

# Youth Programs Update

Andrea Gilman, Youth Programs Coordinator

**Operation Right Choice Meetings**  
**Marcum Terrace-(Sports Center/Teen Center)**  
Wednesday 5pm  
**Northcott Court-(Community Room)**  
Fridays 4pm

The Operation Right Choice (ORC) program is beginning recruitment of new students for the Spring/Summer schedule. Teens involved in ORC have been very active in making their schools, neighborhoods, and communities' drug, alcohol, tobacco, and violence free during the last few months and now it's time to recruit more students to join. Several former ORC graduates have offered to assist in recruiting new students and helping out with the weekly classes. There are a lot of new up-coming activities and events that the students can be involved in this summer and we hope to get as many students involved as possible.

## **PRIDE Youth Program**

The twelve students who joined the Cabell County Youth PRIDE Program attended the international PRIDE youth drug prevention conference in Cincinnati, OH on April 2nd-5th.

Students were able to participate in educational workshops and listen to some of the nation's best motivational speakers. They also performed their educational dance piece for the PRIDE talent show and really did an outstanding job!



Those members of Cabell PRIDE also were given the opportunity to travel to three schools and open up for motivational speaker, Milton Creagh. Mr. Creagh is an inspiring person who has spoken to more students in the US than any other speaker. He is also a partner with the national PRIDE youth programs and delivers truthful and heartfelt messages about the consequences of substance use. It was an honor to be a part of his presentations.

## Middle School Teen Institute

We "Flipped the Script" at our last Middle School Teen Institute held on April 10th-12th. We had over 20 students volunteer as youth staff and help set up camp for the big "Hollywood" event. Students decorated with a focus on media in colors of red, black, and gold.



We held our first formal dinner at TI and the youth staff served as waiters and waitresses. It was very nice! We also pulled out the red carpet at our formal dance and gave prizes away for best dressed guy and gal. The youth staff additionally stepped up and facilitated different workshops and they did an excellent job.

Overall it was very successful.

## Huntington's Day of HOPE Celebration



They also covered the walls with lots and lots of newspaper.



Eight of our ORC and PRIDE students were honored by being asked to participate in what was proclaimed "Hope Day" in Huntington on May 17. It was the third annual Memorial Eucharist for Victims of Violent Crime which remembered and honored victims of violent crimes including the four Huntington teens who lost their lives in a brutal shooting.

The names of Megan Poston, Michael Dillon, Eddrick Clark and Donte Ward, along with other victims, were read aloud by our youth during the ceremony and it meant a lot for our students to be apart of it.

It was a glorious opportunity for the youth of Huntington to stand and assert that they still have hope and believe in a bright future.

Along with local ministers and other interpretive dance groups, our students appropriately performed their song "I Believe" which is a message of believing, hope, and perseverance. Rev. Bishop John Martin said, "There is a point of contact with the past, but what is important is looking toward the future with hope" and I believe our students helped portray that message.

### **RAZE/Tobacco Prevention**

Nine ORC and TACS members are scheduled to attend this summer's RAZE On which is going to be held on June 15th-17th at the University of Charleston.

Our students will join over 150 other WV teens for this three day tobacco education/prevention conference designed to empower teens to help educate others about the dangers associated with tobacco use. Because of their efforts in the past five years tobacco use among WV teens has dropped 42%.

