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Goodwill™ GoodGuides™ awarded grant

Goodwill Industries of the Conemaugh Valley (GICV) Inc.'s GoodGuides Youth Mentoring Program has been awarded a 2011 UnitedHealth HEROES Service-Learning grant from Youth Service America in conjunction with UnitedHealthcare.

The grant will enable youth to become First Responders through UnitedHealth HEROES childhood obesity project. Aligned with the Let's Move! Campaign, launched in early 2010 by First Lady Michelle Obama, First Responders provide guidance to peers and the community through the Youth Service America-advocated Five Stages of Service-Learning.

The Five Stages of Service-Learning model is comprised of Investigation, Preparation and Planning, Action, Reflection and Demonstration/Celebration (IPARD/C). GoodGuides youth (mentees), under guidance of their mentors and GoodGuides program staff, will carry-out the IPARD/C through a structured process. Youth will investigate one or more public venues at which to present their own lessons on healthful nutrition, weight management and food service careers.

They will prepare and plan ways that they will meet community needs for education on childhood obesity. They will take action by teaching various audiences the lessons they decide upon, preparing a healthful dish or meal for the audiences and distributing a collection of healthful recipes at the events. Through analytical and reflective response, youth will reflect on community needs, their actions and their impacts through youth report logs.

And to demonstrate/celebrate their efforts, the youth will make presentations during Global Youth Service Day events in April 2011.

As a kickoff to the UnitedHealth HEROES First Responders project, the GoodGuides Program held two meetings with the program's mentors on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to inform them of the grant award and how they can support the youth as they take the lead in designing and implementing this initiative. Dr. King's leadership in civil rights and the well-being of the community as a whole is the inspiration for organizing the service-learning project and carrying his legacy forward in our community.

The first working meetings on the project will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 9 at Zion Lutheran Church in Johnstown for mentors and youth currently enrolled and any adult or youth interested in enrolling.

GoodGuides works with more than 25 community partners, namely the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, Cambria County Children and Youth Services, Cambria County Juvenile Probation Office and the Johnstown Rotary. Interested youth are encouraged to contact GICV as soon as possible.

The GoodGuides Youth Mentoring Program is a national mentoring initiative operated locally by GICV through a grant by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. It is designed to help youth, ages 12 to 17, in Bedford, Blair, Cambria, and Somerset counties who may have barriers to success.

For more information on GoodGuides, contact Cindy O'Connor, GoodGuides Program Manager at 536-3536, ext. 304 or goodguides@goodwilljohnstown.org. To learn about GICV's many services and programs, visit www.goodwillsouthcentralpa.org.

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