

*I think I can.*

*I think I can.*

*I know I can*





*Engaging community partners to improve the lives of children and families.*

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St. Joseph Youth Alliance

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# Laying the tracks

**Robin Hammond, executive director**



As we travel through life, we learn and grow and ultimately realize we can do anything we set our minds to. We start off thinking about a goal, and with hard work and determination, “I think I can” becomes “I know I can” and soon, we’ve realized our goal.

This year marks our 23rd year helping kids and families believe they “Can Do” anything they set out to do. Our focus continues to be on keeping youth drug free, providing mentoring relationships, working to reduce child abuse and neglect, supporting youth employment, and offering guidance to those talented individuals within our community who care for young children.

We are laying the tracks, educating and instilling confidence in our youth so they can exude the “I know I can” attitude and live happy, productive and safe lives.

Students from Hillyard Technical School are using their “I know I can” attitude to build our youth annex building on the Youth Alliance campus. It is great to watch the progress as these students learn how to properly construct a building—moving from “I think I can to I know I can”—right before our eyes. Follow us on Facebook and watch this building come to life.

This report provides a brief synopsis of our programs and their impact on our community. You will also see a glimpse of some of the wonderful individuals who support our work through their commitment and dedication. Thank you to all of our “Can Do” supporters—parents, providers, employers, employees, teachers, students, mentors, and volunteers—for helping us with our mission of improving the lives of children and families.

## Edson recognized as 2014 Superstar for Kids Teacher inspires awesome attitudes

Kay D. Edson believes in her young adult students and instills in them the “I Know I Can” attitude. She began her career as a social worker and after retiring from the State of Missouri changed her focus to education. The beliefs and skills she used as a social worker now make her unique as an educator. Before joining the Adult Education and Literacy family, Kay routinely volunteered to tutor students. She would give her time with the students, encourage them and teach not only the curriculum, but the importance of believing in yourself.

Her light shines bright! And because of that she is able to brighten the lives of others. Her caring and support aid students in their ultimate goal of learning. She gives youth in this community the foundation they needed to continue to learn and make a wonderful life.

We thank Kay for encouraging others to be all they can be, for sharing the joy of learning, and for all she does for the Youth Alliance. As her students set out on their future, we know they will continue to believe they “Can Do” anything they set their minds to!



**Kay Edson**



## Asset Development

Youth Alliance creates scenarios where teens can build positive values through service to their community in an effort to facilitate leadership skills and lower the likelihood of risky behaviors. The Alliance strives to provide teens with the opportunities they want and need in order to become happy, healthy, successful young adults.

### Trips for Kids

Trips for Kids (TFK) teaches youth about mountain biking and the benefits this activity provides for health and wellness. TFK is part of the Live Well St. Joe project. Nearly 30 rides are scheduled throughout the year.



### Youth Volunteer Corps

Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) of St. Joseph is one of approximately 30 affiliates of the national YVC. Affiliates organize diverse service projects for youth participation after school, on weekends and during the summer. Every YVC project incorporates service-learning to help youth understand the impact of their volunteering as well as team-building games to help youth feel comfortable and get them working together. All projects are supervised by trained adults who know how to motivate and inspire youth ages 11-18. YVC youth are active in the planning process to help create service experiences that speak to their interests.

- Youth volunteers tallied more than 1900 service hours while completing 55 service projects.
- More than 54 kids and 21 adult volunteers rode more than 124 miles in the TFK program.
- Circle of Parents support groups were attended by 100 people throughout the year.
- 136 families were served in Crisis Prevention programs.
- Youth Alliance staff conducted more than 936 home visits for Family Connections.

## Crisis Prevention

Crisis prevention services are some of the most critical services provided by the St. Joseph Youth Alliance.

*The Alliance provides families and youth with support, resources, and hope for a better future. Often, early intervention results in a better outcome; therefore, the Alliance serves as a resource to link families to appropriate and timely services and resources to help families avoid major crises.*

### Suicide Prevention

“Breaking the Silence” suicide prevention coalition challenges current social trends that are leading to increased rates of suicide among children and teens. By breaking the silence and talking about this once taboo subject, at-risk individuals can get help.

### Family Connections

Family Connections is a home visitation program that provides families with resources and services to assess child development, reduce stress and increase positive family interactions.

Family Connections is for families below 185% of poverty with at least one child under the age of 3. The program aims to build parenting skills and help parents set and achieve family goals.

Families are also given parenting tips and linked to inexpensive family-friendly activities.

### Circle of Parents

A parent-led support group that complements the Family Connections program, Circle of Parents offers an understanding environment where parents can share the joys and challenges of parenthood. Structured children’s programs are provided while the parents attend the monthly meetings.

### Child Abuse Prevention

As a Children’s Trust Fund license plate partner, the St. Joseph Community Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention drives awareness, education and prevention. The Coalition finds community-based solutions to fill service gaps and promotes projects to prevent abuse and neglect.

This year, the Coalition partnered with Heartland Health to promote the safe sleep initiative. As a result of this partnership the Coalition received a CTF prevention grant, Every Child Matters, to purchase safe cribs and bedding.





# Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education focuses on improving the education and general life experiences of young children, with two priorities in this area – quality child care and school readiness. The Alliance offers individualized one-on-one technical assistance focusing on quality care. The Alliance also supports community efforts to identify ways to assess school readiness, collaborates with community agencies on early childhood initiatives and takes the lead in organizing the annual Greater St. Joseph Area Community Children's Fair.

The Alliance receives funding through the Missouri Department of Social Services to support quality early childhood programs in Atchison, Andrew, Buchanan, Caldwell, Clinton, Daviess, DeKalb, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway and Worth counties.

## Children's Fair

The Greater St. Joseph Area Community Children's Fair is coordinated by the Alliance and is held every year at the St. Joseph Civic Arena. Children ages birth to 6 years old have the opportunity to enjoy over 30 activity areas designed around a particular theme. Morning, afternoon, and evening sessions are held to help accommodate family schedules. The activities for this event are planned by a community committee.

In 2014, 1,067 children and 871 adults attended the Children's Fair. More than 200 volunteers helped with the event.



## Community Partnership

We participate through committee involvement to support the United Way/Success by 6® early childhood initiatives. United Way also contracts with the Youth Alliance to provide technical assistance to their early childhood projects.

## Educare

Educare provides free resources, technical assistance and training opportunities to unlicensed child care providers who accept state subsidy. Educare works to improve the early learning experiences for low-income children from birth to five years-of-age. Since these children are not yet attending school, the goal for Educare is to help ensure children receive a solid foundation for school success and are ready to enter kindergarten.

Monthly on-site technical assistance visits are individualized to improve or enhance the quality of child care.

- Educare served 36 childcare programs and impacted 315 children.
- The Early Childhood Program conducted more than 300 on-site visits in FY 2014.
- Job readiness classes were conducted throughout the year with 67 students attending.
- The mentoring programs served 194 youth in FY 2014.



# Youth Mentoring

Youth mentoring is about providing young people with positive role models in the community and the workplace. The Youth Alliance mentoring programs have core elements that provide young people with a sense of belonging, give them a sense the community cares about them, and supports them in identifying and capitalizing on their potential.

## Northwest Missouri Mentoring Partnership

Northwest Missouri Mentoring Partnership develops employment skills in youth ages 14-23. Participants receive job preparatory classes including job search, creating a resume and cover letter, applying, interviewing and job retention. The program also offers on-the-job mentoring.



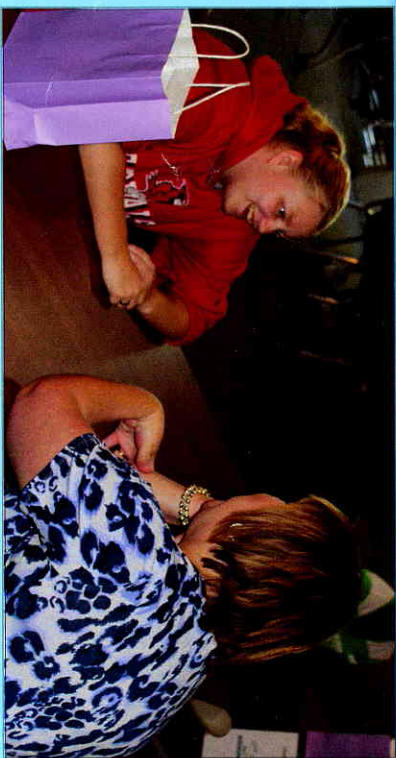


## Journey to Unite Mentors & Parents

Journey to Unite Mentors and Parents (JUMP) connects pregnant and parenting teens with trained mentors who assist with parenting skills, academics and long-term goal setting. This program is a partnership program with Heartland Health and the YWCA.

## Youth Employment

The WIA-Youth Employment program provides eligible youth, ages 14-21, with effective and comprehensive program activities. These activities are designed to enhance youth opportunities for obtaining and completing education along with training programs that will provide employment with job readiness skills and competencies for unsubsidized employment.



Youth should have a sense of belonging and work to achieve academic success with positive, long-term employment experiences.

Youth are prepared for the modern workforce by utilizing a combination of ten elements: tutoring and study skills training; alternative secondary school offerings; summer employment-linked to occupational and academic skills; paid and unpaid work experiences; occupational skills training; leadership opportunities; supportive services; adult mentoring; follow-up services; and comprehensive guidance and counseling.



## Substance Abuse Prevention

The Substance Abuse Prevention initiative empowers youth to live without the use of drugs and alcohol. Community programs are designed to reach youth across Buchanan County to encourage youth to live substance free lives.

## Drug Free Community Coalition

The Drug Free Community Coalition (DFC) is a group of concerned citizens, educators, business leaders, and other community stakeholders who work together to develop anti-substance use initiatives and policies to make the community a healthier and safer place to live. Its mission to encourage youth to choose substance-free lives was heard by a group of local parents and the Coalition was asked to assist them with Project Graduation. This event is an all-night drug and alcohol free event for all seniors in St. Joseph to allow them to celebrate sober on their graduation night.

The Coalition works along with community partners to bring initiatives that promote substance free lives to youth in Buchanan County. Some of these initiatives include, activities for Red Ribbon Week, media campaigns, Safe Prom initiative, compliance checks, Town Hall meetings, health fairs, 3-D month, and Prescription Take Back events.



- Youth Alliance helped 136 students continue their education, and 48 students earned their GEED or high school equivalency diploma.
- 94% of children whose parents are enrolled in the JUMP Program were assessed for social and emotional development.
- Nearly 1,000 pounds of medicines were collected during prescription take backs in FY 2014.
- More than 76 community members attended the "Our Town. Our Health. Our Future." town hall meeting sponsored by the Drug Free Community Coalition.



# St. Joseph Youth Alliance Program Superstars

These people have made a difference in at least one of our key areas. We recognize them for their dedication, turning "I think I can" into "I know I can" and sharing their great enthusiasm with the youth of our community.



**Jamie Burnett**

He has proven to be a man of character in the classroom and workplace.

Jamie Burnett is a man with perseverance and determination. He attended AEL classes consistently and set an example for his classmates. He dedicated his time and energy on his primary goal of acquiring his HiSet Certificate.

Burnett earned his diploma and is now working full-time at The Salvation Army.



**Janet Yuratovich**

For her tireless efforts in making Project Graduation a success, we recognize Janet Yuratovich as our Substance Abuse Prevention Star.

Yuratovich understands the importance of keeping our youth safe, drug and alcohol free. She went above and beyond to ensure graduation night was no different.

She was the driving force in planning and preparation. Her hard work and dedication along with her passion to assist youth in celebrating a special night did not go unnoticed. She truly is a superstar!



**Anderson Ford**

For going the extra mile to help youth, we recognize Anderson Ford for service to our Youth Asset Development programs. Anderson Ford agreed to host a "Teens Auto Know" project last summer. The project was a way of introducing teens and young adults to the basics of car maintenance and safety and building assets. The youth enjoyed their project, and Anderson team members said the project changed their lives.



**Whitney Clark**

A single parent, Whitney Clark demonstrated a sincere desire to improve the quality of life for herself and her child. She diligently attended AEL classes while engaged in part-time employment at Taco Bell. She earned her High School Equivalency Diploma and is now working full-time. She is a shining example of self-empowerment.



**Sherrill Terrill**

The Early Childhood Program recognizes Sherrill Terrill for her caring commitment to young children. Terrill has been the director at McCarthy Baptist Child Development Center for the past 22 years where she works closely with 33 staff members to provide childcare.

"My basic goal is to help children, (Big & Little) become the very best they can become. I love what I do! What better way to spend a day than to spend it surrounded by children?"



**Debbie White**

Debbie White is truly a dedicated volunteer. She offers her time tirelessly to serve the needs of children and youth in our community. Debbie is active on the Alliance's Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention, sitting on both the Safe Sleep/Safe Haven subcommittee and the 3K subcommittee, as well as serving as Treasurer on the Youth Alliance Board of Directors. Debbie's involvement in child abuse prevention is extensive, assisting with a variety of projects from obtaining cribs to ensure safe sleep practices, to collecting purple hats for newborns to educate new parents about the 'period of purple crying'. We are thankful to have Debbie on our crew with her 'I know I can!' attitude!

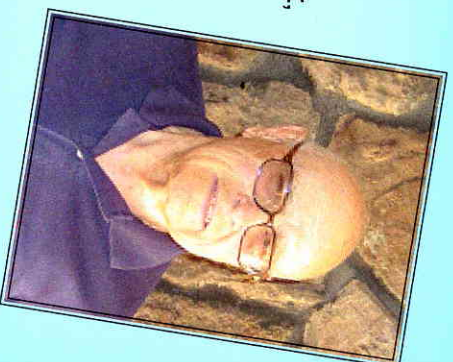


## In Memoriam

### The Volunteer Gift --(Author Unknown)

A helping hand, a willing heart,  
Sometimes that's all it takes -  
A simple gesture on someone's part,  
But what a difference it makes.

That's just the kind of gift you gave,  
Over and over each day,  
And we'll always be glad that you  
Chose to live in such an unselfish  
way.



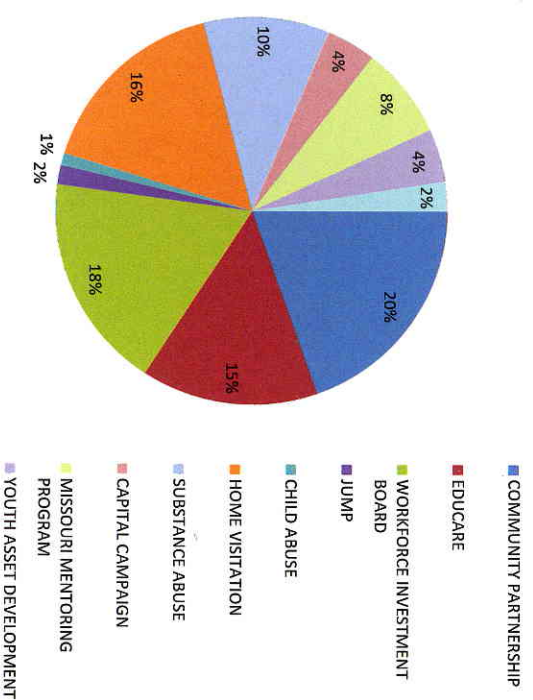
## Jack Teegarden

*We lost a dear friend this past year. Jack Teegarden gave unselfishly of his time and talents. We are better for having known him, and blessed because he called us his friend.*



## Resources

FY 2013-14



The St. Joseph Youth Alliance, which formed as a non-profit in 1994, has supported youth and their families by bringing in more than \$24 million in resources over the past 20 years to address crisis prevention, substance abuse prevention, early childhood development, youth mentoring and youth asset development. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, program and cash revenues totaled \$1,339,269. Volunteers logged 586 hours valued at \$11,412. In-kind donations totaled \$209,703. Overall, the Youth Alliance's total contributed resources for FY 13-14 were valued at \$1,560,384.

### St. Joseph Youth Alliance Staff

The staff of the St. Joseph Youth Alliance works to improve the lives of children and families in Northwest Missouri. When faced with challenges, they exude "I think I can" attitudes and help youth of the community believe they can do anything. Pictured, back row, from left: Judy Jacobs, Julie Wiedmer, Gayle Babcock, Linda Midyett, Angela Reynolds, Rhonda Ewing, Anita Jolly, Mayme Abbott, Kelly Tudor, Leslie Stone, Cindy McWhorter, Patti Long. Front row: Robin Hammond, David Rich, Ariel Schwartz. Not pictured: Selena Good and Melissa Weekly.



Funding through Youth Alliance helps area children and youth live safe, healthy and productive lives. The following lists includes our fiscal donors, business partners and members. With sincere appreciation, we thank the following:

## 2014 Fiscal Year Donors

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