

Ways to Connect with Children and Youth

“A great city for youth is one that provides equal opportunities for each child to reach their full potential. One of the things that we have to work on to make that possible is our community conscience. A critical role for churches to play in this goal is not to allow people to tell themselves that the problems and the disparities do not exist.”

~ Sharon Moore, Big Brothers Big Sisters East Tennessee

Make a Difference Through Prayer

- Praise God for the precious gift of children in our communities — each a unique bearer of God's image with wonderful potential.
- Pray that staff and volunteers serving at-risk youth would receive renewed patience, strength, hope and love each day, despite the stresses and heartache that often come with their ministry.
- Pray for collaboration and commitment among programs serving children and youth, and for sustained funding for critical services through turbulent economic times.
- Pray that children will be protected from abuse, that violence against children would be brought into the light and stopped, and that affected children and their families would find healing through the love and grace of God.
- Pray that children in the child welfare system will find safety and belonging in the embrace of a loving family, and that older youth will be supported as they develop the skills and maturity to succeed as adults.
- Pray for children in the juvenile justice system to get the help they need to make more positive choices, and to be connected with people who believe in them and love them unconditionally.
- Many students have committed to remain abstinent until marriage. Pray that they will be able to resist peer pressure and remain pure despite our culture's standards.
- Pray that youth may find support and guidance to lead them down a healthy path as they face critical life choices.
- Pray for youth who are in such distress that they use drugs and alcohol to dull the pain, develop eating disorders, cut themselves, or even contemplate suicide.
- Pray for children in hospitals with serious injuries or illnesses, and for parents who agonize to see them in pain.
- Pray for fathers who have been estranged from their children – that they would discover the love, courage and emotional resources to be restored as responsible fathers.
- Pray that the Lord of the harvest will call more laborers to devote their lives to reaching at-risk children and youth in Knoxville, until there is a caring Christian adult walking alongside every child.
- Thank God for all those who are sharing God's love with children and youth and teaching them about Jesus, their friend and Savior. May young believers be empowered to shine for Jesus and share God's love at their schools and in their neighborhoods.

Make a Difference Through Your Life

- Child abuse affects children from all socio-economic, racial, and religious groups. Most abusers are people who are known to the family, so educate children in your life about their right not to be abused physically or sexually, and take children seriously when they say they have been abused. If you suspect that a child is being abused, call 1-877-237-0004 (the Central Intake Child Abuse Hotline) to file a report. We are all responsible for protecting the children in our community.
- If you suspect a child may be the victim of child pornography, contact the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Unit of the Knoxville Police Department at 215-7000 or <http://www.ncmec.org>.
- If there is a kid in your neighborhood, church or school who has behavioral problems, it may indicate a cry for help. Is he or she a "bad kid" – or rather, a child suffering from problems with family, abuse, or physical or mental health? Check into the resources in this guidebook that can address these issues, and ask God how you can personally show this child the love of Christ. "Problem kids" hunger for appreciation, unconditional love, and commitment just as all children do.
- Open your home to children in the neighborhood who are home alone until their parents return from work – provide a snack, a quiet space for homework, supervised play and a caring Christian witness (with their parents' permission).
- Explore other opportunities for outreach to the youth in your neighborhood – e.g., a backyard Vacation Bible School, flag football tournament, or teen movie and game night.
- Help your children learn compassion by making them aware of the needs of other children in their own city as well as around the world. Encourage your children to come up with their own ideas for sharing God's love in practical ways with other children.
- Men: Develop a connection with a child growing up without a father in the home. You can't replace their dad, but as a positive male role model, you can provide invaluable affirmation and guidance.

Make a Difference Through Your Church

Care for children in and through the church:

- Discover and nurture people in your church who have a special heart for children. Train and support members who can befriend, mentor and advocate for at-risk youth: in the foster care system, in juvenile courts, in alternative schools and truancy programs, in homeless shelters and runaway shelters. Christ wants to use His body, the church, to bring His blessing to children in these dark and difficult contexts.
- Start an intercessory team to pray for specific children, and for general concerns affecting children. Connect with school guidance counselors, teachers, social workers, child advocates, juvenile court staff and others who work with youth, and ask how you can be praying for them and the children they serve.
- Provide encouragement and transportation for children whose parents do not attend

church to become a part of your congregation. Match each kid with a "buddy" in the congregation who makes them feel welcome and gives them attention during church services.

- Make an effort to reach out and include youth on the fringes of the congregation who are disruptive or disconnected, who don't have friends and don't fit in. A message that "You matter to the church, you belong" can make the difference in keeping a troubled youth connected to the church body and to God through adolescence and into adulthood.
- Think about the facilities in your church -- gym, playground, children's play room, library -- that could be used to connect with unchurched youth in the community during the week.
- Open the church as a host to community nonprofits that serve youth: e.g., before- or after-school programs, summer day camp, arts ministries, and sports programs.
- Form a study group in the church to foster awareness of youth-related issues, and learn how to become advocates for public policies (local and national) that benefit youth.
- Don't just minister to youth – engage youth in ministry! Work with the youth in your church to discover their gifts and calling to be salt and light in Knoxville. Invite unchurched youth in the community to participate in kid-friendly community service projects. Engaging youth in service affirms their significance, builds relationships, develops their leadership skills, softens their heart toward people, and opens doors for God to move in their life.

Reach out to children and youth in the community:

- Go out to connect with kids in the community where they are – in school, at the skate park, in the mall or on the street corner. Start by just being prayerfully present, listening, and enjoying the company of youth. Look for opportunities to touch the lives of youth in ways that matter most to them.
- Create opportunities for intergenerational interactions. For example, start a "grandparents' club" to pair lonely seniors with children with lots of love to share. Organize an apprenticeship program to match youth with an older adult who can teach a skill they want to learn, e.g., carpentry, auto or bike repair, cooking, knitting or other crafts. (See the chapter on the elderly for more ideas on intergenerational ministry.)
- Reach out to children in homeless shelters. Provide tutoring and enrichment activities so they can keep up with their peers in school. Find ways to make them feel valued and loved -- celebrate birthdays, make personalized comforters, give them their own children's Bible, provide haircuts and new clothes. (See the chapter on homelessness for more suggestions.)
- See the list of suggestions in the chapter on Foster Care and Adoption for serving children in foster homes and group homes. Develop ministries that strengthen families so children do not have to experience the trauma of being removed from their home.
- Help kids get a healthy start on life by supporting prenatal care and early childhood development programs. Offer programs that address children's health and nutrition

needs, and that promote habits of healthy diet and exercise.

- Make sure that service ministries involving children do not undermine parents' dignity and responsibility. For example, when churches give holiday gifts to children in poverty, this can make parents feel like failures for being unable to provide for their children themselves. Instead, consider opening a "Christmas shop" in the church where parents can purchase donated new items for a fraction of their price, and give the gifts to their children themselves. For more information, contact Daniel Watson, who started a Christmas shop at West Towne Christian Church (300-6806, daniel@therestorationhouse.net).
- If your church ministers with children who are from a different cultural, racial or economic background, it is wise to provide volunteers with cross-cultural training so that they can more effectively communicate and connect with the children. For training, contact Lennisa Mostella, Leadership and Multicultural Development Facilitator, IM Synergy Business Consultants, 974-0157, lmostella@hotmail.com.
- Organize a Youth Council of young people in your neighborhood who can advise the church on issues concerning youth, provide a sounding board for bridging the communication gap between youth and adults, and give input into the design of ministries to serve youth. For example, engage this youth advisory board in planning a safe, positive place for young people in the community to hang out, such as a "teen lounge," basketball court, or new playground.

Network with youth-serving organizations and coalitions:

- Participate in a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Sunday, when churches can distribute information about becoming a CASA volunteer and take a special offering (preferably during National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April). Call 329-3399 or visit <http://www.casaofeasttn.org> for more information.
- Become a Restorative Justice site, where non-violent juvenile offenders will come out and do community service once a month (call Compassion Coalition, 251-1591 x 1 to learn more about this opportunity).
- Take a stand to promote abstinence. Host a Silver Ring Thing Abstinence Program (call the Knoxville Leadership Foundation, 524-2774 for more information). The JUSTWAIT Community Program (525-4673) offers one-hour presentations on abstinence-based sex education that can be geared toward youth groups. Staff members are also available to speak to congregations, Sunday School classes, and small groups.
- Join the Interfaith Coalition Against Child Abuse and Neglect, which offers a program and materials for use by members of the faith community who want to help abused and neglected children (329-3399, <http://www.casaofeasttn.org>).
- Partner with a public school. Participate in Kids Hope USA (616-546-3580, www.kidshopeusa.org), a church-based mentoring program that matches one church member with one at-risk child for one hour every week at a local elementary school. Another option is to participate in the Knox County School's Partners in Education program (594-1909, bacons@k12tn.net, www.pie.knoxschools.org).

Make a Difference as a Volunteer

Connect with the following organizations that serve children and youth:

Amachi (Knoxville Leadership Foundation): 524-2774, <http://www.klf.org>

Helps children of incarcerated parents achieve their highest potential by engaging them in consistent and committed mentoring relationships with people of faith. Training is provided.

- Have a positive influence on the life of a child by becoming a mentor to one of over 800 children in Knox County who have a parent incarcerated in state or federal prison.
- Commit to spending an hour together with your child each week. Read together, help with homework, go to the park or the museum, play sports or just hang out. Be an encouraging, consistent presence.
- Families: While mentoring is primarily one-on-one time, children can have a fun and meaningful experience by interacting with the mentor's whole family.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Tennessee: 523-2179, <http://www.bbbstnvalley.org>

Serves children in need of a positive connection with a caring adult through three mentoring programs: community-based, school-based, and Amachi. "Bigs" spend regular time with "Littles" having fun together, listening, encouraging positive choices and educational success, and developing lasting friendships. Training is provided.

- Become a Big Brother/Big Sister! "Bigs" are matched with a child in the community, and commit to meet together for at least six hours per month. Make a lasting difference in a child's life while sharing an activity you both enjoy.
- Become a school-based Big and visit with a Little Brother/Sister at their school for a half hour or more each week. Work on homework, read together, play on the playground or share lunch in the cafeteria.
- Through Amachi, faith-based organizations provide mentors for children with an incarcerated parent.

Boys & Girls Clubs: 544-3825, <http://www.bgctnv.org>

Promotes the educational, vocational and character development of youth ages 5-17 in a safe, caring environment after school and all day during summer months.

- Help with special events, such as the Duck Race, Angel Tree, and Golf Tournaments.
- Connect with youth through coaching, club events, games, arts & crafts or other activities.
- Work with kids on reading, tutor them in school subjects or teach computer skills.

Childhelp Children's Advocacy Center of East Tennessee: 637-1753,

<http://www.childhelp.org/regional/Tennessee>

A one-stop-shop bringing together personnel specializing in medical treatment, mental

health care, law enforcement and child protective services to investigate suspected child sexual abuse cases in a child-friendly environment.

- Befriend the children who visit the center for an interview, and serve as a child advocate.
- Join the Board of Directors to give leadership and support.
- Families: Supply the center with small toys, juice and snacks, or clothing donations.

Court Appointed Special Advocates of East Tennessee (CASA): 329-3399,

<http://www.casaofeasttn.org>

Provides trained citizen advocates to make sure that neglected and abused children in the child welfare system have the attention and services they need, and are placed in a safe and permanent home in a timely manner.

- Provide administrative assistance, and recruit additional volunteers.
- Become a child advocate and give an abused or neglected child a voice: Conduct home visits, gather information from social service providers, attend DCS meetings and court proceedings related to the child, and make recommendations to the court regarding the child's best interest. Requires 36 hours of training.

Florence Crittendon Agency: 602-2021, <http://www.fcaknox.org>

Provides specialized programs for female youth in crisis: placement in foster care due to abuse and/or neglect, expulsion from public school, or an unexpected pregnancy that requires learning how to parent while attending high school.

- Positive female role models wanted! Mature Christian women can have an influence on female youth as mentors or tutors.
- Help with special events or become a member of the board or development council.
- Families and groups: Help with landscaping and maintenance work on the 26-acre campus.

Helen Ross McNabb Center: 637-9711, <http://www.mcnabbcenter.org>

A multi-service regional agency that provides evaluation and treatment services for children with mental illness, emotional disorders, learning disabilities, substance abuse, and behavioral challenges, with an emphasis on family involvement.

- Work as a program assistant in the early childhood programs.
- Groups: assist with special projects such as school supply drives, special occasion parties, and holiday events such as a Christmas for the Children program.
- Families: Sponsor gifts for children in the Christmas program.

Hope Resource Center: 525-4673, <http://www.hoperc.org>

Presents "Justwait," an abstinence-based sex education program to middle and high

school students. Offers health, hope and healing to youth who find themselves in difficult situations related to sexual activity. Provides free STD and pregnancy testing, first-trimester ultrasounds, and parenting and life-skills classes, through three pregnancy centers in the Knox/Loudon area. Training is provided for all opportunities listed.

- Be a greeter or counselor for four hours per week at any of the pregnancy centers.
- Facilitate a weekly class that equips young people facing an unplanned pregnancy to become good parents.
- Mentor a pregnant youth one-on-one for an hour each week.
- Serve as a church liaison to keep congregations aware of special events.
- Medical professionals: Volunteer to perform pregnancy tests and/or ultrasounds.

JustLead (Emerald Youth Foundation): 637-3227, <http://www.justlead.org>

Serves urban youth through a network of city churches that implement a comprehensive development program (faith, academics, relationships, and health). Helps children and teenagers have the best opportunity to grow up loving Christ and making contributions as leaders in their homes, schools and neighborhoods.

- Connect with kids by facilitating small group time or visiting their school during lunch.
- Provide homework help and tutoring.
- Participate in sports and enrichment activities: Coach or referee sports teams, supervise games and free play, chaperone field trips, or lead music and art activities.
- Nurture faith development in young people by helping with Bible study and worship.
- Families or groups: Serve a snack or cook a meal for children in the program.

Kids on the Block (Child & Family Tennessee): 524-7483, <http://www.child-family.org>

A prevention program that uses child-sized puppets to teach children in a non-threatening, entertaining way about topics like child abuse, violence, substance abuse, mental health and personal safety.

- Distribute informational literature and blue ribbons during the National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.
- Become a puppeteer! Bring shows to life for elementary age children in public schools and other neighborhood settings.
- Families with older children: Learn the scripts and perform together.
- Invite Kids on the Block to perform at your church, children's ministry, daycare, or other organization that reaches children.

Knoxville Inner City Kids Outreach (KICKO): 523-4956, <http://www.kicko.org>

Aims to help urban children experience the love of God, by hosting nine "Sunday" Schools every week for over 700 urban kids, focusing on evangelism and youth

discipleship.

- Mature adults are needed to build relationships with children in the youth development program by imparting wisdom and Christian values on a weekly basis.
- Help with games, teach Bible lessons, or simply hang out with the kids.
- Families: KICKO offers a great opportunity for shared family ministry – parents can help out with Sunday School activities, and kids can join in the fun and worship while making new friends!

Pacesetters Youth and Family Outreach: 454-4230, lmthis7@comcast.net

Provides academic enrichment activities, encourages parent involvement, and seeks to foster long term relationships between caring Christian adults and urban youth in the Five Points neighborhood. Provides a free afterschool program and summer camp for youth, and a range of support services for families.

- Serve as a tutor and mentor to youth in the afterschool and summer program.
- Give presentations about the ministry at churches, to raise support and volunteers.
- Participate in a Wednesday night Bible study for community residents.
- Families: Provide snacks for children in the academic programs.

Pregnancy Help Center (Catholic Charities): 212-4942, <http://www.ccetn.org>

Helps women facing an unexpected pregnancy, with services including a 24-hour Helpline, adoption services, post-abortion healing, male mentoring, pregnancy testing, and free maternity clothes and baby items.

- Receive and organize donations.
- Offer friendship and emotional support as a counselor.

Project GRAD: 525-4030, <http://www.projectgradknoxville.org>

Partners with 14 schools in the heart of Knoxville to provide support in literacy, math, classroom management, and social services. Encourages youth to graduate from high school and to succeed in college or vocational school.

- Speak at College & Career Days or at the Annual Parent Conference, or assist with special events such as the Walk for Success.
- Serve as a tutor, mentor, or a small group facilitator.
- Students under 18: You can become a peer mentor/tutor, if you meet certain requirements and are supervised by a staff member.
- Families or groups: Donate school supplies, holiday gifts, clothing, or incentive items to reward good behavior and educational achievements.

Restorative Justice: 251-1591, <http://www.compassioncoalition.org>

Gives juvenile offenders the opportunity to complete court-ordered community service

alongside supportive Christians, through a collaboration of Compassion Coalition partner churches, Knox County Juvenile Court, the District Attorney's office, and local non-profits.

- Become a Volunteer Site Coordinator, which means being a supervisor, role model, and mentor for the youth assigned to work at your site.
- Groups: Volunteer together at Restorative Justice community service sites and get to know the youth.
- Families: Serving together as a family can make a significant impression on troubled youth who may not have grown up with healthy family dynamics.

The Royal Chaplain Corps: 455-7769, <http://www.royalchaplaincorps.com>

Offers a "ministry of presence" in support of Knox County juvenile court staff and adjudicated youth. Provides mentoring to youth in the juvenile justice system.

- Mentor troubled youth, offering spiritual guidance, job shadowing and wise counsel. Work with their parole officers to help them form a plan for achieving educational and life goals.
- Maintain a prayerful, compassionate "ministry of presence" at the juvenile court, being available to families, offenders, attorneys and court staff for prayer or simply a listening ear.

Runaway Shelter and Transitional Living (Child & Family Tennessee): 523-2689, <http://www.child-family.org>

Provides a safety net of runaway prevention, crisis intervention, safe shelter, housing, and counseling services for runaway and homeless teenagers and young adults. Includes a Street Art outreach for homeless kids.

- Respond to youth in crisis who are calling to request help, by talking with the youth and assessing the situation. A 6-hour training is required.
- Committed, positive adults are needed to spend time with teenagers in the emergency shelter for their 3-4 day stay. Make a longer-term commitment as a surrogate family to a youth, and offer guidance and support for older teenagers as they transition into adulthood.
- Participate on the advisory council to provide guidance on programs and services.
- Families: Plan events for teens and young adults in the program such as hosting a game night, pizza party, or cooking a meal together.

SOAR Youth Ministries: 544-5881, www.soaruponwings.org

Magnifies the potential of urban youth in the Lonsdale community and develops future community leaders, by sharing the love of Jesus Christ and encouraging youth to serve others. Establishes long-term relationships with youth that facilitate spiritual and educational maturity through an after-school program, Summer Academy, sports

program and other activities.

- Help with classrooms, electives, field trips, Bible study, and meal preparation.
- Dedicate time and attention to children, encouraging them to reach for a hopeful future.
- Families: Collect toys, toiletries, disposable cameras and other items for the SOAR Store, where children can earn rewards for positive participation, educational achievement or service activities.

Teen Challenge: 546-8933, <http://www.tcofetn.org>

Offers weekly substance abuse counseling and helps to place youth with addictions in long-term residential treatment for drugs and alcohol.

- Help out by answering phones, helping to write newsletters and appeals, or providing bookkeeping services.
- Connect with girls in the program – host a "beauty night," teach a craft, cook a meal together, teach scrapbooking ... be creative!
- Families or groups: Help with painting or lawn care.

Tribe One: 546-4131, <http://www.tribeone.com>

Prepares at-risk youth for life and work by focusing on spiritual formation, vocational discernment, and citizenship. Inspires transformation through weekly meetings and 6-month internships, and provides creative opportunities in a recording studio.

- Serve as a mentor for a young man in the work internship program.
- Business leaders: Help create jobs or launch new industries for entrepreneurial youth.

Urban Family Outreach (Washington Pike United Methodist Church):523-0603,

<http://www.urbanfamiluoutreach.org>

Serves children and families of the North Knoxville area through an elementary school after-school program, summer program and various enrichment activities. Reinforces academic skills, nurtures character, and teaches children the love of the Lord.

- Become a mentor, and spend one hour a week helping a child with schoolwork, encouraging their socialization skills, and letting them know someone cares about them.
- If you have a gift in the arts (e.g., music, drawing, painting), share it with eager students through the Arts Enrichment Program.
- Families: Help with Upward Basketball, and teach children the value of teamwork, sportsmanship, and faith.

Wesley House Community Center: 524-5494, <http://www.wesleyhouse.com>

A ministry in the Mechanicsville community that focuses on academics, personal development, community service, faith building and recreation. Offers a program called

TOOLS to help middle school children overcome overwhelming life situations.

- Tutor children during the afternoon academic time.
- Groups: Lead organized recreational activities or just hang out with youth.

Young Life: 525-7468, <http://sites.younglife.org/sites/Knoxville>

A non-denominational organization committed to introducing adolescents to Jesus Christ and helping them grow in their faith. Staff and leaders are caring adults who strive to build positive relationships with teenagers.

- Help to steer and finance the ministry by serving on the local committee.
- Offer financial assistance to help kids and leaders participate in the camping program.
- Become a leader of a high school group, which involves hanging out with them at school functions, attending weekly club meetings, and hosting a weekly Bible study.
- Families or groups: Help with mass mailings, or serve meals at leadership trainings and multicultural ministry events.

Youth Villages: 560-2550, <http://www.youthvillages.org>

Provides foster care and adoption services for special needs children with serious emotional and behavioral problems. Sponsors the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, a program that aims to provide a mentor to every child aged 9-17 in foster care in Tennessee (560-2595).

- Support a young person through an ongoing one-on-one relationship to build his or her self-esteem and motivation.
- Serve as a positive role model and friend; plan and participate in activities as you spend 4 to 6 hours per month together.

Additional organizations that serve children and youth:

Knoxville is filled with organizations that serve children and youth, including those listed below. Ask how you can support their work by:

- Providing administrative support.
- Helping with fundraising and collecting items for donation.
- Tutoring, mentoring or just being a special friend to a child.
- Participating in recreational, educational and arts enrichment activities for children.
- Becoming a community advocate for children.

Birth to Kindergarten Program: 539-3038, <http://birthtok.knoxschools.org>

A free, home based parent education and family support program designed to provide information, activities, and encouragement to families throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten.

Children's Advocacy Day (Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth):

tccy.info@tn.gov, <http://www.tennessee.gov/tccy/advlegis.shtml>

A free annual conference that provides a forum for advocates for children and families across the state to learn about trends, policies and opportunities related to child well-being. TCCY also issues a periodic newsletter, The Advocate, on timely children's issues.

DAD, Knoxville Chapter: 615-726-DADS, <http://www.tndads.org>

Educates about the importance of fatherhood, and advocates for changes in state laws to empower divorced fathers as equal partners in parenting, based on the principle that children need their dads. Information about the Knoxville chapter can be found at www.tndads.org/knoxville/index.html.

Divine Urban eXpressions Cultural Arts & Dance Productions: 455-1107

Provides quality dance programming in a variety of styles for youth and others from disadvantaged Knoxville communities. Nurtures God-given talents as a creative and spiritual outlet of self-expression, enabling participants to develop a positive self-image that will help empower them to rise above their circumstances and positively influence others.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes: 524-6076, <http://www.fcaknoxville.org>

Challenges coaches and athletes at all levels to use the powerful medium of athletics to impact the world for Jesus Christ. Equips and encourages youth to make a difference for Christ.

Haley Farm (Children's Defense Fund): 457-6466, <http://www.haleyfarm.org>

A retreat center (formerly owned by author Alex Haley) 30 miles from Knoxville, dedicated to training and renewing servant leaders who advocate for children and families. Sponsored by Children's Defense Fund, which seeks to ensure every child successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities, paying particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities.

Joy of Music School: 525-6806, www.joyofmusicschool.org

Provides quality music education programs for financially disadvantaged youth. Founded on the belief that all young people should have the opportunity to experience and create music regardless of income.

Kids Café (Second Harvest Food Bank):

http://www.secondharvestknox.org/programs/kids_cafe.html

Meets the needs of children left unsupervised after school with nothing to do, no one to watch them, and nothing to eat. As a collaboration between Second Harvest and after-school programs, Kids Café provides kids a safe place after school, with adult supervision, educational activities and nutritious hot meals. Kids help prepare their food while learning about proper nutrition.

Kidz Team: 368-0899, <http://www.kidzteam.org>

Offers a supportive team to the families of children with an illness requiring long term hospital stays, freeing families to focus on their child's needs by providing products ranging from laundry and personal hygiene supplies to gift cards at local restaurants.

Knox County Department of Children's Services: 329-8879, <http://www.state.tn.us/youth>

Supports family preservation, community involvement, education, and partnerships to help ensure safety, permanency and well-being for children. The Child Protective Services division works to protect children jeopardized by abuse or negligence.

Knoxville Youth Transition Council (Child and Family Tennessee): 521-5605 x 262

An alliance of parents, youth, professionals and organizations (private and public) creating a seamless web of services and supports for youth ages 16-21 with severe emotional disturbances, lack of family support, or other challenges, empowering them to make a successful transition to adulthood. Monthly networking and information sharing meetings are open to all.

Montgomery Village Baptist Center: 577-6244,

<http://www.kcab.org/ministries/montgomeryvillage.php>

Seeks to meet the spiritual, economic and educational needs of the youth of Montgomery Village and their families. Ministries for youth include a summer Vacation Bible School, weekly youth activities; and Camp BaYoCa.

Mount Olive Christian Academies (Mount Olive Baptist Church): 524-1601,

<http://www.mocaknoxville.org>

Affordable educational and enrichment programs for children, including musical training through the Mount Olive Music Academy and biblically-based early education through

the Garden of Discovery Learning Center.

Phillip Moore Outreach Center: 546-3759

Works to prevent inner-city violence through counseling and tutoring. Operates a "boot camp" for at-risk children with a mix of exercise, public service projects and fun activities, and with KPD officers as drill instructors.

SOZO Center: 603-2192, info@sozocenter.com, <http://www.sozocenter.com>

Provides psychological evaluations and biblically based therapy for children and youth covering a range of behavioral, emotional, relational and academic concerns. Offers seminars and community presentations on biblical parenting and strengthening the family.

UUNIK Academy: 414-4478, <http://www.uunik-academy.org>

A rites of passage program committed to the holistic development of African-American males ages 11-14. Helps youth become self-disciplined and responsible while battling for their hearts, minds, and spirits. Provides life, cultural, and academic skills for each student through weekly activities and programs.

Western Heights Baptist Center: 525-9068,

<http://www.kcab.org/ministries/westernheights.php>

Serves youth in the Western Heights community, through ministries including a weekly Bible Study and children's story time; summer Vacation Bible School; and Camp BaYoCa for youth.

Workforce Connections Youth Program (Community Action Committee): 544-5200,

<http://www.knoxcac.org>

Serves 14- and 15-year-old economically disadvantaged youth enrolled in school but at risk of dropping out. Services include case management, academic enrichment, work experience and internships that simulate the world of work.

YMCA OF East Tennessee Outreach Program: 637-9622, <http://www.ymcaknoxville.org>

Helps middle and high school students pursue educational and career goals. Programs include Y-CAP (Community Action Program) -- a ministry with high-risk children referred by Juvenile Court and DCS, offering tutoring, social activities and character development; Junior Y-Achievers – offers workshops, community service projects, fun

activities, and trips; and Y-Achievers -- works with high school students on college preparation and job readiness, and hosts an annual college tour during Spring Break.

YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association): 523-6126, <http://www.ywcaknox.com>

Programs for children and youth include summer day camp, after-school programs for at-risk middle-school students, and leadership training for teens. Places special emphasis on empowering young women by creating opportunities for personal growth, leadership development, physical health, and the elimination of racism.

Service programs for youth

Connect youth in the church and community with these opportunities for youth leadership development through service.

The Crew (Knoxville Leadership Foundation): 524-2774, <http://www.klf.org>

A group of students (grades 6-12) dedicated to influencing their peers to make good choices, particularly about sex, by providing abstinence education and training to put on high-tech, high-energy Silver Ring Thing presentations for fellow teenagers. Provides CREW members with mentoring through weekly meetings and regular community service projects.

Keep Knoxville Beautiful Youth Advisory Board: 521-6957,

<http://www.discoveret.org/keepknox/yab.htm>

High school representatives develop projects related to the mission of Keep Knoxville Beautiful. Helps develop leadership and decision-making skills, while pursuing a mission to "excite the youth of today about the earth of tomorrow."

Kiwanis Club of Knoxville: <http://www.knoxvillekiwanis.org>

Promotes community service to and by children, including Service Leadership programs for elementary through college students. Supports the Fresh Air Camp for children who have disabilities or are from low-income homes (www.freshaircamp.com).

Knoxville/Knox County Mayors' Youth Action Council: 588-5550,

<http://www.metrodrug.org/action/youthactioncouncil.aspx>

A partnership between the Metropolitan Drug Commission and the Knoxville/Knox County Mayors' Offices. A representative body of teens that works on mobilizing youth to have their voices heard, and engaging youth in service to the community. Hosts the

Knoxville Youth Summit, engages in advocacy work related to school funding and student representation, and supplies a "youth perspective" to local leaders.

PRIDE Teams (Metropolitan Drug Commission): 588-5550,

<http://www.metrodrug.org/action/pride.aspx>

High school team members reach out to their peers and community with a drug-free message, including presentations to fifth graders through the Reach Out Now campaign to develop the knowledge and skills to resist underage drinking; partnering with local businesses to encourage parents to prevent underage drinking; and a variety of community service projects.

Students Teaching and Respecting Sexuality (STARS) (Florence Crittenton Agency):

602-2021, <http://www.fcaknox.org>

High school students serve as peer educators for middle school students in hopes of preventing unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, presenting abstinence as a viable option. Recognizing the significant influence of an adolescent's peer group, STARS panelists dispel the myth that all teens are sexually active.

Y-Teens (YWCA): 523-6126, <http://www.ywcaknox.com>

School-based middle and high school community service clubs give young women the opportunity to develop into strong and confident leaders. Y-Teens participate in volunteer projects in their schools and communities, as well as fun social events.

Z Foundation: 712-3227, <http://www.z-foundation.org>

Promotes service opportunities that highlight the participation of families and young people, and encourages churches to develop family service projects.

How to Learn More

- Child & Family Tennessee (524-7483) provides training on the needs of teenagers in our community, and gives presentations to school or community groups.
- The Knoxville Youth Transition Council (521-5605 x 262) invites organizations and individuals with a concern for struggling youth ages 16-21 to learn from one another at monthly meetings.
- Childhelp (637-1753) offers presentations and trainings on the topic of child abuse.
- The Resource Linkage Coordinator for the Knox County Department of Children's Services (329-8879) offers a presentation on the work of this department.
- Project GRAD (525-4030) offers annual training to after-school providers on the program's specific components.

- See the maps and tables in the Demographics section of this guidebook and on the website for more detailed information about the status of children in the Knoxville area. Download the study guide for this chapter for a discussion of the implications of this information for community leaders, pastors, and others who seek the well-being of children.
- Many of the other areas covered in this guidebook relate in key ways to child well-being. See in particular the chapters on Families, Public Schools, Foster Care & Adoption, Poverty, and Low-Income Communities.