

# Alternatives

Alternatives For Girls: Helping girls and young women discover positive life choices

Summer 2002



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## Rise N'Shine with AFG's Summer Program

This has been a tragic year for the youth of metro Detroit. With fourteen youth homicides since the beginning of the year, many parents and young people are legitimately scared. While the metro Detroit area is undoubtedly safe for the overwhelming majority of young people, it is tragedies like these that remind us to be grateful for programs such as AFG's Rise N'Shine Summer Program.

Begun in 1992, Rise N'Shine is a six-week summer extravaganza for 80 girls ages 6-14. Run in conjunction with the Mercy Education Project (MEP) and sponsored in large part by the Detroit Free Press/

Skillman Foundation's Summer Dreams program, Rise N'Shine offers an array of activities to the girls during the hot, long summer days. In addition to program staff, Rise N'Shine is organized and led by eight youth leaders ages 15-17, who act as role models.

The primary goal of the program is to demonstrate to young girls that they can do anything – regardless of age, race, class, or gender. As a result, on any given day you may find girls in the program experiencing everything from ceramics to puppet-making to swimming; all of which are designed to foster well-rounded youth. Each week is jam-packed with excitement. Tuesdays are spent at the YMCA in southwest Detroit, not just playing basketball and

soccer, but also learning Latin dance. Wednesdays focus on age-appropriate skill training, in everything from the arts and sciences, to dramatic performance. Thursdays are for field trips; this year they visited the newly refurbished



Summer Program girls show off their jewelery from the arts & crafts class.

Detroit Science Center, Chandler Water Park, and Michigan Metro Girl Scout Councils Camp Innisfree Equestrian Camp. At Camp Innisfree every girl had the opportunity to ride a horse, learn archery, and swim.

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*"The girls still call each other names sometimes, but more now seem to be doing something about it, defending each other."*

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Later in the program, the girls will take boating, canoeing and paddleboating lessons.

One Rise N'Shine activity deserves a closer look. Each Wednesday morning, the youngest girls in the program participate in a nationally recognized program called "Don't Laugh at Me." Designed to foster tolerance, the

ultimate goal is to create caring, cooperative, and compassionate young people. Different exercises are used to encourage young people to express their feelings in a healthy manner, as well as to creatively resolve conflicts and appreciate differences among their peers. On a recent visit, girls practiced "mirroring", mimicking each other's body

movements, and talking about what made it easy or hard. The exercise is designed to help young people learn how to observe and really listen to their peers.

While it may sound utopian, it actually seems to work! According to 8 year old Aryn, she has learned to look at her ideas about teasing differently. "Something or somebody may be funny, but you don't have to laugh," she proclaimed, "there are other ways to solve problems."

Maureen Day, the class teacher and member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corp, has noticed real changes among the girls, "The girls still call each other names sometimes, but more now seem to be doing something about it, defending each other."

(continued on page 4)

# AFG News

## United Way Honors Amanda Good With Executive of the Year Award

Since 1976, United Way Community Services of Detroit has conducted an annual awards program to honor non-profit executives who have demonstrated excellence in serving our community with model leadership and integrity. This year, AFG's long-time Executive Director, Amanda L. Good, was awarded the Executive of the Year Award at their annual meeting on June

19, 2002. The United Way chose Amy from twenty nominees and evaluated them based on several different criteria, including: leadership, motivation of volunteers and staff, program development, fiscal ability, and public education and outreach. With the award, Amy joins the ranks of several notable non-profit community leaders and previous awardees, such as: the late

Fr. William Cunningham, Virgil H. Carr, Ismael Ahmed, Barbara A. Murray, and Mariam Nolan. In honoring her, the United Way acknowledged Amy's "desire to do something positive for her community which has blossomed into an institution that will impact generations to come." Congratulations Amy! And congratulations AFG!

## AFG "Steps to Success" with the Detroit Shock

Sometimes sports stars seem as distant from real-life hardships as the aliens in Men in Black II. Indeed, with multi-million dollar contracts and corporate logos splattered all over their wardrobes, it's hard to imagine Tiger Woods or Joey Harrington having any real problems. Recently, however, the WNBA's Detroit Shock's Steps for Success program provided a refreshing alternative to this stereotype about the lives of sports stars.

Held at the Detroit Police Athletic League's Boysville Center on July 29<sup>th</sup>, the Detroit Shock's Steps for Success program provided AFG clients with a

personal forum to share stories and insight about life's challenges. Kristin Bernert, vice president of Shock operations, stated the main goal of this program in a press release on the Detroit Shock website: "The players on this team realize that they are role models and take great pride in interacting with young women to help them face and overcome the obstacles that life sometimes puts before them. The Steps to Success program expresses our commitment to making a difference in our community."

AFG chose to participate in this program because of the parallel

missions of our respective organizations. Indeed, much like AFG has done for fifteen years, the Detroit Shock's Steps to Success program, which is unique among WNBA teams, hopes to encourage young women to make positive choices and adopt and incorporate a positive value system. Continuing a collaboration that began a few years back, AFG is truly grateful for this recent opportunity the Detroit Shock provided our clients. Together, we will continue to demonstrate to the young women of metro Detroit that, while success may be challenging, it is always within their reach.

## AFG Role Model, Marilyn Malin: 1942-2002

It is with both sadness and pride that Alternatives For Girls remembers the life of Marilyn (Scheid) Malin: business leader, dedicated volunteer, and recent recipient of AFG's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Role Model Award. Founder of Staff Solutions, a Detroit company that linked low-income people with jobs in the suburbs, she died early morning, May 20, 2002, from pancreatic cancer.

Marilyn Malin was a true role model for young women. In both her business pursuits and community involvement, Marilyn strove to help those with less

achieve so much more. Best known as the CEO and Owner of Staff Solutions, Inc., Marilyn also founded MDTS, Inc., a transportation service that transports employees to their job sites, and SSI Building Services, LLC. Together, Marilyn's companies made it possible for thousands of low-income people to find jobs and to succeed.

Though she had precious spare time, Marilyn was also a committed community volunteer. In addition to her involvement with Alternatives For Girls, Marilyn was a partner of Samuel

Gompers Elementary School, a religious education teacher, Healthy Living Lecturer, and Girl Scout Leader. Marilyn's passion for community service lives on. In lieu of flowers, her family requested that donations be sent to both Alternatives For Girls and Samuel Gompers Elementary School.

Alternatives For Girls is truly grateful to everyone who donated. We will all miss Marilyn. Thanks to your support, however, her legacy will live on.

## Spotlight on Capital Campaign Volunteer, John "Skip" Tatum

Alternatives For Girls is truly grateful for all of the wonderful volunteers who have helped make our historic Capital Campaign such a success! One of the many volunteers who has made this possible is John Tatum, or "Skip" as we like to call him. Introduced to AFG by long-time board member, Agnes Hagerty, Skip was Facilities Project Manager for Trinity Health for twenty years and brought project management, financial feasibility, and planning and development experience to AFG's capital campaign. Trinity Health generously donated a significant portion of Skip's time to AFG's Capital Campaign Project. As a member of the Facilities Committee, Skip helped AFG work on budget adjustments, plan reviews, and environmental issues—all of the nitty-gritty background work that takes the idea for a new building and turns it into a reality.

While the campaign is still not complete (call Nancy at 313-964-5450 to make your donation today), as you can see from the picture on this page, Skip's work has helped AFG's new home develop beautifully. Along



*As you can see from a recent picture our new home is not finished yet. Thanks to (Skip) and many others, however, AFG's new home is looking great as we head toward our grand opening near the end of this year. Stay tuned!*

the way, Skip has had a lot of fun. In fact, he seems to have caught the "AFG-Bug." In describing AFG staff, Skip said recently, "The people there are so easy to like, so genuinely interested in helping people. They're doing all of this on a shoe-string budget." Skip spoke further about AFG's mission: "(AFG) is a sterling example of what needs to be done; the many one-on-one relationships they help form become a turning point in

people's lives. AFG should be an example for others who are getting involved in the community."

AFG thinks Skip is an example as well; a true model for other volunteers. He saw a genuine need and he lent valuable skills to make a difference in our organization. Thank you, Skip. We're glad you're a part of the AFG family. We look forward to many more years of working with and learning from each other.

## AFG's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Role Model Dinner

### *Another Tremendous Success*

Thank you to the individuals, corporations and organizations whose generosity and commitment to AFG made this year's fundraiser another tremendous success. The Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and clients appreciate all of those who enable us to provide services to at-risk and homeless girls and young women.

#### **2002 AFG Role Models:**

Judge June Blackwell-Hatcher  
Marilyn Malin

#### Platinum Level Sponsors (\$10,000)

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EIDOS Group, Inc.  
– Creative Work  
Dennis Heitman of Heitman Garand  
– Photography  
Susan Faulkner – Photography

## "Rise N'Shine" *continued from page 1*



*Summer Program girls beat drums as they learn about the magic of rhythm.*

While these changes may seem subtle, they are seeds with incredible capacity to blossom. And with the recent tragic youth homicides in metro Detroit, a little lesson in conflict resolution may go a long way towards transforming our communities.

(We appreciate all of the support that has come through the Summer Dreams Program to help make this program possible. If you'd like more information about the "Don't Laugh at Me" program, please check out the website, <http://www.dontlaugh.org/>).

## Wish List - Summer 2002

- New socks, underwear, pajamas
- New towels and washcloths
- School supplies
- Backpacks
- African-American Hair Care items
- Pentium III Computers and/or laptops
- Hygiene items (full and personal size)
- Tickets to Tiger games, movie theaters, etc.

By donating any of these items, you help us save our general funds, allowing us to use them for direct services to our clients.

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Detroit, MI 48216**

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