

Parent Connection



May/June 2015

Summer Programs

Ellington Youth Services has a variety of summer programs open to all ages. Be sure to check out our website at youth.ellington-ct.gov under **programs** for full details. A leadership program for 5th and 6th students called *Finding the Leader in Me*, art programs *Journal MEArt and Discover Art*, *Summer Fitness Challenge* and *Ellington Community Theatre* are all offered to students in grades 5 and up. Youth Services and Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation with Arts from the

Heart will present the musical production *Suessical* on July 24th and 25th. Children entering grades 3 through adult are encouraged to register and audition. Please visit www.artsfromtheheart.net for more information and to register.

There are also many programs for youth at the elementary level such as *Safety Town* and *1-2-3 I Am Me*.

On Saturday, June 13th, Youth Services in conjunction with Ellington Resident troopers and

Pedal Power of Vernon will sponsor **Bike Rodeo Family Bicycle Safety Day** from 9 to 11 am. See our website for details.



For grades 9-12

June Session: 2:15-3:15pm 6/1, 4, 8, 11, 15, 18

August Session: 8/4, 11, 18 8:30-9:30am

8/6, 13, 20 9:30-10:30am

\$25 for a 6 class punch card or \$5 a drop in



Join Youth Program Coordinator & Certified Fitness Instructor Tressa Giordano, for a summer of indoor and outdoor exercise. Workouts customized to your fitness level incorporating cardio, strength training, core development, proper form and execution, and stretching. Discussions on healthy eating, food preparation and sampling also offered. Perfect for any fitness level, no judgment, just fun! Bring your friends and work out together while improving your health this summer!

Participants must register at the Ellington Recreation Department and complete a Health PAR-Q prior to participation. Please wear comfortable exercise clothing, supportive sneakers and bring a water bottle. Call 860-870-3130 x 2200 for more information.

Youth Services Welcomes Tressa Giordano

Tressa Giordano joined Ellington Youth Services in May as the Youth Program Coordinator. She is excited to join the staff and brings with her a varied background in early childhood education, psychology and fitness. Tressa is a life-long Ellington resident. She can also be found teach-

ing dance, Zumba and fitness to young and old. She already has some summer programs planned and is looking forward to the fall. Check our website for all the programs offered this summer.

Welcome Tressa!



Youth Services is on Facebook!



Connect with us on
Facebook!



Launch My Idea for High School Students



Youth Services is excited to present “Launch My Idea,” a platform for talented high school students to develop and lead innovative programs and activities for Ellington youth. Over the last few years, we have had the pleasure of mentoring four high school students who we helped initiate and launch three of Youth Services’ most exciting new programs for younger students: *Just Girls*, *Discover Art*, and *Journal MEArt*. The

success of these programs has inspired us to create a platform through which we can help other high school students launch their ideas and benefit the Ellington community in the process.

How does it work?

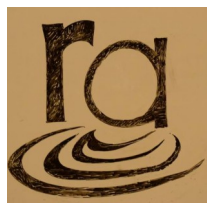
Any high school student in Ellington is eligible. He or she thinks of an idea for a one-day or multi-day program or activity for youth in town or for their peers. A “Launch My Idea” Proposal Form must be completed and sent to Diane Lasher-Penti, Director of Youth Services. The forms can be found and downloaded from our website at youth.ellington-ct.gov.

If the idea is selected, a Youth Services mentor will be assigned to work with the student to develop the plan. The high school student creator will receive community service hours or payment for the hours spent on the program itself. Visit our website for more information or contact:

dpenti@ellington-ct.gov.



Rise Above Student Leadership Group



Throughout the school year, Rise Above fulfilled its mission by hosting a variety of events providing leadership opportunities for its members while, at the same time, benefitting the community. The 60-member organization started the year off with the annual Fall Festival at Brookside Park and the ever-popular Dodgeball Tournaments for high school and middle school students. In late February, over 300 community members joined us in an amazing cele-

bration of the arts at our new event, *Gallery Night*. Local artists of all ages displayed their work while young pianists entertained us and the EHS Culinary Club provided the delicious desserts.

Later that month, we raised funds for the Austin P. Tautkus Memorial Scholarship Fund at our annual *Small Town Big Talent Community Variety Show*. This spring’s events included co-sponsoring the kids’ games at Relay for Life and hosting a College Night with EHS alumni returning to share their college experiences with current high school students. The year

wrapped up with over thirty Rise Above members visiting EMS to talk to the 8th graders about high school. We’ve had an exciting and successful year and wish our seniors the best of luck in their future endeavors.

This year’s Rise Above Core Group members included Spencer Flourde, Nick Topor, Isabella Viega, Kyle Wesley, Kelly Gorman, Sarah Riley, Albie Tebbetts, Megan Nicoletti, Erin Wardrop, Kristen Breen, Kyle Fitzgerald, Rebekah Riley, Tom Arbeiter, Abby Wylie, Kendall Sirica, and Adam Mayne.

Council for Developing Positive Youth Culture—DPYC—is a subgroup of Ellington Youth Services

Diane Lasher-Penti, Director, Ellington Youth Services—dpenti@ellington-ct.gov

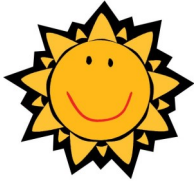
Deborah Stauffer, Prevention Coordinator—dstauffer@ellington-ct.gov

Tressa Giordano, Youth Program Coordinator—tgiordano@ellington-ct.gov

Kathy Larew, Advisor-Rise Above Student Leadership Group—klarew@comcast.net

Phone: 860-870-3130/Fax: 860-870-3198 Website: youth.ellington-ct.gov

Tips on Keeping Your Family Safe this Summer



Summer is a great time to relax and spend time outdoors with family and friends. Many summer activities unfortunately have dangerous elements. Here are some tips to help have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Sun and Heat Safety-When it is very warm, consider staying indoors in air conditioning. If you are out with the kids be sure to wear plenty of sunscreen (at least SPF 15), sun glasses and hats. Babies under 6 months should be out of the sun completely. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water. Get help immediately if you or your children exhibit heavy sweating with cold and clammy skin, headache, rapid heartbeat, nausea, dizziness, muscle cramps or increased body temp.

Summer Car Safety-Never leave a child alone in a car no matter what time of year it is. In the summer, the temperature of a closed car can reach more than 140 degrees in just minutes. Be sure when traveling children are properly belted in their seat, booster

seat, or car seat. Of course adults need to wear their seat belts as well!

Water Safety-More than one in five drowning victims are children 14 years and younger. Enroll children over the age of three in swimming lessons. Don't rely on lifeguards to watch over your children. Never leave your child unattended. Be sure your children know the depth of any pool, lake, pond or ocean before diving.

Safety on Wheels-Whether your child is on a bicycle, skateboard, scooter, roller skates or an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) be sure they wear a helmet and protective gear. Encourage use of trails instead of streets. To ride an ATV on public lands in the State of Connecticut, the operator must be at least 12 years old and be supervised by an adult with a safety certificate. To ride without adult supervision the operator must be at least 16 years old or possess a safety certificate. All ages operating ATVs on public lands must have a safety certificate. Operators under 18 must complete a safety course.

Bug Safety- Use bug repellent that

contains DEET against disease carrying insects however a combination sunscreen/bug repellent should not be used. Read the labels of any product you purchase. Children should wash off repellents when they return indoors. Don't use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays. When outdoors, have a first aid kit handy for any insect bites or stings.

Teen Safety-Talk to your teen about drugs, alcohol and sex. Studies show teens are more apt to try marijuana in the summer for the first time. Parties are more numerous, especially at graduation time. Set a good example. *A reminder that Connecticut has a Social Host Law. The penalty for hosting underage drinking in your home is now a Class A misdemeanor which is punishable by up to one year in prison, up to a \$2,000 fine, or both. Your child can also be ticketed and lose his/her license for 30-60 days.*

Internet Safety- Monitor internet use. This is an issue all times of the year. Remind your child never to give out personal info or meet anyone in person.

College Bound Students and Mental Health



Starting college is exciting but also causes anxiety and stress. 75% of lifetime cases of mental health conditions begin by age 24. Other statistics say one in four young adults between ages 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental health condition and more than 80% of college students felt overwhelmed by all they had to do in the past year and 45% have felt things were hopeless. While this sounds scary to a parent, mental health conditions are like other illnesses; they can be diagnosed and treated. The odds

are that your teen or your teen's friend or roommate will experience a mental health problem during their college years. Here are some things to keep in mind as you send your college student off in the fall:

- Include mental health when you discuss drinking, drugs and sex with your student.
- Be sure you and your teen know some of the most common warning signs of mental health problems. See website below.

- Does your teen know what to do if a friend is acting depressed or says he is thinking of killing himself?
- All colleges have resources and counselors available to students. Make sure your child knows this.
- Visit this website for more information on college students and mental health.:

<http://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/top-5-mental-health-problems-facing-college-students/>