

## FUNdraising with Youth United

*Featuring Youth United of Genesee County Habitat (Flint, Michigan) and Bergen County Habitat (Hackensack, New Jersey).*

### YOUTH UNITED OF GENESEE COUNTY HABITAT HOLIDAY

Habitat Holiday was created by Randall Elementary members of Genesee County Habitat for Humanity's Youth United. In their third annual Habitat Holiday, more 600 students in kindergarten through fifth grade expressed the importance of affordable housing in a creative way. Songs and handcrafted items helped Randall Elementary students do their part to raise funds for the Youth United house sponsorship.

Working with the affiliate staff, Youth United steering committee members took the lead to prepare the elementary kids for the event. Brittany Young and Genora Adams, fourth-grade Youth United representatives, organized can drives and collected change banks leading up to the Habitat Holiday. Each class received a special visit from affiliate staff and the homeowner selected to partner with Youth United, building even greater excitement as the kids could meet the people they were helping.

The combined efforts of the students, affiliate staff, school faculty, parents and community members raised awareness about Habitat's work in Genesee County and generated more than \$7,000 toward the Youth United sponsorship of a Habitat home.



### ACTION STEPS:

#### **Meet with the school's administration**

To prepare for Habitat Holiday, the first step is to meet with the principal and other key staff members to brainstorm ideas for the year and establish expectations for the teachers.

#### **Start visiting classrooms early in the year**

Randall students watched a PowerPoint on poverty housing and learned about Genesee Habitat for Humanity. They also had the opportunity to meet the homeowner who would partner with Youth United.

#### **Have classes work on planned activities**

The music teacher worked with each grade level to learn songs about helping others and record a special CD. Each teacher worked with students to craft items that were sold at the Habitat Holiday event.

#### **Plan a celebration assembly**

Parents and community members were invited to come to Habitat Holiday, where students performed their songs and set up shops to sell their items. Attendees could purchase a copy of the students' CD, which was decorated with student artwork. The homeowner attended a special assembly where students presented a check toward the Youth United sponsorship of her future home.

## YOUTH UNITED OF BERGEN COUNTY ROCK THE BAND EVENT

Youth United of Bergen County demonstrated the power of youths uniting to get things done through a Rock the House band fundraiser. A team of 31 members used their love of music to help build affordable housing in their community. Building on the success of their first Rock the House event, the youths selected a better location, recruited better bands, and organized their youth ticket sales team.

As the recipient of a State Farm \$4,000 matching grant, Youth United of Bergen County included time during the event to express its gratitude for State Farm's support of Habitat Youth Programs.

The affiliate is very proud of their youths' accomplishments. "The most important asset of any local Youth United program is the core group of members that lead, plan, communicate well and motivate the other members," said Denise Marcos, Youth United adviser. "We have a great group of steering committee members."



### ACTION STEPS:

#### Find your passion

Encourage young people to start with projects they are enthused about. This event involves music and getting together with friends; everyone enjoys coming together for a great time.

#### Embrace lessons learned

To help make this year's event bigger and more successful than last year's, we selected a more central location and changed the band requirements based on the results of the previous year. We had a better idea of what foods sold best and how to manage each member's ticket sales in a more productive manner.

#### Organize committees

Specific teams were set up to tackle each aspect of the event: ticket sales, band recruitment, food and beverage procurement, and promotion. Two steering committee members were assigned, along with the Youth United adviser, to provide each team with extra guidance and support.

#### Publicize the event

Promote the event at local schools by having individual members sell tickets at the schools and hand out fliers promoting the event. Tickets can also be sold online or at retail store events, and they can be publicized on Facebook and the affiliate website. It is good to start promoting the event as early as possible.

#### Practice good communication

It is important for everyone to understand their role and communicate with the other members. Planning session members should be open to relay their concerns about specific aspects of the event with the rest of the group.