JULY 2023 | TOGETHER! FOR YOUTH | 509-662-7201

Home of the free because of the brave.

TOGETHER! for Youth will be closed on Monday, July 3rd and Tuesday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day.

Wishing you a fun and safe celebration, from our family to yours.

Girls on the Run Success!

The Waterville Shockers, coached by Carrie VanLith and Mandy Kopta, participated for the first time in the annual Girls on the Run 5k on Saturday, June 3rd. The team was made up of 3rd - 5th grade girls who spent 90 minutes, twice a week training for the event beginning in March. This program was offered to many schools within the Wenatchee Valley and surrounding areas and had participants from Chelan and Leavenworth, as well.

Girls on the Run is a national non-profit organization for girls 3rd through 5th grade (Heart and Sole for the 6th - 8th grade girls) and is a physical activity based positive youth development program that inspires 3rd-8th grade girls to be joyful, healthy, and confident using a fun, experience based curriculum which creatively integrates running.

The vision of GOTR states "We envision a world where every girl knows and activates her limitless potential and is free to boldly pursue her dreams."

Congratulations on a job well done, girls!

For information on GOTR, please visit www.girlsontherun.org

Tobacco/Vaping Quit Kits

In the month of June, we put together nearly 300 Tobacco/Vaping Quit Kits to be distributed to local youth looking to kick their nicotine or vaping habit and reached out to 61 of our partners. As of June 29th, 121 have been distributed!

The kits, housed in a water bottle for hydration, included a card with the Tobacco Quit Line info (1-800-Quit-Now), a TeenLink card (1-866-TEENLINK (866-833-6546)), a few straws to keep their mouths and hands busy, chewing gum to curb cravings and a "You Can" sticker (www.YouCan.wa.gov) to remind them that they can be smoke free!

"We must be free not because we claim freedom, but because we practice it." - William Faulkner

CRIME VICTIM ADVOCACY

By Together! FOR YOUTH

Belinda Mercado - Crime Victim Advocate

Belinda D Mercado joined the TOGETHER! for Youth team as the Crime Victim Advocate in March 2023. Belinda works directly with victims and survivors of crime, to ensure they receive their full rights in accordance with the Crime Victim Rights Act. Belinda has an Associate of Applied Science in Medical Assisting and has 10 years' experience in working in the medical field. In addition, she is a Certified Peer Counselor that worked at Catholic Charities under the PATH Program (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness Services) providing outreach services to homeless individuals challenged with mental health. She then transitioned into the PACT Team (Program Assertive Community Treatment) as a Peer Specialist sharing the journey towards recovery while honoring everyone's unique path toward a meaningful life. Currently, Belinda is finishing up her Associate of Arts and Science Degree at Wenatchee Valley College while playing Goalkeeper for the Women's Soccer team. Belinda is ready to connect further with the community and advocate for the underserved.

For more information about the program, please visit www.togethercd.org

A Month of Training: Montana Summer Institute and Hope Squad Master Training

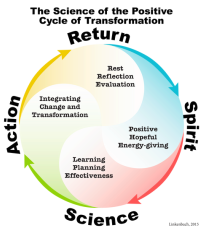
The Paradox of the Positive: Preventing Harm by Promoting Health

This training focused on The Science of the Positive, which is the study of how positive factors impact culture and experience, with a focus on how to measure and grow the positive. It is based on the core assumption that the positive is real and is worth growing.

It is a refreshing way to look at the work of prevention and changing the social norms from negative perceived to positive reality by asking the right questions, and also changing the narrative to show that both negative and positive co-exist side by side. Using phrasing like "Yes...and..." and 'What if..." among others as a way to shift the context and conversations.

There are 10 Paradoxes of the Positive: Positivity, Ubiquity (omnipresence), Spirituality, Fluidity, Circularity, Community, Integrity, Creativity, Vitality, Generosity. One aha moment was the following statement - "The answer is in the community". It was followed up by "are we asking the right questions among the right people to move towards a more positive narrative while not stigmatizing the negative that co-exists?"

Overall, an excellent training, a reset to move through the summer and into the next school year!



A Peace of My Mind

"Bridging divides and building community through storytelling and art"

Author, Speaker, Photographer and Founder at A Peace of My Mind, John Noltner, was one of many speakers at the Montana Institute.

John shared with us his project, A Peace of My Mind, and how he is using exhibits (some of which were displayed during our conference), workshops, lectures, on-site studios (which we were able to participate in during the week) and distance learning that leads to transformative experiences that help rediscover the common humanity that connects each one of us.

For our Montana Institute group, our question was, "How have you grown the positive?" We were challenged to answer the questions in 25 words or less and participate in a photographic story reel, highlighting how each participant has grown the positive either in their community, in their personal lives or amongst their social connections. Of 117 participants, 35 were highlighted in a video on closing day. The results were some of the most beautiful and moving words of wisdom ever read.

Our two staff members who attended both participated in the project and look forward to sharing their photo stories.

We were very inspired by what John is doing and look forward to bringing a similar idea to our area - or even bring in John himself!

For more information on John's "A Peace of My Mind", please visit his website apeaceofmymind.net

DON'T JUST FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT; FIGHT THE POSITIVE GOOD FIGHT.

Hope Squad Master Trainer Conference: Provo, UT

Alyssa Polson: NCW Regional Hope Squad Coordinator

TOGETHER! for Youth Staff Member, Alyssa Polson, had the opportunity to attend the Hope Squad Master Trainer Conference in Provo, Utah in June. The Master Training is by invitation only by the Founder of Hope Squad, Dr. Greg Hudnall, and his team. TOGETHER! for Youth is one of many organizations in the country to help implement Hope Squad in schools in our region, and around the Nation. We were recognized and awarded for our Docuseries, which is a three-part documentary with a few of our schools in North Central Washington to show how Hope Squad had helped their schools. Alyssa was able to share about our Hope Squad Conference and the amazing things that our Hope Squads are doing in our region with other Master Trainers.

Master Trainers (MT's) are Hope Squad experts who provide training, advocacy, and Hope Squad support on a state and regional level. They sustain and preserve the integrity of the Hope Squad program and champion Hope Squads in their area. Our Hope Squads now have the option to do in-person Advisor Training as well as QPR Training, both in which Alyssa is a Certified Instructor. We are excited to expand Hope Squad in our NCW Region and raise awareness for Suicide Prevention to provide training for our students, Hope Squad Advisors, staff and community.