

IMPACT

YOUR COMMUNITY



News for and about leaders in substance abuse prevention.

Spring 2009

Issue #71

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Thank You Volunteers!

By Patrick Ferrell, OS Board Chair & ITI Volunteer

Simply put, the Illinois Teen Institute, Mid-level Institute and Operation Snowball wouldn't exist without you!

ITI, MLI and Snowball depend on your service, whether you're a first time teen participant, a returning teen leader, an adult just now entering our Community of Caring, or a child at heart who has been part of the program for years.

This year's National Volunteer Week is April 19 through 25. On behalf of the OS Board of Directors and staff at IADDA, thanks for giving the time and dedication to make the prevention programs successful.

It is estimated that 56 percent of Americans volunteer for nonprofits. The other way to look at that is nearly half of Americans don't volunteer for nonprofits.

It's not easy to fit volunteering time into our lives. Work commitments, family engagements and even social outings sometimes get in the way. Thank you for ensuring that ITI, MLI and Snowball have a place in your life next to those other commitments. Together, we're making a difference when it comes to the battle against alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

According to the Points of Light Institute, the theme for this year's National Volunteer Week is "Celebrating People in Action."

"The theme captures the meaning behind this signature week – honoring the individuals who dedicate themselves to taking action and solving problems in their communities," the group's Web site reads.

"National Volunteer Week ... presents an opportunity for individuals, families, nonprofit organizations and government entities alike to celebrate the ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things through service," the site continues.

That's exactly what Operation Snowball, the Illinois Teen Institute and Mid-level Institute are all about.

That process can't happen without you. So, again, thanks from us.

We also encourage you to look into your own organization as National Volunteer Week nears. Is there a volunteer you need to thank? Perhaps a parent who came in early to serve breakfast during your annual retreat? Or a colleague who served as a guest speaker or adult leader? Maybe there's a teen who is always your go-to person for important tasks?

Don't forget to let them know how much they mean to your group and our Community of Caring as a whole. We can't continue to do extraordinary things without these folks.

For additional information about National Volunteer Week, please visit www.1-800-volunteer.org.





Dear Friends,

Think positive!!! That is something I have always believed in. As a guidance counselor at Neuqua Valley High School in Naperville, I see on a daily basis what teens are dealing with in their everyday lives. As a director for Naperville Operation Snowball the past 23 years, the devastating effects of drug use in a teens' life. Things are so much more complicated these days, but if you try to take a positive attitude into the conversations you have with teens, the effect can be very beneficial.

Naperville Operation Snowball has partnered with NCO Youth and Family Services and School Districts 203 and 204 in conducting a survey called Power of Choice, given to every high school student in the Naperville area.

Power of Choice project is designed to change misperceptions, support the majority of students making healthy choices, reduce underage drinking and tobacco use and reinforce positive parenting habits.

Each year over 12,000 high school students are surveyed and those results are posted in the 4 high schools. Posters are spread throughout the schools promoting the healthy, positive choices of the majority of our students. The continual climb in percentages each year reflects the positive influences of current education, in school and at home. Operation Snowball has had a huge impact in those positive trends.

Some examples of the findings: What 12,097 District 203 & 204 high school students said in 2007 compared to 2005:

- 72% ~~67%~~ choose not to drink because they don't want to disappoint their parents.
- 73% ~~69%~~ choose not to drink because they don't want to get into trouble with their parents.
- 90% ~~89%~~ think their parents find tobacco use by teenagers NOT acceptable.
- 84% ~~78%~~ think their parents find alcohol use by teenagers NOT acceptable.
- 93% ~~91%~~ of students who did not drink alcohol in the last year report that their parents disapprove of alcohol use by teens.

I find these results to be very encouraging for our youth and the positive choices they are making. To all of our Snowball chapters: keep the spirit of Snowball alive and the positive message that we give to all of our teens.

Warm fuzzies,

Spike Grosshuesch
Vice President, OS Inc.



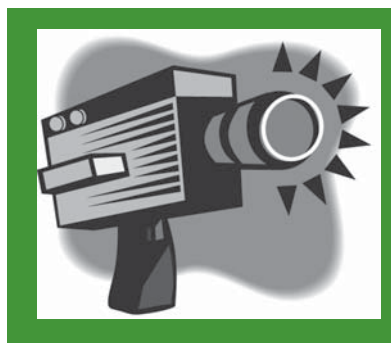


“Life is a movie, direct it well!”

We often act in our lives, but sometimes fail to direct them. Are you directing your own life or are you an actor in someone else’s production? A question that deserves reflection from all of us! Welcome to the theme of MLI 2009, “Life is a movie, direct it well!” The message was simple...write your own life script!

The 2009 Mid-Level Institute took place March 20-22, 2009 at Lake Williamson in Carlinville, Illinois. Participants in grades 6th-8th arrived full of enthusiasm and anticipation for what the weekend would bring. From Chicago down south to Alton, there was representation from all around the state!

Jeff Yalden, a Lifecoach whom has appeared on MTV MADE, opened MLI 2009! Other featured speakers included: Javier Sanchez from R.E.A.C.H. Communications who facilitated a leadership training session; Jeffery Gosnell, Teambuilding Consultant; and Bill



Johnson, Director of Campus Ministry at Marmion Academy. At MLI, we understand the importance of taking care of yourself, so it wasn’t all work and no play! There was plenty of time for fun and entertainment!

MLI participants left fully prepared with an action plan for positive change in their school and/or community. We are looking forward to hearing back from participants and staff on their successes in alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention. Thank you for making MLI 2009 a huge success!

2009 Illinois Teen Institute Summer Leadership Conference

Ability, motivation and attitude. Ability is what one is capable of doing. **Motivation** determines what you do and **attitude** determines how you do it.

What is the Illinois Teen Institute’s **ability**? What is the program capable of doing? ITI is capable of amazing things. For the past 35 years, ITI has impacted the lives of thousands due to the support and foundation of the volunteers and youth that have the motivation to get involved and make a difference. **Can we do more?** As President Obama would say “**Yes we can.**”

“You must be the change you want to see in the world,” great words spoken by Mahatma Gandhi. At ITI we provide youth the opportunity to **be the change**. The time for change is long overdue. We have come a long way, but there is still so much to be done. So, I invite you to join us at ITI 2009 and “**Be the change.**”

The Illinois Teen Institute Summer Leadership Conference will be held July 19-23, 2009 at Monmouth, College in Monmouth Illinois. Applications for participants and staff can be found online at www.os-iti.org under the ITI 2009 link.



In these tough economic times, participants, more than ever, may need financial support to attend. IADDA is doing all we can to secure scholarships for Illinois youth; including sending letters to every Illinois legislator asking them to sponsor at least one youth from their district. Imagine the impact we can have *if you* also contacted your legislator and asked them to sponsor a

youth. If every Illinois legislator sponsored one youth to attend ITI 2009, that would equal 177 participants! You have the **ability**. Do you have the **motivation** and **attitude** to make a difference? Contact your legislator today, share your experience with ITI, and ask them to sponsor a youth for ITI 2009.

If you are aware of an organization or business that may be interested in providing a scholarship for Illinois youth, please contact Shelly at IADDA, 800-252-6301 ext. 16.

Before you all rush to print your ITI volunteer and participant applications off the website, I would like to take a moment and send a warm “welcome back” to Angi Bowman Halvorson! I am expecting a delivery from the stork right around ITI time, so Angi, a former ITI Coordinator and IADDA CEO, will be on contract throughout the week of ITI. Welcome back, Angi!





McHenry County's Mid-Level Institute Reunion

The 8th Annual MLI Reunion for McHenry County was held on April 4, 2009, at Family Service and Community Mental Health Center located in McHenry. Once again there was a large turnout for the reunion with more than 40 students and staff from the 2008 MLI in attendance. Reunion participants had a lot of energy to share throughout the day. They participated in teambuilding activities where they gained more leadership skills and reconnected with friends they made during the October 2008 weekend event, by sharing photos. They were involved in educational learning activities including learning facts about alcohol and other drugs. The participants broke

into small groups with adult and youth staff to discuss activities they have coordinated or are planning in their school or community. They shared their ideas with one another to show a united front and continue their drug-free efforts throughout the County.



Throughout the day, the participants identified skills within themselves that will help make them great leaders.

They strengthened their abilities to take positive risks, be catalysts for change, and, ultimately, make a difference in their community. The reunion attendees; participants and staff; are looking forward to McHenry County's 9th Annual MLI, which will take place October 23-25, 2009, at Camp Algonquin, in Algonquin, IL. Applications for adult and youth staff, ALLY's (Active Leadership Learning for Youth - youth staff training program for freshman in high school), as well as general participant applications are available. Contact Lori Baker, Manager of Prevention Services for Family Service, at (815) 669-2485 with any questions or to receive more information.

OS Board Spotlight - Melissa Byrne



I am honored and thrilled to be a new member of the Operation Snowball Board of Directors. I am a member of the Greater Fox River Valley Chapter of Operation Snowball and have been involved as an adult since 2007, but was also involved in Operation Snowball as a teen. The wonderful things Operation Snowball does as an organization, changing and impacting lives and com-

munities for the better constantly amazes me.

I am an eighth grade language arts teacher at Haines Middle School in St. Charles, Illinois. While my quirky quotes and obsession with Shakespeare trivia sometimes causes my students to chuckle (whether it's at me or with me, I'm sometimes not sure), I can honestly say I have found my calling. At Haines, I am also one of the adult coordinators of Operation Snowflake, and it has been a joy to see the program grow over the past two years.

I am a graduate of Aurora University where I received my Bachelor's degree in English/Secondary Education

and am currently pursuing my Master's degree at Aurora University in Educational Leadership. In my spare time, I love to spend time with close friends and family, read, and search antique stores and book stores for aged editions of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass.



Keep the ball rolling...celebrate **Alcohol Awareness Week and Prom Season!** Chapters are encouraged to plan and/or participate in these prevention campaigns. Use this opportunity to get the Snowball mission out and recruit youth and adult members.

Support Operation Snowball, Inc. and purchase Alcohol Awareness Week and Prom Season items from Prevention Partners. Go to <http://www.preventionpartners.org/os> to order supplies.





7th Annual Snowmeet



Edward Hospital in Naperville hosted the 7th annual Snowmeet on Monday, March 9th. Over 60 youth and adults gathered for workshops and networking. The day began with a presentation on prescription drug abuse given by OS board member, Charla Waxman. Teens from the Naperville Snowball chapter presented prevention skits. Everyone shared information in a networking small group activity. OS, Inc. would like to say thank you to the presenters and Edward Hospital for providing the meeting space and breakfast.

Photos are participants attending Snowmeet 2009.

OS Board of Directors Retreat

The Operation Snowball, Inc. Board of Directors Retreat was held February 28, 2009. The Board of Directors meets annually for strategic planning and teambuilding. Dedicated to supporting the chapters of OS and the youth of Illinois, the Board is in the midst of updating its strategic plan. This process has already identified several goals, including increasing fundraising and marketing, promoting the full range of Operation Snowball programs and empowering chapters to act as agents of change in their communities. If you have any concerns and/or feedback to direct to the OS Board of Directors please contact Mary Jo Peavy at 800/252-6301 extension 18 or email to mpeavy@iadda.org.



The OS board of directors learns the importance of teamwork and goalsetting during a puzzling activity at its annual retreat.





SNOWBALL'S IMPACT ON MY NEW FAMILY

By Meredith Sheriff

When I went to my first Snowball in the spring of 1994, I had no idea the IMPACT it was going to have on my life. Not only did I learn new things about myself and other people, but it enabled me to create a new network of friends that continue to play a pivotal role in my life. I have shared so many happy and challenging times with them, and I'm so thankful for all that we've shared together. My 15 years of many more Snowball events and ITI experiences have been some of the best days of my life, and on December 11, 2008, Snowball impacted my life in a way I never thought possible...

In order to start our family, my husband and I decided that we would look into adoption. We suffered a tremendous and very sad loss with our first daughter, Adeline, in October 2007 when she was stillborn at 39 weeks. We weren't sure how we'd move forward without her, but our faith led us into the direction of adoption. We contacted an agency in Evanston, IL called The Cradle, and we began our education process for adoption. After many classes, much research, biography/profile writing, and many visits with our counselor, we became an official "waiting family" on October 1, 2008, only one day before our daughter's one year anniversary. It was a happy, yet very emotional time for us. We were told to expect a wait time of approximately 13 months once we were on the official list, and so began our journey of waiting...

The process of adoption is very emotional, magical, and fulfilling. My husband and I prayed each night that we would be chosen by the perfect family and get to bring home a healthy baby that we could love and raise in our amazing families. Never in a million years did we expect to get our prayers answered a little over 2 months later...



Ryan & Meredith Sheriff, Renee and Joie.

On December 5, 2008, we learned that a birth mom, named Renee, and her children had chosen us to parent their expectant baby girl due on January 8, 2009. Words cannot express the joy, happiness, and peace that came immediately to our hearts when we learned that our dreams were about to come true. We were told that we would meet Renee on December 11 to start to build a relationship of trust. We couldn't wait to meet her! We had so many thoughts running through our heads... Would she still like us after meeting us in person? Would I say something stupid that would make her change her mind? Would we click and get along? Could this woman truly be giving us the greatest, most selfless gift of her little girl? Needless to say, we were

a nervous wreck going into that meeting!

I write that on December 11, 2008 Snowball IMPACTED my life in a way that I never thought possible because the very first thing that Renee told us about her connection to us was the fact that I had been involved with Snowball! She too was a Snowball kid during her school years, and she was happy that I held the values that Snowball tries to teach its participants. Her positive Snowball experiences helped her make a decision about choosing me & Ryan to parent her daughter, and inevitably, changed my life forever! Renee is an amazing woman, and we feel so blessed to have both she and her other three children as a part of our family!

Our story has so much love, faith, and HOPE attached to it. Ryan and I brought home a beautiful baby girl named Josephine Olivia Renee on January 5, 2009, and in many ways, I owe Joie's homecoming to Operation Snowball! Not only has this amazing program helped me develop healthy morals, values, and wonderful friendships, but it has given me the gift of a beautiful baby girl that I love and cherish more than anything in this world. I share this story with you because you just never know how Snowball can IMPACT your life! I never thought Snowball would have a hand in making my dreams come true! Its magic, wonder, and powerful messages are truly life changing! How will Snowball IMPACT your life????

Stay current with Illinois Teen Institute and Operation Snowball news and events - join the mailing list and read the news blog at www.os-iti.org!





SNOWMENTUM

The following is a list of Operation Snowball chapter events, trainings, and board meetings. Also, included are the Illinois Teen Institute and Mid-level Institute planning meetings and event dates.

June 13, 2009

OS Board of Directors Meeting
Conference Call

Contact Mary Jo Peavy at 800.252.6301 x.
18 or mpeavy@iadda.org

July 19-23, 2009

Illinois Teen Institute
Monmouth College
Monmouth, IL

Contact Shelly Musser at 800.252.6301 x.
16 or smusser@iadda.org

To submit a date please contact IADDA at 800.252.6301, extension 52 or email iadda@iadda.org for consideration.

Naperville Operation Snowball

By Allie Moonie

High school is one of the most exciting times of growing up. Over four years, you make mistakes, accomplish goals, and slowly begin to understand the person you will be for the rest of your life. However, high school also has a darker side. The pressure to fit in is overwhelming, and kids are more affected by family issues and have more responsibilities. Needless to say, the high school years are a volatile yet needed transition into adult life.

It would be safe to say that so far during my high school experience, I've learned how to juggle responsibilities and struggles of growing up while still performing well in school. For awhile, though, I was struggling with my own self-image and finding a place to fit in. It wasn't until I came across a retreat called Operation Snowball that I

began to discover the person who had been living inside all along. Snowball is a teen-led retreat that focuses on promoting a drug-free and accepting lifestyle among teens. Over the course of the weekend, I found myself surrounded by an environment that I had



Members of Naperville Operation Snowball chapter.

never felt anywhere else. Away from high school, we were able to reach out to others without the fear of being judged. The feeling was infectious. As a staple for the weekend, the teen staff performs skits, ranging in topics from

drugs to friendship, causing us participants to look inside ourselves and deal with any hurt. Snowball helped me realize that I had been holding myself back from the world, and that it was time to let go. I found the strength inside to forgive myself, and I let my true self forth.

That was two years ago. Now, I am about to staff my third Snowball weekend. I now have the joy and responsibility of giving participants the first experience that I had. My purpose in life is much clearer thanks to Snowball, and I truly believe that the retreat can melt even the hardest of hearts, and make us all realize that deep inside, we are all the same; we are never truly alone.

OS Board of Directors Election

IADDA staff and the OS Board of Directors would like to congratulate the following OS Board of Directors members on their election to the Board.

Ande Suddeth-District 1, Spike Grossheusch-District 4, Melissa Byrne-District 5, Teri Belgio-District 6 and Dan O'Reilly-District 11. IADDA

appointees are Megan Edmondson, Jack Irwin and Charla Waxman.

Marilee Muirhead and Jason Bolden did not seek re-election. Operation Snowball thanks Marilee and Jason for their contributions to Operation Snowball and wishes them well in future endeavors.





IMPACT Your Community is a publication of Operation Snowball, Inc. and the Illinois Teen Institute and is free of charge to subscribers.

IADDA Staff

CEO: Sara Howe

COO: Peggie Powers

Business Manager: Pel Kelley

External Program Manager (OS): Mary Jo Peavy

External Program Manager (ITI): Shelly Musser

Policy Analyst: Suzanne McLean

Office Assistant: Laurie Campbell

OS staff is provided through a contract between the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association and Operation Snowball, Inc.

IMPACT Your Community invites your comments, articles or photographs. An article must be submitted in typed, double-spaced format. Photos must include caption or an explanation of the event. Please direct all articles or comments to:

Operation Snowball, Inc./Illinois Teen Institute

937 South Second Street • Springfield, IL 62704

800.252.6301 or 217.528.7335

www.os-iti.org

Annual OS Recognition Awards

Operation Snowball, Inc. and the Board of Directors awarded recognition awards for outstanding support of Operation Snowball. The awards recognize outstanding youth and adult members of OS chapters as well as prevention efforts of individual chapters. There also is an award recognizing school and/or community support for OS efforts. The winners are:

1. Outstanding youth leader – Chris White of Nazareth OS
2. Outstanding adult leader – Linda Dunne of Nazareth OS

Congratulations to all the award winners!



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Operation Snowball, Inc. Board of Directors: Patrick Ferrell, Chair; Charla Waxman, Past Chair; Spike Grossheusch, Vice Chair; Alissa LaRose, Secretary; Rob Grupe, Treasurer; Emma Trevor and Jeff Weishaar, Youth Advocates; Teri Belgio, Melissa Byrne, Megan Edmondson, Jack Irwin, Dan O'Reilly, Charles Patton, Linda Pfeifer and Ande Suddeth, Board Members.

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