



# Wilmette Youth Commission's 2008 Report to the Community

## ***A Message from Ann Hughes, Chair of the Wilmette Youth Commission***

The Wilmette Youth Commission (WYC) is appointed by the Wilmette Village Board to provide input on matters pertaining to youth. This annual report is published to share information about issues and initiatives impacting the young people in our community. This year's issue will highlight the ground breaking work of three organizations:

- **TAFY** – The New Trier Township Alliance for Youth recently completed a survey of parents, youth, and community members to identify issues facing young people from grades 6 through 12.
- **The Kindness Connection** – A home grown social service agency formed in 2006 by two Wilmette parents to coordinate volunteer and service learning activities for elementary and junior high school students.
- **The Charmm'd Foundation** – An organization focused on building stronger communities based upon educating the whole person.

We welcome the opportunity to serve our wonderful community and hope that you enjoy this report. As always, we look forward to your feedback at [youth@wilmette.com](mailto:youth@wilmette.com). Thanks for your time and attention.

## **New Trier Township Alliance for Youth Survey Findings Are Available!**



The New Trier Township Alliance For Youth (TAFY) Needs Assessment Project, which was started in March 2006 and funded by New Trier Township, the Village of Wilmette, the District 39 Educational Foundation, local faith communities, parents, and other interested community groups, has completed its data collection phase and results are now available to the public. This is the first Township-wide youth needs assessment in over 20 years.

TAFY researchers used interviews, focus groups and town hall meetings with over 150 community leaders, parents, teachers, park district staff, social service providers, school superintendents, village trustees, and youth themselves, to gather information. This information was used to design a unique web-based survey that was available in June 2008 for a random sample of community members and parents as well as students in grades 6-12 in New Trier Township. A total of 528 respondents across the community completed the survey. TAFY expects the findings to inform parents and youth-serving groups across the Township and stimulate discussions regarding opportunities to improve support of youth. **The WYC's 2008 Report summarizes some of the key statistics from the TAFY findings.** For more information about the study, please contact [tafy@linksyouth.org](mailto:tafy@linksyouth.org).

### **Differences in Perceptions Between Teens/Adults**

The survey reported differences in perceptions between young people and parents regarding rules and their conversations about tough issues. Please note that adult and youth respondents were not likely to be from the same family.

#### **"In my home, there is a parent or some other adult member who...**

**...enforces the rules that have been set." (% reporting "pretty much true" or "very true")**

High schoolers	79%
Parents	98%

**...has talked with me in the past 6 months about" (% reporting "pretty much true" or "very true")**

	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Alcohol Use</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> graders	26%	52%
7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> graders	28%	66%
High schoolers	18%	52%
<b>Parents</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>89%</b>

## Other statistics from the TAFY report....

Availability of Alcohol and Drugs			
The following is the % of students who said it would be "Easy" or "Fairly Easy" to get alcohol or drugs if they really wanted them.			
	Alcohol	Marijuana	Cocaine/Other Illegal Drugs
7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> graders	72%	30%	17%
High schoolers	93%	81%	44%

Difficulties for Teens	
Respondents were asked to rank the <b>hardest things for teens</b> to deal with in our community.	
6 <sup>th</sup> graders said...	Peer pressure and getting along with students/making friends
7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> graders said...	Peer pressure and stress/depression
High schoolers said...	Stress/depression and competition (academics, sports, etc.)

Feelings About Family Time	
Percentage of those who responded that they <b>"do not spend enough time together as a family"</b>	20% of high schoolers
	50% of parents with children in grades 6-12.

Emotional Health	
Although over 80% of <b>parent</b> respondents said that their child's overall <b>emotional health was "excellent" or "good,"</b>	
71% said...	They were concerned about their child's level of stress.
14% said...	They thought that their child might be depressed.
According to parents, the top contributors to their child's level of stress are: the <b>amount of schoolwork</b> , the <b>pressure to compete and excel</b> in school and <b>peer pressure</b> or relationships with other children.	

How Do New Trier Township Youth Spend Their Time?		
TAFY survey respondents reported spending at least 30 minutes per day or several times per week on (% of respondents):		
Doing schoolwork (93% )	Talking on the phone or text messaging (70%)	Completing family or household responsibilities (61%)
Surfing the web (75%)	Watching TV or playing video games (61%)	Hanging out with friends (54%)
Being physically active (74%)	Playing or practicing a sport (61%)	Social networking (48%)

Friendships/Connections at School	
Youth respondents were asked a series of questions about friends and connections at school.	
94% said	They have a <b>friend their own age</b> who really cares about them
80% said	They <b>feel close to people at their school</b>
74% said	There is an <b>adult at school</b> who really cares about them.

New Activities For Young People	
The survey asked respondents what they would want if our community were to provide new activities for young people.	
Top choice for all age groups	A <b>place to hangout out</b> , including recreational activities like movies, bowling, arcade games
6 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> graders	<b>Organized Sports</b>
High schoolers	<b>Job Readiness/Work Internships</b>
Adult	<b>Volunteer opportunities</b> to help others, animals, or the environment

Where to Go for Help		
The survey asked youth who they would go to if either <b>they or a friend of theirs wanted to harm themselves.</b>		
	<b>Don't Know Where I Could Go</b>	<b>Wouldn't Go to Anyone</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> graders	13%	0%
7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> graders	13%	6%
High schoolers	14%	22%

Bullying		
	% who said they had been <b>bullied two or more times</b> in the past year	% who said that their <b>friends stood up for them</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> graders	27%	73%
7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> graders	20%	74%
High schoolers	14%	71%

## Two new local organizations are building on our community's strengths and positively influencing young people in Wilmette



Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Everyone can be great...because everyone can serve." At the Junior High and High School level in Wilmette, students are surrounded by many opportunities to serve others. However, to two community leaders, there seemed to be a void in chances for younger children to volunteer. To address that need, in 2006, Lisa Axelrod and Mary Roth founded **The Kindness Connection (TKC)**.

TKC is a Wilmette non-profit organization that provides children and older youth with hands-on volunteer experience to help them learn the importance of service. TKC makes it easy for schools to fit a volunteer project into classroom time. Robyn Hall, a TKC board member and spokesperson, explained, "The Kindness Connection comes into the classroom and provides everything for the teacher. We help incorporate service learning into the curriculum so that the teachers can talk to the children and decide, 'What needs or organizations do we want to focus on? How can we help make someone else's life better?'"

Currently, TKC has a list of approximately 20 organizations that have a need for volunteers. Activities include making medals for Special Olympians, fleece pillows for veteran's hospitals and catnip toys for animal shelters.

TKC has expanded into all of the Wilmette District 39 schools, two Winnetka schools and other local schools. They have delivered over 7,500 projects and 3,800 hours of service in the greater Chicagoland area, the vast majority from Wilmette. Hall says, "We typically charge a small fee in order to cover our materials and administrative costs. Our goal is to be able to expand to "scholarship" schools, those schools that cannot afford the fees, to give everyone the opportunity to give back."

TKC believes that meaningful volunteer experiences have the power to inspire individuals to make a lifelong practice of giving their time and resources to charitable and civic causes. Wilmette is fortunate to have an organization like TKC dedicated to providing these experiences. For more information, go to [www.thekindnessconnection.org](http://www.thekindnessconnection.org).



Wilmette schools are committed to providing programs for positive youth development. Now, two of our schools, Wilmette Junior High School (WJHS) and New Trier High School (NTHS), have partnered with a local foundation that provides similar programming for adults. **The Charmm'd Foundation** was created in 2005 to reach out to communities and help them create the kind of places where they want to live and work. It provides opportunities for adults to build a community culture of positive character through self-reflection, learning & practicing social skills, and building relationships.

Based on character education and social emotional learning (SEL) research, the Charmm'd Foundation has adopted a framework that is focused on skill based learning in which adults in the community can teach, empower and model positive character traits so that all individuals can better themselves and all the lives they touch.

The Charmm'd Foundation believes sustainable culture change must begin with the adults in the school building as they will continue to have a long-term impact on the ever changing student population. If they are more aware of their own social/emotional skills, it will positively influence their teaching strategies and their impact as role models. The Foundation has connected WJHS and NTHS to experts in SEL; provided teachers and administrators with professional development opportunities and assisted in facilitating meetings.

Charmm'd is beginning to roll out its initiative into the broader communities surrounding NTHS and WJHS. For 2009, they are hoping to offer workshops, in collaboration with other community organizations, to teach skills such as active listening, conflict resolution, problem solving and team-building. Watch for this important work and join in the grassroots effort to create a positive culture for our youth and our community. For more information, email: [contact@charmmdfoundation.org](mailto:contact@charmmdfoundation.org)

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**PROGRAM FOR PARENTS:** In April 2008, the WYC, Wilmette Junior High PTO, PEER Services and the Wilmette Police Department offered a program to parents at WJHS to present them with information on teen drinking in the North Shore and to provide them with tools on how to combat underage drinking and substance abuse. The group discussed legal issues such as the consequences of hosting underage parties, curfew, and new driver rules. For more information, contact [kmahoney@peerservices.org](mailto:kmahoney@peerservices.org).

**SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY!** Each year the WYC awards a scholarship from the Rotary Clubs of Wilmette to a graduating senior with more than 100 hours of volunteer service. Applications for the 2008/09 scholarships are due March 31 and are available by contacting the Youth Commission at [youth@wilmette.com](mailto:youth@wilmette.com).

**Reach out to these local social service agencies for confidential support and educational programs! Each is supported by the Wilmette Youth Commission's Grant program.**

<p><b>The Children's Advocacy Center (847) 885-0100</b></p>	<p>The Children's Advocacy Center provides direct services for child victims of <b>sexual or severe physical abuse</b>, and to their non-offending family members. The center also facilitates identification, intervention and prevention of child abuse. <a href="http://www.cachelps.org">www.cachelps.org</a></p>
<p><b>Erika's Lighthouse (847) 738 2300</b></p>	<p>Erika's Lighthouse: A Beacon of Hope for Adolescent Depression is a grassroots, educational organization dedicated to raising awareness of <b>adolescent depression and mental health</b> for young people. Through the Red Flags Program, they provide a comprehensive curriculum on adolescent depression, training for school personnel to implement the program, an all staff awareness workshop, and seminars for parents and communities. <a href="http://www.erikaslighthouse.org">www.erikaslighthouse.org</a></p>
<p><b>Family Service Center (847) 251-7350</b></p>	<p>The Family Service Center has been serving Wilmette residents since 1913, through <b>counseling</b>, educational programs, and as a resource for mental health and substance abuse issues. <a href="http://www.familyservicecenter.com">www.familyservicecenter.com</a></p>
<p><b>The Harbour, Inc. (847) 297-8540</b></p>	<p>The Safe Harbour Emergency Shelter Program provides <b>emergency shelter, crisis intervention</b>, and comprehensive services for locked-out, homeless and runaway girls. <a href="http://www.theharbour.org">www.theharbour.org</a></p>
<p><b>Haven Youth And Family Services (847) 446-5606</b></p>	<p>Haven has provided <b>crisis services</b> in the community for over 30 years. Efforts focus on at-risk youth, including a <b>24-hour hotline</b>, crisis response program, community outreach and prevention oriented workshops, and counseling services to individual youth, their families and groups. <a href="http://www.havenforyouth.org">www.havenforyouth.org</a></p>
<p><b>LINKS (847) 441-6191</b></p>	<p>Links supports adolescents by providing them with resources to make informed decisions about their <b>health and sexuality</b>. Confidential services are offered in a safe, caring environment and include health education in the community and schools, medical treatment, counseling, support services for sexual minority youth and mentoring for adolescent parents. <a href="http://www.linksyouth.org">www.linksyouth.org</a></p>
<p><b>PEER Services, Inc. (847) 492-1778</b></p>	<p>PEER Services provides a continuum of <b>substance abuse</b> services including prevention, intervention, and treatment. Individual plans are developed for each client to achieve a drug-free status and to achieve positive life goals. <a href="http://www.peerservices.org">www.peerservices.org</a></p>
<p><b>Warming House Youth Center (847) 256-5288</b></p>	<p>Located at Howard Park, the Warming House has served high school students for 38 years as a <b>safe, supportive environment</b> that offers the opportunity for youth leadership, multi-cultural activities and other events of interest to teens. <a href="http://www.warminghouse.org">www.warminghouse.org</a></p>
<p><b>Winnetka Youth Organization (847) 446-0443</b></p>	<p>The Winnetka Youth Organization (the "YO") is a <b>drop-in center</b> that offers recreational, educational and social service activities to eighth graders and high school youth on the North Shore. <a href="http://www.winnetkayo.org">www.winnetkayo.org</a></p>
<p><b>Youth Connection (847) 254-2224</b></p>	<p>Youth Connection offers <b>recreational, academic and community service</b> after school activities for all Wilmette youth in 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Programs are developmentally appropriate for preteens and based on youth interests and needs. <a href="http://www.youthconnectionwilmette.org">www.youthconnectionwilmette.org</a></p>

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**Do you know about WilWork?** The Village of Wilmette created Wilwork in 1977 to connect young residents seeking employment with residents or businesses that have jobs (e.g., babysitting, yard work) available. We are seeking input about the structure and usefulness of this program. Please email us with your feedback at [youth@wilmette.com](mailto:youth@wilmette.com) to let us know if you would encourage your children to sign up for WilWork and/or if you would hire Wilmette youth through this service.

***Wilmette Youth Commission Members:***

Ann Hughes (Chair), Vicki Hanson (Village Staff Liaison), Dennis Allen, Stephani Becker, Sheila Bower, Bobby Dixon, Joan Evans, Emmett Hara, Nicole Kukulka, Emily Swann, Robert Wolkoff