



Youth Senate Voices

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A PUBLICATION OF THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

202 EAST HURON #101, ANN ARBOR, MI 48104

P: 734.761.3005

F: 734.761.3820

senate@youthempowerment.com

Event Highlights

“Dialogue for Social Justice” Leadership Development Training

On Wednesday afternoon, April 29th, the Youth Senate will host its fourth Advanced Leadership Training workshop, which will focus on “Dialogue for Social Justice.”

Mikel Brown, MSW, Naomi Warren, MSW & JD, and Rebecca Mandell, HHS-12, will facilitate this session. The facilitators work under the mentorship of Dr. Michael Spencer (School of Social Work) and facilitate the Intercultural Social Justice Group (Inter-Group) program at both Huron and Ypsilanti high schools.

Walk-a-thon to help Youth Peer AIDS Education in Africa

The Youth Senate’s “Fight Poverty in Africa” Project is hosting a spring Walk-a-thon at 2pm on Sunday, May 31st, 2009. Walkers are meeting at Community High and walking to Burns Park for food, fun and awards.

The money raised through this Walk-a-thon will support a peer AIDS education project in rural Ghana. The Africa Project is also looking for more youth projects to support concerning other issues of poverty in Africa (i.e. conflict, water sanitation, education, etc.)

Senate vs. Big Wigs Game and Annual Picnic & Awards!

Join us on Sunday, May 31st at Burns Park for a potluck picnic, awards ceremony, and ‘Big Wigs vs. Youth Senate’ kickball game following the “Fight Poverty in Africa” Walk-a-thon. The awards ceremony will recognize graduating seniors and emerging high school

leaders. The afternoon’s activities will take place at Burns Park beginning at 3pm (set up and game warm-up at 2:30 pm by the shelter).

★ **View the new Senate Video online!** ★
Go to: www.youthempowerment.com

Spring Calendar

Events

- **Advanced Leadership Training Session 4:
“Dialogue for Social Justice”**
Wednesday, April 29th, 1:00 – 3:30 PM
(To register: alt@youthempowerment.com)
- **Fight Poverty in Africa Walk-a-thon**
Sunday, May 31st, 2:00 – 3:00 PM
(e-mail africa@youthempowerment.com)
- **Youth Senate Celebration!**
Sunday, May 31st, 3:00 – 5:00 PM
 - 3:00 - Big Wigs vs. Senate Kickball Game
 - 3:30 - Potluck Picnic (Finger foods please)
 - 4:00 - Leadership Awards & Recognition

Project Meeting Times

- **Fight Poverty in Africa Project:**
Mondays from 4:00 to 5:30 (Senate office)
 - Pioneer: Wednesdays at lunch **Rm. C227**
 - Huron: Tuesdays at lunchBoth lunches meet in **Media Center**
- **Achievement Solutions Teams:**
 - Pioneer: Mondays at lunch **Rm. C227**
 - Huron: Wednesdays at lunchEarly: **Rm: 9300**, Late: **Rm. 3206**
- **District-Wide Youth Senate Lead Team**
1st Monday each month 6:00 (Senate Office)
Call 761-3005 or senate@youthempowerment.com
- **Senate School Board Committee**
Every Wednesday 5:00pm (Senate Office)
Board Presentations bi-weekly @ 7:00pm

Achievement Solutions Teams (AST) Spring Push: SAVE YOUR GRADES!!

AST members are into their spring push, encouraging peers to finish the semester, and year, on a high note! Students at Huron and Pioneer are inviting schoolmates to *AST* peer support meetings at lunch. (See calendar.)

The *AST* is also seeking Adult Allies committed to a personalized support process for students whom they refer or know to be participating in *AST*. Lack of personalized support in AAPS high schools is a Barrier to Achievement identified by a majority of 1,400 students who participated in research on achievement disparities in 2005-07. The *Leap the Gap* research report can be viewed online at www.youthempowerment.com.

Youth Senate Membership Profile

Inter-Group Relations

The Intercultural Social Justice Group, or “Inter-Group,” students meet weekly, sharing experiences and becoming more aware of their identities and beliefs through use and development of their dialogue skills. Ultimately, through their increased understanding of social identity and justice, students also develop conflict resolution skills. The program culminates in a social action project designed by the students to create positive change in their community.

This year’s Social action project was for 9th grade Gateway students at Huron. It used team-building games and introduced IGR concepts including social justice and dialogue.

Inter-Group is currently operating in Ann Arbor Huron and Ypsilanti high schools and is being represented in the District Youth Senate by Rebecca Mandell, a Huron senior.

*YEP is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization
YEP projects are youth initiated and youth led.
Receive “Voices” by e-mail! Tell us:
senate@youthempowerment.com*

AST Student Aspirations

From members of the Achievement Solutions Teams as told to Superintendent Roberts and members of the School Board at Wednesday, April 22nd, 2009 meeting

- **Rachel Sharp, Huron Sophomore:**

The advice I received helped me build the confidence to get the help I needed to do better in school in many ways. One way was goal-setting. I use the Daily Tracking form to help me. I went from two E’s to a C and a D. I’m still working hard to be more organized and focused to turn my C’s into A’s and B’s.

- **Jaquan Thompson, Huron Junior:**

AST provides a safe environment to express my ideas and frustrations. The *AST* setting is a lot different than a classroom with lots of students. *AST* is a place where I can contribute and get help staying organized.

- **Keo Robin, Pioneer Junior:**

AST provides a peer support structure that helps me overcome personal obstacles and act against problems in school. It helps me rise academically and socially.

- **Emily Holmes, Huron Freshmen:**

AST is a great opportunity to make an impact, right here in Ann Arbor. I want the AAPS to be a great place for kids like myself to learn and grow, without having to worry about things like discrimination.

- **Abraham Liddell, Huron Junior:**

The *AST* is a collective group of unique and accepting individuals. Whenever I’m around them I feel that I can express myself freely. There are no expectations other than good character. The *AST* really makes me consider the possibilities of a good education...being around driven individuals instills drive in me.

- **Gabby Blakemore, Huron Sophomore:**

Positive peer influence and goal setting with the *AST* gives me a real sense of ownership over my educational choices.

- **Hernan Recendiz, Huron Junior:**

The *AST* has made me more of a leader. I like being involved and to have a say in my school and district. I want to help other classmates that are having problems in school and be an example for them to follow.

- **Ugo Uche, Pioneer Junior:**

AST has helped me with my academic focus, organizational skills, and it helped me open up socially. I’ve [also] gotten to develop friendships with students from other schools at the district-wide meetings.

- **Lenye Tynes, Huron Junior:**

The Achievement Solutions Team immerses me in a world of adult and student cooperation that teaches me to overcome and handle obstacles in a productive way.