

Best of the NETWORKER

Feature Articles from Past Issues

The Northwest Youth Networker; newsletter of the [Northwest Network for Youth](#), edited by [Jerry Fest](#) of the [InterNetwork for Youth](#)

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Note: some links from older issues may be expired



It's a Big Month

November is both National Runaway Prevention Month AND Homeless Youth Awareness Month. You can click on the logos above for resources, and additional information/resources are listed below:

Visit the [National Runaway Switchboard](#) to get details on how you can participate in [National Runaway Prevention Month](#) and [Spirit of Youth](#), as well as the full report on the [2000-2008 Trend Analysis](#).

Think Out Loud on OPB ... next Tuesday 9:00 AM (repeats 9:00 PM): Homeless Youth. You can participate in the conversation here: <http://www.opb.org/thinkoutloud/shows/no-place-call-home-youth/>

The following is from Barbara Duffield, Policy Director for the [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](#) -- it is about the 2-part series from the New York Times, part of which was taped in Medford, OR:

I wanted to let everyone know of a unique opportunity to raise awareness about runaway and unaccompanied youth. As you may have seen, the New York Times ran a major, front-page series on runaway youth on Monday and Tuesday of last week. The links to the series are included below.

The New York Times is making a DVD of the videos, and hard copies of the articles, available FOR FREE to those who wish to use the materials for education and professional development. The only stipulation is that the materials cannot be edited or altered in any way.

The stories and videos are powerful and lend an urgency to the need for community, state, and national action. While the entire series is relevant to educators, the first story's video, in particular, features a teen who is struggling to stay in school, despite horrific living conditions as an unaccompanied homeless youth.

November is National Runaway Prevention Month, so you may wish to use these materials as part of broader community efforts. More information on NRPM is available at: <http://www.1800runaway.org/rpm/rpm.html>

To receive the package from the NYT, please email me at bduffield@naehcy.org and I will forward your request to the reporter. Please include your mailing address. In addition, the NYT simply asks interested parties to write

up a couple sentences, concretely stating how you will use the materials, and with which audiences. Please also include this information in your email.

Thanks, and I look forward to seeing many of you in Denver next weekend!

Barbara

LINKS TO NYT SERIES ON RUNAWAYS:

Recession Drives Surge in Youth Runaways <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/26/us/26runaway.html>

For Runaways, S Buys Survival <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/27/us/27runaways.html>



An Article I don't Want to Write

By Jerry Fest

Uh oh! Jerry's on a soapbox again. Well, I'd rather stand on a soapbox than write an article that I fear I may someday be unable to avoid.

The Northwest Network is proud to be the resource for keeping regional networking alive in support of all the fine work being done for young people in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. But the truth is that we need *your* support to continue, and without such support, I may someday find myself writing a "farewell" article.

We know that you support the advocacy and connectivity that is fostered by being part of a regional network. By linking providers and services for youth in need, the mutual support and synergy created has far reaching benefits. We continue to receive accolades for our weekly newsletter, just one of the membership benefits that include a state focused website and continued reports of research, professional publications, and position papers. We are exploring localized and online training events as resources allow. We believe, as you do, that networking is essential to provide services and supports during these difficult times.

And we know that times *are* difficult, professionally and financially. But without your support we may soon be unable to *offer* support. So we are humbly requesting that you join or renew your Network membership for 2010. We continue to offer reduced dues for agencies hard hit financially if you are unable to afford the full renewal fee ... and inexpensive individual memberships are always welcome for those unaffiliated with an agency, or those whose agency budget won't allow. We are not asking for much, but we are asking you to give what you can in support of *your* network.

We look forward to your renewal (or "newal") and continued support for the Northwest Network, so that we may continue to represent and support *you*. In these difficult times we need each other more than ever. Thank you.

For membership information, please contact [Gary Hammons](#).



From our Oregon State Coordinator: [Galen Phipps](#)

OREGON NETWORK FOR YOUTH

Operation Board Meeting Summary

October 27, 2009

The meeting had 6 members in attendance representing Northwest Human Services, Salem; Malheur County Commission on Children and Families, Ontario; Don Schweitzer, Pacific University; Oregon Commission on Children and Families, Salem; Gary Hammons, Northwest Network for Youth; and Galen Phipps, ONFY Director. The group had further discussions of brining the Oregon Homeless and Runaway Youth Coalition

become part of the Oregon Network for Youth. For a lack of a quorum, an email vote will be taken from the ONFY Board members. The Operating Rules of ONFY were also discussed and will also be included in the email vote of Board members. Once this vote is completed additional state partners can be nominated to become Operation Board members.

The group discussed the following:

- Gary Fink from Northwest Human Services will work with Martin Rafferty to write the copy for the ONFY.org website.
- A list of member benefits include:
 - a. Weekly Newsletter
 - b. Name Recognition of Website
 - c. Access to Training Resources
 - d. Statewide Advocacy
 - e. Certificate of Membership

OREGON HOMELESS AND RUNAWAY YOUTH COALITION

Monthly Meeting Summary

October 27, 2009

The meeting had 8 members in attendance, Ann Craig, Jackson Street Shelter Inc – Corvallis, Andrea Logan, Boys and Girls Aid – Washington County, Ally Jamieson, Positive Human Development - Portland, Martin Rafferty, Looking Glass – Eugene, Kevin Donegan, Janus Youth Programs and the Portland Homeless Youth Continuum, Jean Lasater, Oregon Commission on Children and Families, Galen Phipps – Chair. The Coalition through funding from the Northwest Network and Looking Glass can continue on a paid basis until April 2010. Beyond that the Coalition through the Oregon Network for Youth can continue on a dues paying basis. It is vitally important that membership dues and donations be solicited to continue our state advocacy efforts on behalf of homeless and runaway youth.

A proposal was put forward to have the Oregon Homeless and Runaway Youth Coalition come under the non-profit umbrella of the Oregon Network for Youth. A ballot describing a brief history of the issue and a rationale will be sent to the coalition membership to authorize this change.

The strategic plan draft was discussed. It outlines the strategic goals for the coming two years with tasks, timelines, and person taking the lead for our advocacy efforts in Oregon. Some comments were made that resulted in a few changes and the draft was finalized.

Continuing a Theme

As stated in last week's issue, November is both National Runaway Prevention Month AND Homeless Youth Awareness Month. This week the networker continues to recognize with more related stories:

From the [National Network for Youth](#):

We're excited to announce that Jermaine Crawford, known best for his portrayal of Dukie Weems on 'The Wire', has put together a fantastic amount of star power to promote awareness of homeless teens. Jermaine had a moral awakening after portraying a runaway teen on the hit TV show and realizing that many of the extras he worked alongside were actual runaways, people his age who didn't seem any different or less vital than he is.

At a time of year when the streets are getting cold and darkness falls early we are thinking about the plight of young people on the streets more than ever, and we know you are too. We hope you'll join us in sharing this video as widely as possible. Together we can help raise awareness about the invisible generation and work on bringing them back from the brink of flat lining.

Jermaine's group is raising money to increase awareness. The funds he raises currently go to the National Network for Youth to assist in Youth Advocacy. He is interested in using his exposure among young people to raise money for homeless kids all up and down the chain of service and we hope you'll be part of this exciting new campaign.

Watch the video here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptmzcHY_3_M

Or visit the [CODE BLUE CAMPAIGN](http://www.codebluecampaign.org) website: <http://www.codebluecampaign.org>

From Washington State Coordinator: [Laura Hamilton](#):

Our Youth are Talking. Are you Listening?

Kid's Futures is proud to announce the world premiere of four youth-created short films at the Voices of Youth Film Festival this November 18th, from 6:30-8:30pm. Voices of Youth showcases films created by local middle and high school students on topics ranging from school dropout rates to self image.

In the words of one of our young directors "We are really proud of our movie, we really put a lot of passion in to our film. I don't think many adults consider what's really on our minds, but we are a big part of this county."

Hosted by Snohomish County Sheriff John Lovick, the Voices of Youth Film Festival promises to provide an insightful examination of the issues local youth most want you to know about. "Everybody knows our youth have something to say," Sheriff Lovick said, "but when was the last time we really took the time to listen?"

For 16 years "Kids' Futures " has been providing the young people of Snohomish County a forum to express their concerns and communicate the complex issues they face to the community. This is the second year the forum will be held as a film festival.

Kid's Futures invite you to join our young people and host, Sheriff John Lovick, to enjoy the films they have created, ask them questions and learn about the role you can play in an engaged and invigorated community.

Admission is free, but space is limited. Please RSVP so we can reserve your seat at this distinctive and poignant event.

Contact Chris Jury at cjury@snoconetwork.org or 425-252-2668 to make your reservation or to learn more about the Voices of Youth Film Festival at the Snohomish County PUD Auditorium this November 18th.

From [Janus Youth Program's Steve Olson](#):

Steve passed along a series of emails to me that demonstrated the promise and power of networking. Without violating anyone's confidentiality, a provider became aware of a homeless youth who had run to another city 2,000 miles away and now wanted to return home. That provider put out an email plea and, *within 15 minutes*, a local provider was in contact with the youth and was preparing to pick him up, provide shelter, and arrange for transportation home. So often we see evidence of how systems fail young people. In this case we see evidence of how a system can work. Special 'Networker' thanks to all who were involved!



Therapeutic Bubbology

By Jerry Fest

Whether I'm doing outreach/streetwork, counseling in an office setting, or simply sitting in traffic in my car, it is a rare moment indeed that I am without a supply of bubbles. That's right -- bubbles, the liquid soap-like kind that you blow through a wand. They've been standard equipment in every program that I've run since I discovered their therapeutic qualities.

Just what qualities might those be, you ask? Well, for one thing -- they're stress-relieving. Blowing bubbles has an amazing calming effect that can really help put things into perspective. Former smokers have pointed out that watching the bubbles is quite similar to the thought-producing effects they used to get from watching the smoke curl off of their cigarettes. And in terms of making contact with young people, sit on a street corner blowing bubbles and it's nearly guaranteed that they'll make contact with you! That's why bubbles always have a place in my outreach/streetwork packs. Some of the best conversations I've had with youth -- both on the streets and in my office -- have been over a jar of bubbles.

But I'm not kidding when I say they can be used therapeutically. If you're dealing with someone who is extremely upset -- reach for the bubbles. It seems to be an almost unconscious human response to blow bubbles if they are available. Once a person starts blowing bubbles they are, by the very act, taking deep breaths and exhaling slowly. Isn't this exactly what we are taught to do in crisis intervention to help someone calm down? Yet how successful are you telling someone who is upset to take deep, regular breaths? Often, our instructions simply upset them more. But hand them a jar of bubbles and they begin to follow those instructions without being instructed. What more could you ask for?

Over the years I've become quite a connoisseur of bubbles, so I'll leave you with some tips to help get you started.

What kind of bubbles should you use? The short answer is that any kind will do, but there is a brand that I recommend over others. That brand is Pustefix - made in Germany but easily available in better toy stores everywhere. They are more expensive than other brands, but the bubbles are more colorful, lighter, and longer lasting than any other brand I've tried. These qualities are especially important if you're going to be using them outdoors. You can visit the Pustefix web site with the following link: <http://www.pustefix.de/>

You can get other types of bubbles super cheap - the cheapest being those that you make yourself out of dish soap. 1 part Joy or Dawn to 8 parts water works really well! For stronger, longer-lasting bubbles, add 1 tablespoon of glycerin, available in any drugstore. Bubble solution will improve with age, so allow the mixture to sit in an open container for a day or so before use. But be careful about trying to save a few cents. Bubbles that don't last, or leave a wet, soapy mess in your lap, may be stress-inducing as opposed to stress relieving.

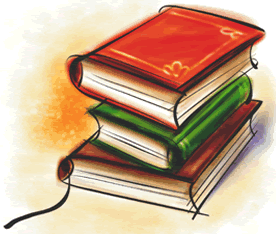
Always buy containers that have the wand attached to the cap. Having to fish for the wand with your finger is messy and unpleasant. The best size container is the 2 ounce size -- large enough for a good supply of bubble mix, small enough to be easily carried -- and easily given away without too great of a loss. I like to keep a nice supply of 2-ounce containers handy (which I sometimes put my own labels on -- it makes a great business card), and a bulk container of Pustefix to refill them.

Also strongly recommended are the ['Little Kids' brand no-spill bubble tumblers](#). They come in both large and mini sizes. I like to keep a large one on my desk and a mini in my car. You can use the wand without opening the top, and they really don't spill. I've turned mine upside-down without incident!

So, enjoy your bubbles. And remember -- they're not just for playtime anymore.

Gary's Recent Readings

By Gary Hammons



JUMP POINT by Tom Hayes McGraw – Hill 2008

While this book is only available via retail, it should be in the professional library of every agency and a must read for all who are pondering the business model of the future and the impact of the “Net”. The first billion connectors to the internet in 1997 were followed by the second billion in 2007. It will take only to 2011 for the third billion to connect. More than sheer numbers, the latter will represent many people in the third world or emerging economies.

The impact of this sea change will be profound and far reaching. It will cause a complete reversal of marketing. The consumer will have the power and vendors will no longer dictate products and services. This is already happening in media, particularly the music industry. Other developments will include demand for much more open-source material and discontent with current practices (already prevalent among 15 – 24 year olds).

Several social and behavioral changes will accelerate. With an average of 4,000 messages reaching us each day, our attention spans have shrunk to 15 minutes in self-defense. Socially, internet communities are rapidly developing into “nodes” via Facebook and other services. There will be a rapid expansion of this phenomenon, particularly in areas such as consumer unions. These will form the new marketplace.

Concepts such as mashups, attention theft, and trust as the new money dynamics, are introduced and explained, along with numerous future oriented concepts. The author has a blog, tombom.com, that further extends these concepts. This was/is altogether a great read.



It's Thanksgiving ... well, the day after Thanksgiving, anyway ...so we're not going to offer you any heavy food for thought to sit on top of all that heavy food for your belly that you probably had last night. Instead, we're just going to offer thanks to all of you. Each of you, in your own way, works to make this a better world for young people, and for that, all of us at the Northwest Network for Youth is truly grateful.

In addition to our thanks, we'll give you at a glimpse of how young people used to celebrate Thanksgiving. Did you know that about 100 years ago children had their own cultural tradition, one that was quickly snuffed out by disapproving adults? You do now ...

"Thanksgiving [Newspaper Article]," in Children and Youth in History, Item #336, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/primary-sources/336>

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!