

# THE SOARING SPIRIT

Volume V, Issue II

June 2011

## SPIRIT YOUTH BOARD MISSION:

Reaching out to foster youth and raising awareness in the community by providing support, telling our stories, and being role models for youth following in our footsteps.

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<i>4th Annual Youth Conference</i>	
<i>Registration for the 4th annual Youth Conference</i>	

## BOWLING FUNDRAISER A SUCCESS

On May 21, the Macomb County SPIRIT Youth Board held its third annual bowling fundraiser. The goal of the fundraiser is to provide financial assistance to older youth that are in care when other funding options are not available. The event ran smoothly and was successful in raising funds for foster youth. The youth board members learned social skills, how to present themselves, public speaking,

time management, and other important skills needed to succeed in the world. Some of the members response to the event were; "we had a great time and got to see that some people do really care about what happens to us", "we got to meet new people, hang out in a safe place and got to have fun with our workers" and "we were able to raise money to help other youth and that feels really, really good".

A BIG THANK YOU  
THOSE OF YOU WHO  
SUPPORT OUR YOUTH!!



## HAPPY FOR NO REASON



By Leon J.

Interested in the topic? Well on June 28th you can come out to learn the 7 steps to being happy from the inside out. Also, you will be provided a free dinner and a chance to meet the SPIRIT Youth

Board. The training is considered a "Happiness Generator" that will be facilitated by The Shelby Optimist Club. You will enjoy an evening learning how to make happiness more a part of your life, even if you struggle with being happy. Sound too good to be true? Well you wont know unless you stop by to find out more

about the difference you can make. Its up to you!!

When: June 28  
5:30 PM- 7:30 PM  
Where: 21885 Dunham Rd. Clinton Twp 48036  
Call Cheri Duncan  
412-6151 for info

## 2011 DISCOVER YOUR INDEPENDENCE CONFERENCE



Are you 14-24 years old and have been or currently are in foster care? Come spend the day with us at the 4th Annual SPIRIT Youth Conference on JULY 22 from 11am -4 pm @ the MISD 44001 Garfield Rd Clinton Twp. Complete and send in the registration form provided inside this newsletter so you can learn how to pay for college, buy a car, get money for 1st months rent and security deposits and learn about obtaining money for other the many other things you need to transition into adulthood. Come hear an awesome guest speaker, Chip St. Clair, talk about his life experiences and how you can make a difference for yourself. Meet new people, win prizes, get free gifts and have lunch with us. Take advantage of other opportunities that you may qualify for. For more information contact the youth coordinator, Cheri Duncan @ 586-412-6151 or talk to your case worker.  
REMEMBER TO COMPLETE AND SEND IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM.

# Summer Time



By Brandon Y.

Summer is a great time for fun and free time. Sometimes that free time over accumulates so I decided to look for a job. Summer is a great opportunity because you can work full time hours and make a lot of money to save for a car or for other things you may want. Also, you can spend your money on entertainment, clothes or hobbies. So, overall it's a win, win situation to have a job during the summer. You see, jobs give you experience and give you an opportunity to prove that you are hard working and diligent. They will probably write you a good reference letter

and you can put the job experience on a resume that you will need for a better job later. Again, like I said it gets you money for things you want and need. However, looking for a job is not easy for us young kids. Especially when the economy is not doing so well. A lot of adults are now taking jobs that we would normally be offered. So, remember to dress nice to make a good first impression, maintain eye contact and remember to talk clear and be able to tell them why you would be the best person for the job. You have to sell yourself so be confident. Anyway, my point being is that summer can be a lot of fun, a time to make some extra money and get work experience when it wont interfere with your school work.

**ASK YOUR WORKER ABOUT CONNECTING YOU WITH MICHIGAN WORKS FOR A POSSIBLE JOB LEAD. ALSO, CHECK WITH YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR.**



## DID YOU KNOW.....

By: Christina D You can get a mentor? Someone to talk with or someone to spend some time with to help you in life.

The mentorship program provides youth that are in foster care with the chance to develop a relationship with an adult, other than an authority figure, who then becomes a friend, a role model and an advocate. This caring, consistent relationship leads to an increased self-esteem, improved social skills, additional opportunities for success in life and help you have a brighter outlook on the future.

"I use to wonder what I had in store for me as a mentee now I know about mentoring through the MSU extension program. The program impacted both my and my mentors life in unbelievable ways".

Childhelp also can link foster youth to mentors. "I would have never graduated from high school, had it not been for the support and encouragement of my mentor", said one older youth.

To be connected to a mentor ask your case-worker about wanting one. You can also contact the youth coordinator, Cheri Duncan @ 586-412-6151



By Leon J.

Getting your license is a very exciting time. It allows you to have the freedom and independence that you have never had before. Driving helps you grow up because it provides you a chance to take on more responsibility. It is also a chance if you are not making good choices, to get yourself in trouble or worse.

Recently, a friend of one of my friends made a horrible decision to drive when drinking. She had been at a bar with a group of people and when she was leaving the bar another person who was drunk convinced her to race him. They were driving fast down Gratiot in Roseville when she lost control of her car and hit a tree. She wasn't wearing her seat belt, she was knocked unconscious and she

## DRUNK DRIVING

spent over 2 weeks in the hospital. She has a closed head injury and a broken left arm. She will never be the same.

Like I said, driving will give you freedom. However, if you drink and drive, no matter what your age, you could end up dying, killing someone else or end up injured and handicapped. Freedom won't mean anything to you if something like that happens.

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens and one out of

three of those is alcohol related.

Keep in mind that

**UNDERAGE DRINKING IS ILLEGAL! DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE.**



## SAFE SUMMER FUN

By: Spencer S.

We all know that with the advent of spring, school is almost over. When you think of summer, immediately the words: "Fun, sun, travel, pool and beach," pop into our minds. However, there is one word that should be in the line of thinking, but sadly isn't, and that word is safety. During this year's spring and summer breaks, most students will be leaving their comfort zone for a little R & R outside of their comfort zones, to go to a much warmer place, say Florida or Mexico. When you leave your comfort zone, and travel to someplace else, there are always dangers. Now this article isn't really about preaching cynicism, but more of being vigilant and resourceful. We've all heard

of drug wars and kidnappings in Mexico, and realistically, if you're smart about what you do, as in make smart choices, you won't get mixed in with the wrong crowd. As for the fun aspect of travelling, you might get to see new places, absorb the local culture, or just be a beach bum all day, it doesn't really matter what you do, as long as it's something fun and preferably new, to get those endorphins going. Also, never go alone to a new place, as for one, the expense might be yours entirely, you have to figure out transportation, and housing and such, but if you come with someone you'll split the costs, not only that, but also you'd have someone you can rely on in a new environment. Really, just be smart about things, MapQuest from your hotel before you go someplace, so you don't get lost, and become forced to rely on

possibly maliciously incorrect information. As with any time where you may be unsupervised, you may feel the urge to step over the line where authority had drawn back home and you may find yourself in some awkward situation. My Cross country coach always used to tell us before the homecoming dance that we must implement the 5 second rule. The rule basically demands that once you are in a house, apartment, or whatever, and placed in a situation that involves something you think you shouldn't do, you have 5 seconds to determine if what is going on will negatively impact you, or something you wouldn't normally, do. This way if the police or someone comes knocking, you won't be involved in the activities. On all accounts, you should have fun, but limit fun to things that you normally would do, and are socially acceptable.

## THE HARDSHIP OF BEING A TEEN PARENT

By Cody W.

I was 18 and a couple days away from graduating when I found out I was pregnant. It came as a big scare but my boyfriend and I decided we were going to become parents and make the best of the situation. I still left for college in the fall and spent my first semester at Western Michigan University walking around with my son growing inside me. Becoming a parent for the first time is such a nerve wracking experience no matter what your age, and being younger it's easier to worry twice as much. Not only did I have to completely change my life to accommodate a baby, which takes so much preparation I also had to step out on my own more and become completely independent. Many young girls that get pregnant don't realize what it takes to have and raise a child. Statistics say that teenage mothers are more likely to have malnourished babies because they fail to take care of themselves properly during pregnancy

and that those in foster care were more likely to have children early on and that there children will also be in foster care. I was not trying to become a statistic. I'm continuing my education to become a Nurse so I will always be able to take care of my son and give him a life I didn't have, but it is very hard. Babies and children are a lot of work; they are not all smiles and sunshine. Newborns eat 8-12 times a day which is very tiring especially if you breastfeed like I am. Babies also have a dirty diaper 6-8 times a day. My son is only 2 months old so I spend majority of my time taking care of him and believe me I was blessed with a very calm baby who hardly cries, but you may not be so lucky and you have to be prepared for it. Diapers are expensive, especially because they don't last. Having a child is not just costly but you also become responsible for another life and not just your own anymore. Whatever my son needs comes before anything I need or want to do. There is a life completely dependent on mine and it can be exhausting. The sleep you do get doesn't last long, and the other times that I am tired I am

torn between whether I should clean up the house or shower. I love my son so much and I would never regret having him but I do wish I waited longer to have a child because I know I'm going to miss out on a lot of thing and I could have established my career and life before bringing in another life and saved money up. I have had to grow up in order to raise my son, and being an adult really isn't all that fun. So think before you act, sex can wait but if you think it can't then take the right precautions and protect yourself. A little bit of fun isn't worth having a child you can't take care of or a disease you can't get rid of.



**ITS NOT EASY! TRUST ME YOU CAN WAIT TO MAKE THAT CHOICE!!**

# THE WOMAN TRYING TO FIND THE LITTLE GIRL



By Tiffany R.

The women trying to find the little girl

Where is the little girl  
who needed her mother so  
bad at night

Where is the little girl  
who cried at night  
thinking that it just might

be only for one night  
that she is by herself

Where is the little girl who hates

But at the same time

Loves her mother

Where is the little girl who smiles  
when all she wanted to do is die

Where is the little girl who wondered why

she was born into so much pain

I will tell you...

that little girl is me,

the woman that stands before you  
praying that God can keep helping  
me make it to

see a better day



## GRADUATED, WHAT'S NEXT?

Wondering what you should do with your life after high school graduation? College is not the only answer. Ask to talk to your case worker to help you decide. Maybe considering a technical school or finding employment is something you need to consider? There may be funding to help you with either option. Ask how Youth in Transition (YIT) funding can help you obtain your independence. You can get assistance with interview clothing or equipment for training or employment. You just need to ask...just do it!!



Interested in finding out about what the SPIRIT Youth Board Does? Interested in joining? Contact your case worker, complete an application if you are 14 years old or older. You get paid to attend and participate. What you need is a desire to want to change the system for the better, focused, willing to work hard and be part of a group of other foster youth. We currently have openings so ask your worker for an application or contact the youth coordinator, Cheri Duncan @ 586-412-6151. It's a great way to learn interview skills and begin your work experience.

## DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?

We are looking for input for our newsletter. If you have something to share, even a question, poetry or artwork please send it to:

Macomb County DHS

Attention: Cheri Duncan

19700 Hall Road, Suite B

Clinton Township, MI 48038

YOU COULD SEE YOUR  
SUBMISSION IN AN UPCOMING  
ISSUE OF THE SOARING SPIRIT  
NEWSLETTER

## THE SPIRITYOUTH BOARD We can help you.....

← We can help you better understand the foster care system, attend meetings with you or just be someone to talk to.

“If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much”. Jim Rohn

