



February 2010 Informational Update

Middle Earth Keeps Its Promises to Youth: Caring Adults



Middle Earth is committed to ensuring every child is the beneficiary of all “Five Promises” laid out by the America’s Promise Alliance (learn more at www.americaspromise.org). Each newsletter, we plan to elaborate on how Middle Earth keeps each of those promises to the local youth we serve. In this issue, we are focusing on the promise of caring adults: “All children need support and guidance from caring adults in their families, at schools and in their communities.”

Our caring staff is the cornerstone of our services. In every one of our programs, the staff are positive role models and mentors to our youth in an effort to prepare them for responsible adulthood. They work hard to offer a listening ear and garner the trust of every adolescent that walks through our doors. We teach them respect and give it to them in return. The staff plants the seeds of positive decision-making skills, accepting the consequences of actions, leadership skills and seeing the potential of their future. Our staff pays attention to each child in an effort to identify those youth that need special services. We are a consistent, safe place for youth to find positive guidance to work through their problems. A perfect example of our work is included in this newsletter, entitled “Finding His Way.”

Sometimes, there is no 'official' program for our work. Approximately one-quarter of our Center attendees are identified as most deprived of a warm, human connection. When our centers are not open, our staff provides these adolescents with individual attention to address their needs, for example, taking the child to a health clinic, helping them fill out a job application, providing academic tutoring, engaging them in community service, or mediating their conflicts with family and friends. Although these efforts absorb a lot of time, we believe every child deserves to rely on a strong support system.

Thank You to Church & Dwight Co., Ethicon, Inc., and Ortho-McNeil

Employees at Church & Dwight Co., Inc. provided a grant through their employee giving fund to help local adolescents develop into responsible community members. The company manufactures a wide range of personal care, household and specialty products under the ARM & HAMMER brand name.



Ethicon, Inc. and Ortho-McNeil have both provided generous corporate gifts to Middle Earth. Ethicon, Inc., a Johnson & Johnson company, is a trusted, world-wide leader in surgical care. Ortho-McNeil®, a division of Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc, strives to provide innovative, high quality, safe and effective treatments to healthcare professionals in primary care, hospitals and other care facilities.

Tour of Somerville in May; Contest on NEW Website

The Tour of Somerville Cycling Series, a tradition since 1940, is a four-day event of competitive cycling and a family festival on May 28-31, 2010. The competition attracts over 600 professional and amateur cyclists from all over the world. The event, which is free to the public, offers live music, kids’ activities, sports demos and other entertainment. All proceeds benefit Middle Earth.



The event website has been completely redesigned with a polished look and more information, including a visitor’s guide to the area, lodging info, course maps, an explanation of cycling strategies, and volunteer info. To celebrate the website launch, Middle Earth is offering a contest to win VIP tickets, a chance to start a race, or a t-shirt. Visit:

www.tourofsoverville.org



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Finding His Way: A Story of One Teen's Success



Jacob (name changed for privacy) first came to one of the Middle Earth Community Youth Centers at the age of 12 with his older brother. Jacob walked in the shadow of his more extroverted sibling and would often engage in competition, disagreements and poor behavior with him as a result. Through many informal conversations, the staff helped Jacob realize that he had a hard time “acting himself” around his peers, so they worked with him to help Jacob slowly find his own niche within his peer group. The staff encouraged Jacob to participate in several inclusive activities that allowed him to find his own group of friends and gain confidence in his own values and interests irrespective of his brother's. One such activity was the center's cooking classes, where Jacob discovered a love of cooking. He is constantly in the kitchen making “concoctions” for his friends and has expressed a strong desire to go to cooking school. Through the staff's gentle mediation, Jacob has also developed a more healthy and supportive relationship with his brother. Jacob's journey reminds us that all adolescents have struggles, some personal and others social, but through proper support and guidance, these struggles can be overcome no matter how big or small.

Important Resources On Our Website

Visit www.middleearthnj.org to:



- Make an online donation.
- Obtain valuable tips / advice on teens on our blog.
- Sign up to get this newsletter via e-mail.

“Run from Winter” 10K Race in March

We are promoting a 10K run on Sunday, March 21 at 9:30 a.m. on a USATF certified course in Duke Island Park, Bridgewater. Long-sleeve race t-shirts will be given to the first 250 entrants. The entry fee is \$30 if you register before March 11 and \$35 after 3/11 and on race day. You can register through Middle Earth's website.



If you would like to learn more about a topic in our newsletter, please call 908-725-7223 or e-mail office@middleearthnj.org.