

UCS News Release

For Immediate Release:
July 30, 2010

Contact: Robert Pini
(802) 442-5491
rpini@ucsvt.org

Young Adults Find Forum with Teens for Change

Bennington and Manchester, Vt. — For teens, finding a safe space to be yourself and have fun with friends can be a challenge. Many local teens are taking bold, new steps to solve that challenge through Teens for Change (T4C), a group dedicated to promoting substance free events for young adults.

“Teens for Change has a unique ability to reach teenagers because it is led by the teens themselves who bring their enthusiasm and dedication,” according to Katrina Hollis, a youth outreach worker with United Counseling Service (UCS) who is a teen and works with other teens to plan the events.

At their most recent event, T4C hosted a Saturday-night party at Bennington Lanes that was attended by more than 50 Bennington area youth.

“There is a huge need for this type of program,” said Crystal Careau, a UCS youth outreach worker who helped plan the event, “the strong attendance really proves that.”

T4C’s mission is to provide the activities and environment where teens can build meaningful relationships. The bowling event consisted of variety of activities such as bowling, pool, Wii games, and dancing.

“Participating in these events is our youths’ way of saying they support substance free living,” said Tom Campbell, UCS youth outreach coordinator who was one of several chaperones. “The group is actively recruiting new members and creating a Teens for Change Facebook page.”

Youth who attended the bowling event received a picture ID card, making them an official member of the T4C community. The IDs will be used at future events and to acknowledge them as group members.

The group is developing many other plans, including opportunities for youth to have their voices heard in local government and the greater community.

Previously, T4C held a successful dance at the Bennington Moose Lodge Family Center, which donated the space. That dance attracted almost as many participants, which pleased organizers since, as the group grows, they don’t want to bite off more than they can handle, according to Lorna Mattern, UCS director of children’s services.

Many local businesses contribute to the success of these events through donations. “For example, Price Chopper, Hannaford’s, Stewart’s, Pizza Hut, and the Moose provided food and refreshments,” said James Brustkern, a UCS therapeutic case manager who also chaperoned. “Other businesses, such as

UCS News Release

Hemmings Motor News, McDonald's, Full Bellies Restaurant, and Carmody's have provided fun giveaways for dance competitions and musical chairs."

Teens for Change is sponsored by the Youth Outreach Program an initiative of United Counseling Services. For more info call Tom Campbell at 447-8270 ext. 31.

UCS serves children, adults, families, and seniors through nationally recognized counseling, early care and education, and clinical support. Visit www.ucsvt.org to find out more.

-End-