



Arlington's Alliance for Youth!

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America's Promise

October 2011

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 2010-11 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.

Growing Needs of our Youth

While our youth and families face significant financial challenges, we as a community must continue to care about our youth. Our youth are the first generation to face a high-tech global village where knowledge is reshaping our world on a daily basis. This complex environment requires that youth learn and develop at a much faster pace than their parents or grandparents did. While the challenges and opportunities facing our youth are great, the amount of support available to them has declined. Today there are more dual wage earner and single parent families working longer hours. Many families have no extended family nearby to help with their children. Additionally, many families are less connected to their neighbors. The number of families going through the trauma of divorce has increased from 2% in 1940 to almost 50% today. Given this, we must find new ways to help each other support the development of our youth. Not just our youth at risk, but all of our youth—including those with great academic work and preparation for leadership.

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 the past years we have made strong progress in developing support for the Five Promises in Arlington. The following collaborative actions have helped nurture this progress and develop new energy for this cause.

- **6th Annual Youth Collaboration Breakfast:** Over 200 community leaders and youth service providers assembled at the AISD Professional Development Center on February 18th to hear Kirsten Vandergriff talk about the volunteer spirit in Arlington, learn about our 2011 Signature Programs, and celebrate the success of community volunteers.
- **Small Grants Program (7th year):** Through our Small Grants program we have developed a grass roots effort that focuses on the Five Promises. We have provided 165 small grants since this programs inception in 2005. We invite our stakeholders to help us find ways to marshal support for this growing grass roots program that has helped thousands of youth.

- **Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) 2010 (4th Year as Lead Agency):** The Alliance was very pleased to be appointed by Youth Service America (YSA) to serve again as their Lead Agency in Arlington. They provided us a \$2000 grant to help organize the City's effort. We were very pleased to have UT Arlington's "The Big Event" help us expand the scope of GYSD by serving non-profits throughout North Texas. We had over 2700 participants from 70 different youth groups and youth serving organizations, including 24 different AISD campuses.
- **The Extra Mile Award (4th Year):** This year's First Rate Living Luncheon was held prior to GYSD in the Diamond Club at the Ballpark and featured Dr. B. Glenn Wilkerson, founder of the ARK Group, as keynote speaker. The Alliance is delighted to partner with First Rate, Inc., in presenting the Extra Mile Award to 7 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.
- **Arlington's Youth Service Leader of the Year Award (4th year):** This award is in memory of Sheris Grove, a strong advocate for Arlington youth. The award is offered at three separate levels—elementary, jr. high, and high school. Each awardee received a trophy--and their nominating youth group received a grant to help fund community service work during the following year.
- **City of Arlington's GYSD Thank-You Ceremony at the Levitt Pavilion:** Youth groups on GYSD gathered at the Levitt Pavilion for lunch and to hear Mayor Pro Tempore Lana Wolff express the thanks of a grateful city for all the service projects they completed. The Sheris Grove winners were announced by Cheryl Carpenter and awards given out to some inspiring youth. Youth groups and award winners were interviewed and videotaped by the AISD TV team. The video clips were then broadcast on the AISD cable TV's "Conversations" program.
- **The First Jerry Cooper Service Learning Scholarships;** This new scholarship program is based on school and community involvement, academic record and financial need. The winning students wrote an essay on the theme, "How My Service-Learning Experience in Arlington Made a Difference." Two tied students from Lamar and Seguin High Schools were each awarded a scholarship.
- **Arlington's Father Hood Initiative:** We are very pleased to announce the formation of this initiative which we hope will strengthen the fatherhood spirit in our community. Vice Chair Marc Marchand and Dr. Geoffrey Mitchell will be leading a Steering Committee as it strives to define issues and identify solutions that are sustainable and unique to Arlington. Currently we are planning for an event near Father's Day 2012.
- **Public Relations:** The Alliance has a PR committee who oversees the website, publishes our monthly e-newsletter, develops Facebook support, and provides news releases to the media.
- **Board Training:** Each September the Board and its advisors received professional training from a certified trainer for non-profits. Topics have included the legal and financial responsibilities of board member, board development, policy and procedures manuals, strategic planning, sustainability and fund raising.

New Directions for 2011: The Alliance would like to thank all partners and donors who have helped plan, organize, and support these 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 in these new directions:

1. Established an Executive Vice Chair to strengthen Alliance leadership
2. Update our bylaws to provide for growth and better performance
3. Invite Collaborating entities to take the Five Promise pledge.
4. Develop broader community support
5. Enhanced Website and Newsletter
6. Serve on the Arlington Chamber of Commerce Youth Advisory Council
7. Support the adoption of "Our Community, Our Kids"