

Health Shack provides a safe, centralized place for teens to store health records

\$400,000 UNITEDHEALTH GRANT PAVES THE WAY

For too long, homeless teens, emancipated minors and young people who have aged out of foster care, have had a difficult time getting health care services in a timely and efficient manner. Their health histories and personal records have often been scattered, making consistent care almost impossible.

Fortunately, that situation is changing, thanks in part to a \$400,000 grant from UnitedHealth Group. This generous grant will fund Health Shack, a collaboration that includes Wind Youth Services, The University of California-Davis, Sierra Health Foundation, Linkage to Education and FollowMe Inc. Health Shack is a pilot program that helps young people set up secure personal health records electronically.

These Web-based records are designed to store critical information, such as diagnoses, medications, allergies, chronic conditions, treatment plans, test results and health insurance eligibility. When fully implemented,

youth and their health-care providers can access the private records anywhere in the nation.

“For teens who don’t have a medical home or consistent health care, this type of health record could help save lives, especially in an emergency situation,” says Cindy Ehnes, director of the Department of Managed Health Care.

Health Shack Projects Manager JD Rudometkin points out that Health Shack employs teens and other young people called Youth Health Ambassadors, to create and develop the Health Shack Personal Health Information System Website and resource links. In fact, he says, “Youth Health Ambassador Robert Pedersen named the program Health Shack and Youth Health Ambassador Kevin Johnson came up with the tag line, ‘The door is always open.’”

Rudometkin is proud of his ambassadors, most of them Wind kids, and the work they do. “It’s amazing to watch all of the youth in Health Shack as they grow,” he says.

As for the program’s future goals, Rudometkin says he is hopeful that it



Youth Ambassadors Sarab, Kevin and Aaron at grant presentation with Cindy Ehnes (center), director, Managed Health Care.

won’t be long before the Website’s personal records include educational information as well as health-care data.

Wind Youth Services Executive Director Ellyne Bell is also grateful for the grant. “Wind Youth Services would like to thank UnitedHealth Group for investing in the youth of Sacramento,” she says. “This generous grant will enable us to move forward and fully implement our program—the only program across the nation to have young people at the core of its design and implementation process. We hope this program will serve as a model for California and the nation by encouraging others to assist youth to take control of their personal health and well being.”

Visit www.healthshack.info.

WIND and WALK ‘N ROCK FOR KIDS GEAR UP FOR SECOND SUCCESSFUL FUND RAISER

WALK ‘N ROCK for KIDS 2010, a Hope Productions Foundation event, has once again selected Wind Youth Services as a non-profit partner.

“This is one of our biggest fundraisers of the year,” says Wind Event Coordinator Missy Kinder. “Last year, we raised over \$35,000 in walk pledges and shared in the profits from the evening’s Journey concert.”



Wind’s goal for next year is to double pledge numbers. For information call Missy Kinder, (916) 561-2424.

Mark the Date

WHEN: Sunday, May 30, 2010

WHERE: River Cats Stadium

WHAT: A 5K walk, a fun-filled day of activities, music, food, and more, plus an evening concert.

Visit our Website: www.windyouth.org for updates. After the first of the year, visit: www.walknrock.org to register.

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Ellyne Bell MA. LMSW
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Contact:
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Wind Center (916) 443-8333

ARTS AFTER SCHOOL

The Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission (SMAC) and Wind have entered into a collaboration with three community artists to teach art to our youth after school.

This pilot program—Community Arts Programs for Community Organizations Partnering with Regional Artists—is made possible through a grant from SMAC and will run for one year. Classes are held three times a week at Wind's Youth Center and include both visual and performing arts.

The artists involved in this teaching program come highly qualified.

Gail Dartez, the theatre teacher, is a professional actor with the Capital Stage Company. She has an MFA from Yale and teaches at Consumnes River and American River Colleges.

Olivia Yasmin James teaches dance. She is an independent dance instructor and the founder and director of the dance group Fenix Drum and Dance Company.

Tania S. Love is the visual arts teacher and a professional artist. She earned a B.A. in art and holds a Master's in education. Love teaches independent study for the Sacramento Academic and Vocational Academy.

SMAC's Community Arts Program makes resources and artists available to help agencies like Wind pursue their individual goals through the arts. "The arts are a wonderful medium through which to accomplish many social service agency goals," explains SMAC Arts Education



Gail Dartez, a professional actor and theatre teacher, meets with Wind students after school to teach them about the art of acting. Below, students participate in class warm-up activities.



Coordinator Erika Boardman Kraft. "They can be used for self-reflection, celebration, building self discipline and self esteem and to build connections between people and across communities."

What's more, the classes are just plain fun, and the kids love them!



Holiday Giving Opportunities at Wind 2009

The Holidays can be a wonderful time for creating happy memories, giving and receiving gifts, seasonal activities and special food. For many of the kids we serve, the holidays can be lonely, stressful, and nothing out of the ordinary. Here are some ways you can help us make this holiday season warm and loving for our kids.

- Donate new, unwrapped gifts. For suggestions, please see our Holiday Wish List at www.windyouth.org, or call (916) 561-2424 to have one sent to you.
- Donate gift cards and fast food cards for last-minute gifts
- Host a fun holiday activity such as ice skating, caroling, cookie baking, ornament making, etc. at our center or your gathering place.
- Suggest and help coordinate "giving-back" projects, such as creating stockings filled with goods for others in need, caroling at a hospital, bringing holiday cheer to a nursing home or making simple gifts for family members, so that our kids can experience the joy of making a difference in the lives of others.
- Prepare a meal on one of the days during the week before Christmas and New Year's.

Contact: Wind Center (916)443-8333 or Wind Administration (916)561-2424 for more information.

Wind helps young people meet their goals

SARAH'S STORY



Sarah is originally from a small central California town. She moved to Sacramento with her older sister when her mother died. After a few months in Sacramento, Sarah came to the Wind shelter when her relationship with her sister deteriorated and she became homeless. Since being in the shelter, Sarah has graduated from high school, enrolled in college as a fulltime student, and has found employment as a Youth Health Ambassador with Health Shack.

Sarah is currently on the waiting list for transitional housing, and with the support of her Youth Advocate, she has been meeting with her sister to work out living arrangements until housing becomes available.

BRIANNA'S STORY

Brianna came to the Wind Youth Center from a group home. After talking with a Wind Outreach Advocate and learning more about our services, Brianna decided to volunteer at our center.

Wind helped Brianna get her birth certificate, her California I.D., her Social Security card, eyeglasses and a Medi-Cal card. The Medi-Cal card was important because she had to have surgery to remove gallstones.

Brianna started at Wind doing volunteer work—preparing lunches, cleaning the center, participating in fundraisers, answering phones—but her goal now is to get a work permit, graduate from high school, reunite with her mother and attend college.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"May the beauty we love, be what we do." -Rumi

As we approach this holiday season, we all begin to look once again, to wait again for the coming light. With the darker days of the season, we celebrate with candles and hearth fires, but we also become brighter lights within ourselves and we share that light with others. It's a great time of giving at Wind and we are amazingly blessed by the outpouring of love and goodness that the community gives to the youth we serve. This year we are also looking for opportunities for our youth to give to others in the community as well. The experience of giving to others can empower and gratify—our own worth is recognized in the act of giving as we see that we can truly make a difference in the lives of others and the community. The youth we serve have many needs, but they also have much to give. We will be looking for ways they can also contribute back to the community through offering time,



energy and creativity to various projects and places.

So in these winter days ahead, we will be hoping to find opportunities to be light to the community that has so blessed us. In our mutual giving and receiving, we open the doors to the basic goodness that is present, yet can seem quite elusive. The best gift of all is finding the light within that is the beginning of all true change and all basic goodness.

Peace to all,
Ellyne

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Wind Youth Services is a Sacramento area nonprofit established in 1994 to work with homeless and street youth who were not being served by any other organization. Initially, the focus was on providing outreach and survival services, such as food, clothing, sleeping bags and hygiene articles. This was a valuable service to the youth, but it did nothing to solve the more systemic problems that contributed to being homeless or living on the street.

The focus of Wind today is to assist youth to get off the streets and out of homelessness. All of our programs are directed to the goal of assisting youth to choose healthier lifestyles and obtain the skills necessary to make change happen in their young lives.

WIND'S MISSION

To engage youth experiencing homelessness who need safety from the streets and access to resources to help them move from crisis to healthy functioning and independence.

WIND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Crisis Youth Shelter Day Center
Learning Center Outreach
Health Shack

Homelessness among youth under 18 increased 78 percent in Sacramento County between 2007 and 2008

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Monetary donations, online or mailed
- Donate through your employee giving program or United Way (#3148)
- Donate items from our Wish List www.windyouth.org Call (916)443-8333 for donation times & location.
- Use a SaveMart S.H.A.R.E.S. card and 3% of your purchase comes to Wind. Call (916)561-2424 to request this free, pre-registered card
- Donate household items and clothing to our Thrift Store. Call (916)761-9614 for pick-up or take items to 6150 Auburn Blvd, Citrus Heights

FOCUS ON: MARTHA AND DAVID SWARTS

Generous hearts teach home cooking to Wind teens

David and Martha Swarts have been conducting cooking classes for Wind Youth Center youth every week for five years. And they love what they do.

"We both love cooking, eating and teaching," explains David, who says the couple's philosophy is to teach the kids that they *can* cook. "We want them to gain confidence with cooking. Cooking is fun, and eating is even more fun."

Cooking class student Brianna agrees. "We get to make things from scratch," she says. "And the teachers are awesome."

Over the years, the Swarts have taught the kids to make things like pizza from scratch, stir-fry, quiche, chicken cordon bleu, Indian tacos, twice-baked potatoes and pasta from scratch. "In five years, we have come up with lots of different recipes," says David. Those recipes include desserts like monkey bread, puff pastry and any kind of cookie.



Martha Swarts and students on her birthday.

When asked if he and Martha have always been a cooking duo, David, who has a B.A in astronomy, says, "Ha! A cooking duo? Martha is the cook, an excellent cook. I can wash dishes, revise recipes, and help execute."

At the end of the day, the Swarts want the kids to feel comfortable in the kitchen. With the right knowledge, David points out that they can try new things and save money by doing it themselves.

Thanks for everything, Martha and David.

UNSUNG HEROES IN OUR KITCHEN

Around lunch time on any given day, the kitchen at Wind's Day Center starts to smell like grandma's cooking. That's because groups of kind-hearted cooks from all around town gather forces to provide our kids with some of the best tasting and most nutritious meals ever—spaghetti, lasagna, burritos and more. And the kids love it! Actually, so do our Youth Advocates and other staff members.

To our valued chefs, we shout out a great big *Thank You!* You're the best.

If you would like to provide hot meals to our kids, give us a call at (916) 443-8333.



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www.windyouth.org

Do you own a tee-shirt and sweatshirt printing business?

Our annual tradition includes providing each staff member and a small number of volunteers with a shirt imprinted with our logo to wear at work and Wind events. This year we are unable to budget for this, and would appreciate a donation or significant discount on these items. Contact us at (916)561-2424 if you can help.