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# In Youth We Trust

## The Youth Philanthropy Program of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois

### My First Time At Youth Charity Jam by Candace Brahm

I was really excited this year to be part of my first Youth Charity Jam (YJC). I had heard other members talk about the event with great enthusiasm. Youth Charity Jam is an event In Youth We Trust started in 2003 to raise money for scholarships. Today, the RAMI organization has taken it on with our help to raise money for the RAMI Music Scholarship. Because it was my first year, I decided that I wanted to experience every part of this great event.

Planning for the Youth Charity Jam was tons of fun. I got to help pick a theme for YJC, audition the bands, set up for the event, and attend the event as well. Picking the theme was probably one of the easier tasks because everyone on the com-

mittee had such great input. The hardest part I would say was auditioning the bands. We actually had a separate event during which we auditioned 14 bands. All of the bands were so talented that it was very hard to say which ones were the best. Each of the bands brought something unique and it was awesome to see so many people in their teens being so passionate about the music they played. Although it was a difficult task, the other judges and I carefully scored the bands. By the end of the night, we knew which seven bands would compete at YJC.

The night of YJC was such a great experience. The stage looked so cool with all of the microphones, speakers and drums. We also had life-sized cardboard cutouts of famous musicians on the stage thanks to Al Grace Appliance! The tables were decorated with pictures and references to famous bands and musicians. Although everyone had certain jobs to do, we were all able to listen to most of the bands. They were really great!

Overall the entire experience of YJC was loads of fun and, because we were raising money for charity, also very rewarding. I can not wait to be part of the Youth Charity Jam again next year!



In Youth We Trust Members Kelsey Schroeder, Hayden Wilsey, Caroline Pilcher, Austin Laue, Danny Kagan, Ashlee Finch, Carlee Bane, Danielle Kamp, Ryan Miller, Reed Ortland, Beatrice Hagny, Carly Goelz, and the YJC winning band Hope Despite.

### The Most Beautiful Valentine's Day by Hayden Wilsey

When most people think about Valentine's Day, they immediately envision the ideal romantic engagement with the person of their dreams. A beautiful bouquet of flowers, chocolates and a romantic dinner are a must in most of our books, but after this past Valentine's Day I've realized how unnecessary these things are. I spent the best Valentine's Day of my life at a press conference for the Jack's Big Helpers grant funded by In Youth We Trust. I have been touched forever because of it.

Jack's Big Helpers is a group formed by middle school aged Spectrum School students in order to help one of their

fellow students, Jack O'Neil. Jack is a small, amazing spirit who started his own nonprofit organization to raise money and donate time and comforting things to children who are battling medical conditions. The group of middle schoolers heard Jack speak at their school about his work with children in the hospital and felt the need to help.

Jack's Big Helpers applied for a grant through In Youth We Trust for money to purchase fifty Build-A-Bears and three Playstation 3s and games to accompany them. The group wanted to donate these items to Rockford Memorial Hospital and deliver them to children in the pediatrics unit. The game systems would be placed on

individual carts and hospitalized children would be able to check them out. This grant provided long standing impact in the lives of suffering children and a sense of comfort to the kids and their families. One dad of an admitted child said "as a parent who is here [at the hospital] a lot, you can never understand how much something like a teddy bear or a game system means to our son and us as parents. You have touched so many lives with such a simple donation. These things make our stay at RMH so much easier."

Easier, enriching and moving. These are the results of our work as In Youth We Trust members. By volunteering our time and funding deserving projects, the entire community benefits. It was truly an incomparable feeling when I saw how the project we funded touched so many lives that Valentine's Day was incomparable.

#### Spring 2010 Grantees

Lydia Urban Academy—  
Heartways

St. John Lutheran Church—  
F.U.E.L.

Rockford Public Library—  
Mosaic Student Film Festival

Christian Union Full Gospel  
Church— S.T.E.P.



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Senior Spotlight! Here are some of our graduating seniors' thoughts on IYWT and a little about themselves!

**Questions:**

- 1.) How do you feel IYWT has changed you?
- 2.) If you could have any super-power in the world, what would it be and why?

**Senior Spotlight: Hayden Wilsey**

1) Through my work with IYWT over the past three years I know that I have become a more mature, relatable and fun person. IYWT has been one of my most valuable experiences in my entire high school career. I will never forget the skills I have gained, the friends I have met and the humbling experiences of serving the community.

2) As far as super powers go, I wish I had the power to say everything I want to say in the most concise way possible (and so does the rest of the club, especially James). Or I would like to be able to come up with innovative solutions to problems easily so that I could better serve the council and community by coming up with new, effective ideas for innovating current systems and ideas (again, the conciseness would be nice).



**Senior Spotlight: Emily Puckett**

1) Through IYWT, I have made many lasting friendships, as well as been given the opportunity to improve my leadership skills and learn how to function in a working environment. I have enjoyed becoming active in our community and I believe that activism is something I will carry with me throughout the rest of my life. IYWT has made me more aware of the responsibility we have to our community and has given me the opportunity to work with several students

from across northern Illinois who share my passion about helping others.

2) My super-power would be to become invisible. Think of how much fun Halloween could be....now you see me, now you don't! Plus, I could scare people by walking into a room where no one could see me, and I would get to spy on people without them knowing I was there. Yup, that would be awesome!



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