“Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society’s margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies.”

KOFI ANNAN
CULTIVATING A GENERATION OF CHANGEMAKERS.

Kofi Annan’s quote epitomizes the core belief inspiring the nine year partnership between Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, and Ashoka’s Youth Venture. Young people involved in United Way Youth Venture (UWYV) combine their passions and skills to address a problem they see in their community through an entirely youth-led and youth-created social venture. Youth, ages 10-22, are supported in this opportunity through intensive skill-building workshops, hands-on learning, consistent mentorship, and seed funding to help them launch their idea from dream to reality. These valuable life lessons are delivered through close collaboration with our partnering school districts, resulting in development of leadership skills, confidence, a sense of empowerment, and experience as changemakers—all of which prepare them to be engaged members of society, prepared to succeed in college and future careers.

As a part of MWCC’s Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, we believe that youth participation leads to better decisions and outcomes. In today’s schools, students are educated to prepare them for the world they will inherit; complete with the problems we created or were unable to repair. Much of the learning that takes place in schools is passive, whereby students are expected to learn by others imparting wisdom upon them instead of learning by doing. Youth are a valuable resource of inspiration, talent, knowledge and energy; and they truly hold the future in their hands. Shouldn’t we then be investing more in them and engaging them in active learning strategies which teach them to be changemakers?

Young people involved in UWYV develop leadership skills, build confidence, provide hours of service to their communities, and most importantly, are given the chance to make lasting positive change for others, as well as for themselves. At the same time they learn how to confront problems and develop creative solutions.

In 2002, the leaders of the United Way of North Central Massachusetts (UWNCM) shared this vision when they identified that the north central Massachusetts community was not meaningfully acting to help cultivate the next generation of leaders, volunteers, and philanthropists. The United Way was unknown and irrelevant to many young people and too much of the investment in youth was in the form of remedial and intervention services. The United Way of North Central Massachusetts wanted to also invest in youth proactively and offer the opportunity to contribute to the betterment of their communities. Believing in the capacity of young people to create change, the United Way partnered with Ashoka’s Youth Venture, and later with Mount Wachusett Community College in 2005.

It is our hope that through the United Way Youth Venture experience, young people will carry the skills that they’ve learned, as well as the charge to take action, into the later aspects of life; and that elder generations will begin to see youth as capable, responsible, valuable members of society.
PROGRAM OUTCOMES

“Things don’t have to be the way they are. The world is changed by ordinary people. Little people living out big love.” - Robby, “Kid President”

UWYV Increases Student Success

- **100%** of participants reported that they plan on graduating from high school
- **95%** of Venturers reported that it was important for them to get a college degree and **96%** plan on attending college
- Over **80%** of Venturers report that they earn primarily As and Bs in school
- **37%** report that they have done better in school since joining UWYV
- Over **85%** of participating youth reported they were involved in sports, clubs and other activities

- Students who actively participated in UWYV had a **lower rate of detentions, 1% vs 8%**, and a **lower suspension rate, 0.4% vs 10%**
- At all but one partner site, Venturer MCAS scores were **higher than the school’s average** with Venturers scoring on average **nine** points higher in each MCAS section
- At both North Middlesex Regional High School and Murdock High School, Venturers scored **exceedingly higher** than non-Venturers by an average of **23** points per section
- **89%** of reporting students reported that they would continue to do things that would improve their communities in the future

Actively engaged students who responded to the Spring Survey reported:

**Skills Gained**

- **76%** Stated that UWYV has positively helped them learn the importance of teamwork
- **72%** Feel that UWYV has helped them learn how to do a public presentation
- **77%** Agreed that UWYV has helped them learn how to problem solve
- **67%** Know how to research
- **65%** Feel better prepared for their future
- **54%** Better understand how to develop a budget
- **74%** Learned how to work with people different than themselves
- **63%** Feel more confident
Participation and Activity Metrics

- Since 2002 when UWYV began in north central Massachusetts, **238 Venture Teams** have launched, with **139 remaining active**
- In FY14, UWYV was able to provide this experience to Venturers at a cost of **$1,743.95** per team (a **11% decrease** from FY13) at the cost of **$117.68** per student directly engaged in UWYV, a **25% reduction** over FY13
- Out of the partner sites that reported, Ventures raised more than **$7,923** in matching funding to support their Venture missions
- UWYV students engaged more than **374 adult volunteers**, a **48% increase** over FY13, and provided countless hours of community support to the north central region
- In FY14, **29 Ventures were launched** across all partnering schools/districts and organizations, with **49 Teams** in the pipeline for FY15
- Of all of the Youth Venture partnerships nationally, UWYV of North Central Massachusetts holds the largest contingent of engaged students and teams
- **82 workforce and college-ready skill-building workshops** were delivered by staff and Champions on topics including budgeting, marketing, fundraising, and setting SMART goals
- More than **415 youth** attended the Fall Kick-Off, a regional youth conference held at MWCC
- Over **300 socially entrepreneurial ideas** were generated (in the process of working with the **8,965 youth exposed**)

Leadership Experience

- **93%** Think it’s **important to listen to others’ ideas and suggestions** when making a decision
- **69%** Agreed that UWYV has helped them learn **how to lead change in their community**
- **66%** Have **organized other students to take action** on a community issue through UWYV
- **56%** Feel **more prepared to speak and/or present** in front of an audience
- **66%** of students now understand how to run and organize a meeting
- **73%** Understand **how to address problems in the community**
- **67%** Now enjoy assuming **leadership roles**

Importance of Community Engagement

- **91%** Believe that the lessons learned through UWYV are relevant to making **positive community change**
- **90%** Believe it is important to learn about other cultures and beliefs that are not the same as their own
- **91%** Believe that it is important to encourage others to participate in their community
- **75%** Through UWYV understand how decisions are made in their community
- **87%** Agreed that people their age can influence decisions and policies
- **82%** Feel that their Venture had a **positive impact on the community**
- **90%** Agree that UWYV is an **important opportunity for students**
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & SPECIAL EVENTS

Introduction
In FY14, the primary focus of UWYV program staff was a solid commitment to quality delivery across all partner sites. Through a period of change, including staff turnover and financial belt tightening, an intentional decision was made to contract the program to a smaller number of partners, allowing for deeper and stronger relationships. The primary beneficiaries of these relationships? Unquestionably, our youth. Despite the reduction in the number of partners from 18 to 12, more students participated in UWYV than ever before, participating in skill-building workshops and making their social entrepreneurship dreams a reality.

Highlights of Our Special Events

Fall Kick-Off
The fourth annual UWYV Fall Kick-Off event was held on October 18, 2013 at Mount Wachusett Community College, with over 400 Venturers attending. Fall Kick-Off provided the opportunity for those new to UWYV to learn about and explore the UWYV program, as well as gain valuable information about how to get started with their changemaking ideas and create a new Venture Team. For seasoned Venturers, Fall Kick-Off presented the opportunity to network with other youth leaders and to attend breakout sessions that addressed areas that would help them enhance and sustain the Ventures. For Champions and Allies, it provided an opportunity to learn more about how to support the individual Venturers and Teams.

Daniel M. Asquino, MWCC President, and Bob Chauvin, CEO of long-time UWYV supporter, Tyco SimplexGrinnell, were on hand to launch the day’s activities. This year’s program featured Venturer, Deryn Sussman (Bears on Patrol Venture, NCCES) as co-emcee, providing yet another public speaking and leadership opportunity for youth to shine. In the same vein, some of the breakout sessions were facilitated by Venturers, as well as other members of the greater community. Keynote speaker, Marlo Alvarado Custdio, a community organizer and CEO of his own film production company promoting civic engagement, shared his personal experience as a struggling youth turned changemaker. 80% of attendees rated his segment a four or five on a scale of one to five and overall, student and adult attendees gave the Fall Kick-off event high marks with 81% rating it a four or five. Participating youth shared that their favorite parts of the event were the sharing of ideas, networking with other driven youth, talking about fundraising, and hearing the keynote speaker.
### Breakout Sessions For Venturers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakout Session Name</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Advisory Board</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Your Venture to the Next Level</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Your World</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch Perfect</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond the Bake Sale</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing to the Max</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Your Application to the Top of the Pile</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ratings were on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being “terrible” and 5 being “awesome”. The Fall Kick-Off also provided professional development and networking for Allies and Champions with two breakout sessions: Ally Training, and Teacher • Mentor • Friend.

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“The Fall Kick-Off is one of the best field trips I have ever been to; I can’t wait to start a Venture!”

*FKO Student Attendee*

### Day of Caring

Mount Wachusett Community College has long participated in the United Way Day of Caring, and this year, for the first time, the college community was delighted to serve as a host site. More than 100 students, faculty and staff packaged 16,000 meals of rice and beans for families in need in support of the Venture Team, Kylee’s Kare Kits for Kids. The meals were then distributed to area food pantries for families in need.
Champion Roundtable Discussion

On January 16, 2014, UWYV staff hosted the second annual Champion roundtable discussion, a networking opportunity for Champions (stipended, non-controlling adult mentors that are responsible for running UWYV programming at their respective schools). Twelve Champions throughout the districts attended, as well as UWYV staff. The purpose of this Champion event was to exchange ideas and best practices, as well as have the opportunity to meet and strengthen relationships with other Champions. The meeting gave the Champions the opportunity to gain answers to their common questions and walk away with a supportive network of fellow Champions. Also during this meeting was a request to participate in strategic planning goal setting, resulting in a January 31, 2014 strategic input meeting attended by five Champions, where topics included program curriculum integration and teacher evaluations.

Administrators Dinner

UWYV held the first-ever Administrators Dinner on May 6, 2014 at Mount Wachusett Community College, hosting partnering district superintendents, principals, and UWYV staff. This event kicked off with inspirational words from Massachusetts State Senators Stephen Brewer and Jennifer Flanagan, both passionate, long-time supporters of the UWYV program. The attending school leadership learned about the tremendous impact their students are having on the community through their Ventures, and discussed ways to increase the level of involvement UWYV has within their schools.

Community Panels

A community panel is the culmination of a Venture Team’s application process. It is a chance for students to showcase the time and effort they have put in to developing their plans, and allows community members the opportunity to participate in the process as adult supporters for these youth. Venture Teams deliver a formal presentation of their Venture’s business plan, are asked questions by panelists, and finally receive a decision as to whether or not they have been approved for their seed funding of up to $1,000. In order to provide this opportunity to Venture teams throughout the spring, UWYV relied on 62 volunteers to serve as panelists (three of these were students) from a multitude of community partners and stakeholders at 17 community panel events.

Tyco SimplexGrinnell Competition Training

On June 12, and 13, 2014, UWYV staff facilitated a national program training at the DoubleTree Hilton in Leominster, MA. The training was part of a National Grant Competition sponsored by Tyco SimplexGrinnell. The training was a collaborative effort between United Way of North Central Massachusetts, Mount Wachusett Community College, Ashoka’s Youth Venture, and Tyco SimplexGrinnell to promote UWYV to other United Ways throughout the country.

This year, a two-day “how-to” style presentation, inclusive of multiple hours of hands-on learning, was presented to four United Ways: United Way of Long Island, New York; United Way of Medina County, Ohio; United Way of Stark County, Ohio; and the United Way of Silicon Valley, California. Tyco SimplexGrinnell shocked the audience when they awarded multiple major grants rather than the traditional single award to start their own local UWYV program. Winning a $30,000 grant was the United Way of Silicon Valley, and taking home surprise grant awards of $20,000 each, were the United Way of Long Island, and the United Way of Medina County.
Significant Programmatic Highlights

Curriculum Integration. Through several pilots in FY14, UWYV made tremendous strides toward the goal of aligning the program more deeply with K-12 Common Core curriculum standards. Through a close partnership with the Leominster School District, UWYV staff was able to pilot a school-based delivery model involving co-teaching throughout an eighth grade English class unit, “How Can I Make a Difference?.” Students completed Action Plans, learning the essential skills of goal-setting, budgeting, and marketing, while creating advertisements, marketing plans, and other related homework projects.

Financial Sustainability Initiative. This year, several measures to increase financial security were implemented, including the opening of a UWYV-branded online store with 10% sales commission going back to UWYV. In addition, UWYV rolled-out partner-level management of revolving accounts, with any seed funds not spent within a year recycled to support the launch of new Venture Teams resulting in a pool of $8,254 available to fund new Ventures—37% of the total seed funds awarded. Also funding the revolving accounts was a new initiative, a “Pay It Forward” program, requiring new Ventures to contribute 10% of funds raised toward future Ventures launched within their school or partner organization. Revolving accounts and “Pay It Forward” contributions have accumulated a starting balance of $16,500 for the FY15 year!

Strategic Social Media. This year, the UWYV program has created a more continuous presence and use in existing social media pages, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Vine. Due to this stronger social media presence, the program has had a 34% increase in its online fanbase in the past year and continues to gain more popularity in the community.

New Action Plan. The Action Plan template, the business plan that all Venturers complete to help organize their project goals, budget, and sustainability, was fully redesigned to better help youth outline their Venture idea in a format that requires them to think critically about their project. Feedback on the new format has been positive, with participants sharing that the updated version is easier to work with and much less intimidating.

UWYV-Branded Store. In January, UWYV launched a branded online retail site, www.uwyvstore.org, providing a variety of apparel, gear, and marketing items for Venture Teams to display their changemaker pride, expand public awareness of their mission, and resell for fundraising. Both a part of the financial sustainability plan, and a benefit to the many Venture Teams in UWYV, the store provides items for sale that promote the UWYV of NCM brand as well as an option for Teams to co-brand merchandise of their choice with their own Venture logo or name. 10% of sales revenue is commissioned back to UWYV, and youth have access to a simplified billing process and virtually limitless product selection options at reasonable prices.

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

SATellite GARDEN
NORTHEast MIDDLESeX REgIONAL HIGh SChOoL

On a community service trip to New Orleans, members of the North Middlesex Service Club witnessed a local community’s effective and cost-efficient composting system and decided to create one of their own. Through United Way Youth Venture they were able to transform a long-neglected school courtyard into a functional garden with raised beds, potted vegetables and composting facilities. The Venturers even took this garden a step further when they were awarded a $20,000 grant to build a state of the art hydroponics facility and greenhouse, the first of its kind in the entire state.

With the community garden in place, the satellite garden has already collected over 1,150 pounds of fresh, organic produce, of which a total of 750 pounds has been donated to a local food pantry on a weekly basis. These students have not only learned many new skills, but they have helped transform a community by raising awareness of the need for nutritious alternatives for those who often cannot afford it.

This is a model Venture of students who have gone above and beyond to not just improve their school, but to help the greater community as well. Their hard year-round work will help countless families across the region and inspire generations of students to follow in their footsteps.
Academic Scholarships.
Scholarships were awarded to five students at the United Way’s Annual Thank You Event on May 1, 2014, held at the DoubleTree Hilton in Leominster, MA. The criteria to be awarded a scholarship included: current or past Venturer, a minimum GPA of 2.5; exhibited leadership skills within school or community; and demonstrated long-term involvement with and dedication to community, specifically in terms of creating opportunities for young people and improving what they define as their community.

This year’s recipients were:

Zayna Basma – Goals For Nets – Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
Zayna’s passion and ability to listen carefully have helped motivate many others, both adults and youth, to be more involved in making positive impact in their world. Using her skills and interest in soccer, Zayna, along with her siblings and fellow teammates, created a unique Venture called Goals For Nets, a summer soccer camp which raises money to buy mosquito bed nets for families in Africa to help prevent the spread of malaria. Zayna embodies everything one hopes to see in a Venturer.

Jeffrey Dike – Friends of Rachel’s Challenge – Leominster High School
While at Leominster High, Jeffrey started a club to foster a more positive school atmosphere by empowering students to have a better understanding of how to end bullying. After seeing the positive impact his club had at LHS he took it upon himself to turn it into a Venture project, Friends of Rachel’s Challenge, so that he and his teammates could spread their message to other schools and organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club. Jeffrey’s willingness to step up and help his peers has made a lasting impact on the community and opened him to invaluable life experience.

Remie El-Hayek – United We Stand For All and Mama Africa – Leominster High School
Remie exemplifies the caring nature we all wish to see in our communities as she works to do all she can to help those in need. As an eighth grader, Remie started the Venture United We Stand For All, which is aimed at feeding the homeless and less fortunate in her community every Saturday and on Christmas. When she became a sophomore in high school, Remie started her second Venture, Mama Africa, and began working directly with the Peace Corps to teach people how to create sustainable farms. Remie’s dedication to serving others is a remarkable example of what one student can do in the United Way Youth Venture program.

Marina Sheid – MLK Day of Service, Outdoor Classroom, and Satellite Garden – North Middlesex Regional High School
As a leader of the service learning club at North Middlesex, Marina has worked to create an environment that is inclusive of all students and open to new ideas, and demonstrates her leadership through action and humility. In addition to starting the Satellite Garden Venture team, which provides fresh produce for the surrounding community, Marina created her own Venture to begin an annual MLK Day of Service. This Day of Service has engaged over 120 volunteers in service, ranging in projects from painting murals for the garden to making fleece blankets for the homeless. Marina continues to strive to do all she can for the community, representing a determination and wisdom far beyond her years.

Shannon Tucker – Simple Treasures – Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
Through hard work and a conscientious effort to improve the Parker Charter greater communities, Shannon has been an example of what both a Venturer and a leader should be. As a result of her caring nature she created a Venture, Simple Treasures, where she has been able to assist abused women and children locally in Fitchburg, bigger cities like Boston, and even internationally in the Dominican Republic. Shannon’s drive gave her the wherewithal to surpass any obstacles in her path and treat them as an opportunity to learn. Her passion and desire will help make her a leader in any community she chooses.
PROFILE OF YOUTH SERVED

According to evaluations and assessments administered from 2013-2014, participating organizations and students indicated that:

Gender  This year we had an equal representation of female and male Venturers.

Ethnic Background

- Caucasian: 66%
- Latino/Hispanic: 13%
- African American: 8%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 5%
- Hmong: 4%
- Native American: 3%
- Other: 0.5%
- Did Not Disclose: 0.5%

Age

- 28% are between the ages 10-12
- 65% are between the ages 13-17
- 6% are over the age of 18
- 2% are unknown

Socioeconomic

- 24% of participating youth qualify for free or reduced lunch, reflective of the economic impacts in the region.

“UWYV introduces you to new people to make positive changes in the community. It teaches you teamwork skills, how to develop a budget, and how to make a presentation in front of a panel. You learn many skills that will be useful in life.”

Venturer, Monty Tech
**Teams by Partner 2002-2014**

Including Descriptions of Teams Launched in FY14

**History of Venture Teams Launched**

- **238 Venture Teams launched** from 2002-2014
- **139 remaining active** from previous years

In FY14, **29 new Ventures were launched** across all partnering schools/districts and organizations with **110 of all Ventures sustained**, a **17% increase** over FY13

United Way Youth Venture partnered with **12 middle and high schools** in 8 area school districts, **one community college** and **one community-based organization/after school program** during the 2013-2014 school year. They included:

- Ayer Shirley Regional School District
  - Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School
  - Ayer Shirley Regional High School
- Fitchburg High School via 21st Century Afterschool Program
- Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School, Devens
- Leominster Public Schools
  - Leominster High School/Center for Technical Education Innovation
  - Samoset Middle School, Leominster
  - Sky View Middle School, Leominster
- Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School, Fitchburg
- Mount Wachusett Community College, Gardner
- North Central Charter Essential School, Fitchburg
- North Middlesex Regional High School, Townsend
- Winchendon Public Schools
  - Murdock High School, Winchendon
  - Murdock Middle School, Winchendon

**Teams by Cause**

- Animal Rights: 7%
- Environment: 10%
- Poverty: 14%
- Health: 17%
- Community Involvement: 21%
- School Empowerment: 31%

**29 Venture Teams launched FY14**

**139 Currently Active Venture Teams**

**110 Active Teams launched 2002-2013**

**Inactive Teams**
Since 2003, the Ayer Shirley Regional School District has paved the way for educational and cultural change within the school, leading to a ripple effect of awareness and support within the greater community. In recent years, the UWYV program has grown rapidly within the middle school as a result of integration into the school day as a course for students. This year, UWYV experienced some growing pains in the school, including the middle school’s long-time Champion stepping down, and as a result, UWYV paused operations for the second half of the year before any teams could launch. At the high school level, the UWYV program continued to grow, with students taking interest in supporting school athletic programs, extra-curricular activities, and at-risk members of the community.

**PARTNER OUTCOMES**

- Ayer Shirley High School launched **3 teams** in the 2013-2014 school year
- At Ayer Shirley Regional School District, **741 students** were introduced to UWYV this year
- **68 teams** launched in Ayer Shirley to date, with **53 remaining active (78%)**
- This year, **367 students** were engaged--of these students, **214 were active** Venture Team members

**Ayer Shirley Regional High School**

**History of Teams Launched**

**2012**
- ASHS School Store

**2013**
- Archery Club
- H.T.K.S.I.S

**2014**
- Activity Skill Building Group (ASBG)
- ASRHS Model United Nations
- SCORE!

“The UWYV program within the Ayer Shirley Regional High School is solid, growing, change-making, inspiring and unbelievably amazing.”

Ally, ASRHS
About the Teams Launched 2013-2014

ASRH Model United Nations

ASRH Model United Nations will be starting the first Model UN at the school, inspiring students to become better speakers, writers, debaters and possibly our future ambassadors! These Venturers look forward to taking this club to the next level of competition, testing their skills against other Model UN clubs across the state as they become a new component to the ASRH community.

SCORE!

SCORE! will be uniting the students of Ayer Shirley Regional High School to raise money for desperately needed sports supplies and a new school scoreboard. They hope to bring the school community together by creating not just greater pride of being a part of the school sports program, but making the whole Ayer-Shirley community proud of their school.

Activity Skill Building Group (ASBG)

ASBG will be new mentors to Page Hilltop Elementary students helping teach them the arts! This group of dedicated individuals will not only encourage students to enjoy the arts in a time where many such programs are being cut, but also help these students as they prepare for their time in middle and high school.

“Until I saw the UWYV Dream It. Do It. presentation, I didn’t realize I could make a difference and impact in my community.”

Kathryn Wheeler, Venturer
“UWYV means we are helping people and showing that we care about them and showing that we are leaders.”

Venturer, ASRMS
UWYV works with Fitchburg High School which is currently in its second year partnership with 21st Century After School Program. UWYV worked in close collaboration with the school's Champion to bring the changemaking “Dream It. Do It.” workshop curriculum inside the classroom, presenting to two tenth grade U.S. history classes during a unit on civil rights and abolitionist leaders. FHS launched one Venture, Team ARCS, which engaged multiple community stakeholders, including the City of Fitchburg mayor, to gain widespread support for much-needed renovations to the Coolidge Park facilities.

### History of Teams Launched

- **2007**
  - Riverfront Revival of the Arts
  - From Crocker to Crocker

- **2008**
  - STAGES
  - LifeLink

- **2009**
  - Intergenerational Project
  - FHS Red Raider Rock Band
  - Prom Dress Express

- **2010**
  - FHS Rachel’s Challenge
  - Raider Works
  - We’ve Got You Covered

- **2011**
  - Fitchburg Finches Quidditch
  - KimChiLove
  - Stand UP

- **2012**
  - Double-Dutch Initiative
  - FHS Helping Hands
  - Free Rice FHS

- **2014**
  - Team ARCS

### About the Team Launched 2013-2014

#### Team ARCS (Actively Reaching Toward Community Service)

What began as a push to build more public restrooms at Coolidge Park in Fitchburg has transformed into an incredible effort by the members of Team ARCS to help improve Fitchburg on a much grander scale. They are now dedicated to having their Venture work in tandem with the City of Fitchburg Mayor’s Office and the Department of Parks and Recreation to help gain community support for the construction of a new field house in Coolidge Park, both improving the park for area residents as well as for the countless number of visitors from all over the state.
Students at Parker follow the principles of all essential schools, including the idea that a teacher’s role is to coach students on how to learn, and therefore, learn how to ultimately teach themselves. This method of guidance lends itself to the implementation of UWYV at Parker, where young people are encouraged to take the reins of their ideas and bring them to fruition with minimal adult interference. Parker Venture Teams understand the concepts of project-based and sustainable endeavors, as they are incorporated into their learning models as early as seventh grade. This past year, Ventures focused their change-making efforts locally, raising awareness for breast cancer, upgrading school recycling capabilities, supporting area homeless families, and caring for shelter animals.

**Partner Outcomes**

- Parker launched 4 new teams in the 2013-2014 school year
- 400 students were introduced to UWYV this year
- The Champion offered a UWYV period during students’ choice block in order to provide assistance and guidance to new and potential teams
- 19 teams launched at Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School and 9 remain active (42%)
- This year, 22 students were engaged--of these students, 21 were active Venture Team members

**History of Teams Launched**

2006
- Team Ultimate
- Project Smile
- Lowell Girls Group
- Prospect Hill Project

2007
- Academic Support for Students
- Club PAGE

2008
- Parker STAND

2009
- Puppy Love

2010
- Support the Music

2011
- Health Awareness

2012
- Art4All
- Murals with a Purpose
- Parker Greenhouse
- Simple Treasures

2013
- Goals for Nets
- Parker Press
- Rooted in Stone
- Y.A.P.P. Fence

2014
- Everyday Essentials
- Parker Green
- Pink Ladies
- Sponsor A Dog

“I needed help and United Way Youth Venture gave me that help and enabled me to build the greenhouse to be used for the horticulture classes.”

**Mike Sushchyk**
Venturer, Parker Green House
About the Teams Launched 2013-2014

Everyday Essentials
Everyday Essentials is looking forward to helping families in need who are moving into new homes with the support of the Acton Housing Authority. They plan to gather everyday needs through donations and provide them to the families.

Parker Green
While Parker once had a well-sustained recycling program, it has lost the impact of past years, with few students understanding how the recycling program works. The Venturers of Parker Green have taken it upon themselves to revitalize the recycling program, helping to raise awareness in the school on the how and why of recycling, as well as improve the school’s access to recycling bins. They have also started the process to help create a compost program at the school to make the school even more green.

Pink Ladies
The Pink Ladies of Parker are determined to do their part in the battle against breast cancer. Not only do they help get their fellow students involved in doing what they can to address the issue, but they lead the charge working hand in hand with the Relay for Life. Their fundraising activities include sales of pink items such as wristbands and baked goods.

Sponsor a Dog
After hearing about all of the great work that Last Hope K9 Rescue, an animal shelter in Boston, does for abused animals, the girls of Sponsor a Dog knew they had to help out in any way possible. Through their Venture, they will raise funds to buy supplies such as new beds, coats, leashes, collars, and food to be sent to the shelter to help the dogs that are in such need.

“United Way Youth Venture has helped me a lot with leadership skills and talking to people as well as small skills like handling money and having more responsibility.”

Avanti Mohan
Venturer, Simple Treasures
One of UWYV’s longest-standing partners, Leominster Public Schools, led the way in embedding changemaking into school curriculum this year. Champions and faculty at the middle school level opened their classrooms not only to the “Dream It. Do It.” challenge, but also to an ongoing series of skill-based workshops and activities aimed to bring their typical English Language Arts studies to life. As a result, the majority of Leominster’s eighth grade students were given the tools and support needed to lead change, resulting in nine Venture Teams launching within the middle schools! Meanwhile, Leominster High Venture Teams continued to make headlines with community-galvanizing efforts, many emphasizing the city’s heartbreaking challenge of supporting the displaced and homeless population.

**PARTNER OUTCOMES**

- Leominster launched **12 teams** in the 2013–2014 school year
- **3,243 students** were introduced to United Way Youth Venture this year
- The UWYV program continues to be offered as part of Middle Schools in-class curriculum, in alignment and support of the common core
- **71 teams** launched in Leominster to date, with **50 remaining active (70%)**
- This year, **983 students** were engaged—of these students, **391** were active Venture Team members

“We will know that we have achieved our goal when there is enough help to go around to all people in need.”

**Remie El-Hayek**
**Venturer, United We Stand For All**
Leominster High School & Center for Technical Education Innovation

History of Teams Launched

2002
- Leadership Venture

2003
- Launch Pad Venture

2004
- Tech Awareness Venture
- Operation Photojournalism

2005
- C.O.M.P. (CTE)
- S.T.A.M.P.
- Nature’s Den

2006
- Giving Back to the Community

2007
- L.A.N.D.
- Traveling Through the World

2009
- Teen Reach
- Devil Pups
- Arts for Random Kindness (ARK) (CTE)
- Our Family to Yours (Upward Bound)

2010
- Nature Yard
- SADD Members Involved In Lifestyle Education (S.M.I.L.E.)

2011
- United We Stand for All
- Life Skillz 101

2012
- Mama Africa
- Friends of Rachel’s Challenge

2013
- LEAD-
- Leominster Football
- Teen Helping Teens

2014
- The Devil’s Advocate
- GO Make A Difference
- STRIDE - Students Trying to Rise in Defense of Equality

About the Teams Launched 2013-2014

The Devil’s Advocate

The Devil’s Advocate of LHS is determined to enlighten the student body by bringing back and improving the school newspaper. As a result of their diligent reporting, their school peers and community readers will be better informed about all that’s happening around them and be driven to do their part for the school and community!

GO Make A Difference

Inspired by the need for volunteers in earthquake-stricken Haiti, the students of GO Make a Difference created their Venture as a way to battle the homeless issue both locally and abroad. Through their efforts, these Venturers will raise funds to help feed the homeless in Leominster as well as throw birthday parties for those children who would otherwise miss out on the joy of having a birthday celebration. The team also plans to support local efforts to provide affordable homes by volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. Through this journey of giving back locally, the team hopes to raise enough money to eventually travel to Haiti for a service trip, putting their local experience to use.

STRIDE (Students Trying to Rise in Defense of Equality)

STRIDE is a group of determined students who are committed to gathering support for the LGBTQ community throughout their school and Leominster. As they raise awareness, the Venture Team also plans to fundraise to support the Waltham House, which provides safe housing and counseling for LGBTQ youth who have encountered mental and physical abuse due to their sexual orientation.
Samoset Middle School

History of Teams Launched

2002
• Mums and Muffins

2003
• C.L.A.S.S.
• L.E.A.F.S.

2005
• Wildcat’s Wares Wagon

2006
• Willing to Help - Queriendo Ayudar

2008
• Positive Pre-School Pals

2009
• Samoset Gazette
• Teen Generational Service Venture
• Walking Around the World

2011
• Book Critique Clan

2012
• PAWS
• LEAFS
• Samoset Spirit Squad

2013
• Beat Out Bullying

2014
• LSRC - Leominster Sports Recreation Club

About the Team Launched 2013-2014

LSRC (Leominster Sports Recreation Club)

As students of Samoset, the boys of LSRC immediately noticed the state of neglect of the school’s outdoor baseball field and basketball court. Enthusiastic sports-lovers, these Venturers decided to do something about it so future students can enjoy outdoor sports in improved facilities. Working with the City of Leominster’s recreation department, the students are determined to bring these athletic areas back to their former glory and help make Samoset sports great.

“To me, UWYV means that if all of the Venture groups work out, the younger generations will have a great future.”

Student, Samoset
History of Teams Launched

2004
• Sky View School Store

2005
• Little People's Literature

2006
• The Buzz Venture

2008
• Hawk's Nest
• Backyard Group

2009
• Freedom Venture
• Seeds for Success
• Hawk's Safety Crew
• Nature's Perch

2010
• 4 Paws

2011
• Get F.I.T. (Fitness is Timeless)
• Expressions of a New Generation
• Make it Clean. Keep it Green

2012
• Art for Animals
• Don't Waste, Donate
• Kitz for Kids
• Turtles in Trouble
• United Skaters Foundation

2013
• Birds For Boston
• Colors for Cause
• KAMP-Kids Against Mean People

2014
• Changing Lives
• The Confidence Crew
• FAST (Fitchburg Animal Shelter Team
• Holiday Spreaders
• Kissing Scars
• Saving Evergreen
• Sky View Mentors
• Water.org

About the Teams Launched 2013-2014

Changing Lives
The Changing Lives founders have experienced firsthand not only how difficult the battle with cancer can be for a loved one, but to cope with personally. This knowledge has compelled them to help other youth by creating an in-school support system including awareness and group activities for their peers to have someone to lean on if they need it.

The Confidence Crew
The Confidence Crew Venture promotes change in the mentality of their fellow peers by helping all students raise their self-esteem and promote a positive self-image through confidence-boosting activities and special events. The Confidence Crew, hosted their signature event, a talent show at the middle school, providing an opportunity for fellow students to showcase the skills that make them unique, while giving them an opportunity to share in the empowering experience of speaking or performing publicly.
About the Teams Launched 2013-2014

Fitchburg Animal Shelter Team (FAST)
The members of FAST are revved up and ready to help the local Fitchburg Animal Shelter do all it can for homeless animals by raising money, donations and awareness for these family-less animals!

Holiday Spreaders
The Holiday Spreaders team members realized how little their generation knew about Alzheimer’s disease and realized they could make a difference. Along with raising awareness of this disease within the community, this Venture helps those who are struggling with Alzheimer’s in Leominster by bringing them holiday joy each month through festive visits to assisted living facilities featuring games and gifts.

Kissing Scars
The Kissing Scars Venture Team is a group of driven students hoping to end the problem of students in their school resorting to self-harm through cutting. Not only do they raise awareness of the issue to fellow students and adults, but they show their peers that there is another way and that they always have a fellow student they can turn to in times of need.

Saving Evergreen
Saving Evergreen, a project-based Venture Team, wanted to help out the local community when they saw Leominster’s public Evergreen Cemetery neglected, vandalized and in disrepair. Wanting to honor those we’ve lost, they committed to support the city with help cleaning the grounds and repairing headstones.

Sky View Mentors
Sky View Mentors know firsthand that getting through middle school isn’t always easy. This group of students is dedicated to helping their peers through the tough times, knowing there is someone they can turn to for support, while also creating a network of continuing support and resources for themselves.

Water.org
The project-based Water.org Venture Team is changing the way their peers think about drinking water by raising awareness and funds to help those who have no access to clean water. Inspired by Matt Damon’s Water.org non-profit initiative, the students of Water.org raised almost $500 through marketing campaigns at school to send to those in need.
The ambitious and talented students of Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School (Monty Tech) are fortunate to have a high degree of administrative and financial support from district leadership. With this endorsement, UWYV delivered a “Dream It. Do It.” experience to the entire freshman class of more than 350 students. In October, Monty Tech’s spirit of community engagement was manifested by serving as a host site for the United Way Day of Caring, and provided helping hands to improve the Salvation Army facility in Fitchburg. Throughout the year, engaged Venturers met weekly to fine-tune their community-changing Action Plans, integrating the school’s vocational specialties to help Monty Tech’s feeder communities.

**History of Teams Launched**

**2012**
- Appreciate the Arts

**2013**
- Helping the Homeless
- Horizons for the Homeless

**2014**
- Chasing Dreams
- Monty Tech Cares

**About the Teams Launched 2013-2014**

**Chasing Dreams**

Inspired by a love of theater and how it has helped them in their own lives, the Venturers of Chasing Dreams are excited to share their passion with local elementary students. Through their Venture, these students will bring theater to the youth, engaging them as performers in their own shows and hopefully inspiring them to continue enjoying theater arts on their own.

**Monty Tech Cares**

The young men of Monty Tech Cares knew that it was not enough to help the community here and there, but to make it a systematic part of the school’s mantra. Their Venture establishes an annual day of service for the students of Monty Tech to come together and help a part of the community in desperate need. This year they worked with the Montachusett Interfaith Hospitality Network of Fitchburg to help repair the areas of the building that needed improvements.
This year, delivering the UWYV message to students at Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) involved putting a slightly different spin on the “everyone is a changemaker” mantra. Through workshops catered specifically to the community college audience, MWCC students learned in-depth definitions of social entrepreneurship and service learning, and how those concepts could directly complement their coursework at the college. Young people ranging from first-year students to high-schoolers in dual-enrollment courses participated in workshops; each group provided valuable insight on how to successfully provide UWYV experience to a diverse student population. While no teams launched, UWYV formed new partnerships that will enable the program to expand its reach for next year.

**Partner Outcomes**

- Located in Gardner, MA with satellite campuses in Devens, Fitchburg, and Leominster
- Serves 29 communities in North Central Massachusetts
- 62 young people have been introduced to UWYV this year
- Two teams launched to date, one remains active (50%)
- This year, 62 students were engaged--of these students, three were active Venture Team members

**History of Teams Launched**

- **2011**
  - Water to the People
- **2013**
  - CODES (Carry On Don’t Ever Stop)

“I can change the world one idea at a time. It only takes one person to motivate a community.”

*Student, MWCC*
The vision of North Central Charter Essential School (NCCES) asks students to “think for themselves, care about others, and act creatively and responsibly.” Following this vision NCCES pairs well with UWYV and its goal to create cultivators of community-benefiting change in north central Massachusetts. As with many essential schools, NCCES gives students in grades 7-12 the opportunity to learn through project-based assignments with the ultimate goal to have each young person acquire the skills to be self-led learners. The past academic year was ultimately a challenging one, as the school transitioned to an interim building while a brand-new facility was built. Despite this sometimes stressful experience, the UWYV program was a catalyst in challenging participating students to push themselves to once seemingly-impossible personal victories.

“United Way Youth Venture opened up a whole new community for me of other young people who want to be leaders and who want to change the world.”

Venturer, NCCES

PARTNER OUTCOMES

- Located in Fitchburg, MA
- NCCES launched one team in 2013-2014 school year
- 333 students were introduced to United Way Youth Venture this year.
- Four teams launched to date with two remaining active (50%)
- This year, 180 students were engaged—of these students, nine were active VentureTeam members

History of Teams Launched

2011
- Wii Kinnect

2012
- NCCES Helps B.O.P.S.
- Team Green

About the Team Launched 2013-2014

Clean Up Humanity

With the initial desire to help solve every problem in the world, the Venturers of Clean Up Humanity have worked hard to narrow their ambitious ideas into achievable SMART goals, ultimately deciding to raise awareness to help end the issue of domestic abuse right here in the area. Along with awareness campaigns, Clean Up Humanity will be fundraising for the YWCA to aid in their support of women and children who are looking for assistance from abusive homes and relationships.
One of the reasons UWYV works within North Middlesex Regional High School so well is their deeply-rooted service learning culture. Students who choose to get involved with UWYV typically already have a solid understanding of what it means to be an active member of society, specifically utilizing community projects as means of education. This existing pool of service learners has come in handy for numerous Venture Teams, as there is never a shortage of volunteers or an extra set of hands for a particular project. While teams at NMRHS in the past have focused on delving deeper into already-existing projects at their school, this year was distinctively different—offering an opportunity for students to bring their changemaking dreams to life for causes very personal to them.

“UWYV is about empowering youth, giving them a voice, and allowing them that opportunity to not just be the future, but be the now. It creates the change we need to see. That is ultimately what United Way Youth Venture is all about.”

Ray Kane, NMRHS Champion

PARTNER OUTCOMES

- Located in Townsend, MA
- NMRHS launched four teams in 2013-2014 school year
- 1,000 students were introduced to United Way Youth Venture this year
- 11 teams launched to date with nine remaining active (82%)
- This year, 100 students were engaged—of these students, 30 were active Venture Team members

History of Teams Launched

2006
  • Patriot Gardens

2007
  • Fighting Back

2012
  • Literary ‘Zine
  • The Outdoor Classroom

2013
  • MLK Day of Service
  • Satellite Garden
  • Second Helpings

2014
  • The Bright Lights Project
  • Days for Girls Kit Making
  • Habitat at North Middlesex
  • WHEAT Community Café
The Bright Lights Project

Following a service trip to New Orleans, the students of the Bright Lights Project were inspired by Green Lights New Orleans, a group that puts energy-efficient light bulbs into homes in need. These Venturers decided to enact a similar program right here in North Central Massachusetts, teaming up with Unitil and MassSaves with the goal of raising awareness and increasing the number of homes with energy-efficient lighting.

Days For Girls Kit Making

After learning in class about the many issues that girls in Africa face on a daily basis, the Venturers of Days for Girls decided they wanted to do whatever they could to make a difference. During their research they found out about Days for Girls, a non-profit group that provides sustainable feminine hygiene and health solutions. This group will be running sewing classes and fundraisers to purchase the materials and make feminine hygiene kits that will be shared internationally to help girls around the world gain a sense of dignity and self-esteem.

Habitat at North Middlesex

Inspired by the mission of Habitat for Humanity, the leaders of Habitat at North Middlesex have made it their goal to do whatever they can to help the local Habitat chapter. From directly volunteering at Habitat build sites and the Habitat ReStore, to running donation drives to help the families, these Venturers are excited to help make their community better one house at a time.

WHEAT Community Café

After years of volunteering at the WHEAT Community Café, a soup kitchen for the hungry, the Venturers knew something had to be done when WHEAT’s unreliable stove would take an hour and a half just to boil a pot of water. To solve this issue they came up with the idea to create a community-wide cook-off to fundraise for a new industrial-grade stove to help both the WHEAT volunteers and the hungry they serve!
Through the support of Murdock Middle School administration and the UWYV Champions, the deeper implementation of the program has helped to provide positive and empowering programming to students through a weekly elective course offered to sixth through eighth graders. These students not only planned Ventures to improve the community, but also engaged in a process that gave them experience with budgeting, presenting, teamwork, and making their voice heard. Though no high school Ventures launched by June, there are several teams eager to pick up where they left off at the start of the next school year. Venturers at Murdock care passionately about their student body and their town, devoting their Action Plans to solving municipal problems, aiding local citizens, and creating recreational facilities for everyone to enjoy.

**Murdock Middle School**

**History of Teams Launched**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Teams Launched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Art Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Kidz Krew</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>First Day Warriors, United Blues</td>
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</tbody>
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**About the Teams Launched 2013-2014**

**First Day Warriors**

After witnessing the struggles veterans have to overcome as they return home from duty, the members of the First Day Warriors wanted to find a way to help these local heroes. They finally decided on a Venture which would help assemble homecoming packages to give to returning veterans. While they know this won’t solve all of the problems these veterans face, they do know that making their lives just a little easier will go a long way.
United Blues

After the school had to cut their sports budget by $30,000, the members of United Blues became increasingly aware of the many students at Murdock who were not involved in sports mainly because they could not afford to pay athletic fees. Instead of feeling disparaged, these motivated students decided to take action by starting a Venture, United Blues, to help these students. Through a variety of fundraisers and working hand-in-hand with the athletics department, these Venturers hope to get many more students into Blue Devil uniforms for years to come.

Murdock High School
History of Teams Launched

2007
- Extreme Makeover: Field Edition
2008
- Operation Murdock Cares
- The Sound of Murdock
2009
- Wii Care
2010
- Sound of Blue
2011
- Devil Bots
- Operation Murdock: Special Olympics
2013
- Lady Blue Devils Softball Field Improvement Team

“I would recommend United Way Youth Venture to others because it really motivates you to want to do something in your community. Seeing successful ventures and participating is very inspirational.”

VENTURER, MURDOCK HIGH SCHOOL
INACTIVE PARTNERS

Many of the partners below were funded by specific grant programs, which are no longer available.

Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg & Leominster
PARTNER 2011-2013
2011 • Hoop Dreams • Café Cash
2012 • Teen Center Track • BGC Bakerz

Chester Mossman Teen Center
PARTNER 2011
2011 • Team Rainbow Sprinkles

Cleghorn Neighborhood Center
PARTNER 2010
2010 • Kids Gone Green

Gardner High School
PARTNER 2007
2007 • Environmental Crew • Senior Citizen’s Senior Prom

House of Peace and Education
PARTNER 2010-2011
2010 • Project Helping Educate Little People (Project HELP)
2011 • Double Pawz

Lura A. White Elementary School, Shirley
PARTNER 2011
2011 • Guitar Project

Longsjo Middle School, Fitchburg
PARTNER 2011-2013
2011 • New Generation

McKay Arts Academy, Fitchburg
PARTNER 2009-2013
2009 • FAA School Store
2011 • C-VA.S.T. (Charlie, Vaseem, Andy Sports Tutors) • CCZDFE Water Bottle Company • Exploring Fitchburg’s Riches • F.A.A.B. (Fitchburg Arts Academy Bookworms)
2012 • Guided Learning Café • Herbaceous Bunch
2013 • Rocking Creations

Memorial Middle School, Fitchburg
PARTNER 2009-2013
2009 • ESP: Eco-School Project • PATH: Peer Academic Tutoring Help
2011 • M.A.A.C. (Memorial Arts and Ceramics) Misfits
2012 • All About Animals • Crocker Field United
2013 • C4C
METE OUR CHAMPIONS

Structured as a school-based program, the success of United Way Youth Venture greatly depends on the partnership with Champions and their tireless efforts to help Venturers get all they can out of the program. In addition to helping the UWYV staff manage the program’s recruitment, logistics and outcomes in each individual school, Champions are responsible for assisting the efforts of all of their school Venturers. The time and passion required for this role is a formidable commitment for anyone, Champions dedicate themselves to providing the opportunity for hundreds of youth to fine-tune leadership and social entrepreneurship skills while creating a brighter today and tomorrow for our communities.

Ayer Shirley Regional High School

Chris Donovan and Lucille DaCosta, co-Champions for three years, make a dynamic duo. Together they lead their Venturers to be successful leaders of the ASRHS community, proving that teamwork does make the dream work. Lucille assists at-risk students in their behavioral issues by opening their eyes to the benefits of UWYV, helping improve their self-esteem and work ethic, which they then bring back to the classroom. As a coach, Chris promotes the UWYV program to his teams and many, already leaders on the field, have begun to take on this new leadership role directed to help others in need.

“Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School

Kathryn Lyon not only embraced the mission of United Way Youth Venture, but worked with administration to systematically incorporate the program into curriculum at ASRMS. What started out as just another school partnering with UWYV, the program is just as much of an institutional staple as other course subjects; students now go to math, science, English and United Way Youth Venture.

“Some of our students have come quite a long way. In fact, the point person in charge of one Venture was considered non-verbal when she was in elementary school, but led the Venture presentation.”

Chris Donovan, Champion

“UWYV has become not just a part of the ASRHS community, but the starting point for students to take a greater leadership role to help make a change for the better.”

Lucille DaCosta, Champion

Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School

Kathryn Lyon not only embraced the mission of United Way Youth Venture, but worked with administration to systematically incorporate the program into curriculum at ASRMS. What started out as just another school partnering with UWYV, the program is just as much of an institutional staple as other course subjects; students now go to math, science, English and United Way Youth Venture.
Fitchburg High School
Since becoming Fitchburg High’s Champion two years ago, Dave Kelly has been a proponent for the United Way Youth Venture program at the school, merging the lessons that UWYV teaches with the school goal of promoting service learning through the 21st Century After School program. Dave continues to help the program grow by tying the Venture model to a multitude of other school organizations including the Pay It Forward Club. His work continues to mold the program with the mission of the school which will ensure a successful partnership.

Francis W. Parker Essential Charter School, Devens
Caroline Beasley is a strong proponent of the Essential School mission, which aims to assist young people in becoming self-directed learners. With this in mind, Caroline has worked to exemplify the mission by offering UWYV to interested students at Parker.

Caroline takes advantage of the youth-led mentality at Parker, offering minimal interference to each Venturer’s creative process. As she concludes her fourth year as Champion, Caroline maintains this approach and continues to offer guidance toward — but not control over — each young person’s vision for the Venture and unremitting advocacy for youth community involvement.

Leominster High School & Center for Technical Education Innovation
Carol Robison was approached to become an Ally for her daughter’s United Way Youth Venture team, Project Launch. Watching this Venture grow and witnessing the team’s excitement inspired her to realize what youth could accomplish. Years later, she became a co-Champion with her daughter and worked to grow the UWYV program in Leominster. She gains motivation and inspiration from watching her students grow with in the program.

“Meet Our Champions (continued)”

“UWYV has given students the opportunity to put the skills learned in classrooms to good use. It’s also so wonderful to watch students really take advantage of this opportunity to challenge themselves academically.”

Caroline Beasley, Champion

“Our students are amazed at their UWYV peers and the great things that they have accomplished. They see the Venturers as positive role models, making a difference in their own communities.”

Carol Robison, Champion
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School, Fitchburg

The 2013 recipient of the United Way Youth Venture Champion of the Year Award, Trish Kozlowski recognized the unique opportunity Monty Tech had when partnering with UWYV. As Champion for a vocational school, Trish has devoted her time to figuring out the best ways to pair the mission of UWYV to the needs of high school students pursuing a specific discipline. Trish successfully linked UWYV to the cosmetology and woodworking departments at Monty Tech.

North Central Charter Essential School, Fitchburg

In the two years since Lizz Mallett has taken on the role of Champion for NCCES, she has seen the program develop and expand, with more students than ever becoming interested in the Venture program. Her natural enthusiasm and excitement for helping others is contagious and inspires her students to do the same through their Ventures. Lizz has been instrumental in weaving the United Way Youth Venture program into the school culture to help its mission to make the community a stronger, healthier and more successful place to live, learn and grow.

North Middlesex Regional High School, Townsend

Ray Kane can speak volumes on the benefits of service learning. As the leader of NMRHS service learning club, he has worked to facilitate hands-on experiences for his students that will stick with them after they leave high school.

Becoming Champion for NMRHS was an apt choice for Ray, given his passion for pairing youth with tangible community involvement. Since joining the UWYV team in 2011, Ray has encouraged young people in his school to address problems locally, nationally and internationally.

“I have always participated in community service projects on my own, but I especially love the entrepreneurial training that the students receive developing a Venture Team. It is such great life experience.”

Trish Kozlowski, Champion

“United Way Youth Venture has given our students a venue that allows them to come out of their shells, and gain the skills and self-empowerment needed to turn their Venture ideas into a reality.”

Lizz Mallett, Champion

“United Way Youth Venture is about empowering youth, giving them a voice, and allowing them that opportunity to not just be the future, but be the now. It creates the change we need to see.”

Ray Kane, Champion
Meet Our Champions (continued)

Murdock High School, Winchendon

When Steve Haddad was stepping down from his term as Champion at Murdock High School, he recognized that CJ’s enthusiasm and fresh perspective in teaching would be a great match for the Champion role. In CJ’s first year he recognized that the students who participate in the program are creating a positive culture in alignment with the new initiatives set forth by the administration of the school.

“UWYV has had a positive effect and has given students something to believe in and the proof that they do have the ability to make a difference in the community.”

CJ Johnson, Champion

Murdock Middle School, Winchendon

After being an Ally for several years, Stephanie Rondeau took the position of co-Champion in 2011, and became the sole middle school Champion when Murdock split into separate middle and high schools in 2013. Steph was instrumental in providing help to UWYV as she was a main catalyst in this transition period, keeping the program running as an elective class within the middle school curriculum. She continues to do great work as a Champion, helping pipeline teams become approved Ventures, while still actively serving as an Ally to many launched Venture teams.

“United Way Youth Venture empowers students to enact their ideas for social change. Students find out they can make a difference in their community, in whatever they define their “community” to be: school, town, or the world.”

Stephanie Rondeau, Champion

Samoset Middle School, Leominster

“UWYV has a very positive impact on school culture. Our students are able to see that the things they are passionate about can lead to positive projects within the community.”

Tiffani O’Brien, Champion

Tiffani O’Brien became involved in UWYV four years ago when she acted as an Ally for the Book Critique Clan. It was through this Venture team that she was able to see how important it is to provide an outlet for students to express their thoughts and concerns. She witnessed the empowering experience that enabled youth to take those ideas and create their own solution. Taking on the role of Assistant Champion at Samoset has allowed Tiffani the opportunity to see the difference a group of students can make within the school and the community.
Sky View Middle School, Leominster

Sharyn Tomasso has been a long-time advocate for the UWYV experience and the benefits it can bring to young people. As an English Language Arts teacher at Sky View Middle School, Sharyn noticed a direct correlation between what UWYV offers young people and what the Common Core Educational Standards asks teachers to ensure students are learning.

Cognizant of this correlation, Sharyn began the process of providing written documentation that illustrates the linkage between the Common Core Standards and UWYV. Thanks to Sharyn’s efforts, UWYV will have further evidence of the program’s positive impact on young people in north central Massachusetts.

Leominster School District, Lead Champion

Gina Wironen started with the United Way Youth Venture Program over 12 years ago as a founding partner in the role of Leominster’s Districts Coordinator of Community Partnerships. She recognized that the components of the UWYV program would complement the district’s commitment to community service. The program quickly became embedded in the culture of Leominster Public Schools, requiring Champion support in both middle schools and the high school.

Gina mentors and trains Champions from all of the United Way Youth Venture school districts in north central Massachusetts, sharing her knowledge of the many Venture Teams she’s seen launch. When asked which Venture is most memorable, she proudly speaks of Mums and Muffins, a group of special needs students in a life skills class. This group of Venturers developed their leadership skills by managing a bakery for school staff and visiting a local nursing home with their baked goods.

Allies and Adult Volunteers

The 134 Allies who volunteered their time and energy this year to supporting our Venture Teams have provided an invaluable service to the young changemakers of north central Massachusetts. It is the role of each Ally to act as a non-controlling mentor to an individual team and assist in a variety of functions, from helping with the transportation of the Team to offering technical advice for the Team’s tougher questions. Without the help of the Allies, the UWYV program would be unable to have such overwhelming success in the North Central Massachusetts community.

In addition to Allies, more than 241 additional adult volunteers who dedicated their free time to helping the Venture Teams host wonderful events and fundraising efforts, which continue to help resolve many significant issues in the community.
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

All performance measures are continuously scrutinized and revised each year in order to enable more accurate assessment of program impacts.

Mid-Year and Year-End Partner Reports
The semi-annual reporting tool collects a summary of all activities that have occurred at each partner site for each half of the school year, and is primarily outcome oriented. The submission of a complete semi-annual report is tied to release of Champion stipends, and ensures timely and complete reporting on program progress and outcomes. In addition, the year-end report requires submission of information about the attitudinal and academic impact and progress made by students participating in the UWYV program.

The data collected and measured, which compare UWYV participants to the school they attend as a whole, includes, but is not limited to:

- MCAS scores
- Attendance
- Suspension rates
- Detention rates
- Percentage of participating youth in free and reduced lunch
- Graduation rates of participating seniors
- Percentage of graduating UWYV students who are continuing on to higher education
- Accurate tracking of adult volunteers and exposed, engaged and directly involved youth
- Accurate tracking of engaged students, active Venture Team members, activities and Venture Team outcomes
- Accurate accounting of Venture teams seed funding and fundraising funds

Spring Engagement Surveys
In FY13, the post-engagement survey was modified from evaluations used in previous years in order to reflect the LEAP (Liberal Education and Americas Promise) Civic Engagement Value Rubric – a tool developed with the intention of creating a basic framework for higher educational institutions nationwide. This rubric is used to demonstrate progressive student learning in Civic Engagement. The Spring Survey helps to quantify the impact on UWYV participants’ experiences and attitudes about community. The Spring Survey is administered each spring to students who are members of Venture Teams.

Participation Tracking
Data collected by UWYV from our partnering sites includes demographic information allowing the program to provide upon request a student-specific transcript detailing participation in skill-building workshops. While UWYV workshops do not count as college credits, the hours are tracked to demonstrate the accomplishment of youth in practicing these workforce-ready skills. This information, critical to accurately track participation, includes gender, age, ethnicity, and zip code and helps us to better understand the youth population we serve.

Champion Meetings
Program staff held regular in-person meetings for UWYV Champions. These meetings were designed to assess current program progress within each individual school and to offer assistance, guidance and feedback with regard to recruitment of new students, sustainability of current teams, and offer an opportunity to share best practices. In addition, these meetings also served as a means to discuss current obstacles each Champion may have been experiencing and to offer insight, advice, and assistance into ways to broach difficulties. These meetings were the direct result of feedback from Champions in previous years. UWYV staff also met regularly with Champions for ongoing feedback in at least two more individual meetings: one at the beginning of the year, and one at year-end to determine what worked well, and where improvements can be made for the following year.
THANK YOU TO OUR PANELISTS

The role of the panelist is an essential element of the UWYV program that ensures launched Venture Teams are ready to conquer many barriers they may face as they take first steps onto the road to success. This year, 62 panelists volunteered their time to listen, inquire, and provide valuable feedback, preparing 29 Venturere Teams in their entrepreneurial journey. These panelists are members of the community, representing a diverse cross-section of experience and perspective. The compassion and vision of our panelists have not only helped these teams receive seed funding, but in many cases have grown into ongoing mentoring relationships.

Sara Bailey – Teacher, Sky View Middle School
Scott Bennett – Account Manager, United Way of NCM
Joseph Berry – Marketing VP, BumbleBee Tuna
Tricia Berry – Former Advertising Manager
Timothy S. Blake – Principal, Sky View Middle School
Bruce Brennan – Software Quality Assurance, Rapid Micro Biosystems
Michael Brennan – Student, Wentworth Institute of Technology
Tom Browne – Principal, Leominster High School
Alexandra Buckman – Student Venturer, Leominster High School
Eric Budd, PhD – Professor, Fitchburg State University
Ellen Campagna – Teacher, Samoset Middle School
Lucas Cardwell – Student Venturer, Leominster High School
Dawn Casavant – Chief Philanthropy Officer,heywoodhospital
Chris Chew – Headmaster, North Middlesex Regional High School
Thomas Connell – Senior Product Manager, Tyco
Emma Craig – Community Based Advocate, YWCA
Kathleen Craigen – AmeriCorps*VISTA, MWCC
Cheryl Cuddahy – Editor, Leominster Champion
Kim Curry – Dean of Admissions, Monty Tech
Kim Derry – Guidance Counselor, Sky View Middle School
Kathy DiRusso – *Pink-Haired Lady,* Breast Cancer Advocate
Carey Doucette – Principal, North Central Charter Essential School
Gillian Draleau – Parent and Professional Coach
Danielle Drapeau – Teacher, Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
Jean Dupont – Teacher, Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
Shelley Errington Nicholson – Director of Community Learning, MWCC
Lori Fiandaca – Guidance Counselor, Samoset Middle School
Sara Granger – Finance Analyst II, Tyco SimplexGrinnell
Sue Hamel – Secretary, North Middlesex Regional High School
Kathy Heintz – Director of Community Outreach, United Way of NCM
Ronald Houle – Ward 2 Member, Leominster Public School Committee
Carol Jacobson - Alumni Relations, MWCC
Maribeth Janssens - Office Manager, United Way of NCM
Connie Kelleher - Director of Resource Development, United Way of NCM
Kyle Kiser - Teacher, North Middlesex Regional High School
Joan Landers - Superintendent, North Middlesex Regional School District
JR LaPointe - Maintenance Supervisor, Leominster Recreational Department
Plamedi Makelela - Student Venturer, Leominster High School
Pam Mariano – Owner and Manager, Bailey’s Bar & Grille
Heather Mazzaferro - Leominster Public School Committee
Ann McDonald - Executive VP, MWCC
Kayla McNamara - Recreation Director, Fitchburg Recreation Department
Jocelyn Mendes - Student Venturer, Leominster High School
Maggie Monroe-Cassel - Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity NCM
Donna Morel - Manager, North Middlesex Savings Bank
Kathy Nowoswiat - Specialist, American Cancer Society Relay For Life
Nona Ojala – Ward 4 Member, Leominster Public School Committee
Eileen O’Shea - Manager Cash Applications, Tyco SimplexGrinnell
Liz Reiser – Student Government Representative, MWCC
Paul Richard - Executive Director, SHINE Initiative
Pam Rivers - Health Director, Fitchburg Public Schools
Jeremy Roche - Principal, Fitchburg High School
Josh Romano - Vice Principal, Murdock High School
Christopher Rosinski - Entrepreneur, Online Retail
Bryan Sanderson – Student Leader, MWCC & Parent Parker Charter
Regina Shopiro - Teacher, North Middlesex Regional High School
Brian Tata - Library Media Director, Leominster High School
Joanne Walsh - Corporate Communications Manager, Tyco SimplexGrinnell
Patty Washburn - Assistant Principal, North Middlesex Regional High School
Jenna Whittaker- Athletic Director, Murdock Middle/High School
Lisa Wong - Mayor, City of Fitchburg
Myriah Zwicker - Nurse, North Central Charter Essential School

“I would recommend participating in UWYV because it can help people build up important skills such as communication and event planning skills, and it also helps the community so it’s a win-win.”
Venturer, NCCES
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“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

PETER DRUCKER