

# MILFORD'S PROMISE

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*The Alliance for Youth*



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[www.milfordspromise.org](http://www.milfordspromise.org)

## President's Message

Barbara Walsh, PhD and  
Wendy Gibbons-Shepro, LCSW



Here we are in 2009 already . . . a new year with new needs but also new opportunities. Our country is starting off the New Year with a new president who said "service will be a central cause of my presidency". I reflect on an excerpt from a speech Mr. Obama gave in Colorado in July that begins, "We need your service, right now, in this moment - our moment in history".

Milford's Promise offers people many opportunities to serve and give back to our community. We encourage you to contact us to learn more about the great work that is being done in our community and how you might play a role in its success. We are excited about our new programs this year. We have added a new school to our mentoring program - Live Oaks - and will continue to add new schools as the year progresses. President and First Lady Obama are strong supporters of mentoring and we expect in the next few years to see a great expansion in mentoring. We are very pleased with the positive outcomes that we have seen with the mentees and look forward to building on this in the future. We have added two new exciting programs to our After School Activities. A national report issued by "Fight Crime; Invest In Kids" states that "on school days, 3 - 6 p.m. are the peak hours for teens to commit crimes, be victims of crime, be in or cause a car crash and smoke, drink or use drugs". I think we can all agree on the importance of safe after school environments for our kids. In

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1
After School Programs Continue at WSMS	1
You Can Make a Difference, Mentors Needed	2
Milford's Promise to Host a Toy Tag Sale	2
Boys & Girls Club of Milford Open to Public	3
Respect Month Approaching	3
Milford Youth & Family Continues "Rent-A-Kid" Program	3
Youth Improv Group Raises Awareness	3
Junior Achievement Appoints New District Manager	5
High School Students Promote Respect	5
Milford Health Department Asks "Are You Ready?"	6

addition, the work of the RESPECT Club will continue and we are very excited about our new program, SR3, which you can read more about later in this newsletter.

Overall it has been a good year for Milford's Promise and we are energized as we look forward to the challenges this Year will bring. We thank you for your past support and look forward to a renewed partnership that will help the young people of Milford grow and develop into capable young adults.

## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS CONTINUE AT WSMS

To help meet the need for positive, free after school programs for middle school students in Milford, Milford's Promise continues to work in conjunction with Principal Vince Scarpetti and several faculty members at West Shore Middle School to provide a safe place and constructive activity one day per week for any students interested. We currently are able to provide 3 after school programs at West Shore; an archery program, a jam band and homework / study skills program. Currently over 60

Please see *After School* on page 4

## MENTORS NEEDED! YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Milford's Promise, in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of SWCT, is happy to announce that Live Oaks was recently added to our elementary school mentoring program. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> school to participate in this program, joining Orchard Hills, Meadowside and Pumpkin Delight. Our goal is to see this program in all 9 elementary schools in the city. Right now our biggest challenge is recruiting mentors. Because our program takes place during the school day, we need caring adults with flexible enough schedules that will allow them to commit 1 hour per week to making a difference in the life of a child. Our recent POE (Program Outcome Effectiveness) data shows that the students in the first year of their match have shown marked improvements overall academic performance specifically in science and written oral language, improved quality in assignments

*“Be the change you wish to see in the world”*

## MILFORD'S PROMISE TO HOST A TOY TAG SALE

We will be hosting a gently used children's toy tag sale on Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am – 6:00pm at the Milford Oyster Fest, in the Milford Bank (Broad St) parking lot. Come down and check it out! As the old saying goes “one child's trash is another child's treasure.” We will be sharing the parking lot space with Good Shepherd Church who treasure.” We will be sharing the parking lot space with Good Shepherd Church who will be hosting a children's used book sale at the same time.

We will be collecting donations of gently used toys and books for our tag sale starting immediately until August 10. Drop off locations are the Boys &

turned in, increased quantity of submitted homework assignments, and decrease in serious school infractions i.e., principals' office visits / fighting. Students in the second year of their match (also according to gathered POE data) show increased scholastic efficacy (feeling more competent academically), decreased absences from school and better self esteem and aspirations of attending high school and college successfully in the future. In general, studies show that children with mentors show better performance in school, higher self esteem and less likelihood to engage in risky behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. Imagine making such a profound impact on a child in just one hour of your time per week. Our goal is to see this program expand to serve more youth and continue to improve these factors for each child.

To learn more about our program and find out how you can make a difference, please contact Danielle Dumont, Executive Director at [cmdumont@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmdumont@sbcglobal.net) or 203-490-9160

Girls Club (14 Benham Ave) and YMCA (631 Orange Ave) during their normal hours of operation. *Use this as an opportunity to clean out your toy closets for a good cause.* No stuffed animals please. Receipts can be provided upon request for tax purposes. Please direct any questions to Danielle Dumont at [cmdumont@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmdumont@sbcglobal.net) / 490-9160



Congratulations Milford named one of America's "100 Best Communities for Young People" for the third consecutive year!

***ARE YOU AN ORGANIZATION OF PROMISE?***

We are looking to recognize schools, churches, organizations and businesses in the community that are committed to delivering the 5 key Promises to ensure the success of our youth.

Do you provide youth with:

*Caring Adults  
Marketable Skills  
Safe Places  
Healthy Starts*

*Opportunities to give back to the community*

If so, visit [www.milfordspromise.org](http://www.milfordspromise.org) to learn more about this program, see a complete listing of current "OOPs" and download an application.

message of Respect in their schools to be named respect stars. From this group, the principals choose the top students to be named Ambassadors of Respect. The Ambassadors will then be honored at a city wide Respect Celebration hosted at City Hall on Thursday May 21 at 7:00pm. The Mayor will present a Proclamation to the city and present each ambassador with a plaque to commemorate the honor. Honors students will be sent an invitation to this event and a press release will be published in local papers with further details. All Respect stars and Ambassadors will be invited to march in the Memorial Day parade on Sunday May 24, 2009.

Although we reserve the month of May to honor those that exemplify the message of respect, it is important to point out that Respect is something that should be lived every day of the year. Always remember, "To get Respect, you must give Respect".

## Respect Month Approaching

It is almost that time once again to celebrate May, National Respect Month. Notices will be sent out to all schools shortly to begin identifying "respectful" students. Teachers, school staff and peers are asked to nominate students that they feel exemplify the

## Milford Youth and Family Services Continues "Rent-A-Kid" Program

Do you have a job that seems overwhelming? If so, Milford Youth and Family Services are reaching out to Milford residents who are looking to have jobs completed in and around their homes. Milford Youth and Family Services maintain a list of youth within the Milford community who are looking for part time work. Currently, the Rent-A-Kid program has 144 youth involved in the program. The program targets youth between the ages of 12-17 interested in temporary, part time jobs such as shoveling snow, yard work, raking leaves, gardening, child care and other miscellaneous needs. The program will assist youth in acquiring work experience, a sense of responsibility and self-confidence.

Residents, who contact the agency looking to have a job completed, will be matched up with a youth within their neighborhood area. With so many youth involved in the program and eager to work,



we will be able to find a youth in your area. Interested residents may contact Lindsey Bartlett for more information at 783-3253.

## Youth Improv Group Raises Awareness

Milford Youth and Family Services are currently working with 20 middle school students in a psychodrama program. The psychodrama program is an improvisational theatre group designed to raise awareness of issues facing youth, families, and the community, through the use of skits. Facilitated by family therapists, the purpose is to educate and heighten the awareness of audiences and theatre members concerning the family experience.

Please see *Youth Improv* on page 5

*After School* from page 1



*Principal Vincent Scarpetti gets a lesson in Archery from advisor Dave Zunski*

students participate in the Archery club and it continues to be a great success. Their hope is to someday become a member of the NASP (National Archery in Schools Program but CT is not yet a participating state in this national program. The advisor for this program has been in communication with state officials to help make this goal become a reality. If this happened it would mean national recognition and potential for state funding as well. In the meantime, the students are having a blast with the program and had to be divided into 4 separate groups because of the overwhelming interest. The Musical Jam Band club and Study Skills programs are also widely enjoyed

*"Who knows what these students might potentially become involved in after school?"*



*Homework club busy at work*



*President Wendy Gibbons-Shepro also get a lesson in Archery from advisor Dave Zunski*

by approximately 30 students per week. Members of Milford's Promise Executive Board, Wendy Gibbons-Shepro, Danielle Dumont and Alison Tighe recently visited these programs to gauge their success and show their support. "During our visit, we participated in an archery lesson, sat in on a jam band session rocking out to Led Zeppelin and observed students quietly and diligently involved in completing their homework assignments", commented Executive Director Danielle Dumont. "It was wonderful to see students actively enjoying the programs we are able to offer. If not for these programs who knows what these students might potentially become involved in after school. We are happy to be able to offer these safe, constructive activities during the critical after school hours". Milford's Promise is always looking to build their funding capacity to be able to continue these programs at WSMS and ideally expand to the other middle schools as well.

*Student jamming at Jam Band after school program*



*Youth Improv* from page 3

Participants will present real life situations that explore the emotions that family members experience both individually and collectively. The program fosters insight and emotional growth for theatre members and audiences because of the experiential design of the performances.

The improvisational group has been working together since November 2008 and is currently working on skits to perform in the elementary schools and within the Milford community.

## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT APPOINTS NEW DISTRICT MANAGER

Pam Kezer has recently replaced Joe Meade as the District Manager of Jr. Achievement in Milford.

We welcome her to the area and look forward to working with her to continue growing JA in the Milford schools. To help maintain the close relationship developed by her predecessor between JA and Milford Youth Servicing agencies, Pam has joined the Milford's Promise Board of Directors and also attends the monthly Milford Youth Service Network Meetings.

For those that may not be familiar with Junior Achievement. They are a non-profit organization dedicated to preparing and inspiring young people to succeed in a global economy. They offer programs for students in grades K-12. Through these programs students learn the difference between needs and wants as well as how things work in their community including citizenship, economics, matters of business and the roles of people working in a community. All of the elementary schools in Milford are currently receiving the "JA in A Day" programs. These events are held at the school during the school day from 9 am to 1 pm. Pam is currently looking for volunteers to teach these programs to the students. Pam adds, "You don't need an MBA to

For more information on this group, please contact Lindsey Bartlett at 783-3253.



### Milford Schools Upcoming "JA in a Day" Events

Thursday – April 2	<i>Pumpkin Delight</i>
Thursday – May 7	<i>Racebrook, Orange</i>
Friday – May 8	<i>Orchard Hills</i>
Thursday– May 21	<i>Orange Ave</i>

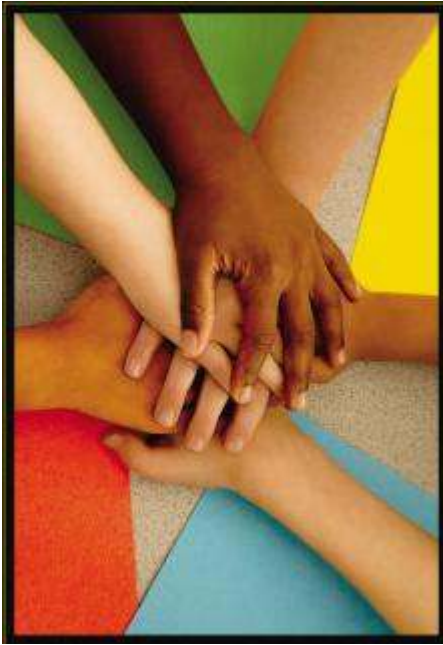
teach JA! We will provide you the materials, training and even lunch. The programs are student friendly, fun and easy to deliver"

To learn how you can make a difference as a JA volunteer, contact Pam Kezer at 203-779-5483 or [pkezer@jaconn.org](mailto:pkezer@jaconn.org).

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PROMOTE RESPECT

Under the advisement of Dave Ullman , former Milford public school teacher and Milford's Promise board member a collaborative Respect coalition has been formed amongst area high school students. Students from Law, Foran, Platt and Laurelton Hall meet regularly to discuss the ongoing need to promote respect and "change the norm" in their schools. They call themselves "SR^3" which stands for Students for Respect, Responsibility and Resilience and currently have approximately 25 active members. Liz Denhup, a Foran high school senior and Milford's Promise board member shares, "We are interested in fostering self-respect, respect for others and their property and respect for the environment which includes school climate. It is our goal to raise awareness on the differences between perception and reality, stereotype and truth.

*Please see Promote Respect on page 7*



Please RSVP by April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
 Marie Capiris (203) 876-7536  
 or email [Capiris@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Capiris@sbcglobal.net)

THE MILFORD COLLABORATIVE  
 Presents a Workshop on Cultural Awareness  
 “BREAKING THE CYCLE OF CONDITIONING”

- *To increase understanding of how culture impacts our daily lives, both personally and professionally.*
- *To become more aware of how our cultural background, beliefs and experiences shape the way we view, interact and service others.*
- *Understanding that culture goes beyond racial and ethnic differences*

WHEN: THURSDAY, APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2009  
 8:30 - 9:00 am Registration and Continental Breakfast  
 Workshop: 9:00-12:00 noon  
 Location: The United Church of Christ in Devon  
 30 Ormond Street, Milford

**THE EVENT IS FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
**HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**



***POE data shows students in the 1st year of their match have shown marked improvements in***

- Overall academic performance specifically in science and written oral language.
- Improved quality in assignments turned in to teachers
- Increased quantity of submitted homework assignments
- Decrease in serious school infractions i.e., principals' office visits / fighting.

***Students in the 2nd year of their match show***

- Increased scholastic efficacy (feeling more competent academically)
- Decreased absences from school
- Better self esteem and aspirations of attending high school and college successfully in the future

Imagine making such a profound impact in the life of a child by donating just one hour of your time per week. For more information on our program or to find out how you can make a difference, please contact Danielle Dumont, Executive Director at [cmdumont@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmdumont@sbcglobal.net) or 203-490-9160

Visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)  
 Search on “Milford Mentoring” to  
 watch a powerful video about why  
 you should be a mentor.

*Promote Respect* from page 5

Together we can strengthen our community from within, and have a positive impact on our own lives as well as the lives of those around us". SR^3 is currently working on a PSA video promoting Respect that they plan to show in each school and also post on youtube.com. For more information on what this group has been working on, contact Dave Ullman at [dju430@aol.com](mailto:dju430@aol.com).

## Milford Health Department Asks "Are You Ready?"

"3 Days, 3 Ways, Are You Ready?" is a public motivation campaign urging individuals, families and the community to prepare for potential emergencies and disasters. 3 Days, 3 Ways is a message that relies on the participation and action of every citizen of Milford.

The 3 Days, 3 Ways message is simple: Be ready to survive on your own for at least 3 days

following a disaster. In a large disaster, a community could be without outside assistance for several days. Work with your family to become prepared in 3 Ways –

1. Make a plan
2. Build a kit
3. Get involved

Any steps the public takes today will put them, as well as the community, in a greater position for resiliency, whether from a major storm, power outage, pandemic flu outbreak, or a terrorist act.

On a local level, Project Manager Bruce Varga, Milford Health Department Intern Amy Shields and Youth Coordinator Chelsea Donini are currently introducing the program to the citizens of Milford through presentations to a variety of volunteer associations, high school clubs and projects with fifth grade public and parochial students.

Go to [3Days3Ways.org](http://3Days3Ways.org) for more information or contact Bruce Varga directly at [BVarga@newhaven.edu](mailto:BVarga@newhaven.edu)

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