

Greater Mankato Area United Way *Your Gift in Action* eNewsletter

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101 N. 2nd Street #100
Mankato, MN 56001
www.mankatounitedway.org

Volunteer Caregiving **VINE Faith in Action**

This program assists people with light housekeeping, errands, grocery shopping, meal preparation, mail management and relationship building for people who may not be "old enough, disabled enough, or poor enough" to qualify for these types of services through other organizations and programs in the community. United Way funding will be used to partially fund the current position of program staff, as well as to hire a part time social worker to help increase services to better meet the increasing demand.

Crisis Nursery **Lutheran Social Service of MN**

The Crisis Nursery will provide a temporary safe haven for children from infancy through 12 years of age, where parents experiencing a family or personal crisis can call for support. The ultimate goal of the nursery is to prevent child abuse and/or neglect. United Way funding will be used to keep this program going.

PROGRAMS FUNDED in 2008 THANKS TO YOU!

Something great is happening thanks to the generosity of greater Mankato area donors and the huge success of the 2008 campaign, and we want to let you in on it!

The Greater Mankato Area United Way and its Board set a challenging campaign goal in 2008 to increase funds by 5%, in order to sustain and expand our existing partner programs, as well as fund our 2008 initiative: the Ready! for Kindergarten program. Thanks to the success of the campaign, we're able to do that, and more!

This issue of the eNewsletter will tell you about the new and expanded programs in our community that have been made possible by your generosity.

Girls on the Run **YWCA**

You may have read the recent articles in The Free Press which talked about research in our community that shows that local girls are dealing with an unusually high rate of depression, self-mutilation, thoughts of suicide and overall dissatisfaction with themselves, and how the Girls on the Run program is being brought to the Mankato area by the YWCA to reach out to these girls to replace these feelings with positive emotions and self-image.

Pictured here in a press conference at United Way last week, Anne Ganey, Executive Director of the YWCA, said



that she is very excited about bringing the Girls on the Run program to the Mankato area. John Seymour, Ph.D. of Minnesota State University, Mankato, (also pictured above) shared some of the findings from his and Anne Blackhurst, Ph.D.'s data analysis which led to the community's understanding of the need in this area. Their research found that unlike boys, girls report that they "lose support, or their perception of support at this time". Research also shows that girls experience different types of pressures at this critical point in their development and, different than boys, girls tend to internalize their fears and problems. Anne stated that although they've known since the data was collected several years ago that there was a need for a gender-specific youth development program in our community, the problem was that there simply was no funding available

Lincoln Logs Learning Center

Adult Basic Education

The mission of the Lincoln Logs Learning Center is to provide a safe, stimulating, nurturing environment for the children of refugee and immigrant parents, so that the parents can acquire and improve their literacy skills necessary to be self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members, and citizens. United Way funds will be used for childcare scholarships.

Project for Teens (P4T) **Council for Health & Promotion**

This is a peer education/service-learning program that involves 40 students from 3 Mankato area high schools to be trained as peer leaders. These students are provided training during which they get information, skills and tools to address audiences in grades 6th-8th to discuss healthy and responsible decision-making, risks associated with teen sexual activity, and communication skills on how to be assertive to say no. United Way funds will cover program expenses such as CHAP staff time on program coordination and evaluation, as well as materials and refreshments related to the P4T training, and implementation and evaluation.

until now. Thanks to the new funding from the United Way, as well as an anonymous donor from the community, Girls on the Run will start as a pilot program in 2008.

At the core of the program is helping girls to be comfortable and more confident with who they are. The girls go into small groups with a "Coach" who acts as a mentor, providing a safe place to share their emotions. While this is definitely a Youth Development Program which focuses on the girls' cognitive skills (mental, social, emotional, spiritual and physical) to help them find their place in the world, there is always an aspect of running and movement in each session where the girls are encouraged to move their bodies in a non-competitive environment. Because as Anne puts it so well, "research shows that when women don't move, their dreams don't move".

What's exciting about the Girls on the Run program is that it's a proven, evaluated program that has shown impact in other communities around the country. We look forward to great things and lasting impact from this program in our community.

Ready! for Kindergarten

We reached our goal, and as a result are funding the 2008 pilot of the Ready! for Kindergarten program. You may have seen the back cover of the Community Education and Recreation Program ... if you did, you noticed that the first Ready! for Kindergarten classes are getting underway in May already at two pilot school locations. Classes will begin at Carlson Craft later this year, as the pilot employer location.



With a program coordinator in place, and the sponsorship of the Mankato Area Public Schools, the Ready! for Kindergarten program is a reality in 2008. Look for a press conference in early summer to tell you more about the program.

What's goin' on in the community: VINE Faith in Action

VINE announces a six-week seminar, *As Families Grow Older*, which will be held Tuesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. starting March 25 and going through April 29. This community seminar will feature expert speakers addressing topics most critical to decisions concerning aging loved ones. For more information or for pre-registration, call Mary O'Sullivan at 507-387-1666.

VINE is also organizing *Senior Spring Clean-Up Days* beginning Saturday, April 5 and they are in need of volunteers! If you're interested in volunteering this spring, or want more information, contact Emily Danberry at 507-387-1666.