

# youth action news ALLIANCE

NEWS & INFORMATION FOR THE YOUNG LEADERS OF TODAY

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**“You may think  
the little idea  
you have will never  
accomplish anything,  
but we can testify that  
our little idea  
became huge and worked.  
Anyone can do it.  
We started at six years old.  
You are never too young  
or too old  
to help someone else...  
Go out and  
make a difference in  
someone’s life.  
-The Singer Twins**

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PROVIDING WRAP-AROUND SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN, NATIONWIDE

## Where the Kids Are



By: Latasha Kinnard  
Chicago, IL

The one institution that dominates the lives of children across the world (or at least most of them) is no doubt the education system. In the United States, all children are required to attend public, private or parochial school from the ages of seven to 16. While there are a small percentage of students who are home schooled, the vast majority of students spend more time at school with their teachers than they do at home with their parents. With such a high concentration of youth in one place at one time, it would seem like policy makers would want to take advantage of this nicely wrapped opportunity.

America’s Promise Alliance has defined Five Promises that all children need as a foundation to a healthy future. These promises include caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education and opportunities to help others. What if we could take these Five Promises, and provide them at one location? Instead of schools focusing solely on education, what if all schools also focused on health, mentoring, and community service? This idea is embodied in the America’s Promise Alliance National Action Strategy, “Where the Kids Are.” It certainly does not take a genius to figure out that services for kids should be provided “Where the Kids are,” so the larger question becomes why it is so difficult to make this strategy a reality for schools throughout the nation.

Common sense would say that policymakers nationwide should implement “Where the Kids Are,” as soon as possible. It would surely change our school systems for the better. Unfortunately, the implementation of the solution proves to be difficult. And this is where the youth voice comes in. The education system needs a revolution, and over the next 20 years, we’re the ones that will make it happen. Although there are some schools that are responsive to the needs of the whole child, there too many schools that continue to operate while ignoring the little girl who comes to school hungry, or the little boy who cannot see the black board. We need a new generation of educators who cannot fathom the idea of a school with no health care professionals on the premises, or a school with no after school programs, or a school that does not provide nutritious meals, or a school with no mentoring or service opportunities. This is what a school should be. This is what a school has to be if it is to provide a promising future for all its students.



For more information on “Where the Kids Are,” please link to (<http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=6548>). For resources and specific plans on how you can get involved, register on the 15 in 5 Campaign Network at (<http://15in5.americaspromise.org>).



By: Alyssa Bisanz  
Mesa, AZ

### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## Communities In Schools

Communities In Schools (CIS) is a critical player in helping to minimize the numbers of students who drop out of high school by bringing existing community resources to youth who need it most. Adults involved with CIS assess the needs of children in schools and connect them

with the tools they need.



Communities In Schools was founded upon five basic principles which convey the same message as each of the Five Promises. The five basic principles for success are mentor relationships, safe places, a healthy start, marketable skills, and opportunities to give back. Each year CIS benefits more than 2 million youth in 27 different states and the District of Columbia. This organization has existed for more than 30 years and was founded by youth advocate and current Vice Chairman, William E. Milliken back in 1977. The National Board of Directors also includes Chairman, Elaine Wynn of Wynn Resorts and National President, Daniel J. Cardinali. It should come as no surprise, then, that Cardinali is the co-chair of the working group for Where the Kids Are, discussed on page one.

Basically, CIS helps kids stay on track to graduate, by better connecting schools to their surrounding communities. They bring resources, services, parents and volunteers all literally into schools, which creates—as the name says—a community of caring people within the school itself. The program begins with an assessment of local youth needs, and then creates a plan that uses existing community resources to respond to those needs. Depending on the needs of the community, the program can take on a variety of different forms, including one-time consulting or after-school programming.

For additional information about Communities In Schools you can visit their website at [www.cisnet.org](http://www.cisnet.org).

### PROJECT OF THE MONTH

## Kicking HIV/AIDS Out of Kenya



By: Glenn Means  
Mt. Sterling, KY

38.6 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. That's the same number as the total populations of New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago combined. There are now more than 15 million children under the age of 18 whose mother, father or both parents have died from AIDS.

Children orphaned by HIV/AIDS are especially vulnerable to poor health and nutrition, missed opportunities for education and protection against abuse and exploitation. They are also at great risk of contracting HIV. In many cases, orphans are forced to leave school and end up on the street. However, two organizations have made it their main mission to stop this devastating disease from destroying lives.

UNICEF is the only organization of the United Nations that's central focus is helping children. UNICEF helps assist children through community based services in primary health care, basic education, and safe water sanitation in more than 140 developing countries. UNICEF shares a similar vision—helping children—with one of America's Promise Alliance's partner organizations, Key Club International. UNICEF and Key Club International joined forces years ago to prove that they could eliminate Iodine Deficiency Disorders and they virtually did that.

After conquering Iodine Deficiency Disorder, Key Club International is yet again reaching out and joining forces with UNICEF to conquer another disease: HIV/AIDS. Key Club International plans to target the major issue is through education and enrichment of young girls in Kenya. The United States goal is to raise over \$500,000 from the Trick or Treat UNICEF Campaign, which will go towards the Kicking HIV/AIDS out of Kenya program. This program is a young ladies soccer program, in which enrichment and education is taught, life skills, self-confidence, promoting leadership, and the main mission is to strengthen decision-making skills and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Key Club International members recently visited the site of where their project is taking place. These members got to learn about what they are doing with this program as well as how this program is not only a fun soccer league, but a life-saving measure to help these girls. Key Club International is helping young girls not only stand up for themselves but helping them to make a decision that could change the rest of their lives.

If you would like to get involved with this great project, act now! You don't have to be a part of Key Club International to help. Set up your own campaign and provide funding for these great projects. Its projects like these as well as partners like these that help make the world a better place and help our young people succeed.

For more information on how you can help visit these [www.keyclub.org](http://www.keyclub.org) or [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).

A GREAT PLACE TO GROW UP

## Scottsdale, AZ

By: Andrew Samskey

Scottsdale, Arizona is full of life and opportunity. Just one look across the city and you will realize that there are caring adults and safe places at every turn. There are healthy meal choices and many places to learn and give back to the community. Effective educational opportunities exist through the excellent Scottsdale School District. The system serves many of the more than 48,000 youth in Scottsdale, and reaches into another of the Five Promises with the Scottsdale Schools Service Learning program and the Summer Youth Corps, which both offer great opportunities to help. KidsCare, Fit City and the Boys and Girls Clubs all make sure that children around the city are healthy and ready for a fulfilling day.

For children, the sunny Arizona weather makes Scottsdale an ideal location to participate in many recreational sports. Swimming lessons are offered at the local community center and there are a variety of afterschool programs ranging from reading clubs, flag football, and drug abuse resistance education (DARE). The city also does great work with the interfaith community, and organizations such as at North Valley Community church offer a huge support system for youth. The opportunities to serve and work to help young people develop many necessary skills among which include leadership, public speaking, and responsibility. These kids of skills encourage young people and teenagers to step outside of normal teenage peer pressure.

Those privileged to grow up in Scottsdale will find a place where they can grow physically and mentally in a safe environment that will help them to become some of the very best adults.



START PLANNING NOW:

## myGoodDeed Commemorating 9/11 With Service

If you have ever dreamed of doing good in the World; if your goal is to be a catalyst for change; or if you are simply looking to make a difference, then myGoodDeed Inc. might just be what you need in order to get inspired and help others.

myGoodDeed Inc., a nonprofit organization, runs the interactive website [www.myGoodDeed.org](http://www.myGoodDeed.org), a place where people of all ages are able to submit a pledge to perform a good deed for others on a day of their choice. There are no guidelines as to what this "good deed" has to be. Basically, if you are planning to help or have already helped someone in need, myGoodDeed would like to know about it.

The organization was originally founded in 2002, when two friends, David Paine and Jay Winuk, starting wondering what they could do in order to commemorate Sept. 11, 2001, the day of the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City. Although the main goal of the myGoodDeed web site and organization is to establish Sept. 11 as a national day of service, it not only encourages people to do good deeds for others on or around September 11th of every year, but also year-round.

As of today, more than 380,000 pledges of service have been recorded on the web site. As a result, the organization has grown to focus on more than just documenting people's good deeds for others, and the web site now provides great resources and toolkits for those that are not sure on how to start to help people in need. A quick browse through the site and you will be surrounded with ideas on how to "give back." From making an appointment to give blood, to donating clothes to Good Will, this web site reminds us that there are many ways to help those around us.

Also, soon, myGoodDeed will launch its new eye-catching web site, which will include many cool features like planting your own "Cause Tree" and hearing what celebrities are planning to do in the spirit of service.

As summer starts winding down, start planning now what you would like to do during the week of Sept. 11 to not only help those in need around you, but also to keep the "spirit of giving and selfless service that unified our nation following the terrorist attacks" alive.

INTERVIEW

## Sisters 4 Life The Incredible Journey of the Singer Twins

Mollie and Jackie Singer did not have an average youth. Mollie suffered from Juvenile Diabetes, a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Early on, Mollie incorporated into her daily life shots of insulin and other protective measures to make sure that she could live her life to the fullest.

Even with the burden of Diabetes, the Singer Twins have lived amazing lives, driven by one early experience of pain. As 9-year-olds, Mollie and Jackie both were invited to a birthday party. However, with lunchtime approaching the friend that invited them stood up during lunch and announced that Mollie would be uninvited because her mom said that diabetics were too much of a "hassle," but that Jackie could still come. The twins were devastated. As an act of support, Jackie decided she too wouldn't attend. This one act of ignorance would send these two girls on a mission to help others by creating a movement called "Diabetic Angels."



By: Daniela Eguiguren  
Burke, VA



By: Glenn Means  
Mt. Sterling, KY

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The Twins recently sat down with the Youth Action News to discuss the Diabetic Angels.

**MS:** Diabetic Angels is anyone who dares to have fun, dares to be cool, and dares to cure diabetics. Diabetic Angels are not just young people in school but even adults. Diabetic Angels are those people who care to learn more about this disease as well as help someone else who is suffering from it.

**JS:** Diabetic Angels will learn how to act in an emergency situation as well as what high and low blood sugar means. Diabetic Angels will also learn how to advocate and help Diabetics raise awareness about this crucial disease.

**YAN:** This sounds amazing! I also read how people are starting Diabetic Angel Chapters all over the world. As of right now how many chapters do you know are presently at work?

**JS:** That is something we are working on right now. People have been in contact with us all the time wanting to borrow our mission statement and start their own chapter. As of right now we know of 25 chapters around the world. We also have reached over six continents which we never expected. We never thought it would grow this big but we are happy it did.

**YAN:** I read your mission statement which I also thought was excellent. What does CURE stand for?

**MS:** We have always wanted to cure diabetes through Advocacy, Awareness, Education, and Fundraising. CURE stands for C: Compassion for all who suffer from Diabetes. U: Understanding the challenges they face. R: Ready to fund medical and technological research. E: Eager to educate and advocate for all Diabetes.

**YAN:** Your work with the Angels must require a lot of travel. What sorts of nation-wide events have you attended?

**JS:** We have traveled to New York City and spoken with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund and what they could do to help Diabetics. We also have traveled to Washington, D.C. many times to speak with the National Institute of Health on how they could help. We have gone to many press conferences at the Capital and testified in front of Congress. We also met with the Domestic Policy Director at the White House and had a meeting with him about how to help Diabetes in funding and awareness.

**MS:** We have raised over \$600,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund...We were honored at the Prudential Community of Spirit Awards and I was named one of ten top volunteers. We also received a Caring Award which is probably one of the most memorable moments for us. Jackie and I were two of five that were honored and inducted into the Most Caring American Hall of Fame. In January we were chosen by MUDD as two of four inspirational role models that they would feature in an ad that would be in almost every magazine including Teen Vogue. We were awarded 5,000 dollars from MUDD which we were very happy to receive. It was an honor and a privilege to work with them.

**YAN:** So what have you learned through this experience?

**JS:** I know I have just learned so much from being there to help Mollie. Mollie is an incredible sister and I look up to her. It has taught me so much about being a leader and also knowing that I can accomplish anything I set out to do. We got feedback from a little girl that helped save her grandfather in an emergency situation because of what she had learned from Diabetic Angels. That was good enough for me to know that we were making a difference.

**MS:** I look up to my sister. She has helped me but also we set out from the beginning to make this a movement to help others. We are teaching people skills to save lives. Communication is very important and we took advantage of that at a young age by advocating at the Capital and making our voice be heard. It's some of those simple skills we teach to people like even testing your blood sugar before you drive to make sure you are okay. Some people don't think about these things, but if you make them aware of it they will start to change their habits and remember to do it. We have accomplished so much and will continue to search until a cure is found for Diabetes.

For more information on the Singer Twins and the Diabetic Angels, visit

## Mark Your Calendar!

### AUGUST

#### Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month

- 3-15 Kiwanis Key Leader Program (Hawai'i)
- 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous People
- 10-14 National Educators' Institute for Jewish Service-Learning
- 10-21 World Youth Congress
- 11-14 5th Annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations
- 11 8th Annual Service-Learning Summer Institute
- 12 International Youth Day
- 19 International Young Professionals Summit
- 22-23 National Conference on College Student Grief

### SEPTEMBER

- 11-12 ServiceNation Summit
- 12-14 Kiwanis Key Leader Program (New Hampshire)
- 15-16 Global Youth Enterprise Conference
- 22 National Conference on Citizenship
- 26-28 Kiwanis Key Leader Program (Manitoba)
- 27 City Year Opening Day

### ADD TO OUR CALENDAR!

If you know of an interesting national event or day to celebrate, we'd love to learn about it! Send an email with your suggestion to:

[YouthPromise@americaspromise.org](mailto:YouthPromise@americaspromise.org)



### REGISTER & SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

Log on to our 15 in 5 network at <http://15in5.americaspromise.org> and help write for America's Promise Alliance! We're looking for youth to write service and leadership related articles for our website and in our monthly Youth Action Newsletter. Poetry is also welcome, as well as visual art in any form. Send us an e-mail at:

[youthpromise@americaspromise.org](mailto:youthpromise@americaspromise.org)