great deal of time and energy to receiving this accomplishment.



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Executive Director

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