Kicking Off the New School Year

Thanks to the support of our partnering schools, the United Way Youth Venture (UWYV) program started the year on a high note, working with an enthusiastic group of middle school counselors-in-training at Camp SUN (Students Understanding Nature) over the summer, and hosting our introductory Dream It. Do It. workshop for nearly 90 ninth grade School Within a School students. This one-hour inspirational workshop yielded numerous ideas and was followed by several students enthusiastically sharing ideas for Ventures they wanted to begin working on. In addition, staff spoke at a Fitchburg Rotary Club meeting to raise awareness of the many issues Fitchburg students are tackling through UWYV.

Following the resignation of our previous FHS Champion at the end of FY14, we are still looking to hire a Champion at Fitchburg High to provide ongoing stability and support for the program during the school day. Hiring this essential person will enable us to bring the program back to FHS in full force for the spring.

100% of FY14 Fitchburg High School Venturers reported that...
- They believe it is important to get a college degree and they plan on pursuing a degree.
- What they have learned through UWYV is relevant to how they can make positive change in the community.

“It is my hope to give back and help the Fitchburg library by helping kids with reading and anything they need dealing with school.”
Fitchburg Student

Community Investment
- 35 Venture teams have launched in Fitchburg School District since the program began in 2005.
- Since 2005, an investment of $18,040 in seed funds and $44,150 in Champion stipends has been made to Fitchburg School District through the UWYV program. In the first half of this academic year, our staff provided 47 hours of direct service (a value of $1,060) and is committed to investing at least 20 additional hours.
- 7 student workshops presented this academic year were focused on writing a business plan, budgeting, fundraising, marketing, and setting SMART goals.
Enthusiasm for Changemaking

Although we are yet to secure someone for the Champion role at Fitchburg High School this year, the program has still been able to make a difference with many students within the Fitchburg school district. Thanks to the efforts of the school administration and the 21st Century After-School Program, UWYV staff was granted the opportunity to work with students at Camp SUN over the summer to help them launch a Venture to raise awareness about bullying. In addition, we were able to introduce UWYV to School Within a School, with much immediate interest from students and a plan for close collaboration with the teaching staff of the program.

Transformative Change

“We wanted to help our community but were not sure how to make it happen. United Way Youth Venture helped us put together a plan.”

“I want to help my city of Fitchburg by going around to the ball parks and fields and fix them up.”

-Fitchburg Venturers

Venturers in Action

As the FY14 school year ended, the students of Fitchburg were not done pursuing their passion to help others through the UWYV program. Comprised of 14 driven students from multiple schools and grades, the leaders of the Venture team, Guardians of Camp SUN, were determined to collaborate on a district-level to end bullying in Fitchburg schools. In only four weeks’ time, these students completed their Action Plan, presented their idea to a panel of community leaders, and completed their goal of educating every student in Camp SUN on how to end bullying at their schools.