



East Haddam
Youth & Family Services, Inc.

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Winter 2011

Upcoming Events

Stuff a Cruiser

Saturday December 10
9:00am-4:00pm
Nathan Hale Plaza

Holiday Campaign

Donation Deadline:
December 16

Gift Pick-Up:
December 21 & 22

Family Night

Friday January 20
6:30-8:00pm
Elementary School Cafeteria

Open to all students (grades
K-5) and their families

S.H.A.R.P

January 25th, February 1st and
February 8th
5:00-6:30pm
Middle School Library

Contact Information:

Telephone: 860-873-3296
Fax: 860-873-3243
Email:
youthandfamily@prodigy.net

Visit www.EHYFS.org for
additional information, or
find us on Facebook!

Welcome to the first edition of the East Haddam Youth & Family Services newsletter. We plan to produce four editions each year, winter, spring, summer and fall. **Future editions will only be available electronically. If you are interested in receiving this newsletter, please visit www.ehyfs.org and join our contact list.** Our hope is that the newsletter will provide you not only with information about upcoming events and what our agency is doing directly, but also snapshots of the collaborations we develop on a regular basis to educate, support and nurture our young people, their families and the community as a whole. We hope that you find it informative, thought provoking at times, and educational. The staff and Board of Directors of East Haddam Youth & Services wish each and every member of our community a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

Holiday Campaign

All of a sudden, the holidays are upon us and once again East Haddam Youth & Family Services is in need of donations for our annual Holiday Campaign. As always, our greatest challenge is youth ages 12-18. Any gifts for these older children, including gift cards, are greatly appreciated.

Anyone interested in “adopting” a family for the holidays should contact EHYFS. Donations can be delivered to 387 East Haddam-Moodus Road, Moodus, from now through December 16, 2011.

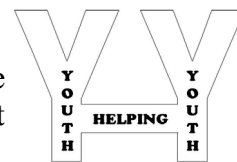
Parents or guardians of children age birth to 18 who live in the East Haddam/Moodus community and are in need of gifts for Christmas are encouraged to contact EHYFS at 860-873-3296.

EHYFS Annual Appeal

Shortly, you will be receiving our annual appeal letter in the mail. This is an invitation for you to invest in continuing to create a community culture that allows all of our residents to thrive. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to East Haddam Youth and Family Services. Your financial support will help to make a difference in the lives of so many people right here in East Haddam. Thank you so much for your generous and very appreciated financial donation.

Youth Making a Difference

Youth Helping Youth is a high school leadership group dedicated to creating positive experiences and activities for youth in East Haddam. In partnership with EHYFS, this group creates leadership opportunities for high school students. Members of YHY believe that youth in East Haddam should be given the opportunity to make positive choices about how they spend their time, how they relate to their peers, and how they connect with the community.



Teens in Action is a community service group open to middle school students in grades 6, 7 & 8. This group takes part in annual activities including a coat drive, holiday campaign and food drive, all to benefit the town of East Haddam.

Teen Leaders Changing Lives is comprised of 7th and 8th grade students who represented East Haddam in the first annual Teen Power Conference this summer. Students came together with youth from Durham-Middlefield to participate in this conference that emphasized the importance of youth leadership in the fight against underage drinking and other substance use. TLCL is currently sponsoring a poster contest for middle school students, grades 6-8 and creating a series of videos that will focus on educating parents, teachers, peers and the community about the effects of underage drinking and drug use.



Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth

The term “**Developmental Assets**” is not new to our community. Assets represent developmental building blocks that are essential for all children and youth. We can think of Developmental Assets as external experiences in the home, school, peer group and community that support and nurture young people and the internal values, attitudes, and competencies that work together to help them become healthy, independent and successful young adults.

A 2010 survey of our youth, grades 7 through 12, indicated that 14% of them report fewer than 10 assets in their lives, 13% report between 30 and 40 assets, with the majority reporting between 10 and 30 assets.

As a community, we can draw upon the inherent strengths of our youth and adults to increase assets in young people. We can:

- Give them adequate adult support through positive intergenerational relationships;
- Provide meaningful leadership and community involvement opportunities;
- Engage them in youth-serving programs;
- Provide consistent and well-defined behavioral boundaries and guidelines;
- Help them connect to our community; and
- Create opportunities to develop social competencies and form positive values.

One recent example of how these principles are being supported in East Haddam is through the Lions and Community Lions who recently began a **LEO Club** (Leadership, Equality, Opportunity) for youth ages 12-18. This group provides new and exciting volunteer opportunities for young leaders who work to complete activities in partnership with adult members. The LEO Club provides an opportunity for youth to contribute to activities as responsible members of the community.

Rachel's Challenge

On October 19th, EHYFS, in partnership with the NHRMS faculty and with support from MPAC, brought "Rachel's Challenge" to Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School. Students and faculty attended an assembly that detailed the life of Rachel Scott, the first victim of the 1999 Columbine shooting in Littleton, CO. The mission of Rachel's Challenge is based on the writings she left in her journals and school assignments, as well as her many acts of kindness and compassion. Rachel's Challenge asks students to create a culture of kindness in their school and community by overcoming prejudices, choosing positive influences and committing to engaging in small acts of kindness. An evening presentation was also offered to parents and the community.

Following this powerful presentation, students in grades 6-8 were given the opportunity to join the newly formed **Chain Reaction Club**. By completing school and community based projects, this group will spread Rachel's message of kindness and compassion throughout the East Haddam community.

East Haddam Local Prevention Council (LPC)

The East Haddam Local Prevention Council is a community group that represents various sectors of East Haddam and is interested in reducing the incidence of substance abuse among young people in our community. Focusing on alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention, the group supports the work of EHYFS and forms a collaborative team to enhance positive youth development in the community.

Anyone interested is welcome to join the LPC either as a member or to support specific projects or activities throughout the year.

Safe Home Alone Readiness Program (S.H.A.R.P)

This four-hour program provides valuable safety information for children ages 10 and older who stay home alone. The course consists of two 90-minute classes followed by a one-hour graduation. It is required that at least one parent attend the graduation. Through role playing, hands-on activities, and speakers from local police and fire departments children will learn basic fire, medical and personal safety tips. Students who attend all three classes will receive a Certificate of Completion. There is no cost to attend this event, but space is limited. Contact EHYFS by January 18th to register 860-873-3296.

Tip Line (860-873-5013)

It is vitally important for everyone in our community to focus attention on creating the positive conditions necessary to nurture healthy development in our young people. Each of us has an important role to play in ensuring that these conditions exist, and each of us shares the responsibility to pay attention to and confront behaviors and activities that threaten the health, safety and positive futures of our youth and our community. Parties or gatherings where under-age young people are drinking or using drugs rate highly among those activities. If you become aware or suspect that this is happening in your neighborhood, please call the Tip Line. It is anonymous and confidential.