



Arlington's Alliance for Youth!

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America's Promise

October 4, 2012

Annual Report to Stakeholders

Vision of the Arlington Alliance for Youth: Our vision “Developing a caring community in which our youth will flourish,” has taken a big step forward during the 2011-12 administrative-year. Alliance programs that support the Five Promises of America’s Promise have all grown, helping us foster a grass roots effort that gathers our community around our youth.

The Need for New Leaders, Researchers, Supporters, and Volunteers: Dr. Peter L. Benson, president and CEO of Minneapolis-based Search Institute, died Sunday, Oct. 2, 2011, after a year-long fight with cancer. Dr. Benson’s international reputation in human development emerged in the 1990s through his innovative, research-based framework of the 40 Developmental Assets, which became the driving force behind the creation of the Five Promises of America’s Promise.

Dr. Benson was the author or editor of more than a dozen books on child and adolescent development and social change, including, my favorite reference *All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents (2nd edition)*. He will be missed.

His passing reminds us of two things: First, researchers such as Dr. Peter Benson have provided us with new knowledge on child growth and development that did not exist for prior generations. The second realization about his passing is that our generation is the first to use that knowledge in new ways to help our youth flourish.

We have been actively seeking schools, non-profits, and business organizations to join our Alliance and expand the delivery of the five promises we must, as a community, make to our youth. Our efforts have resulted in the expansion of our board to include five new directors: 1) Cheryel Carpenter from APD; 2) Don Henry from the Rotary Club of South Arlington; 3) Tavian Harris from Seasons of Change Inc.; (4) Idalina Yoakum from Arlington Physicians; and Lt Scott Brown from APD.

The Importance of the Five Promises:

The Arlington Alliance for Youth wants to ensure that all children in Arlington receive the support needed to fulfill these promises:

1. Relationships with caring adults
2. Safe places with structured activities
3. A healthy start and life styles
4. Effective education and marketable skills
5. Opportunities to serve others.

Children who receive this support on a regular basis are 5 to 10 times more likely to be successful in school and become productive adults and good citizens. They are also less likely to become involved in risky behaviors like drugs, sex, violence, or alcohol.

Progress in Promoting the Five Promises: We are pleased that during 2011-12 we have made strong progress in developing support for the Five Promises in Arlington. Each of our signature programs listed below have helped in that success.

- **7th Annual Youth Collaboration Breakfast:** Over 200 community leaders and youth service providers assembled at the AISD Professional Development Center on January 20, 2012, to hear Dr. Scot Cressman speak about the power of choice and collaboration. Tawney Harris, Project REACH site director helped us recognize 25 Small Grant winners. After announcing our 2012 Signature Programs, Cynthia Jensen, United Way –Arlington, encouraged attendees to collaborate with schools by introducing two great examples in our community: Churches adopting schools and the formation of Dads Clubs in our schools.
- **Small Grants Program (8th Year):** This program has developed a grass roots effort that focuses on the Five Promises. Each grant empowers a caring adult to engage youth in a meaningful community service project. This year's 25 grants are estimated to have helped 8-10 thousand youth. Since this program started in 2005, we have awarded 168 small grants to youth groups in our community worth over \$48,700.
- **The Extra Mile Award (5th Year):** This year's First Rate Living Luncheon was held on the Thursday prior to Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) in the Diamond Club at the Ballpark. The Alliance is delighted to partner with First Rate, Inc., who presented eight Extra Mile Awards to 9 individuals (volunteers or paid staff) that have gone the extra mile in working with our youth. First Rate Also provided each of the honorees the opportunity to designate their favorite non-profit to receive a \$1500 grant.
- **Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) 2012 (5th Year as Lead Agency):** The Alliance was very pleased to be selected by Youth Service America (YSA) to serve again as their Lead Agency in Arlington. YSA has provided us a \$2000 grant to help organize the City's GYSD efforts. YSA also has provided registration, transportation, and lodging for a member of our board to attend the national Youth Service Institute conference—this year in Houston. The Alliance budgets for 30 grants a year for schools or organizations that want to form a coalition of youth groups and complete a project for GYSD. Fifteen additional grants are offered to organizations that participate in GYSD projects. We are very pleased that UT Arlington's "The Big Event" has joined GYSD by providing 900+ students and staff to help non-profits throughout North Texas. GYSD in 2012 had over 2700 participants from 70 different youth groups and 12 different AISD campuses.
- **Arlington's Youth Service Leader of the Year Contest (6th Year):** This award is in memory of Sheris Growe, a former member of our first GYSD committee and a strong advocate for Arlington youth. The award is offered at three different levels—elementary, junior high, and high school. Each level has a winner and two runner-ups. Each honoree receives a trophy—and their nominating youth group receives a grant to help fund community service projects during the coming year.
- **Arlington's Best Service Project of the Year (6th Year):** This award is open to all GYSD youth groups as well as small grant winners. It requires a poster board display with photos and a short essay (500 words) explaining their project. The winning youth groups receive a trophy and ad grant that may be used to finance additional service projects in the coming year.
- **City of Arlington's GYSD Thank-You Ceremony (6th Year):** Youth groups on GYSD gathered at the Levitt Pavilion for lunch, entertainment, and a special thank you for their service from the City presented by Council Member Lana Wolff. GYSD contest awards were announced and given out to some great youth service leaders and youth organizations. Youth groups and contest winners were interviewed and

videotaped by the AISD TV team for later broadcast on the AISD cable TV show "Conversations."

Attendance at the City Celebration included over 300 youth and adult leaders.

- **The Jerry Cooper Service Learning Scholarship (2nd year):** This scholarship is based on school and community involvement, academic record, and financial need. Applicants must be seniors and submit an essay on the theme "How My Service-learning Experience in Arlington Made a Difference." Two students were awarded these scholarships—who are enrolled at Arlington and Martin High Schools.
- **Arlington's Fatherhood Initiative:** Marc Marchand, Tim Cameron, and Dr. Geoffrey Mitchell have been leading a steering committee that has been exploring projects that are sustainable and unique to Arlington. Initial projects will be in support of the AISD Dads Club initiative in the 2012-13 year.
- **Public Relations (7th year):** Our mission of educating our community on the Five Promises is supported by our Public Relations Committee. We provide an e-newsletter "The Little Red Wagon Express" and manage a very active website. The committee also issues news releases and responds to media requests. It also participated in the adoption of a new logo to be used on Alliance websites, newsletters, and material.

We have made great strides in two other areas worthy of note:

- **Board Development:** During the past year we have rewritten our bylaws, and updated both our Policy and Procedures Manual and our 3-Year Strategic Plan. In September this year our board received professional training on strategic planning and supportive action plans.
- **Musical Night Out: From Patsy Cline to Broadway:** On Saturday, Oct 6th, the Southwest Kiwanis Club and the Arlington Alliance for Youth, will be holding our first joint fund raiser at UTA's Bluebonnet Ballroom in the Hereford Center. Diner is at 6:30 pm and the show begins at 8 pm. Local award winning vocalist Jenny Thurman and Todd Hart will present some great entertainment. The Lamar High School Show Choirs will also perform.

New Directions for 2012-13: The alliance would like to thank all partners and donors who have helped plan, organize, and support our activities. Collectively, we have developed a better understanding of the needs of our youth and how to help them. We invite you to help us chart new directions in the following areas

1. Board Development
2. Address Strategic Issues
3. Adoption of best practices
4. Development of additional funding sources
5. Funding plan for staff
6. Simplifying administration
7. Developing a broader participation by civic clubs
8. Supporting the adoption of City's "Our Community, Our Kids"

Sincerely,

Jim Walther
President 2011-12
Arlington Alliance for Youth