

United Way Funds Boothbay Interact Club’s “Winteract”: Awareness and Dollars to be Raised for Fuel Fund

The Boothbay Interact Club’s Winteract project, which raises awareness and money for emergency fuel assistance, has been selected to receive a competitive grant from United Way of Mid Coast Maine. The January community-wide event consists of various outdoor family events such as snow-shoe racing, a snow-man building contest, lots of sledding, and roasting of marshmallows. In 2009, the group raised over \$1,000 for the Boothbay Region Community Resources Fuel Fund, to which United Way also contributed funds separately. Winteract also increased awareness of the need for emergency fuel assistance, and the Interact Club hopes to expand this year to include information on weatherizing homes.

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- Dennis Unger of the University College at Bath/Brunswick.

“Youth in the region are looking for the chance to participate in their community in a meaningful and hands on way. Winteract allows them to have fun while raising awareness of a critical need: keeping friends and neighbors warm during the harsh Maine winter,” said Eden McDaniel, President of the Boothbay Interact Club.

United Way’s Youth & Lifelong Learning Council is funding three projects which demonstrate the integration of Youth Asset Development principles with community efforts to address energy efficiency and/or winter preparedness. The other youth projects selected in this competitive grants process are in Waldoboro and Bowdoin.

“The aim of this initiative is to promote opportunities for youth to engage and serve others while implementing winter preparedness strategies in their home communities,” said United Way Board member Dennis Unger of the University College at Bath/Brunswick. “United Way wants to encourage communities to help build positive Developmental Assets among youth.”

The Developmental Assets are 40 common sense, positive experiences and qualities, such as serving others, perceiving that adults in the community value youth, or spending three or more hours per week in sports or organizations, that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Studies of more than 2.2 million young people in the United States consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to succeed in school, help others, maintain good health, resist danger, and overcome adversity. The average young person experiences fewer than half of the 40 assets. More information on the 40 Assets identified by the Search Institute can be found at <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets>. More information on United Way’s work improving lives in Mid Coast Maine can be found at www.uwmcm.org.

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