

# New program hopes to develop lifelong philanthropists

Power of Youth Council to draw sophomores, juniors, seniors from all three high schools

By VINCE LUECKE, Editor Perry County News

PERRY COUNTY - The nearly boundless enthusiasm and power of youth will soon be evident as the United Way of Perry County and the Perry County Community Foundation team up to launch a new program designed to promote community involvement, trusteeship and philanthropy.

The Perry County Power of Youth Council will promote philanthropy among today's young people to prepare them to support their communities of tomorrow by giving their time, talent and treasure. It will also teach them how to be agents of change in their community.

The Perry County Power of Youth Council will consist of sophomores, juniors and seniors from all three area high schools. Applications are currently being accepted and the group's first meeting is scheduled for Aug. 26. Home-schooled students are also eligible.

Members of the new group will have opportunities to work together to improve their community. They will learn how to be philanthropic leaders for the future and how to incorporate the skills they learn into all aspects of their lives as valuable, caring citizens of our nation, said Rebecca Fenn, executive director of United Way of Perry County.

The new philanthropy-education program for youth grew from a collaboration between the local United Way and the community foundation. Both groups rely on community trustees and board members and the new program has an advisory committee of adults from the United Way, Perry County Community Foundation, youth serving agencies and the community, who will plan and lead monthly sessions to educate the participants on philanthropy.

Discussions will cover volunteerism, leadership development, marketing and fundraising.

"We're even going to ask them to design their own logo," said Sally Houzanme, the foundation's director.

The program will culminate in a grantmaking activity to fund a local project that will be chosen by the Power of Youth Council.

The Perry County Community Foundation has established a nonpermanent fund to support the immediate grantmaking ability of the youth council and an endowed fund as a permanent resource to support the program.

The United Way of Perry County and the Perry County Community Foundation will provide additional funds for immediate granting as well.

It's not often young people are thought of as philanthropists, but the program supports the view that everyone, regardless of age, have roles to play in supporting their communities. Young people are no exception, said Fenn.

"Many people only think of a philanthropist as someone who donates lots of money. But a philanthropist is anyone who donates their time, talent and treasure. Donating time as a volunteer to a cause you believe in, sharing one's talent as a leader, or sharing a skill, is also very important," Fenn said. Every donation of time, talent and treasure is important to those organizations and individuals working to improve our lives and communities."

One of the most exciting aspects of the program, United Way trustee Pat Crawford said, is that it will give young people a real stake in changing the community for the better.

The council will receive support and guidance from adults, but will move in the direction set by its members, including decisions on what issues to tackle through its annual grant.

"Our hope is that it gets young people in our county involved not only now but as they become older," she said.

Crawford hopes the program will pay long-term dividends by keeping young people in the community or making them more likely to move back here after college.

Engaging youth in philanthropy prepares young people to be active, lifelong community citizens. It is beneficial for both the youth and the community, Fenn, Crawford and Houzanme believe. Studies show that youth who volunteer just one hour a week are 50 percent less likely to abuse drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or engage in destructive behaviors and youth who volunteer are more likely to do well in school, graduate, vote and be philanthropic.

Communities also benefit because teenagers volunteer 1.3 billion hours annually which means teenage service is worth \$34.3 billion to the U.S. economy each year.

"Our mission is to develop philanthropic values in youth through education, leadership and participation in local philanthropic activities" Houzanme said.

### **How to Join**

High-school sophomores, juniors and seniors can pick up applications at local schools or by calling United Way of Perry County at 547-2577 or the Perry County Community Foundation at 547-3176. Applications are also available at [www.perrycommunityfoundation.org](http://www.perrycommunityfoundation.org). Public libraries in Tell City and Cannelton also have applications, as does *The News*.

Students will be selected on the basis of willingness to learn, character, positive attitude, motivation to serve, leadership ability and availability of time. Home-schooled students are eligible.

The first meeting of Perry County Power of Youth is scheduled for Aug. 26.

Power of Youth Adult Advisory Committee members are Renate Jobst, T.J. Noland, Pat Crawford, Cindia Ress, Mayor Barbara Ewing, Joan Hess, LouAnn Oberhausen, Lisa Noble, Stephanie Walsh, Jody French, Karen Peter, Sally Houzanme and Rebecca Fenn. Anyone wanting more information about the program or how it can help the youth of the community, contact Houzanme at 547-3176, e-mail [sallyh@perrycommunityfoundation.org](mailto:sallyh@perrycommunityfoundation.org) or Fenn at 547-2577, e-mail [unitedwayperry@psci.net](mailto:unitedwayperry@psci.net). Advisory committee members can also offer information.

Tax-deductible donations may be made to: Perry County Power of Youth, care of the Perry County Community Foundation, P.O. Box 13, Tell City, IN 47586.