

The United Way of Greater Lorain County designed a Youth Leaders Council that provided students in their junior year of high school the opportunity to become involved in decision making, fund raising, philanthropy, team building and volunteering. Nine students representing eight schools participated in the inaugural program during the months of November 2006 to May 2007.



**The purpose of the program is to:**

- Develop an awareness of community needs among the youth in Lorain County
- Help the youth of our community become aware of their responsibilities and capabilities to help others
- Acquaint youth with the many services available to their families, friends and themselves
- Identify priority community needs from their youthful perspective
- Provide a challenging opportunity to instill a spirit of volunteerism in our future adult leaders
- Offer a lesson for life in giving back to the community through United Way contributions

Members of the Youth Leaders Council completed their volunteer service through a Day of Caring project at the Boys and Girls Club of Lorain County, Community Impact Organization and FAITH House. Members also participated in various fund raising activities in their particular high schools. Once the money was raised, United Way partner agencies were then invited to submit student funding applications for various projects at their particular agencies. The students then spent a Saturday afternoon reviewing proposals, making wise funding decisions and awarding limited dollars where they would make the greatest impact. In the midst of these activities, each of the students spent a day “shadowing” one of United Way Board Members at their particular place of business -- learning about their various roles in the business world and why they volunteer.

Projects funded include the purchase of childcare center learning aids, health care equipment, after school program materials, educational books for power hour enrichment program, success for youth activities, campus impact project, social skills and yoga, project rescue and disaster services.

The culmination of the Youth Leaders Council was an appreciation and recognition dinner where students were involved in a pinning ceremony. Guests at this distinguished dinner included the superintendents, principals and counselors/advisors of each of the schools represented, board members whom each of the students “shadowed,” agency representatives from each of the agencies who received grant awards and their parents. Each of the students spoke about their particular experience and how it has affected their lives.

United Way would like to thank Avon Lake, Brookside, Clearview, Elyria, Keystone, Lorain County JVS, Oberlin and Wellington high schools for allowing these students to participate in this program. Special thanks also to Larry Tracey, Founder of Youth4Youth, for spearheading this program.



**Pictured left to right –**

**Front row:** Maya Wyman, Stephanie Thomas, Brittany Mauer and Jennifer Chrosniak.

**Back row:** Chanelle Williams, Matt Weiland, Madeline Shanko and Jamie Hunt.  
Not pictured Brittany Dunn.