



**WINTER/SPRING 2011**

A Community Newsletter  
for Middlesex United Way

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Middlesex United Way

# COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES-HEALTHY YOUTH INITIATIVE HONORED

On January 25, Middlesex United Way held its Annual Meeting at the Riverhouse at Goodspeed Station in Haddam and presented three major awards to volunteers in addition to recognizing one of the organization's community impact initiatives.



Middletown resident William E. Wrang, III, Senior Vice President at Webster Bank (pictured above with several generations of the Wrang family) received United Way's highest honor for a volunteer, the Community Service Award. The award recognizes length and continuity of service. Wrang was introduced by his long-time friend Larry McHugh, President of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce.

Wrang is a passionate, longtime champion of Middlesex United Way. He has volunteered for the organization since 1997 and served in many capacities including United Way Campaign Chair in 2004 and Board President from 2007-09.

Betsy Morgan, director of the Middlesex Coalition for Children, received United Way's Community Leadership Award for strengthening communities and improv-

ing the lives of children in Middlesex County for more than forty years. The Coalition partners with United Way on the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) and an annual diaper appeal (read more about this on page 3).

Chandler J. Howard, president and CEO of Liberty Bank, was honored with the Tocqueville Society Philanthropy Award. Known for his involvement with numerous community organizations, Howard has long been a strong, visible United Way leader. He recently served as Co-chair of Middlesex United Way's 75th Anniversary Campaign, and his leadership helped establish and grow the Liberty Bank Foundation.

Visit us online at  
[middlesexunitedway.org](http://middlesexunitedway.org).

Follow our blog at  
[mxunitedway.blogspot.com](http://mxunitedway.blogspot.com)

*Story continues on page 7*

## LEADers Share Realities of Homelessness

By Amanda Girardin

MSW Student, University of Connecticut  
Intern, Middlesex County Ten Year Plan to  
End Homelessness

LEADers in Homelessness Reality is a group whose mission it is to speak truth to power about the realities of homelessness and is one of the advocacy strategies of the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness (TYP). It comprises community members who are currently homeless or have experienced homelessness and can provide unique insight.

The LEADers are raising awareness about homelessness and the stigmatization of this vulnerable population by sharing their own touching stories to faith organizations, legislators, residents and TYP's leadership council. Members have different reasons for joining the committee, but their goal is to aid in the prevention and elimination of homelessness.

"I hope that by joining the committee I can stay informed about things going on in the community related to helping the homeless population," says Azure Smikle.

"I want to help others who are homeless. We have many services for immediate management of homelessness but very few long term solutions to homelessness," notes another member, Fred Pinero.

"Service providers need more training to understand what it feels like to be homeless," says Craig Clarke. "There are some practices within the system that actually hinder homeless people from being able to get a job and attain stability. I want to help bring these issues to light."

If you are interested in hearing more about the LEADers' experiences contact Ann Faust at [ann@anendinten.org](mailto:ann@anendinten.org).

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## GARY SIMONSEN

MIDDLESEX UNITED WAY BOARD PRESIDENT

As Middlesex United Way moves forward from its 75th Anniversary year, there is still reason to celebrate. We are all excited about becoming an official service area of The Diaper Bank, an initiative that began more than two years ago. It's satisfying to see it through to a successful conclusion.



This effort exemplifies United Way. We saw a problem in the lack of a permanent diaper bank in Middlesex County. We created a community dialogue and recruited others to join us who were also passionate about the issue and wanted to find a solution. With our partner, the Middlesex Coalition for Children, and volunteers and donors, we achieved our goal of joining The Diaper Bank. Our region will receive 120,000 disposable diapers each year to be distributed through four local agencies working with families in need throughout Middlesex County. You can read more about this on the opposite page.

At our Annual Meeting, we honored longtime United Way volunteer William E. Wrang, III with the Community Service Award. My congratulations go to Bill on this well-deserved honor. He continues to serve on our Board of Directors and we all benefit from his wisdom and experience. Bill and his family are truly rooted in this community, and they are champions for its continued vitality.

We also recognized our partners in the Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth (HCHY) initiative at the Annual Meeting. United Way supports HCHY in 13 of the 15 Middlesex County towns through their Youth Service Bureaus. Individually they are each doing outstanding work. Collectively, they are reducing high risk behaviors while helping youth build the 40 Developmental Assets such as commitment to learning and constructive use of time. Please see page seven for more evidence of their progress towards reducing the rate of risky behaviors among youth, one of our Five Year Goals for the Common Good.

Lastly, I would like to extend my thanks to Faith Jackson as she concluded her term as Board President in January. Under Faith's leadership the organization has made great progress in tracking and reporting community-wide impact. She also oversaw the adoption of our Five Year Goals for the Common Good which will continue to guide our work.

I look forward to serving as Board President. Since 1935 Middlesex United Way has been changing lives and advancing the common good, and we are as committed as ever to continue to do so. Seventy-five great years and counting!

# SUCCESS! MIDDLESEX COUNTY JOINS SERVICE AREA OF THE DIAPER BANK

## Four local agencies to receive monthly delivery of diapers

Nearly 3,000 babies in Middlesex County live in families too poor to diaper them properly leaving their health and well-being seriously at risk. Add to this the fact that Middlesex County has no permanent diaper bank and there is no subsidy for diapers through safety net programs such as SNAP and WIC.

United Way decided to take action and do something about this problem. We began to spread the word when we asked guests at our Annual Meeting in early 2009 to bring with them a package of disposable diapers. Guests donated more than 5,000 diapers.

United Way was soon joined by the Middlesex Coalition for Children. Companies and organizations throughout the county ran diaper drives and an annual appeal resulted in 70,000 diapers in 2010. All diapers were stored and distributed to those in need through the WIC program at Middlesex Hospital.

Through the appeal and a \$10,000 contribution from United Way, we reached our goal of raising enough funds to become a permanent service area of The Diaper Bank. That means four local agencies will receive a total of 120,000 diapers each year.

In early March, the first delivery of diapers was dropped off at Middlesex Hospital's Maternal and Child Health, pictured above right.

The three other local agencies that will receive a monthly delivery are: Early Head Start; Even Start Family Literacy at Middletown Adult Education; and

the Family Wellness Center at Community Health Center. In total, the diapers will help 200 families in Middlesex County.

Many thanks to everyone who helped make this great success possible! However, we still have work to do. We must continue to raise funds to support and expand the delivery of diapers to our area each year. With financial contributions The Diaper Bank is able to purchase diapers at a dramatically reduced cost. Visit [www.thediaperbank.org](http://www.thediaperbank.org) to donate online.

You are also invited to join us by running a diaper drive to stock an emergency bank. Drives will kick off at the Campaign Awards Breakfast on May 3 and culminate on the Day of Action on June 21.

Contact United Way for more information on running a drive at (860) 346-8695.



### The Facts About Diapers:

- Diapers are expensive. An adequate supply of diapers costs more than \$100 per month.
- There is no subsidy for diapers. Safety net programs like food stamps (now SNAP) and WIC don't cover diapers.
- Fewer diapers means more diaper rash. Parents who can't afford diapers change their babies only once a day.
- Diaper rash can lead to other problems like hepatitis and physical abuse.
- Cloth diapers are not always an option. Most laundromats won't wash them and most day cares won't allow them.



“Like” us on Facebook!

# CONFERENCE EMPOWERS YOUTH TO BECOME LEADERS FOR CHANGE

*“You don’t realize how much power you have, but you do have the power to change your community.”*

Those words were spoken by Senior Trainer Jim Conway of The Search Institute to a group of nearly 140 students and mentors. They were gathered at Middlesex Community College in December for a day-long, highly engaging workshop facilitated by Conway (right).



Throughout the day, youth built relationships in a continually energized environment. The training was fast-paced, relational and extremely productive. Students were constantly moving about the room and working with and meeting youth from other towns. Tasks were assigned to the groups and required planning and cooperation. At the workshop, participants explored:

The culmination of the day was for each student group to develop a comprehensive plan in four areas of action: relationships, environment, student roles, and staff appreciation. Each group then reported out their plan for one of those projects.

Some of the projects were: a town meeting or retreat; a presentation to coaches about substance abuse; Friday evening trips to bring diverse groups of students together; an assembly about the negative effects of bullying; a Gratitude Day to show appreciation; “Asset Friday” where one asset will be featured each week; and a dreamboard where everyone can post a goal or dream to help create a better school environment.

Organizations representing all communities in Middlesex County were invited to participate, including the Youth Service Bureaus and towns that receive support from Middlesex United Way to implement the Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth (HCHY) initiative. Each organization brought 8-10 students and at least two adult mentors to work with the student group.

The HCHY initiative is based on a proven successful model from the Search Institute to help youth determine their assets, or strengths, and take action to improve the world they see around them. In towns where HCHY has been implemented, students report reduced rates of risky behaviors including substance abuse, violence, and anti-social behavior.

- Building powerful relationships with students and staff;
- Determining what personal assets they have and what assets are built in successful projects;
- Assessing school climate and impact change in four different areas;
- Putting leadership skills to work; and
- Creating a detailed action plan with follow-up expectations.

## Written by Old Saybrook student Melanie Brodeur about the conference:

*“I couldn’t wait to attend this meeting with Mrs. Mill and the rest of the asset team, ready to get some insight on ways to be a leader..A strong speaker named Jim Conway spoke to us of his past experiences involving his life as a professor, living in New York and leadership. He had us doing activities with the other students, mixing us up. We learned each other’s dreams, abilities to work in a team, and our abilities to form an action plan. We came up with many wonderful ideas however, in the end we chose to...present many opportunities for students to contribute to their community.”*

# Women's Initiative Hosts Financial Literacy Workshop and Upcoming *Power of the Purse*



In December, the Middlesex United Way Women's Initiative (WI) hosted a free financial literacy workshop called "Understanding Money & Credit" at Middlesex Community College.



"Understanding Money & Credit" is a training module from Money Management International, a non-profit credit counseling agency dedicated to providing financial education to help people improve their lives. The workshop was open to the public.

The session was co-facilitated by Rosa Carrero (at left in photo above), Community Outreach Officer at Liberty Bank and WI member and Sheryle McMillan of Money Management International (center) who graciously donated her time to speak at the workshop. Kim Hogan (right), Director of Finance and Administrative Services at Middlesex Community College and also a WI member, welcomed the group to the College at the beginning of the program.

More than 50 participants attended the session and each received a helpful workbook to track their expenses, create spending and savings plans, learn about identity theft, and learn how to check their credit score.

In addition, those in attendance were shown how to:

- Assess their current financial situation;
- Learn how to set financial goals;
- Understand the cost of credit; and
- Create a budget based on their income.

"Understanding Money & Credit" was hosted by the United Way Women's Initiative with additional support provided by Middlesex Community College and Liberty Bank.

The WI is a group of caring women dedicated to creating opportunities for a better life for all women and children in Middlesex County by giving, advocating and volunteering in support of them. The Women's Initiative focuses on strengthening three key areas affecting the lives of women and children: early childhood development; empowering young women; and financial stability.

## Third Annual *Power of the Purse!*

You are cordially invited by the WI on Thursday, June 23 at Baci Grill in Cromwell for an evening of good friends and conversation, delicious hors d'oeuvres, and a fabulous silent auction featuring an array of purses, totes, and handbags all packed with themed items inside.

This event is not restricted to women. Bring along a friend or spouse and shop the night away. Festivities begin at 5:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$25 each. Call Middlesex United Way at (860) 346-8695 to purchase. All proceeds benefit the work of the WI.

**We are also collecting "gently used" purses to distribute to local programs helping women get back on their feet and teen girls who need a boost of self-esteem.**

**Bring your gently used purses with you to *Power of the Purse* or drop them off at United Way at 100 Riverview Center, Suite 230 in Middletown.**



Advanced**COPY**  
TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

## Advanced Copy to Donate Portion of Sales to United Way

Advanced Copy Technologies, Inc. in Cromwell is offering a generous promotion to benefit Middlesex United Way in honor of our 75th anniversary in 2010. Advanced Copy will donate 3% of Lanier equipment sold to any Middlesex County business to Middlesex United Way now through June 30, 2011.

“We are excited about launching this pilot program and feel this could launch a new era of fundraising,” says Greg Gondek, President of Advanced Copy Technologies. “This type of commitment helps our community by keeping business, jobs and revenue within our community while promoting local businesses and strengthening support for United Way.”

“This is a generous and creative way that any business or organization can support United Way and align with our brand,” says Kevin Wilhelm, Middlesex United Way Executive Director. “Advanced Copy Technologies is a great example of a business that is taking action and doing what is right—for United Way and the local economy.”

“We hope that it moves other companies to follow suit,” Mr. Gondek continues. “Part of the reason why we did this is to inspire others to create similar programs.”

Please email [greg@advancedcopy.com](mailto:greg@advancedcopy.com) for more information on this program.

## 2 GREAT OFFERS FROM OUR FRIENDS



### Lower Your Electric Rate and Support United Way

United Way announces a new partnership with North American Power (NAP) that will save you money on a bill you already pay each month. You can now choose a lower electric rate over your utility’s rate and help support United Way with North American Power.

Start saving today. It’s fast, easy and hassle free:

- **There is no cost to you.** Choosing North American Power’s lower rate is FREE and you can return to your utility’s rate at any time without penalty.
- **Same reliability.** Your utility will still be there just as it always has to take care of service, billing and emergencies. The only change is the money you save.
- **Support for Middlesex United Way.** NAP will donate \$10 on their behalf when you get started plus an additional \$2.00\* every time you pay your electric bill.

“We are so excited to be working with United Way as a partner in our fundraising program,” says Greg Breitbart, North American Power’s Chief Marketing Officer. “We could not think of a better way to directly support our community than to work with an organization like United Way that serves those in need right in our backyard.”

“Our partnership with North American Power aligns perfectly with United Way’s goal to increase the economic self-sufficiency of people in Middlesex County,” says Kevin Wilhelm, Middlesex United Way Executive Director. “Everyone can take advantage of this opportunity to save money on their utility bill.”

Get started today by visiting [www.napower.org/mxunitedway](http://www.napower.org/mxunitedway) or call (877) 572.9447.

\* \$2.00 donation reflects average household electric use of 1000 kwh/mo.

# ANNUAL MEETING CONTINUED

from page 1

United Way also recognized its partners in the county-wide Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth (HCHY) initiative. Middlesex United Way supports the program in 13 of 15 Middlesex County towns through Youth Service Bureaus. It is based on a proven successful model from the Search Institute, helping youth to build the 40 Developmental Assets.

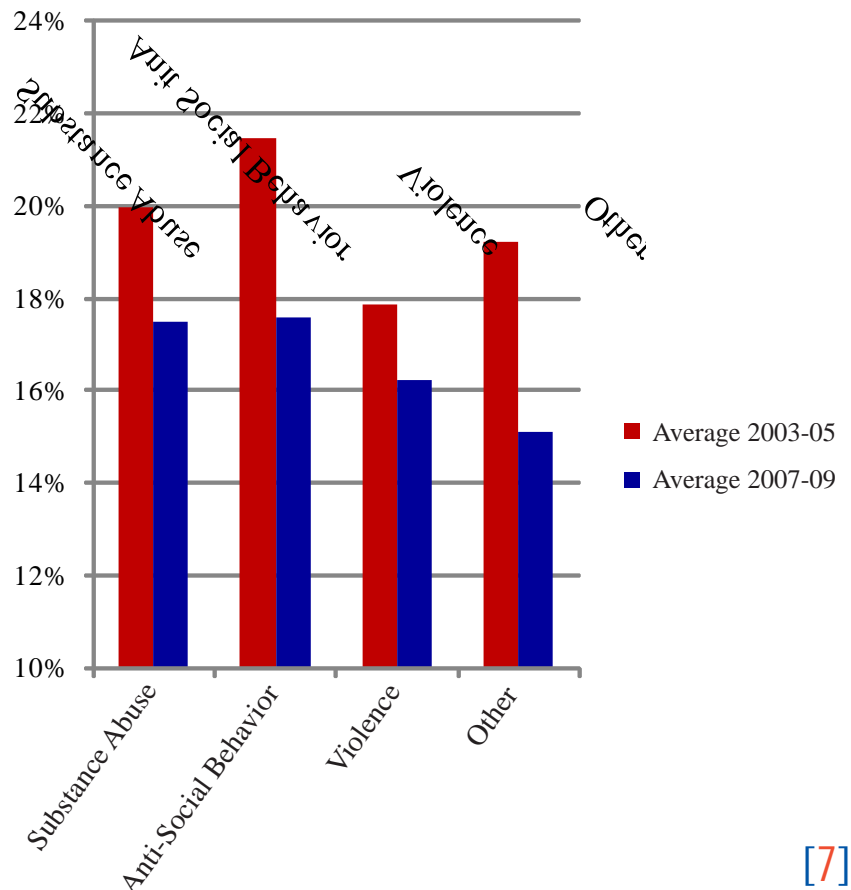
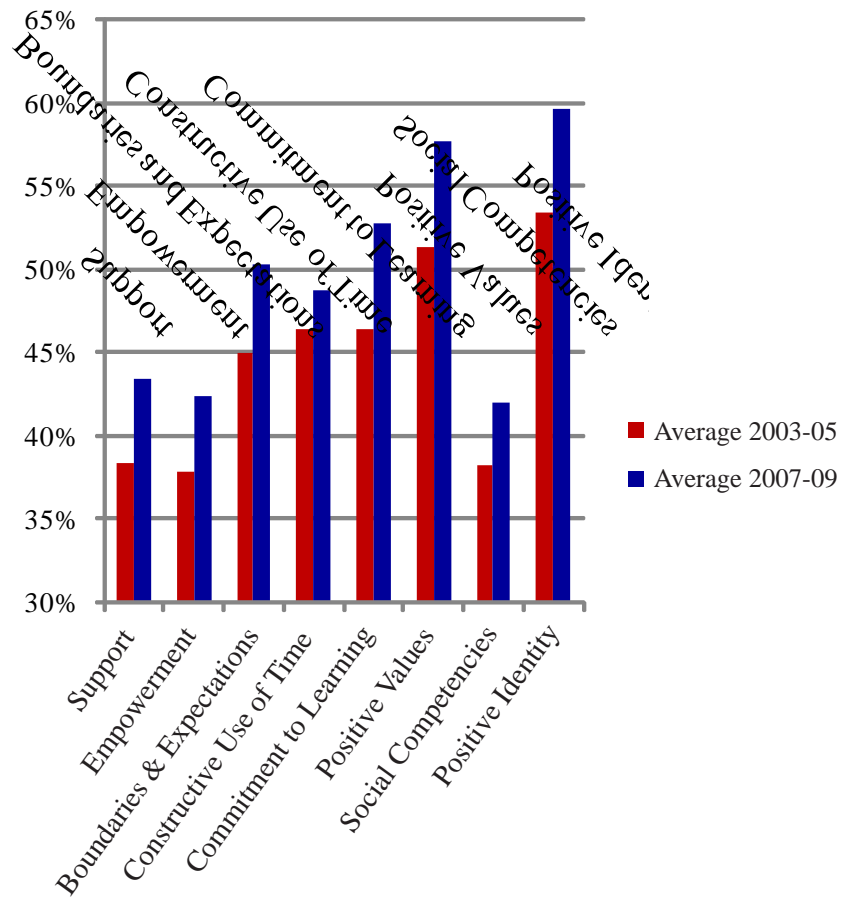
Sheryl Sprague, who oversees an HCHY Technical Assistance grant from United Way at Rushford, spoke about the outstanding work being done by the HCHY partners and their impressive results. View the charts at right to note the increase in Developmental Assets (top chart) and decrease in risky behaviors during the same time period (bottom chart). For more about the initiative, please see the story on page 4.

The Annual Meeting also marked the conclusion of Faith M. Jackson's term as Board President. Jackson, Director of Human Relations for the City of Middletown, has overseen several achievements during her term including the adoption of United Way's Five Year Goals for the Common Good.

Gary Simonsen of PrimePay was elected as Board President. Other new directors elected to the board are:

- Anthony Assante, Egidio Assante Wealth Management, LLC;
- Shirley Dickes, Pratt & Whitney/ IAWAW #700;
- Cheryl Duey, Northeast Utilities;
- Carl P. Fortuna, Jr., Fortuna & Cartelli, PC; and
- Arthur "Buddy" McDowell, Middlesex Hospital.

Students were surveyed for the first time in 2003-05 (red bars). An increase in several of the Developmental Assets occurred when the same eight communities surveyed students again in 2007-09. During the same period of time, there is a decrease in risky behaviors (bottom chart).





**Middlesex United Way**

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## Save the Date:

**Campaign Awards Breakfast**  
Tuesday, May 3 at the Crowne Plaza

**Women's Networking Breakfast**  
Wednesday, May 25 at  
Middlesex Health Care Center

**Day of Action**  
Tuesday, June 21 (diaper drives run  
May 3 through June 21)

**Power of the Purse**  
Thursday, June 23 at Baci Grill

## Many Thanks to Our 2010/11 Corporate Sponsors

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