



## “Community Sense Makes Common Sense”

Belknap County Convocation on Children and Families

January 22, 2008

### County’s Youth Tell the Story of ‘Community’ at Convocation Event

LACONIA: Children and youth from around Belknap County played a central role in the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Belknap County Convocation on Children and Families held on Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> from 3:30-7:30pm at the Opechee Inn & Conference Center in Lakeport. Along with the popular Exhibitor Showcase offered by organizations and agencies serving children, youth, and families in Belknap County, youth shared their projects, thoughts, and ideas about the communities where they live.

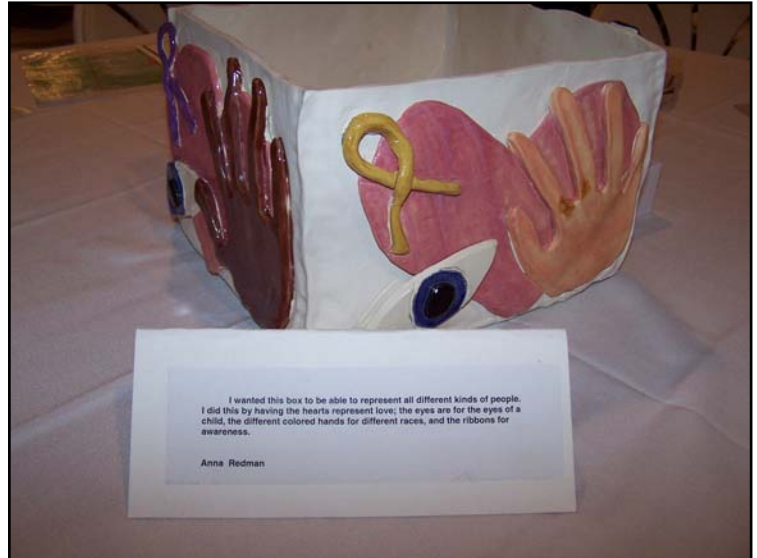


A youth invites visitors to view the numerous exhibits from agencies and organizations as part of the Exhibitor Showcase, a popular part of every Convocation event.

This year’s Convocation theme, “Community Sense Makes Common Sense”, was expanded and interpreted with numerous projects and presentations prepared by children and youth from classrooms and youth groups throughout Belknap County. The array of projects, displayed in the Opechee Conference Center, clearly and convincingly conveyed what the students had learned about their communities.

Included were placemats, decorated by children at the Lakes Region Child Care Centers, Project EXTRA, Boys & Girls Club of the Lakes Region, and several 4-H groups; a seven-foot replica of the Tilton Arch built by freshmen at Winnisquam Regional High School; clay centerpieces created by Gilford High School art classes and later auctioned off to attendees to benefit Lakes Region United Way; an iMovie telling the story of the Witch of New Hampton, created by 5<sup>th</sup> graders at the New Hampton Community School; a lively operetta, “Stone Soup: A ‘Rock’ Opera”, sung by second graders at Gilford Elementary School; life-sized sculptures from Inter-lakes High School in Meredith; and a castle wall built by middle school students at Belmont Middle School. All projects captured the attention of those attending this annual festive event that highlights the contributions that children, youth, and families make in their communities.

One of the table centerpieces created by student artist, Anna Redman of Gilford High School. She says, “*I wanted this box to be able to represent all different kinds of people. I did this by having the hearts represent love; the eyes are for the eyes of a child; the different colored hands for different races and the ribbons for awareness.*” (Photos of other centerpieces appear elsewhere in this Convocation 2008 section of our website.)



In May of 2007, schools and others were invited to create some type of curriculum-generated activity that could be shared at this 2008 event. Students were asked by their teachers or leaders, “What does ‘community’ mean to you?” Then with the guidance and support of their adult leaders, these students answered this question by creating projects of all descriptions.

This 5<sup>th</sup> annual Belknap County Convocation event, attended by close to 300 people, was a collaborative effort of non-profit organizations, county government, and Lakes Region businesses that spent nine months planning for this large event. Each year, the Convocation event takes a different theme, but all are designed to honor children, youth, and their families and to promote an appreciation of

the communities in Belknap County. For the past 5 years, the Citizens Council has been the lead sponsor of this event.

The 2008 Convocation began at 3:30pm with both the displays by youth as well as the popular Exhibitor Showcase of interactive displays and exhibits from numerous agencies and organizations providing services for children and families in Belknap County. Presentations connected to the youth projects began at 5pm as Pleasant Street second grader, Allison Locklear, and her teacher, Darlene Page, talked about the school's intergenerational activity with residents of the Taylor Community. Four other

presentations

the dinner

Youth

roles

Convo-

from the

of the Lakes

4-H Club,

Restorative

Services

with

such as



Youth emcees Jeremiah Dadian (L) and Angie Joyce direct visitors to the next Convocation event.

followed during hour.

played prominent throughout the

cation. Teens

Boys & Girls Club

Region, Townline

Belknap County

Justice, and Youth

Bureau assisted

numerous details

greeting visitors,

checking coats, acting as buffet escorts, and helping with decorations, setting tables, and arranging

displays. Six youth from both Gilford and Laconia: Mae Baker, Jeremiah Dadian, Angie Joyce,

Samantha Hannan, Jim LaBrie, and Samantha MacDonald were the youth emcees who skillfully guided

attendees through the Convocation event.

Also awarded during the dinner hour program was the coveted Annette P Schmitt UnSung Hero Award, presented by Judge Willard Martin to Leo Sanfacon of Gilford, a longtime volunteer on behalf of youth.

Schools and youth groups participating in this Convocation event included a second-grade classroom from Belmont Elementary School; Belmont Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> Grade; Boys & Girls Club of the Lakes Region; the Chapel Valley 4-H Club in Sanbornton; Elm Street School 4<sup>th</sup> Grade (Laconia); Gilford Elementary School second grades; Gilford High School; Gilmanton School 7<sup>th</sup> grade; Inter-Lakes Middle and High School art programs; Lakes Region Child Care Centers; New Hampton Community School 5<sup>th</sup> Grade; Pleasant Street Elementary School 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade (Laconia); Project EXTRA! (Laconia School District); Townline 4-H Club from Tilton; Winnepesaukee Winners (Alton) 4-H; and Winnisquam Regional High School 9th grade.



Two 4-H youth describe a Convocation activity to Alton resident, Dick Wallace.

**MORE PHOTOS FOLLOW:**





9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Winnisquam Regional Middle High School constructed a scale model of a popular landmark in their community, The Tilton Arch was built in 1882 by Charles Tilton who was inspired by the memorial arches he saw during a tour of Rome.



BELOW: Second graders from Gilford Elementary School end the Convocation event with a rousing presentation of the operetta, "Stone Soup: A Rock Opera". This is the simple story of how a village fed everyone through the small contributions of everyone.