

# JOSPEH PAUL BAILEY CHOSEN AS OUTSTANDING WV HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE YEAR



For the past six years I have had the pleasure of working with and mentoring Joseph Paul Bailey. He was one of the first students to enroll in Operation Right Choice when he was in middle school. Over the past six years he has served as the president of Teen Against Cigarettes and Snuff (he was one of the founding members of this teen lead tobacco prevention coalition), served as a youth staff member for the WV Teen Institute and the Region II Middle School Teen Institute. He also served as the President of the RAZE On High Teen Tobacco crew at Huntington High School. He participated in many of the Artworks Program through the Huntington Museum of Art, he was a certified Peer Mediator through the Cabell County Sheriff's Department, served as a teen leader and mentor at the East End Boys and Girls Club. He helped to write, produce and starred in an underage drinking PSA for the WV State Police and the WV Prevention Resource Center.

In November of 2006, Joseph was accepted into the AppalYouth Fellowship along with 6 other young leaders from Appalachian Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky. Joseph committed to four weekend trainings over ten months, where he honed his skills as a young leader, learning about how to support other young people interested in serving their communities. In partnership with the Huntington Housing Authority, Joseph received a \$2500 grant to address violence against teens in Huntington. To honor his four friends who were murdered in 2005 on prom night, Joseph took the initiative to organize a Teen Issues Day at the city park. The day's events addressed a variety of issues facing teens, including suicide prevention, gang and youth violence prevention, post high school education opportunities, as well as tobacco and other drug abuse prevention. In attendance on May 20, were the Superintendent of Huntington City Schools, Cabell County Prosecuting Attorney, and the Mayor. The Mayor declared May 20, 2006 Teen Issues Day in Huntington. So impressed with his efforts, Joseph received an additional \$3000 from the Cabell County Youth Violence Prevention Task Force for help with the costs of the event.

In March of 2006 Joseph co-presented a workshop on Youth Civic engagement at the Forging New Links Statewide Conference on Service and Volunteerism in Columbus, Ohio. In July, Joseph helped to spread the message about youth voice and youth and community involvement by presenting a workshop on "Adulthood" at the 2006 statewide Faces of Leadership Conference in Charleston. "I have received a great deal of support and encouragement from others. I only hope I can return to favor to someone else," said Joseph at his Fellowship recognition lunch.

He has traveled throughout the region and state speaking and conducting workshops and seminars on substance abuse prevention, violence prevention and youth leadership. He is a 2006 graduate of Huntington High School.

Last November at the WV Prevention Resource Center's "Share the Vision Conference", Joseph was selected as the "WV Outstanding High School Student of the Year" and presented a plaque by First Lady Gayle Manchin. Unfortunately he was not able to be there to accept the award due to finishing up basic training in the Navy. Several of his fellow students attended and accepted the award on his behalf. He is currently stationed in Illinois and soon will begin training at "A" school for four weeks and then on to Connecticut for six weeks for Submarine school where he will be a chef. Joseph has always had a dream of being a chef and the Navy will pay him and train him through their culinary arts programs. After serving as a chef on a submarine for six months he hopes to transfer to be a chef at the US Embassy in France.

Tim White, Resident Services Supervisor, Huntington WV Housing Authority