

Coordinator's Corner

--COLLEEN HENDERSON

The Workforce Investment Act mandates that Youth Councils be developed to oversee youth employment activities. The Mendocino County Workforce Investment Board Youth Council is a permanent subgroup of the WIB. It is authorized to have up to 20 members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, primarily from youth serving agencies.



Current Youth Council members include Chairperson Patty Bruder, North Coast Opportunities (NCO); Dennis Aselyne; Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE); Carol Barrett, WorkAbility; Alexis Bertozzi, Youth Member; Carlos Jacinto, Nuestra Casa; Alese Jenkins, Independent Living Program; Tami Mee, WIA Youth Program; Cindy Miller, Mendocino Private Industry Council; Polly Palecek, Alcohol and Other Drugs Program; Vicki Patterson, Nuestra Casa; Donna Pierson-Pugh, Anderson Valley High School; Sherri Steinmann, Safe Schools/Healthy Students; Wendy Wall, Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Karin Wandrei, Mendocino County Youth Project; and Chris Warner-Casey, Community Development Commission.

The Youth Council acts as a clearing-house for youth services. Appointed by the Policy Council on Children and Youth to be the Teen System of Care Board, the Youth Council is developing a county-wide Youth Resources System to provide easily accessible resource information to adults connected with teens and young adults. Other current Youth Council activities include the Youth Philanthropy Board, funding of youth-initiated projects, serving as advisory committee to an AODP program to prevent teenage binge drinking, a quarterly resource newsletter, and a Work Readiness Certificate.

The Youth Council also initiated two successful countywide Youth Summits in the fall of 2002 and the spring of 2004.

Youth Philanthropy: Doing Good in the Neighborhood

--KATHLEEN SWAIN

What do a student-run coffee cart business, a digital video project about Native American culture, and an outdoor education program for teens have in common? They are all community-based projects developed by youth for youth in Mendocino County and funded by the Youth Philanthropy Board, a group of teenagers and young adults who serve as grantmakers.



Members of the Youth Philanthropy Board (front row) and the Youth Council gather at the end of their fifth training.

The Youth Council organized the board last year after receiving a start-up grant from the S.H. Cowell Foundation and funds for the youth projects from the Mendocino County Department of Social Services.

Youth were recruited throughout the county to participate in five trainings on grantmaking, application design, project development, evaluation, and fundraising. With \$1,500 to spend, the group made grants to three projects. Then they took on the oversight of existing youth projects, which were previously funded by the Youth Council, including a teen nightclub in Ukiah, a cultural awareness training at Anderson Valley High School, and a presentation on the dangers of drinking and driving to high school students in Willits.

While the board members had fun giving money to good causes, they also discovered that being a philanthropist is not necessarily an easy job. "Working on the Youth Philanthropy Board has been one huge learning experience. I had falsely assumed that it would be an excuse to skip school, but boy was I wrong. It has taken a lot of work, but through it all, I've managed to enjoy myself," participant Emma O'Rourke-Powell said. "It has been an amazing experience, from coming up with the application to reading (the applications) to having to

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Point Arena High School Coffee Cart is Brewing

--VIKKI ROBINSON



Senior Alex Mazzocco manages the Point Arena High School Coffee Cart business. Alex plans to pursue a career as a chef.

The Point Arena High School Coffee Cart, a student run school-based business of the WorkAbility I, Learning Center, and Career Center programs, successfully launched on February 14, 2005. Students, grades nine through twelve, are involved in the planning and execution of every area in the business.

Seed funding was provided through a student-written grant to the Mendocino County Youth Philanthropy Board, PAHS Boosters Club, and Mendocino County WorkAbility program. Jay Baker True Value Hardware in Gualala donated aprons.

Phase two, of a three-phase plan, was accomplished in April when Horicon School and a Point Arena Schools employee generously donated two espresso machines.

Students will produce the specialty coffee drinks everyone enjoys on cool foggy mornings, but the coffee will take a back seat to the nutritious smoothies students are producing.

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Bridging the Gap in Anderson Valley

--CYD BERNSTEIN

On January 25 and 26, Anderson Valley Junior/Senior High hosted the Bridging the Gap Summit. The first day of the summit consisted of a leadership training for 35 junior and senior high students and 17 adults from staff and the community.

Bridging the Gap Day took place the second day, and was attended by all students and faculty in grades seven through twelve. The student leaders led the rest of the student body through various activities that examined stereotypes, personal values, and issues of acceptance.

The morning began with a diversity bingo game in which students were asked to find their peers who met certain criteria. This encouraged students to mingle and relax. Bryce Skolfield, from the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), helped organize the event and began the day with a speech about acceptance.

After the introduction in the gym, students broke up into 17 groups, each group led by two student facilitators. Within these small groups, everyone played an introductory game and then joined two other small groups to form larger groups. In the larger groups, students participated in an activity called Sounds of Stereotypes, which involved identifying negative stereotypes and correcting misconceptions about certain groups.

Following lunch, students participated in an activity called Crossing the Line. The entire school stood on one side of a line and listened while different statements were read. If they agreed, they were asked to cross the line.

Bridging the Gap seemed to elicit different responses. Some students felt it was a waste of time; others felt they had never spent a school day so productively. Personally, I feel that it was an invaluable opportunity both for the leaders, who were challenged to facilitate groups of their peers, and for the rest of the student body, who were invited to step out of their comfort zones and into realms previously unexplored. Several students expressed an interest in beginning a Gay Straight Alliance group in response to the apparent lack of acknowledgement of the gay community in our school.

Bridging the Gap gave students the chance to shed their preconceived notions of others and learn to accept, not simply tolerate, those around them.

Willits Youth Learn the Dangers of Drinking and Driving

--JENNIFER JULIUS

Jason Barber, a nationally renowned motivational speaker who addresses the dangers of drinking and driving, will present at my high school (Willits) on May 11, 2005. His first presentation will be strictly for the students in my high school, and the second will be for the alternate high schools in our community. Jason is a very powerful speaker, and I know his presentation will result in a very positive change of perspective for many of the students in our community.

The total cost of this project was \$4,500 for his speaking fee and transportation. I was very fortunate to receive a \$2,500 grant from the Youth Council. The rest of the money I obtained from various local organizations that encouraged my project, such as Police Activity League and two groups at my high school. I've been very fortunate to receive so much support, and thus far I've submitted the holding deposit to secure Jason, and now I am simply counting the days until the presentation.

Editor's Note: Jennifer updated her article following Jason Barber's presentation: "Approximately 600 students from the area were able to attend and it was very beneficial. Various people thanked me for having him present, and told me how impactful it was. The response was amazing!"



Anderson Valley junior and senior high students participate in Crossing the Line activity during Bridging the Gap Day.

Youth Philanthropy (CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

decide to only fund some of the applications. I think that this board is a wonderful way for students to get real life experiences."

For Youth Council members who coordinated the board's formation, their reward was in observing the empowering impact of this experience on the young philanthropists.

"The Youth Philanthropy Board has empowered youth with the skills and support to be successful in community activities and resources," Sherri Steinmann, a member of the organizing committee, said. "They learned to work together, students from all areas of the county, to help orchestrate and create avenues of healthy activities for our youth. Creativity has blossomed, and it was wonderful to watch our youth in action."

Now the eight members of the Youth Philanthropy Board find themselves in the position of seeking financial support for their own organization, both to sustain the board with additional training and to fund additional youth projects. Aware of the significant role they have played in promoting positive change in the county, the board members are committed to continuing as grantmakers. They hope to use financial donations from individuals and businesses throughout the county to fund future applications and projects left pending due to lack of funds.

Board member Alexis Bertozzi, who also sits on the Youth Council, said, "The Youth Philanthropy Board is and was important to the county because it gave youth with a vision of change, a chance to change their community."

For more information about the Youth Philanthropy Board, please call 467-5590.

WIA Youth Services

Mendocino Private Industry Council, in partnership with the Mendocino County Office of Education, operates the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program. This program offers a full array of employment and training as well as educational services to eligible area youth. Tami Mee, Youth Services Manager, offered the following statistics for services provided during the last program year:

Services	Youth
Enrollment in WIA services	106
Summer employment	28
Other employment (internship and work experience)	19
Occupational skills training	5
Basic skills training (individual training from tutors)	53
Work readiness skills training (job skill preparation)	71

X-IT Makes an Entrance in Ukiah

--DANELLE READY

Teens in the Ukiah area are often left without something to keep them occupied. Such pure boredom can lead to unhealthy activities, such as drug and alcohol experimentation, especially on Friday nights. We, the Board of Directors of X-IT, a teen nightclub, hope to find a cure for behavior like this by planning dances and concerts that engage our fellow teens in appropriate social activities.

X-IT has come a long way from its beginnings as a simple idea. The project had been discussed on many a lonely weekend night when we called one another asking what there was to do tonight. We invented a make believe teen nightclub and thought it was only a dream. But with the help of the Mendocino County Police Activity League and a grant from the Mendocino County Workforce Investment Board Youth Council, we have been able to bring our dreams into reality. We've been meeting every Wednesday and often on weekends to organize ourselves. Steve O'Mara, from West Company, helped us to formulate a complete business plan, including a mission statement.

X-IT's first big project was a community forum held March 23, 2005. To prepare for this event, we sent out over 50 invitations, made a reservation for a building, and purchased food for refreshments. Michael Kisslinger, of North Coast Opportunities/ Catalyst, gave us lessons in meeting facilitation and helped us form an outline for the evening. In this forum, we gained an outside perspective on X-IT from top community, business, and government leaders. They helped us see the positives and negatives of our existing plans and how to further them. We collected names of businesses and people who may donate both time and money to our cause. With the community's input we now see what challenges lay ahead of us as well as possible ways to deal with them.

We are now looking forward to our first X-IT-produced concert. We've reserved the Fine Arts Building at the Ukiah fairgrounds for Friday, May 13. Flyers have been produced and distributed at the Family Expo and at Ukiah High School. Plans for the concession stand have been made and the bands Overshadowed, Gnor Kall, and Definition Unknown have all agreed to play for us.

Our participation in X-IT has provided us an education in business management, community organization, fundraising, and implementation of a business plan. It has taken stamina and dedication. But we are willing, as we want to reach our goal of a nightclub designed for and operated by teens, providing entertainment and diversions that are acceptable to teens, their parents, and the community. *Editor's Update: Some 200 teens enjoyed X-IT's May 13th concert.*

Anderson Valley Youth Explore the Great Outdoors

--ISIDORA JIMENEZ

My school, Anderson Valley, has more activities to offer to students because we received grants from the Youth Philanthropy Board and other foundations. Now we have some recreational trips on weekends. I say "some" because it takes a lot of effort to organize them, and on top of that, they are very expensive.

The awarded grant of \$500 helped us create the first two recreational trips, and there is going to be one more on April 16. The first trip was awesome! Nine other students, three adults, and I went snowshoeing near Lake Tahoe. It was a wonderful experience for all of us, but it was a better one for those of us who had never been in the snow and had never gone snowshoeing before. We learned about the environment while interacting with others. We got to know each other better and learned to trust others.

There was another trip, but I did not attend it. From hearing about other people's experiences about this trip, I got the impression that it

was a fun trip. It was a ten-mile walk through Cache Creek Wilderness in Lake County. They went around looking at the environment and learning about different things. These trips have helped us become more aware of our surroundings.

The next trip will be to the Lost Coast. They are going backpacking and staying there overnight. It will help them learn more about each other and become more educated about their environment.

These trips have expanded the horizons of a lot of young people like me, and have given all of us teenagers in our community a space to do something else besides drugs. These foundations made it possible for us to start doing these trips. With the money we received from these foundations, we have been able to present students with an environment that has more activities. It gives people more choices of activities to do on the weekends. Since there are few activities going on in this small town, Boonville, these recreational trips give the habitants in this valley more options. These trips represent a way to get out to the world and learn about and experience other places.

I, as well as my peers, am really thankful for having gotten this grant. I am also thankful for having gotten the opportunity to experience new things while interacting with my peers.

Coming Soon...Life on the Rez II

--BLAKE MORE

Our trip to the Sundance Film Festival to participate in the Sundance Reel Studio Young Filmmakers Program in the winter of 2003 proved to be an excellent training ground for eliciting a powerful new message.

The trip allowed five of our Rez youth to travel to Park City, Utah to share their work with other youth filmmakers (nine groups from the nation were chosen to participate, ours being one of them).

While incredibly inspiring, this trip caused our youth to re-evaluate their entire creative outlook and sent them into a spiral of soul searching to refine their message and redefine what they wanted to portray in their second video effort. They thought that this video would be made last year, but they have realized that time has been a blessing.



Darrell Bechtol and Vincent Maruffo edit *Life on the Rez II* video at the Arena Technology Center in Point Arena.

Darrell "Hisham" Bechtol (the director of *Life on the Rez*) and Vincent "Bertsie" Maruffo are working with North Coast Rural Challenge Network coordinator, Kim Swenson, and artists, Blake More and Christian Birk, to complete the project. Storyboards have been created, poems have been written, original music composed, and many hours of video have been shot. The video has been digitized and now the youth are deep in the editing process. Their goal is to complete the project before the "Youth Create Multimedia Festival" on June 14 at the Arena Theater in downtown Point Arena.



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Senior Maribel Coria presents a kiwi strawberry smoothie she made for students to sample at the Point Arena High School Earth Day celebration.

PAHS Coffee Cart (CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

The PAHS Coffee Cart is looking for a new name, and students are being encouraged to submit suggestions. The business revised its original focus on specialty coffee beverages to also feature healthy lifestyle choices and nutrition. For example, in honor of Earth Day, the diligent student coffee cart employees invited the student body to sample organic vegetable juice, an assortment of melons, and fresh fruit smoothies at the Career Center during lunch. The Coffee Cart students created and tested many of the recipes.

The project's third phase is to acquire a cart so that the business can become mobile. The cart will enable us to participate in extra curricular activities such as sports concessions or community events like the Fourth of July parade and fireworks, where vendors are encouraged to participate.

Currently the Coffee Cart is open for business two days a week: before school, during morning break, and occasionally during lunch. The students hope to develop the business into a student run café in the future. Considering the enthusiasm the crew exhibits on Coffee Cart days, there is no doubt that their dream is well within reach.

WIB ADMINISTRATION

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This is a quarterly publication for business leaders of Mendocino County. We invite comments and suggestions on this and future publications.

Please let us know if you would prefer to receive this by email, or if you would prefer to be removed from our mailing list.

To contact us regarding this publication, please call (707) 467-5590 or send an email to swaink@mcdss.org.

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WANTED: BUSINESS OWNERS, OPERATING OFFICERS & CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Congress set up local Workforce Investment Boards to be business-driven. If you are interested in steering the workforce development system in Mendocino County, consider becoming a WIB member. Call 467-5506 for a board member packet and membership application.

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