

“Simply saying,  
I believe in you  
can make  
someone’s  
day.”



**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**  
**LIVE UNITED**   
United Way of Greater Rochester

# WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SCHOOL AGE YOUTH . . . AND WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US ABOUT THE YOUTH IN OUR COMMUNITY:

*Children who receive consistent, nurturing caretaking are more likely to function well in school, develop positive peer relationships and behave appropriately.*

**In 2007, 2,144 children (12 of every 1,000) in Monroe County were subject to a confirmed child abuse or neglect report.**

*Poverty increases the probability that an adolescent will engage in problem behaviors such as violence, delinquency and substance abuse.*

**Rochester has the 11th highest child poverty rate of all large American cities; In Monroe county, 7% of Caucasian children, 37% of African American children and 40% of Hispanic children aged 6-17 live in poverty.**

*Research suggests that the most important factor protecting children from experiencing negative effects of exposure to community violence is a strong relationship with a competent caring positive adult.*

**16% of Rochester City School District (RCSD) kindergartners have witnessed violence in their neighborhoods. 11% have witnessed violence in their homes.**

*English proficiency is highly predictive of lower performance on state tests.*

**During the 2006-2007 school year, 7.1% of Rochester public school children were of limited English proficiency, compared to 1.5% in suburban school districts.**

*Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of grade three.*

**About 1 out of every 10 RCSD high school students dropped out of school in the 2006-2007 school year, compared to about 1 out of 100 students in local suburban public high schools.**

*Children who experience early learning difficulties in school are at increased risk for behavioral, psychiatric and academic problems, including being retained a grade and dropping out of high school.*

**Academic achievement on New York State standardized tests tends to be lower in the RCSD as compared to suburban districts and widens as students progress up through elementary and middle school.**

*Children of teen mothers are less likely to graduate from high school and are more likely to become teen parents themselves. The sons of teen mothers are more likely to serve time in prison by the time they reach their late thirties/early forties.*

**Annually, about 1 in 10 births in Monroe County and 1 in 5 births in Rochester is to a teenage girl.**

# BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE: SCHOOL AGE YOUTH

Needing to build upon the Blueprint for Change: Early Childhood and ensure a continuum of support services for youth, United Way felt it imperative to turn our focus next to school age youth. We believe youth voice is important and we believe it is important to engage youth in partnering with adults to solve our community's problems. Rochester area kids told us what they thought about the situations and issues affecting them:

- We want to be recognized as a diverse group of individuals who want to contribute to our community in positive ways.
- We want consistent, stable and nurturing relationships with positive youth and adult role models (parents, family members, school staff and community members) who can provide support and guidance.
- We want safe places to play, to learn and to live.
- We want adults to expect greatness from all youth and to support us in achieving this greatness.
- We don't want to put all the responsibility on adults; we need to take responsibility for our decisions and actions.
- We engage in risky behaviors because of a sense of hopelessness and apathy.
- We are too often portrayed with negative stereotypes and marginalized.
- We are often expected to take on adult roles—taking care of younger siblings and contributing to the household income—and are exposed to adult responsibilities. We are not prepared.
- We don't feel valued and heard. We want and need a voice as partners with the decision-makers in our community.

## ABOUT THE BLUEPRINT PROCESS

United Way of Greater Rochester is working to advance the common good by making measurable change in our community. Our mission is to magnify and focus the power of community resources to address our most pressing social needs. The blueprint process represents a new approach for how we will invest the resources that support our work on behalf of the community. Any combination of these resources may be invested with the intent of making long-term, sustainable change:

### GIVE

United Way makes a financial commitment to a particular program focused on community needs.

### ADVOCATE

United Way serves as a convener, advocate and champion for issues identified by the blueprint process. This may result in a public policy initiative or simply convening community leaders for dialogue.

### VOLUNTEER

United Way acts as a catalyst for identifying volunteer needs to advance a strategy and mobilizing volunteers to carry out the work.

# GOAL: EVERY YOUNG PERSON IN OUR COMMUNITY IS READY BY 21 FOR COLLEGE, WORK AND LIFE

## OBJECTIVES & INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

### IMPROVED PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

- Improve social-emotional competencies (i.e., resisting peer pressure, improved decision-making, conflict management)
- Decrease high risk behaviors (drug use, risky sexual behavior, violence, delinquency)
- Reduce anti-social behaviors and attitudes
- Decrease in teen pregnancy

### IMPROVED SCHOOL SUCCESS

- Improve performance on standardized tests
- Improve GPA in core academic subjects
- Improve school attendance
- Reduce high school drop out rate

### MORE EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

- Increase coordination among agencies
- Increase level of parent satisfaction with service

## STRATEGIES

### AFTER-SCHOOL & SUMMER ENRICHMENT

Gives kids positive and nurturing programs in their out-of-school hours and influences positive and productive use of kids' discretionary time.

### MENTORING

Promotes positive outcomes in at-risk youth and can lead to better attendance in school; reduction in substance abuse, violence, and criminal behaviors; and stronger relationships with parents and peers.

### SELECTIVE PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION

Recognizes and addresses early warning signs for at-risk youth including school failure, drop out, pregnancy or delinquency.

### SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT

Offer better integration of services for children and their families, and make it easier to take advantage of those services.

## IMPLEMENTATION

United Way investments may be financial support, advocacy on issues, mobilizing volunteers or a combination of all three. We will fund both "evidence-based" programs (proved to work based on extensive research and having effective, long-lasting results) and "promising" programs (practices that have some evidence supporting effectiveness, but which have yet to be evaluated at the same level of rigor as evidence-based practices.)

### EVIDENCE-BASED OR PROMISING PROGRAMS

#### Be Proud! Be Responsible!

Addresses knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about sexual behaviors and teaches how to lower sexual risks.

#### Botvin's Life Skills Training

Develops students' skills to resist pressure to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

#### Teen Outreach Program (TOP)

Aims to reduce teen pregnancy, academic failure and suspension from school; helps youth understand their future life options.

#### Literacy

Funded summer and after-school programs will be required to utilize an evidence-based literacy program (such as Accelerated Reader).

### EVIDENCE-BASED OR PROMISING PROGRAMS

#### Community-Based Mentoring Program

Promotes pro-social behaviors by matching adult volunteers with at-risk youth.

#### Bry Achievement Mentoring

Improves attendance, grades and graduation with middle school students.

#### Hillside Work Scholarship Connection

Improves graduation rates, entry-level work skills and post-secondary education rates.

### PROMISING PROGRAMS

#### Coping Power Program (CPP)

Focuses on family communication/management skills and stress management for children with aggression problems and their families.

### RESOURCE INVESTMENTS

#### Knowledge Management

Create opportunities and systems to share best practices and advance the field of expertise.

#### United Way's Synergy Fund

Provides funding to agencies considering working together so they can better achieve their collective mission.

# YOU CAN HELP EVERY YOUNG PERSON IN OUR COMMUNITY BE READY FOR COLLEGE, WORK AND LIFE . . .

# GIVE.

The work outlined in the Blueprint for Change: School Age Youth will be entirely supported by contributions to the Community Fund.

Your gift to United Way's Community Fund joins with the generosity of your friends, family and co-workers to ensure the necessary resources are there to make a real difference to members of our community in need. It supports student readiness and success, resources for families in crisis and helps individuals achieve independence.

Please consider making a gift to the United Way this year and designating either all or part of your donation to the Community Fund. We all benefit when a child succeeds, when families are financially stable and when people are healthy.

# ADVOCATE.

Real and sustained change in community conditions requires more than money. It demands advocacy efforts. Some school age youth advocacy opportunities include:

- Advocate on behalf of access to quality child care for low-income working families
- Advocate on behalf of increased access to health insurance for children
- Advocate to help youth be heard
- Advocate for continued funding of 2-1-1 centers to ensure access to information and referrals

# VOLUNTEER.

Giving of your time is perhaps one of the most powerful ways to "give." Some school age youth volunteer opportunities include:

- Mentor at-risk youth in one-to-one mentoring relationships
- Work with youth in after-school and summer programs in a variety of ways including supporting reading, career exploration or artistic expression
- Volunteer at agencies that support kids

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