



Spring 2013 Newsletter

2014 Peace by Piece Summit!

Nearly 100 students from the Resiliency Preparatory School, Saint Vincent's Home, and the YouthBuild programs in Fall River and New Bedford gathered at the old Kuss Middle School for the sixth annual Peace By Piece Summit on May 9, 2014. Sponsored by the Fall River Shannon Community Safety Initiative, Southcoast Hospitals, United Neighbors and Partners, this year's event offered an opportunity to engage youth in a discussion of how violence impacts them and to talk openly about how they are dealing with the impact of violence in their lives. Youth reflected on their experiences with violence, gang involvement and substance abuse. Discussion was facilitated by leaders of the Foundation Movement, a Boston-based anti-violence group led by Banjineh "Op" Browne and Ernesto "Eroc" Arroyo. The program began with a video that detailed the story of Janet Connors whose 19-year-old son, Joel, was murdered during a home invasion in Boston in 2001. She now devotes her life to teaching "restorative justice," a philosophy that encourages forgiveness when wrongdoers accept accountability.



Fall River Youth Violence Prevention Initiative

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40 Developmental Assets Training

Various school and community members attended the 40 Developmental Assets Training at Greater Fall River Re-Creation on May 6th. This School Community Partnership hosted training provided by Southcoast Hospitals' RAPP Program focused on building assets, identifying personal strengths and challenges, and ultimately building stronger youth and stronger connections. We look forward to seeing this type of positive relationship building grow in our community in hopes for a more successful and peaceful generation of youth!



National Youth Violence Prevention Week a Great Success in Fall River!

Schools and community agencies participated in amazing youth violence prevention work during National Youth Violence Prevention Week 2013! Visit www.FRYouthViolencePrevention.org to see the activities that various schools and agencies did to help support this incredible day!



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SSYI Youth Presents at Boys and Girls Club and Resiliency Middle School

Javandy Mills is a 24 year old male who is a participant of the Youth Outreach Program under SSYI. Javandy has spoke to about 75 youth at the Fall River Boys & Girls Club back in March and also spoke to the students and staff at RMS in April. He addressed the struggles he endured as a youth growing up in the city. Having an absent father, drug addict mother and several brothers and cousins who were heavily, and still are heavily gang involved. He spoke about his childhood and adolescent years as a full out gang member and how he thought that selling drugs and robbing people and fast money was the life. Javandy also spoke about his run ins with DYS and probation.. He spoke about his attempted murder charge when he was 18, which landed him a 5 year bid in Dartmouth and Walpole. He spoke about the incident, which was caused by an altercation with another man at a night club, where Javandy stabbed this individual 7 times. He regrets a lot of his actions and he understands how his past affects his present and future. He strongly encouraged these youth not to follow in the same footsteps he walked. Javandy is very excited to be participating in GED programming at RE-Creation, as well as getting on track with employment programming through Outreach. He is very interested in pursuing a career in cooking but also has developed a passion in helping youth.





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2013 Youth of the Year!

The Youth of the Year Award, established in 2007, is designed to recognize and encourage the contributions and excellence in the young people of Fall River who have built their character and competence through the fulfillment of the promises. Youth are judged on personal achievement, leadership abilities, extracurricular activities, healthy living, effective learning opportunities, and/or community involvement.

Fall River knows that its young residents are involved in improving both themselves and the community. Through the Fall River School Community Partnership, a subcommittee of Partners for a Healthier Community, acknowledges those achievements by awarding a \$500 Youth of the Year Award. This process consists of nominations from school or community agencies for high school seniors who fulfill the criteria of excellence. Nominees then submit personal essays that describe areas of accomplishments, challenges, and beliefs. Finalists are then interviewed by a panel of judges who make the final selection.

The 2013 Youth of the Year recipient is Carson Moreira-Rego, a senior from B.M.C. Durfee High School looking forward to graduating this upcoming June.

First Runner-Up for the award is Nicholas Raposo (senior, B.M.C. Durfee High School). **Tied for Second Runner-Up is Megan Rockett** (senior, B.M.C. Durfee High School) and **Jack Santoro** (senior, Bishop Connolly High School).

Remaining finalist nominees include Shantel Moniz (senior, B.M.C. Durfee High School), **Lexie Rivera** (senior, B.M.C. Durfee High School), and **Aisha Rivera** (senior, B.M.C. Durfee High School).



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Fall River Youth Violence Prevention Information Presentation

The Fall River Youth Violence Prevention Initiative organized an information presentation to provide local and state delegation with updates regarding our youth violence prevention grants and activities. Information was shared from various partners related to current efforts, and we were able to hear from the youth directly affected by our Youth Outreach Program and the impact it has had on their lives. Awards were presented to delegation for our thanks in the hand they are playing in stopping youth violence in Fall River.



Please remember to email Michaela Gagne Hetzler with any information for the Fall River Youth Violence Prevention website and newsletter at: michaelajgagne@gmail.com. Thank you!

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