



Youth Action Network

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Beware of the Staph Infection Outbreak

by Tex Russell

Hey Amy!

Hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving! I know that we did! So with this holiday season, we want everyone to stay healthy, and embrace your giving spirit! Read on to see what we mean...

YAN Squad

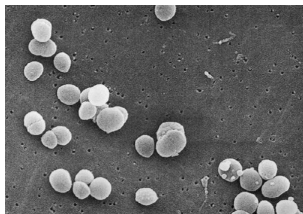
Volunteer Options for Youth

By Tommy Watson and Maya DiTraglia

Whether teens are required to volunteer for school, church, etc., or simply decide that we'd like to try it out, we often find it difficult to know where to start, because we don't know where we can participate. Therefore, we decided to highlight seven different organizations that need volunteers and that are open to us youth! Of course, around the holidays the amount of volunteer opportunities is magnified, but our list provides on-going opportunities. Personal gratification guaranteed!

Austin Yellow Bike Project

The Austin Yellow bike project is a non-profit organization that is run by an all-volunteer team. Volunteers recondition bikes that were to go to the



In the United States alone an estimated 90,000 people have the Staph Infection. It isn't known how many people die from this infection, one estimate put it a more than 18,000, which would be just above the death toll from AIDS. The infection is usually attracted to those with a weak immune system. Usually the serious MRSA (Staph bacteria resistant to antibiotics) infections are rare in the community, but attention has been focused on schools in the recent months, because of the death of Ashton Bonds, a 17-year-old high school student from Moneta, VA. Several hospitals over the United States will start testing patients for MRSA (the staph infection resistant to antibiotics), in an attempt to slow down the infection rates.

What are the symptoms and signs of a Staph infection?

The disease of the skin usually results in

landfill into one-speed bikes, paint them yellow, and release them back into the wild for the community to share and enjoy! Austin Yellow Bike has been around for 10 years and not only gives free bikes to the community but also supplies bikes to children and those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Volunteer tasks include things like building Yellow and Kids' bikes for their free community programs, sorting parts, organizing and cleaning the shop, constructing storage places, and fixing tools. All you have to do to volunteer is walk into either of their two locations, and talk to a Shop Coordinator. Locations are at 2013 E. 51st St. and 1720 East 12th St. and schedules for work days as well as further information can be found at <http://austinyellowbike.org/home.htm>.

Austin Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is an organization committed to decreasing poverty by constructing affordable, well-built houses for families in need. There are multiple volunteer opportunities for people 16 years of age and older, but people under 18 must be accompanied by an adult over the age of 21. However, this requirement is easily met as many of the projects can be done with a group, in which case a parent, teacher, or facilitator of some sort can tag along. Youth is able to volunteer in the areas of Construction, ReStore, Administration, and/or the Lunch Program. Volunteers for construction must commit a full-day and will be involved in such tasks as painting the house, installing cabinets and hardware, and laying the foundation and driveway. ReStore sells used and donated building material so volunteers will organize hardware, sort and measure doors, help customers find merchandise, and so on. The administrative area needs people to help coordinate fundraising events, post flyers for AHFH, and assist with their database and mail. Finally, the Lunch Program works to provide meals for workers on site and also homebuyers. The ReStore, Administrative, and Lunch programs do not require a time commitment, but rather whenever volunteers are available. For more information, visit the website: <http://www.austinhabitat.org/>

Austin Steam Train Association

The Austin Steam Train Association (ASTA) has both Volunteer and Staff that maintain and run multiple locomotives year round. Volunteer opportunities include: on-board service volunteers, administrative volunteers, maintenance/restoration volunteers, and-after a process of selection, training and hands-on experience-train operation crew member, as well as many others. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with ASTA, please contact them either by phone (512-477-8468) or

a localized collection of pus, known as an abscess or boil. The infected area might be red, swollen and painful.

How do people get staph infections?

In teens, most staph infections are minor skin infections. Teens with skin problems, like burns or eczema, may be more likely to get a staph infection. Staph infections can spread from person to person usually those that live close together in a group of people.

Can I prevent a staph infection?

Staph infection bacteria is everywhere. Many healthy people carry it in their skin without getting sick. As long as you are clean and have good hygiene, that's the best way to keep the bacteria away. You can prevent staph skin infection by washing your hands frequently and by bathing and showering every day. Keep areas of the skin that have been injured very clean because that is one way staph infection can enter your body.

What can I do to feel better?

It takes a boil ,for example, 10 to 20 days to heal without

by email (info@austinsteamtrain.org). For more information visit their website at <http://austinsteamtrain.org/index.html>

Project Transitions and Top Drawer Thrift

Project Transitions is a nonprofit group that provides housing and hospice to people living with AIDS and HIV. They own and manage Top Drawer Thrift store where money is raised solely for their organization. Volunteers do retail work in Top Drawer and sort and price donations and merchandise. Top Drawer is open from 10 AM to 7 PM Mon.-Sat., so youth volunteers could work after school or during holiday and summer breaks. Note that new volunteers must attend a volunteer orientation before becoming active. For more information, visit the website: <http://www.projecttransitions.org/>

Central TX SPCA

The Central TX SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) is a non-euthanasia animal shelter providing shelter, food, medical care, and adoption for lost and abandoned dogs and cats. People from the ages of 15-17 can be Senior Youth Volunteers and participate as dog or cat caretakers (with parental consent), and people 18 and older can participate as Adult Volunteers where they are able to perform additional tasks such as organizing special events. Dog caretakers walk, groom and play with the dogs and cat caretakers groom and play with the cats, so it is the perfect opportunity for those who enjoy working with animals. The Central TX SPCA asks that its volunteers make a minimum (and very feasible) time commitment of 2 hours per month. For more information, visit the website: <http://www.centraltexasspca.org>

Art Alliance

Art Alliance Austin is looking for 700 volunteers to help at the 58th annual Art City Austin (formerly the Austin Fine Arts Festival), which takes place Saturday, April 12 from 10 am to 5 pm, and Sunday, April 13 from 11 am to 6 pm where downtown meets Town Lake. Proceeds from the event go to the Austin Museum of Art and the Blanton Museum. Volunteers will be able to choose to participate in over a dozen different roles, and are expected to work 3 hours per event. After working, volunteers gain free admission to the fair, and get an invitation to the post-event volunteer appreciation party! If you are interested in working with Art Alliance Austin to help bring this event together register online at artallianceaustin.org or e-mail Allison Specter at

treatment, so treatment will definitely help. Most infections, will go away on their own in about seven days. To ease the pain from a skin infection, try soaking the skin in warm water and putting warm moist cloth over the infected area. You can also take pain relievers that can help reduce pain such as tylenol, or ibuprofen. Sometimes you may need to get tropical antibiotics to clear up the infection. See your doctor if it doesn't go away soon. Don't shave areas that the infection has had an out brake on, if you do make sure you clean you electric razor, or use a clean disposable razor.

aspecter@artallianceaustin.org.

Loveisrespect, National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

Loveisrespect, National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, operated by the National Domestic Violence Hotline, is a web and telephone based helpline that provides guidance for teens in abusive relationships. Everyone who calls in for help remains anonymous. Volunteers for the Helpline must be 16 years of age or older and will respond to Helpline calls and online chats to provide information, crisis intervention, safety planning and resources to teen callers. The interactive volunteer training is a bit extensive (40 hours), and people will need to do about 8 hours of volunteering per month, but it's worth the time for anyone who feels strongly about preventing teen dating abuse. The organization is located in Southwest Austin. For more information, visit <http://www.loveisrespect.org/>.

If none of the above volunteer options interest you, visit the website, www.volunteermatch.org. With a refined search, VolunteerMatch can suggest organizations that better fit you.

Donate Today!

by Brooke Fowler

Sure, people talk about donating blood and how it saves the lives of others. Some say it has it's perks such as free cookies or a T-shirt souvenir. But donating blood is also shown to have some health benefits as well.

Blood contains iron. Okay, you should know that, therefore each time you give blood some of that iron is removed. High blood iron levels, can increase the risk of heart disease. Iron has been shown to speed the oxidation of cholesterol, a process thought to increase the damage to arteries that ultimately leads to cardiovascular disease.

The process of giving blood involves screening the donor, (which usually includes a series of questions that some might find personal,) the actual donation, and a brief recovery period. This applies to both whole blood donations and plasmapheresis, or donating only one's plasma.

The needle is usually quite painless, but you may feel a small pinch, which is virtually nothing compared to the lives that you will be saving. For every pint of blood you

donate, you could save up to two lives. That is amazing if you think about it!

The Blood Center of Central Texas offers a special program for donors called, "Hands of the Group Program". This program finds ways to reward those who donate. Since cash reimbursements are not legal, they offer points for everytime you donate. Those points can be used online to purchase tokens of appreciation, such as shirts, mugs, backpacks, and more! It's really rewarding to think of the lives being saved, but the goodies are never a bad thing either.

I am planning to donate blood later this week, but I am personally encouraging everyone over the age of seventeen to start donating soon, even if it's once a year, for five years. You will have saved TEN LIVES!

YAN Merchandising Grant

by Maya Gaster

The Austin Voices merchandising consultant, Alice Geacone, has accomplished a lot for Austin Voices and the community it affects through her projects. One of these was the compilation, design, and production of the Austin Voices student planner. The planner featured creative contributions (in the form of art and informative articles) from students in Austin area schools and assembled by members of Austin Voices. Making and selling the planner was an expensive but very rewarding process for all of the collaborators involved in seeing the project to its finish. Alice has big plans for future planners, including full-color planners and better and more useful content. On a separate project last month, Alice, with collaborators Ariel Kay and Daisy Lanier and the encouraging oversight of Amy Averett, put together a grant application that will help Alice fund future plans. The grant is for \$5,000 from Super Pals, a non-profit offshoot of the Change4Change Foundation. According to a press release describing the eligibility and requirements, "the goal of C4 is to provide a quick and simple source of cash funding for community groups, with a focus on smaller organizations that do not have easy access to grants or donations." The grant, according to the release, will be awarded to an organization or group that promotes "creativity, social responsibility, and the arts."

Daisy Lanier, a collaborator on the planner and grant proposal, says "I definitely feel accomplished after finishing this grant proposal." The grant proposal itself took about a month to create, and includes a timeline of the history of Austin Voices, staff biographies, an explanation of the different areas of impact on the community, plans for

the grant money, personal anecdotes from youth who have contributed to and worked with merchandizing projects like the planner, and even a comic strip depicting the sometimes humorous situations that occurred during the creation of the planner. Daisy adds, "I really can't think of anything that could possibly be more creative or meaningful [than the Austin Voices planner] and more worthy of receiving this grant. Working on the grant proposal made me realize how much of an impact we actually make by making the planner."

Alice puts it best in the artist's statement from the grant proposal: "[The process of creating Austin Voices merchandise] consists of a lot of love and hard work. ...Using [recycled materials] to create a symbol of our hard work and thoughtful development demonstrates the depth of creativity and innovation in our project. ...We poured our heart and soul into these pages and have grown attached; we know you can understand our request that the planner be returned." The grant award decision will be announced in early December, so cross your fingers for us!

AISD School Inequities Project by JoAnna Clasberry

It's been talked about, "Schools don't get equal funding!" "Schools aren't equal!" But with Austin Voices' new project, the rumors and mysteries will be solved. A project started by Angelo McHorse and Alice Geacone should be completed and presented by Ariel Kay and Michelle Powers by January 31 this next year. In the creators' visions, photographs of each Austin school, and interviews with students from each school, would be the meat (or vegetarian substitute) of the presentation. It would show the disparities directly from the source. This vision *will* be continued by Ariel and Michelle. The project will be approached a little differently however. Instead of approaching it as "Eastside schools are bad, Westside schools are good," the research will go further. Each of the schools has something the other schools don't offer.

Are you now itching for some proof of the differences in each school? While Johnston High gets about \$8,997 per student, Bowie gets \$5,294 per student. While Johnston has 81% of their students on a free or reduced lunch plan, Bowie has 8%. While Johnston has 5% of their students in the Gifted and Talented Program, Bowie had 67% of their students in the Gifted and Talented Program. Bowie and Johnston seem to have the most drastic statistics. Why? Is more funding always the answer to good schools systems?

Are you now itching for the answers?! Check in for updates soon!

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