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# WHYUS? NEWS

## “An Unspoken Message”

By Lou Gilbert, Executive Director

### Dear Friends:

With another school year begun and the weather turning crisper, I'd like to share with you some happenings here at Y-US. As many of you know, we have been engaged in a capital campaign for the last 18 months or so to purchase our Bloomfield Retreat House. *With your help, a dream for us has been fulfilled!* Thank you for your contribution to this significant milestone in the history of Y-US. Please see page 2 of this newsletter for the final wrap-up on the campaign.

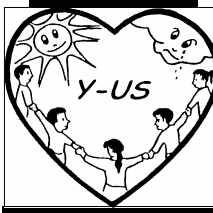
Another piece of news I want to share with you is that our very first contract with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF), awarded to us in 1991, has been defunded as of September 30<sup>th</sup>. This is the result of a State Legislature-reduced appropriation from the spring 2004 state budget. The DCF chose to defund all eighteen programs in this class across the state, and rebid a reduced amount of money for services. We have applied for one of these smaller contracts, which if received, would not begin until December. As a result, we have been forced to reduce the number of children we serve in our Better Horizons peer support program.

With the help of funding from local community foundations as well as the United Way, we will continue to serve a much smaller number of children. We also will serve some children through a

“fee-for-service” format with DCF in which a menu of individual services is provided for individual fees. Our DCF-funded Building Families FAST (Foster and Adoptive Support Team) program and STAE @ Job Corps (Supporting Teens Achieving Employment) program continue uninterrupted.

Perhaps the hardest part of this funding reduction is that we know how critical our Better Horizons program and other services are in the lives of our children. I share with you, just one unspoken example of this as relayed to me recently by a staff member.

Wesley, one of our Program Coordinators, was cleaning out one of our vans that he had just used to drop-off a group of kids after an activity. He found a small crumpled piece of green paper that he saw had some writing on it. Thinking it might be important he opened it up and read the message scrawled in a child's handwriting **“please don't drop me off anytime soon, that place is too stressful.”** Whether this was a foster child or a child still in their biological home, we are not sure. *What we are sure of is that this was one of the many unspoken cries for help that we try to hear.* The message is powerful to us - the child who wrote this would rather be with us at the Y-US program than in their “home”. With your help, we are committed to continuing to bring at least a little hope and support into the lives of at-risk children in our community.



Serving Community Youth Since 1989

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# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMPLETED!

We are pleased and proud to report that we have received a \$20,818 grant from the Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation which brings our total funds raised to \$256,000 thus meeting our campaign goal! Although we closed on the purchase of our Bloomfield Retreat House in March, we still had a remaining \$25,000 to raise to cover our costs. After 18 months of hard work from the staff, Board of Directors and many supportive donors, we will close our capital campaign—**Y-US Building the Future.**

Our youth now have the use of the retreat house secured for their needs which include many activities and special events.

In June we held a celebration dinner at the Retreat House to honor major supporters of our capital campaign. This included the **Greater Hartford Jaycees Foundation**, a donor advised fund at the **Hartford Foundation for Public Giving**, the **Aaron Joseph Dornan Foundation**, the **H.A. Vance Foundation**, and **Hartford Financial Services Inc.** It was well attended by Y-US staff (including our founder Br. Marcus Turcotte), Board Members and donors.

A list of donors contributing \$100 or more to the capital campaign appears on the facing page, as well as being named on a permanent plaque in the building.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Effie Economou, President
- MiChelle Pereira Lopes, Vice President
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- Carol Glider, Secretary
- Egan Bovell
- Don Goodman
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### STAFF

- Louis Gilbert, Executive Director
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- Krista Gale, FAST Program Coordinator
- Rafael Lopez, Behavioral Specialist
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- Sharmee Walton, DCF Job Corps Liaison
- Santos Vazquez, Program Coordinator
- Wesley Gordon, Program Coordinator
- Jose Rivera, Youth Worker
- Chris Choi, Youth Worker (Jesuit Volunteer)
- Von Marie L., Junior Youth Worker
- Gina Gorman, Vehicle Safety Instructor

## Y-US WISH LIST

**Can you help us** with items that we have an ongoing need for?

- White socks for youth
- Gel pens & markers
- One-subject notebooks
- Disposable cameras
- Small calculators
- New winter gloves

Please contact Y-US at the number below for more information.

The Y-US newsletter is published in the spring and the fall. For more information, please contact:

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“YOU WILL  
 FIND AS  
 YOU LOOK  
 BACK UPON  
 YOUR LIFE,  
 THAT THE  
 MOMENTS  
 THAT  
 STAND OUT  
 ARE THE  
 MOMENTS  
 WHEN YOU  
 HAVE DONE  
 THINGS FOR  
 OTHERS.”

—Anonymous

**Thank You to Retreat House Donors (\$100 and greater)**

“ TO  
ACCOMPLISH  
GREAT  
THINGS WE  
MUST NOT  
ONLY ACT,  
BUT ALSO  
DREAM; NOT  
ONLY PLAN,  
BUT ALSO  
BELIEVE ”

- Anatole  
France

Mr. & Mrs. Alan Dornan  
Carol Glider  
Effie Economou  
Charles Lowe  
Don Goodman  
Barbara Bodnar Linden  
MiChelle Pereira Lopes  
Louis Gilbert  
Kate Kerchaert  
Krista Gale  
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Soraghan Construction  
Aetna Foundation  
DaphneSeybolt Culpeper Foundation  
Society of Latin America  
West Hartford Rotary Club

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Marie Bastarache  
Teamsters Local Union # 671  
Walker Systems Support  
Diaz/C-Town Supermarket  
Saint Bridget Church, Manchester  
St. Timothy Middle School  
Unitarian Universalist Church of W. Hartford  
First Congregational Church of Bloomfield  
Home Depot Distribution Center  
Central Connecticut State University  
Haz-Pros, Inc.  
Tunxis Grange # 13  
Fleet Bank  
El Gitano Supermarket  
Congregation Beth Israel

**GRACIAS!**

Thank you to the many volunteers who help our families, volunteer with our youth, and help Y-US stretch its budget dollars to provide services to many at-risk youth. In particular, we would like to recognize:

**Anita & Steve Balkun**—for hosting a party in which guests were asked to bring a household item to benefit our families. The items such as cookware and kitchen appliances were distributed to mothers during our annual Mothers’ Day celebration brunch.

**The Newington Rotary**—for organizing and providing a cookout two summers in a row at our Retreat House for some of our younger children. The Rotarians brought their families to meet and mingle with our kids. One of their members also donated a new gas grill last year which was used.

If you would like to get more involved with our kids or organization, please call Kelly or Kate at 951-7268.

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## WHY US? NEWS

*“In Their Own Words...” - by our foster children*

**“I would like to get adopted**  
because I would like to be with someone  
who actually loves me, unlike my mother.  
I feel like she didn't want me because she  
waited so long, and now I can't see her.  
Back then I really felt unloved and  
unwanted.  
But I still realize I love her, and I pray for  
her, and I wish the very best for her.  
So if I ever get adopted, I hope it is with  
my brother.”

**“My foster mom is the one**  
who took care of me when my real mom  
had to leave me when I was three.  
My foster mom wanted to take care of me.  
I am so happy that at least I have someone  
that loves me a lot, and a place to live and  
sleep. I think that I would want to be  
adopted by my foster mother because she  
treats me like I was her real daughter.”