

Youth Action News

NEWS & INFORMATION FOR THE YOUNG LEADERS OF TODAY

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**“He who has health
has hope.
He who has hope
has everything.”**
-Arabic Proverb

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ALL KIDS DESERVE TO GROW UP HEALTHY. ALL KIDS DESERVE HEALTH INSURANCE.

All Kids Covered



I sometimes take for granted the fact that as a kid I got to have regular check-ups and visits to the doctor when I was sick. Many kids growing up in the United States today do not have this privilege, often times because their families do not have access to health insurance coverage.

As a nation, it should be our goal to have “All Kids Covered.” This idea resonates within the halls of Congress and is one of the basic tenets of healthcare initiatives forwarded to this upcoming presidential election. We all want to see America’s youth healthy and productive, optimistic and reaching for their goals. Yet, the basic need to be healthy has often been sidetracked as the numbers themselves tell us.

Did you know that 9 million children in America that are uninsured? Without health insurance it is very difficult for kids to receive the check-ups, flu-shots, vaccinations and dental visits they need to grow up healthy. The good news is that 6 million of these uninsured young people are eligible to enroll in either Medicaid or the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Created in 1997, SCHIP provides health insurance for children from working families who are too poor to afford private coverage on their own. Sadly, many of these children and their families are unaware of the existence of SCHIP and the positive impact it can have on their lives. Others just don’t understand the often confusing enrollment process associated with these programs.

To address this problem, the America’s Promise Alliance recently announced the launch of a new national initiative called All Kids Covered. The goal of All Kids Covered is see that all eligible children become enrolled in the SCHIP or Medicaid programs. This important initiative seeks to begin a legacy of bringing healthcare assurance to ALL American children through a high standard of quality care and wellness.

The America’s Promise Alliance believes that in order for the All Kids Covered strategy to be most successful, young leaders need to rally and take action. Young leaders can assist with local enrollment initiatives, they can help raise awareness around the availability of health insurance programs in their states and communities, and they can help influence the opinions of politicians by urging them to support expanding these federally funded programs.

When First Focus (www.firstfocus.net), a bipartisan advocacy group affiliated with America’s Promise, asked youth from around the country to write letters to First Lady Laura Bush in support of SCHIP funding, there was an overwhelming response. Over 1,000 letters were delivered to the White House, which emphasized the youth voice on the importance of healthcare for children.

We, as Americans, should be committed to making sure that all kids in the United States are covered. Join America’s Promise as it begins its 5 year campaign, and help bring an positive change in the lives of America’s youth!



New from the Alliance



It's the goal of the America's Promise Alliance is to provide 15 million young people with increased access to the 5 Promises in the next 5 years. As a way to generate action around this goal, The Alliance is proud to announce the launch of a new web platform called the 15 in 5 Campaign Network. This web site has been created to provide news, information, resources, and tools specific to the each of the National Action Strategies.

- Site Highlights include:**
- Blogs:** Learn about the interesting work being done across the nation on behalf of young people by reading the latest posting in the Delivering Promises Blog, and the Youth Promise Blog.
 - Partner Profiles:** Learn about the work of our Alliance Partners and how you can get involved in their efforts.
 - Tools:** Search a library of tools and resources provided by our Alliance Partners to help you take action in your community.

Visit the website today to become registered user.
www.15in5.americaspromise.org

PROJECT OF THE MONTH:

Cover the Uninsured Week



By: Daniel Kent
Carmel, IN

Do you want to help make sure more people are provided with access to health insurance? If so, now is a great time to learn about Cover the Uninsured Week, taking place this year April 27 - May 3.

A project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Cover the Uninsured is an initiative to publicize the issue that millions upon millions of individuals live without health insurance. According to the website, each individual without insurance is "forced to gamble every day that they won't get sick or injured." Cover the uninsured week brings together business owners, educators, students, patients, hospital staff, physicians, nurses, faith leaders and many more to speak out on behalf of the uninsured.

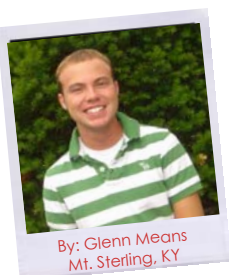
There are many ways for you and your community to get involved in Cover the Uninsured Week 2008. The website also has resources to help you get started taking action around the following three ideas:

- Help organize a health insurance enrollment event at a local hospital, community center or school
- Organize a health coverage forum with community, business, and faith leaders
- Distribute information about available low-cost and free health coverage programs to uninsured individuals and their families.



A GREAT PLACE TO GROW UP

Mt. Sterling, KY



By: Glenn Means
Mt. Sterling, KY

Sometimes it's hard to believe that I'm finally a college student and making decisions for myself. It seems like just yesterday when I was a little kid wondering what life would be like when I was grown and independent. One thing though that remained the same throughout my life that will never change and I am grateful for that....this being my community.

I wouldn't have wanted to grow up anywhere else but Mt. Sterling, Kentucky. Every time I return to this beautiful community, I am proud to be from such a wonderful place – a place filled with so many memories.

After thinking back on what my community has done for me, I realized that can't even begin to mention them all. Mount Sterling is very supportive of young people's decisions and has always supported my friends and I in all of our endeavors. The school systems here strive to challenge their students to reach their utmost potential. Mount Sterling also encourages young people to get excited about helping others. I am from a community that almost always hosts a weekend of service. Mount Sterling is genuinely a giving place that values youth voice and believes in their power to make a difference.

I am fortunate to be from a place that works to provide children with access to all the Five Promises. Through innovative collaborations, strong schools and a variety of other community resources, Mt. Sterling provides a structured place for youth to blossom into great adults. For these reasons, I'm proud to report that Mt. Sterling has been named a three time winner of the America's Promise Alliance 100 Best Communities for Young People competition.

I am thankful that my parents chose to raise me in Mount Sterling. Without the support of this community, I don't know if I would be the person I am today. Thanks to Mount Sterling I have been able to pursue my dreams and more importantly make a difference.



PARTNER OF THE MONTH :

American Academy of Pediatrics



By: Alyssa Bisanz
Mesa, AZ

I am seeing three's. March is the third month of the year, and the third Promise, A Healthy Start, is how this month's partner gives back to our communities. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a not-for-profit organization that works to ensure that children and youth in America stay physically, socially, and mentally fit during their formative years.

Currently, this partner has teamed up with America's Promise around the issue of healthcare. Under All Kids Covered, an America's Promise National Action Strategy, the goal is to enroll 6 million uninsured children in America who qualify for public healthcare. AAP Board Member, Jay Berklehamer, M.D. is the co-chair of the All Kids Covered National Action Strategy working group.

The American Academy of Pediatrics began in 1930 with a founding group of 60 children's physicians. Since then, AAP has grown its membership to 60,000 people. In addition, the AAP has 59 chapters made up of healthcare professionals and pediatricians that strive to communicate AAP's message and get others involved with this cause. Currently, AAP is operated and governed by a Board of Directors that represent 10 geographic regions. As a result of the great work AAP has accomplished, they created a bench marker for others to recognize a separation between child and adult care in the medical industry.



For additional information about the American Academy of Pediatrics you can visit their website at www.aap.org/.

IN MY OPINION:

Hold on to Your Dreams

By: Imade Imausen
Nashville, TN

In my opinion, if you hold on to your dreams hard enough no one can take them away from you. I've always had big ideas and to others my goals sometimes looked impossible. But I realized that no matter how many people around me were trying tell me to be realistic, it only took one person's encouragement to keep me focused on my dreams.

When I started college, I thought that I had to grow up and become independent. I should no longer look to others for help and advice. It didn't take me long to realize that my assumption was wrong. I learned that I still needed advice and someone that could help me work out conflicts and encourage success in all aspects of my life. Although I have not openly told all the people that have made a difference in my life that they are my mentors that is exactly what they are.

If you don't have a mentor in your life, find one. A mentor will be someone that pushes you above your comfort level to achieve academically or professionally. It's helpful to find a mentor with experiences in your professional goals. But, that's not always possible, and that's okay. I must say that for the most part, the people I've identified as mentors in my life are not specialized in the areas of my research interests and my medical school interests; they are simply specialized in being wonderful people.

So how do you find a mentor? You can either openly ask someone to take on the position as your mentor, or inadvertently ask someone questions or for advice and keep coming back to them. Also take a look around. Look at the people you interact with on a day to day basis. If you admire them, more than likely it's for a reason. Don't feel ashamed or scared to ask for help, everyone needs it and the worst thing that can happen is they'll say no.

Finally, when someone comes into your life and makes an impact on you, don't let them go. With their encouragement, you'll reach for your dreams and achieve your goals.

Resources from the Alliance

Cover the Uninsured Planning Guides & Templates



Visit this website to find Planning Guides designed to help you organize health insurance events on campus, or forums for your community. You can also download templates designed to help you write letters to the editor and work with local media around health insurance promotion.

<http://covertheuninsured.org/materials/guides/>

Covering Kids & Families ABC's of School-Based Outreach



This guide is designed to provide you with helpful tips and strategies to work with your school communities to enroll eligible, uninsured children in Medicaid and SCHIP, and to assist you in planning school-based outreach and enrollment activities around the Covering Kids & Families Back-to-School Campaign and throughout the school year.

<http://covertheuninsured.org/actioncenter/kit.php?KitID=13>

SUCCESS STORY:

Supporting Healthy Babies

By: *Samantha Schulte
& Lena Badr
Burke, VA*

As part of a nationwide campaign involving the partnership of FBLA-PBL and the March of Dimes, our school's Future Business Leaders of America chapter sponsored an awareness and fundraising campaign for the March of Dimes Organization last November.

March of Dimes is a non-profit health organization that is leading the way in the fight to save babies from premature birth, which is the number one cause of newborn death in the United States. Every year, more than half a million babies are born prematurely, and sadly, prematurity is steadily increasing. The March of Dimes working to funding research to find out why premature birth happens and what can be done to prevent it.

Our school's FBLA chapter decided that we can help defeat premature birth and the other threats that face babies. We decided to organize several activities to help raise monetary support for the March of Dimes. These activities included selling pink and blue tie-dye t-shirts. We also placed March of Dimes jars at the end of lunch lines to collect loose change. Additionally, we made baby pink and baby blue ribbons that we sold for \$1.00, as well as cut-out dimes that people could sign and hang on a march of dimes display in the main hallway.

In order to get people in the spirit, we decorated the entire school with pink and blue balloons and streamers. All of the locker bays and main hallways were garnished and splashed with pink and blue. They looked great! People were really excited to participate in such a worthwhile event.

As people started inquiring about our decorations we decided it would be a great idea to make informational flyers in order to inform people about premature birth and how, together, we can help support the fight against the number one killer of newborn babies. We also created a "Pink and Blue Crew" which went from class to class informing people about our campaign.

During our classroom visits we ran into a teacher who's husband was the Director of Federal Affairs for the March of Dimes. We were absolutely excited to make a deal to give him our signed petition and pictures in order to help him influence the government support of the national campaign.

And of course, how could we create a school-wide event without using taking advantage of Facebook, which most of our school's students use and check frequently. Our Facebook group helped us send mass emails and notices to keep people updated about our progress.

Our event was a huge success. Even after all was said and done, students continued to walking around with their March of Dimes t-shirts, which was so rewarding to see. I know that our school truly made a difference in the lives of so many.



Get Involved:

March for Babies, formally known as WalkAmerica, is the oldest and one of the most popular walking events in the nation. Get your friends and neighbors to walk and raise money to support research and programs to help babies in your community and across the nation get a healthy start.



Learn about this year's events by visiting their website at:
www.marchforbabies.org

Mark Your Calendar!

MARCH

- American Red Cross Month
- National Nutrition Month
- Youth Art Month
- 3 Read Across America Day
- 3-6 Newspapers in Education Week
- 9-15 Girl Scout Week
- 20 Absolutely Incredible Kid Day
- 30-5 National Boys & Girls Club Week
- 31 Caesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning

APRIL

- Keep America Beautiful Month
- 7 World Health Day
- 9-12 National Service-Learning Conference
- 13-19 National Library Week
- 12 YMCA's Healthy Kids Day
- 22 Earth Day
- 25 Take Your Son or Daughter to Work Day
- 25-27 Global Youth Service Day
- 27-3 National Volunteer Week

MAY

- Youth Traffic Safety Month
- 2 Join Hands Day
- 6-12 Reading is Fundamental Week
- 5-9 Teacher Appreciation Week

JUNE

- 5 World Environment Day
- 7-14 National NeighborWorks Week
- 11 World Population Day
- 12 World Day Against Child Labor

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