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What Is the Wakulla County Coalition for Youth?

Written by Gail Campbell, Wakulla County Coalition for Youth Thursday, 08 April 2010 15:06

What Is the Wakulla County Coalition for Youth?

The Wakulla County Coalition for Youth is a growing body of people who promote healthy youth development by preventing problem adolescent behaviors such as substance abuse, suicide, violence, delinquency, school drop-out, and teen pregnancy. The Coalition fosters collaboration and cooperation among all providers and agencies serving Wakulla in order to leverage efforts and better serve the needs of Wakulla youth, and thereby, families.

(sidebar id=1)In practice, this collaboration means Coalition partners listen intently and with respect to reports from the Department of Juvenile Justice or the School District or the Health Department or the Sheriff's Office or from the YMCA or Extension Office or from the Mental Health or Substance Abuse provider networks or Parks and Rec or County Commission as they report their respective efforts in healthy youth development. In these meetings, gaps are sometimes revealed and the Coalition responds by shoring up – to greatest extent possible – holes in needed programs or services. It is a dynamic process that has resulted in genuine collaboration, and shared leadership toward a shared vision for Wakulla Youth.

Meetings are held monthly, the first Wednesday of the month at 12:30 p.m. at the TCC Wakulla Center. The public is invited and the WCCY looks forward to your participation and increased participation by Wakulla Clergymen and women, and by middle and high school youth who want to become change agents. There is a place at the table for everyone genuinely committed to positive youth development.



Recent Coalition projects include: Publication of a Resource Directory – the culmination of eight months of work led by Shelley Swenson of the Extension Office and Volunteer WAKULLA leader Ken Gambill, and aided by all Coalition leaders to include Commissioner Artz who insured that Health Care needs were also included. (See photos from recent Resource Guide distribution). The guide lists services available in Wakulla County and it is currently being distributed to people in places of referral; ie, enforcement officers, EMS, Firefighters, Health, BOCC, School Guidance and a host of others who are daily asked the question "who do I call, or where do I go for... HELP WHEN NEEDED.." Ultimately the Guide will make way to the WakullaCoalition.com web site for constant update and correction. The web site too is a new initiative, now being designed and developed by the Wakulla High School web design class.

Another current effort by the Coalition is the Be the Wall social marketing campaign designed to remind parents and all adults to "Be the Wall" between alcohol and their kids. Wakulla takes seriously its responsibility to promote healthy youth development. Underage drinking is not a right of passage, and while most Wakulla youth do not drink, the consequences when they do drink are serious.



Across the nation, throughout Florida, and in Wakulla County prevention planning by Coalition Leaders has led to reduced levels of risky behaviors by youth through focus on positive development of children and youth. It's a process that studies behaviors, attitudes and beliefs, actions and consequences that leads to the greatest of outcomes... happy, healthy, thriving young adults.

If you are interested in knowing more, come to a Coalition meeting, or call 528-7137 to learn more.

Pictured:

(Above left): Shelley Swenson and Ken Gambill speak before the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners.
(Above right): Commissioner Lynn Artz at a recent WCCY meeting.

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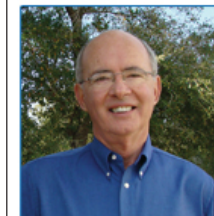


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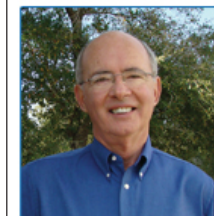
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