



think ahead emPowerU



The Voice of
our Youth ²⁰⁰⁷



Celebrating Our
25th Anniversary



Friends,

We are seeing exciting developments in our region! Through surveying the young people in our community in 1999, 2003 and again in 2007, we have learned what type of support they need. And, with the assistance of our partners in the thirty-county region Heartland Foundation serves, resources have been devoted to fulfilling those needs with results that have impacted our youth – and our communities – in profoundly positive ways.

This year, for the first time, we were able to compare our region’s results with those of the work done by the national initiative, America’s Promise. The result is interesting and has further impacted our thinking about where we have been, where we are now, and where we might next go in our quest to nurture new empowerment in our youth.

This data has also allowed us to track trends and identify additional areas which will be addressed as Heartland Foundation continues its mission to help build communities that are valued and valuable to young and old alike.

Thank you for your generous support and investment in the health and vitality of the communities in which we live. Through your efforts, we have achieved progress, and have set a course for further development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith K. Sabbert', enclosed within a circular flourish.

Judith K. Sabbert
Chief Operating Officer

promises kept

Since 1999, over thirteen thousand Northwest Missouri youth, ages 12 to 18, have been interviewed so that the community can continuously learn how the young people in the area are doing and where they believe there are challenges and how they believe those challenges can be overcome.

In 2007, Heartland Foundation furthered our commitment by incorporating the learnings from America's Promise into the research methodology. The Five Promises are necessary foundations upon which successful futures can be built for our youth.

... So, how are we doing? >>>>

the five promises

> caring adults

Every child and youth needs and deserves support and guidance from caring adults in their families, schools, and communities, including ongoing, secure relationships with parents and other family adults, as well as multiple and consistent formal and informal positive relationships with teachers, mentors, coaches, youth volunteers, and neighbors.

> safe places and constructive use of time

Every child and youth needs and deserves to be physically and emotionally safe everywhere they are – from the actual places of families, schools, neighborhoods and communities to the virtual places of media – and to have an appropriate balance of structured, supervised activities and unstructured, unscheduled time.

> a healthy start and healthy development

Every child and youth needs and deserves the healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthful habits and choices resulting from regular well-child/youth health care and needed treatment, good nutrition and exercise, comprehensive health knowledge and skills, and role models of physical and psychological health.

> effective education for marketable skills and lifelong learning

Every child and youth needs and deserves the intellectual development, motivation, and personal, social-emotional, and cultural skills needed for successful work and lifelong learning in a diverse nation, as a result of having quality learning environments, challenging expectations, and consistent formal and informal guidance and mentoring.

> opportunities to make a difference through helping others

Every child and youth needs and deserves the chance to make a difference – in their families, schools, communities, nation and world - through having models of caring behavior, awareness of the needs of others, a sense of personal responsibility to contribute to larger society, and opportunities for volunteering, leadership and service.

the five promises change lives

Children who receive at least four of the Five Promises are much more likely than those who experience only one or zero Promises to succeed academically, socially and civically. They are more likely to avoid violence, contribute to their communities and achieve high grades in school.

Receiving at least four of the Five Promises also appears to mitigate gaps across racial and economic boundaries. >>>>



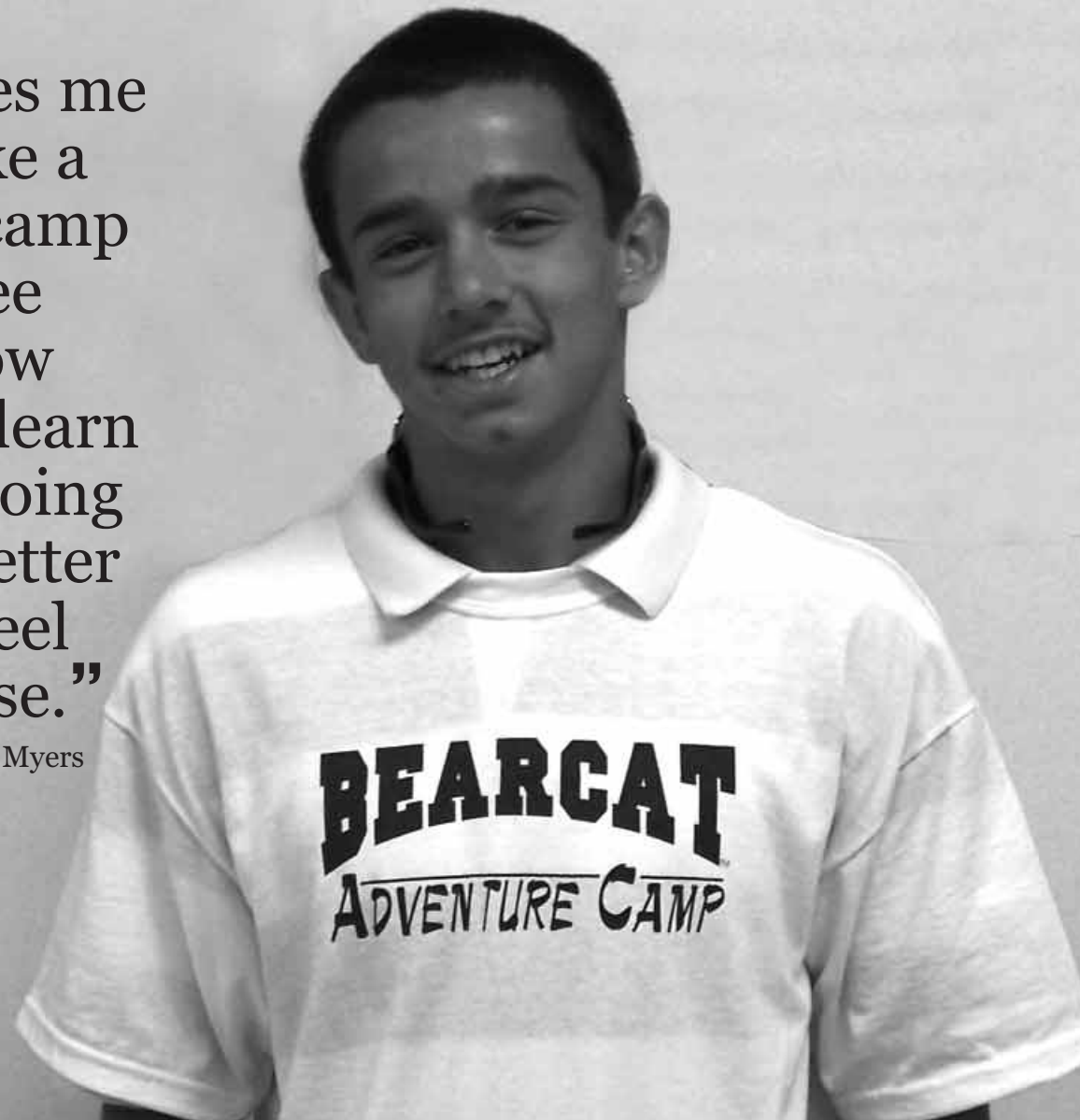
caring adults >

Nationally – $\frac{1}{3}$ of teens lack quality relationships with their parents.

In Northwest MO, 87% of our youth are experiencing this promise!

“ EmPowerMe pushes me through life. To take a group of kids to a camp for 5 days and to see how much they grow and the skills they learn knowing they are going back into society better people makes me feel like I have a purpose.”

– Raymond Myers





safe places and constructive use of time >

Nationally – Only **37%** of children and youth experience this promise.

84% of our youth in Northwest MO are experiencing this promise!

a healthy start>

Nationally, only **43%** of young people experience this promise.

In Northwest MO, **80%** of our youth are experiencing this promise!



an effective education >

Nationally, only **39%** of young people experience this promise.

80% of our youth in Northwest MO are experiencing this promise!



“Project Fit has helped me gain confidence in myself. I have improved my health overall by getting my heart pumping and blood flowing every morning.”

- Hannah



opportunities to help others >

Nationally, nearly **half** of all young people are not experiencing this promise.

66% of the youth in Northwest MO are experiencing this promise.

“ The emPower Plant and Jump Starters has impacted my life in many different ways. It has given me the opportunity and financial support to give back to my school community. I learned many new life skills and I am eager to teach others.”

- Chris Fimple



promises kept.

Clearly, when you invest in programs that support and promote the Five Promises, the quality of life for our youth improves.

Young people who have been involved in at least one of Heartland Foundation's programs are doing better than the average child in Northwest Missouri:

- 52.6% of program participants have performed volunteer work as compared to 39.8% of those who have not participated in a Foundation program.
- 63% of Foundation program alums are interested in participating in activities to make decisions about the community compared to 55% who have not participated.

73% of the young people who have been involved in Heartland Foundation programs say that none of the Five Promises are missing in their lives compared to 65% of those who have not participated in any Heartland Foundation program.

With the wonderful assistance of our partners and other youth-serving organizations in the region, we have been able to realize exciting trends!

- In 1999, only 43% of young people believed that they could contribute to the future of their community. Now, 82% say that they can.
- The first poll showed that only 33% of youth polled believed that new ideas offered by them were welcome in their communities. Now, fully 67% of them feel that way.
- 77% of our youth today feel valued by adults in their community. This figure was just 28% in 1999.
- 92% of our youth believe it is important for people their age to pay attention to their health.
- Alarming, the first poll revealed that 3 out of 4 young people planned to leave the region upon finishing high school or college. Now 2 out of 4 express that they plan to stay.

This is great news, but there is still work to do.

- 62% of our youth do not feel safe at school.
- 45% spent time with someone who could get them into trouble.
- 24% have been in some kind of trouble that caused a juvenile officer to get involved.
- In the past 12 months, 17.8% report they have thought about suicide.

invest in success.

Your active participation and investment
in Heartland Foundation
provides the resources needed
to continue to improve
on delivering the Five Promises.

It's an important evolution.

Witness it. Help us make it happen.



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www.heartlandfoundation.org