



United Way



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Youth Services of Kittitas County Helps Kids Have Fun - Safely



Kids just want to have fun. However, with temptations such as alcohol, drugs and gang activity lurking in every community, where can they turn for safe recreation?

In Ellensburg, one answer is Youth Services of Kittitas County. Since 1975, this innovative non-profit organization has offered young people enjoyable options for spending their after-school and weekend hours.

“Our overall goal is to meet the needs of kids who are faced with decision-making and idle time – who need a little boost,” observed Stan Bassett, director of programming. “We offer alternative choices of things to do – a safe place just to relax, to kick back.”

With funding from United Way of Central Washington, the City of Ellensburg and other sources, Youth Services of Kittitas County offers a variety of programs, primarily for those of middle school and high school age.

There is a drop-in center at 213 West Third Street in Ellensburg where young people can come after school to play pool and video games, and have snacks. There is the Rainier Street After-School Program, which offers activities for young people living in subsidized housing. During Winter, there is an open gym night each week at Morgan Middle School. There is a big-brother, big-sister mentor program. At Memorial Pool, there is a Saturday afternoon free swim. In addition, young people who are referred by the Superior Court or a local “diversion panel” for theft, may spend time with Bassett on Saturday mornings to work through their problems.

“We’re there to assist in any way we can,” Bassett said. “Not every kid will fit into every program. Some float back and forth.”

Some 600 to 800 young people in Kittitas County take advantage of Youth Services programs each year. Volunteers, including numerous students from Central Washington University, assume many of the staffing needs.

Bassett, who contracted polio at age eight, and has been in a wheelchair ever since, is in a unique position to understand how childhood is not always easy.

“I like to keep humor going in the conversations – to lighten things up,” he noted. “It seems like things are moving so quickly in this age of technology. Kids all want instant answers, instant solutions,” he said. “In our programs, we can go back to some of the basic, fun things like playing cards, shooting pool, window shopping and talking. We give them a sounding board where they can talk and we can help them to find other directions.”

“A lot of these kids are not happy when they’re coming in our door,” he said. “I tell my staff that, at the end of the day, if one or two kids feel better, we’ve done our job.”



Updates

Officers Announced

United Way of Central Washington’s officers for 2010-2011 include: Chair, **Charlie Eglin**, Tri-Ply Construction; Vice-Chair, **Pete Bansmer**, Yakima Federal Savings; Treasurer, **Wendie Hansen**, Yakima Herald-Republic; and Secretary, **Rod Matson**, Matson Fruit.

New Board Members Chosen

Several new members were elected to the United Way Board at the Annual Meeting on May 18. They include **Sandy Dahl**, Memorial Hospital; **Tom Hurson**, Tree Top; **Terry Abeyta**, Abeyta-Nelson PC; **Mike Broadhead**, Central Valley Bank; **K. L. Wombacher**, Yakima Bears; and **Teri Sutton**, Teri Sutton CPA. Retiring members included **Libby Hodge**, **Sam Granato** and **Russ Myers**.

Word of the Month

The Word of the Month for June is Friendliness. Friendliness is taking an interest in other people, being warm and courteous. When you are friendly, you happily show interest in others and share things you have.

Plans Are Underway for 2010 United Way Campaign



Jan Luring

Jan Luring, 2010 Campaign Chair for United Way of Central Washington, has announced her team for this year’s campaign.

Cabinet members include: Associate Chair, Terry Abeyta; Ambassador Chair, Mike Broadhead; Marketing, Ken Messer; Area Chairs, Dave Dion, Elaine Beraza and Joe Falk; and Pillars Club Co-Chairs, **John and Monica Colgan**.

Completing the list of major campaign positions are: **Scott Wagner, Alan Cottle, Mike Dooley, Katie Gaudino, Joel Pearson, Pete Bansmer, Brad Fitterer, Jeff Louman, Tony Klein, Sue Ford, Russ Myers, Rod Matson, Jack Irion, Becky Scholl, Colleen Williams, Linda Dixon, Craig Mendenhall, Ryan Beckett, Margaret Ruiz-Smart, Tom Robbert, Wes Morris, Dave Rankin, Todd Leinbach and Jeff Smith**. In addition to these key campaign leaders, more than 500 volunteers will work to meet this year’s goal.

As a new feature this year, there will be a Day of Caring kick-off event in both Yakima and Kittitas

counties. Mark your calendar and plan to attend the afternoon community service project kick-off event in **Ellensburg on August 28**. Following our community service project, we will reassemble at the CWU football game for the season opener. Then, at 9 a.m., **September 9 in Yakima**, we will kick off our Block Party Day of Caring Event, with breakfast at the River Road and 40th Avenue McDonald’s. This is your chance to gather a team of co-workers and volunteer time to help area non-profits. Each team member will participate in activities to benefit local agencies and their clients. Last year, more than 200 volunteers donated some 1,000 hours of service, including landscaping, painting and cleaning.

Genipher Messer, owner of Idea Marketing, has volunteered to contribute both design and layout work for this year’s communications materials for United Way of Central Washington’s annual campaign.

More than 65 non-profit groups receive funding as a result of this drive. Last year, \$1,930,000 was contributed.

We look forward to seeing you all, as the campaign gets underway!



Terry Abeyta



Mike Broadhead



Ken Messer



Dave Dion



Elaine Beraza



Joe Falk



John & Monica Colgan