



Arlington's Alliance for Youth!

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<http://www.arlingtonalliance4youth.org>



America's Promise

Annual Report to Stakeholders October 2, 2008

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 2007-08 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. This report will outline our growth and successes as well as remind us that there are many youth in our City who don't have the support they need.

Growing Needs of our Youth

While our economy presents 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. There are now 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. Given this, parents, grandparents, and neighbors must find new ways to help each other support the development of our youth.

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 with this support 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.

The Economic Perspective:

While the development of all our youth must be our first priority, there are two other advantages that benefit our community from saving a youth at risk. First, our community saves up to \$2 million dollars for government over that child's lifetime in costs associated with juvenile offenses, high school dropouts, adult crimes, welfare costs, and lower tax revenues. Second, we can develop a sense of caring that will make Arlington a great place where families can raise children and enjoy the benefits of community. Research shows that this happens best when we care about all children in our City.

Progress in Promoting the Five Promises: We are pleased that during the past year 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.

- **Fall Community Leaders Luncheon:** This event was sponsored by First Rate, Inc. and was attended by over 40 community leaders. Jim Holgersson discussed the needs of Arlington's youth and how we can work together to better support the Five Promises. A calendar of events that encourages collaboration was presented.
- **Strong Neighborhood Summit-Youth Module:** We organized and conducted discussion sessions with approximately 50 youth to determine their awareness of community resources that support each of the five promises. Art teachers from Arlington High Schools helped participants capture their vision of these resources and understand why they are important. Teachers and students, following the Summit, prepared a painting for each of the five promises which are now on display in the City's Main Library in the Studio: Teen Arts Underground.
- **Arlington Recognized as a Top 100 Best Community for Young People:** The Alliance assisted the City's committee in preparing a great application for the Top 100 Best Communities for Young People contest. This application reflects the great strength of youth serving initiatives across our City. The City was notified that it was selected as a winner and conducted a news conference on January 24th to speak about the many great features of our City that helped earn this honor.
- **3rd Annual Youth Collaboration Breakfast:** Over 140 volunteers and youth service providers assembled at Rolling Hills Country Club to hear a special video message from Alma Powell and Mayor Cluck about the honor of being selected as a Top 100 Best Community. We also recognized our 2007 AY grant winners, announced the 2008 grants program, and listened to our keynote motivational speaker, Janeé Harell.
- **Small Grants Program:** Through our Small Grants program we have developed a grass roots effort that focuses on the Five Promises. We were very pleased to award 28 small grants at our March City Hall Grants Ceremony. While this was a 17% increase over 2007, there were 15 additional grant requests for which we lacked funding. We invite our stakeholders to help us find ways to meet the growing grass roots program to provide active support for youth in challenging times.
- **Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) 2008:** The Alliance was very pleased to be appointed by Youth Service America to serve as their Lead Agency in Arlington. They provided us a \$2000 grant to help with these duties as well as travel money for a member of our board to attend a 3-day conference by the Youth Service Institute in San Diego. Dr. Shirley Theriot, Advisor to the Alliance and Director of UT Arlington's Center for Community Service Learning, also attended this conference. With this additional support we were able to triple the number of youth groups (39) participating in GYSD 2008.
- **Chamber of Commerce Foundation Sponsors GYSD Grants:** Council Member Kathryn Wilemon and I visited Wes Jurey CEO of the Chamber in Fall 2007 to discuss possible funding for GYSD youth groups. The Chamber saw this as a great opportunity to help our youth develop community leadership skills and offered a \$100 grant for each group. They appointed Allan Crawford as the Chamber's lead and pledged to help grow GYSD in the coming years. This incentive contributed significantly to our tripling the number of youth groups participating in GYSD in 2008.
- **Partnership with First Rate, Inc's Servant Leadership Appreciation Luncheon:** The Alliance was invited by First Rate, Inc to develop an award for adults that could be given out at their annual Servant Leadership Appreciation Luncheon. An ad hoc committee designed the award entitled "The Extra Mile Award" to honor those members of our community that go the extra mile in working with youth. The luncheon, scheduled for the Friday before GYSD, honored 12 great nominees who went the extra mile in serving our youth. The Award winner, Kelly Feuling was nominated by SafeHaven. The award allowed her to designate a non-profit agency to receive a \$5000 donation from First Rate Inc. Keynote speaker Tilley Bergin provided great insight to the notion of servant leadership as well as the accompanying humor of life. Council Member Mel Leblanc read the Mayors Proclamation for GYSD and offered comments. This event was very successful in promoting "caring adults" –the first promise.
- **UT Arlington's Youth Leadership Recognition Breakfast:** Each youth group participating in GYSD is asked to nominate a member of their group for the Sheris Growe Youth Service Leader of the Year Award. UT Arlington graciously invites all nominees to this breakfast to honor their leadership and service. This 2nd year event honored 31 nominees and their guests. State Representative Diane Patrick was the keynote speaker. Council Member Lana Wolff joined Representative Patrick in congratulating each honoree and posing for special photos.
- **City of Arlington Sponsors GYSD Closing Ceremony at Vandergriff Park:** After youth groups completed their GYSD projects they returned for our closing ceremony and the announcement of award winners. As each group returned they were interviewed by Council Member Lana Wolff, Cheryl Carpenter emcee, or AISD

Superintendent Montenegro about their project. The AISD TV team videotaped the interviews and published them as Conversations Show #117. The Sheris Growe winners were Callie Cunningham winning 1st place, Jennifer Loh 1st runner up, and Sarah Haggan 2nd runner up. Hot dogs, chips, and drinks were provided for those present.

- **Other Community Wide Collaborative Efforts Supported by the Board:**
 - Mayor's Youth Commission, Advisory Board
 - Teen Court Advisors Board Chair and Vice Chair
 - United Way-Arlington, Steering Committee Members
 - Out City, Our Kids Initiative, Members
 - Building Equitable Communities Committee, members
 - Success in Schools Dropout Summit, both Co-chairs plus two members
- **Conducted Board Training:** September 20th the Board and its advisors received professional training from Teresa Wright, a BoardSource certified trainer. This years training focused on board responsibilities with a special emphasis on strategic planning.

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. With your continued support, we can help Arlington continue to be a top 100 Best Communities for Young People when the City applies in Fall 2009.

Sincerely,

Jim Walther
Chairman of the Board
Arlington Alliance for Youth