

# CARES Celebrates 30 YEARS of Service to New Canaan YOUTH & FAMILIES



**Empowering Youth**

**Strengthening Family**

**Building Community**

## Western ROADHOUSE Wrap-up



On Saturday evening, March 7 a capacity crowd filled Waveny House to celebrate New Canaan CARES and its 30 years of dedicated service to the community. The Western Roadhouse theme lent itself to a fun and casual evening as guests donned their most comfortable jeans accessorized with cowboy boots, hats, fringed vests, and plenty of bandanas. The music and entertainment were non-stop while the live and silent auctions offered a bountiful array of



*ROADHOUSE Decorating Co-Chairs: Kim Gilhool, Julie Swearingen, Beth Forfang, and Jennifer Skyrn (photo by Jeanna Shepard)*

goodies to suit every taste. Attendees were enthusiastic and felt strongly that they wanted and needed to show their support for this vital community organization that has given so much to our schools, our kids, and our town. The evening was a smashing success with all proceeds going to support the many programs offered by CARES, including leadership training for middle and high school students, mentoring through drama for elementary and middle schoolers, empowerment and assertiveness training for preschool through middle school.

## CARES Upcoming PARENT PROGRAMS – SPRING 2009

- |  |                              |                              |                                    |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>April 14: East School</b>   | <b>April 21: West School</b> | <b>Susan Rubin, DMD, HHC</b> | <b>9:30 am</b>                     |
| Dr. Rubin, leader in the world of food and health, will help our families integrate whole food and healthy living into our chaotic lifestyles. She will give us delicious ways to build healthy relationships with food and teach nutrition concepts to our children.  |                              |                              |                                    |
| <b>April 29: Puberty – Yikes!</b>  |                              |                              | <b>Outback Teen Center 9:30 am</b> |
| Puberty and peer influence intensify the many challenges of middle school. Shifting friendships, body image, mood swings, and opposite gender relationships can send our kids and ourselves into a tailspin. Join us for a how-to session on keeping lines of communication open, while reviewing the developmental milestones your 5 <sup>th</sup> or 6 <sup>th</sup> grader may be experiencing. |                              |                              |                                    |
| <b>May 6: Social Networking – Setting Boundaries</b>   |                              |                              | <b>Outback Teen Center 9:30 am</b> |
| Facebook, Twitter, iPhone ... a universe inhabited primarily by our children, who navigate adeptly without much help from adults. Join us for some pointers on how to navigate, set appropriate boundaries, privacy settings, and safety tips.   |                              |                              |                                    |
| <b>May 7: Changing Bodies, Changing Selves</b>   |                              |                              | <b>Waveny House 9:30 am</b>        |
| The 'BIG Talk'. An eye-opening discussion and thorough review of physical, emotional, social, and psychological challenges and changes your 4 <sup>th</sup> grader may be facing, together with how to keep the lines of communication open as the issues get tougher.   |                              |                              |                                    |
| <b>May 14: Annual Kitchen Tour</b>   |                              |                              | <b>10:00 am – 3:00 pm</b>          |
| Take a friend and explore our 17 <sup>th</sup> annual showcase of fabulous New Canaan homes. Complimentary breakfast and free parking for the day.   |                              |                              |                                    |
| <b>May 28: Coping with Economic Uncertainty: Social, Emotional, &amp; Financial Tips</b>   |                              |                              | <b>Outback 9:30 am</b>             |
| As New Canaan faces unprecedented challenges in the midst of these economic times, are you wondering what actions you should be taking to protect your family? Here's an emergency toolkit for facing the hard truths on the road to renewed financial and emotional stability for our families.   |                              |                              |                                    |

## YOUTH Programs Span the Grade Levels – PRE-SCHOOL through GRADE 12

"CARES offers programs and tools to promote healthy lifestyles, strengthen family systems, boost children's resiliency and build self-esteem." (Saxe Middle School faculty member)

### Take the LEAD © – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Leadership

"We learned how to have fun looking for the good in others instead of making fun of others." (Saxe 7<sup>th</sup> grader)

*Take the LEAD* is a new, inclusive leadership and assertiveness training program that engenders the tenets of positive youth development and social-emotional learning, while providing social ecological supports to promote positive outcomes for all students. *Take the LEAD*, was developed by health promotion specialists and students as part of a community health initiative aimed at building individual strengths, while reducing negative behaviors. The 16-session interactive program equips students with social and emotional learning skills that transcend the classroom, empowering them to approach life's challenges with competencies in several key areas, including: self-awareness, interpersonal communication, social awareness, decision-making, goal setting, self-management, problem-solving, organizational skills, and personal efficacy. The skill-based curriculum includes a service-learning project that provides student teams the rare opportunity to transfer their skill-sets to real life situations, in and around the school or community. As a closing celebration, students share service projects with the community, including other students, parents, and faculty.



7<sup>th</sup> graders stand in front of quilting squares they created as part of Service Learning Project

### Follow the LEADERS - all 500 Grads!

CARES recently passed the 500 mark, as it graduated another talented group of student leaders from the 35-hour intensive Leadership Challenge© program – for a total of 513 high school leadership graduates in New Canaan to date; 50% of whom are now attending college; the other 50% are busy applying their leadership talents in our schools and

community. Sean D., NCHS senior, courageously shared his thoughts... "Before taking Leadership Challenge, I was hesitant to take chances and put myself out there. Leadership helped me feel stronger about myself and my abilities. I now try to push myself into new experiences, especially in order to meet new people."

Service projects recently undertaken by Leadership students include mentoring preschool and elementary youth on a variety of topics using diverse mediums, from drama to athletics; participation in the International Linus blanket

project – supplying hand-made blankets to needy families; creating and performing drama programs to middle school students on challenging topics, such as cliques, and Internet safety. Not to rest on their laurels, graduates continually return to the Challenge to mentor trainees, or offer additional hours or ideas for community service. For more information about youth leadership opportunities contact CARES office.

## CARES YOUTH PROGRAMS – SPRING 2009 – Register NOW (through April 15)

### Elementary School: Kid POWER

Using drama, recreation, and crafts, elementary school youth have the opportunity to work with high school mentors in an interactive learning environment. This 3-session workshop provides participants multiple opportunities to work individually and collaboratively to build confidence, resilience and communication skills, while learning the value of teamwork firsthand.

**Mondays: April 27, May 4, May 18 – 3:45 – 5:00 pm**

**Grades 3-4**

### Middle School: ASSERTIVENESS Training

This middle school assertiveness program empowers students to become effective communicators. Participants improve their personal communication style, learn to be more assertive, and practice essential leadership skills. Sessions include hands-on activities designed to identify and forge individual strengths, while enhancing teambuilding and group dynamics, as well as providing multiple opportunities for role-playing and public speaking.

**Tuesdays: April 28, May 5, May 12 - 3:15 – 4:30 pm**

**Grades 5-6**

### Mentoring Through Drama Program

Drama, set design, writing and acting are all on the agenda for this award-winning mentoring program. Recently this group created and performed two different short plays for both 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders, addressing issues of popularity, gossip, exclusion, confidence, and personal identity.

**Afterschool practices TBD - productions in May**

**Grades 8-12**

**Email your reply to: CARESinfo@newcanaancares.org  
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