

CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR AT FIRST NIGHT BUFFALO

WNY United has partnered again with the Independent Health Foundation to produce the 22nd annual First Night Buffalo. The celebration runs from 5 to 10 p.m. on Friday, December 31st, at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. The annual holiday family tradition will provide families a variety of activities to ring in the New Year, including rides and amusements, a storybook land, hypnotist, music, magic, arts & crafts, scavenger hunt, exotic reptiles, the grand finale balloon drop and more. The \$8 event tickets, which are on sale now at all area Wegmans locations, include all rides, games and attractions. Children 2-years-old and under are free. Tickets are \$10 at the door. Free parking is available at the Fernbach, Main Place Mall and Turner ramps.



For a map and more information about the event visit www.FirstNightBuffalo.org or call (716) 635-4959.

WiNnY the Buffalo – Uniting the Herd to be Hands Off Drugs

A press event was held at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center on Tuesday, December 1st to unveil **WiNnY** the buffalo and kick off **First Night Buffalo**. **Mayor Byron Brown, Dr. Cropp**, President and CEO of Independent Health, and **Mark Simon**, President and CEO of UNYTS were featured speakers as well as **Beth Anzalone**, Program Director for WNY United. **Sheriff Howard** joined us to unify the message of staying safe by not drinking and driving this holiday season and LIT students from BUILD Academy #91 did the honors of unveiling **WiNnY**.



WiNnY the buffalo is covered in handprints from kids from all over Western New York who wanted to join our herd and help spread the important message of being “HANDS OFF DRUGS. **WiNnY** will continue to unite the herd by traveling to different WNY United partner schools as well as other locations throughout the year. **WiNnY** has been made possible thanks to the sponsorship by **Evans Bank**.

WNY United gratefully acknowledges the **Buffalo Niagara Convention Center staff including Paul Murphy and Marissa Kozerski**, for their support of this project as well as **Carrie Meyer, April Davis and Jen Mitri** from the **Independent Health Foundation**. A special thanks to **Howard Martin, Brenda Lamm** and all of our friends at **Evans Bank** for sponsoring **WiNnY** and helping us spread our message.



Special recognition to the following schools and organizations who have pledged to be **HANDS OFF DRUGS** by submitting handprints: AJ Schmidt Elementary, Alden High School, Alexander Central Schools, Alexander Hamilton Elementary, Brocton Central School, Build Academy BPS #91, Charter School of Applied Technologies, Christian Central Academy, Discovery School BPS #67, Frank A. Sedita Academy BPS #30, Gowanda Central School, H.O. Brumsted Elementary, J.T. Waugh Elementary School, Lindbergh Elementary, Nativity of Our Lord School, Niagara Day Care Center, Springville Griffith High School SADD, Roosevelt ECC #65, St. Gregory the Great, St. John the Baptist School, St. Joseph School, St. Peter R.C. School, Southern Tier Catholic/Archbishop Walsh, and Thomas Jefferson Elementary.

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At WNY United, we work together to create high quality substance abuse prevention programs that inspire children, teens and families to strive to be their best. As an organization, we target high-need locations where young people are most at risk, working with schools and community groups to reach as many people as possible. Ultimately, we strengthen the skills that youth need to face life's challenges.

School Community Action Team (SCAT) is a comprehensive plan for prevention: It is based on long term partnerships with schools and their surrounding communities to identify risk factors, assess capacities, and then develop and implement a tailored prevention plan made up of proven and appropriate strategies. SCAT includes evidence-based curricula, service learning training for students with leadership potential, academic mentoring, specialized training for adults and students, and ongoing technical assistance. We also work to change the surrounding environment with broad-based approaches such as awareness campaigns and special events.

Together, we help students learn to make healthy choices. We empower parents and teachers to guide them along the way. The result? You'll see it when you meet students who have participated in WNY United programs: They're confident, ready to face life's challenges and chase after their dreams. They also know that alcohol and other drugs will only get in their way.

We would like to welcome our new school partners for the 2010 -2011 school year. Buffalo Elementary School of Technology B.E.S.T #6, and Gowanda Central School District. It is our hope that we can work collaboratively to give you, your students, and community the necessary tools to make healthy choices and decisions.

We also want to thank our long standing SCAT (School Community Action Team) Partners for another year of program implementation.



Fourth row: Jessica Ulmer, Michelle Johns, Wes Borden
 Third row: Julie McCarthy, Becky Krebs, Sarah Paruta, Jen Calderon
 Second row: Denise Bitar, Tammy Regnet, Lynn Burdzy
 First row: Beth Anzalone, Program Director, Samantha Zappala, Theresa Villano

Buffalo Elementary School of Technology B.E.S.T. #6
 Debra Sevilian-Poles – Principal
 Wes Borden – Prevention Specialist

Dr. Antonia Pantoja Community School of Excellence #18
 Valerie Kent – Principal
 Theresa Villano – Prevention Specialist

Native American Magnet School #19
 Sixto Indalecio – Principal
 Theresa Villano – Prevention Specialist

Hillery Park Elementary #27
 Dr. Maria Miller – Acting Principal
 Tammy Regnet – Prevention Specialist

Frank A. Sedita Academy #30
 Wanda Schoenfeld – Principal
 Jessica Ulmer – Prevention Specialist

Harriet Ross Tubman School #31
 William Boatwright – Principal
 Jen Calderon – Prevention Specialist

Bilingual Center #33
 Miguel Medina – Principal
 Samantha Zappala – Prevention Specialist

Martin Luther King Multicultural Institute #39
 Ramona Reynolds – Principal
 Jen Calderon - Prevention Specialist

Lovejoy Discovery School #43
 David Hills – Principal
 Samantha Zappala - Prevention Specialist

Frederick Law Olmstead #56 & #64
 Michael Gruber – Principal
 Jessica Ulmer - Prevention Specialist

Lorraine Elementary #72
 Jackie Bavaro-Phelan – Principal
 Samantha Zappala - Prevention Specialist

Dr. Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence #89
 Mary Jo Conrad – Principal
 Wes Borden - Prevention Specialist

BUILD Academy #91
 Colleen Carota – Principal
 Theresa Villano - Prevention Specialist

Southside Elementary School #93
 Darlene Jesonowski – Principal
 Becky Krebs - Prevention Specialist

Buffalo Academy of Visual and Performing Arts #192
 Darren Brown – Principal
 Becky Krebs - Prevention Specialist

Cleveland Hill School District
 Dr. Sharon L. Huff - Superintendent
 Denise Bitar - Prevention Specialist
 Michelle Johns - Prevention Specialist

Frontier Central School District
 Vincent J. Coppola, EdD - Superintendent
 Lynn Burdzy - Prevention Specialist
 Michelle Johns - Prevention Specialist

Gowanda Central School District
 Charles Rinaldi - Superintendent
 Julie McCarthy - Prevention Specialist

Lake Shore Central District
 James E. Przepasniak - Superintendent
 Sarah Paruta - Prevention Specialist



RED RIBBON WEEK 2010

The effort to keep kids away from drugs goes on every day. But each year, from October 23rd – 31st, the effort enjoys greater visibility as people wear red ribbons and clothing, decorate schools and other public buildings in red, and create numerous events and activities to honor the memory of fallen DEA Agent **Enrique Camarena**, who was kidnapped and killed by drug traffickers. Since 1988, “National Red Ribbon Week” has been observed across the country not only as a tribute to Agent Camarena, but also as a way for people to show commitment to substance abuse prevention efforts and living lives free of the abuse of drugs.

BUILD ACADEMY #91 HOSTS “TEAM UP AGAINST DRUGS DAY” RALLY

On October 26th, BUILD Academy #91 hosted the “Red Ribbon Rally - Team Up Against Drugs Day”. A crowd of over 500 Pre K through eighth graders, teachers, dignitaries, and friends of prevention participated in the event. The school's principal **Ms. Carota** welcomed the students and guests and introduced Beth Anzalone, WNY United Program Director, who served as the emcee for the event. Buffalo DEA Agents **Brian Chella** and **Mike Hill** recounted “The Enrique Camarena Story” and applauded the students for participating in Red Ribbon Week and for choosing to lead drug-free lives.

Beth Anzalone turned the microphone over to Theresa Villano, WNY United Prevention Specialist for BUILD Academy, to host the game show, “Are You Smarter Than A Bills Player?” The contestants were none other than Buffalo Bills players **Keith Ellison**, **Fred Jackson**, **Paul Posluszny**, and **Jon Corto** who entered to the Bills Shout song. Fred Jackson was honored as a “WNY United Friend of Prevention” for his ongoing commitment to helping WNY United spread its message.

The Bills players were split into two teams and joined by students so the game could begin. Each team was then asked a series of drug/alcohol themed questions. Billy Buffalo, Buster Bison, and SCAT Cat were on stage to cheer on the two teams. It was a close game, but in the end the Ellison/Posluszny team prevailed. The winning team member was awarded a white “gold” trophy necklace. After the game each Bills player shared a little about themselves so the students could understand the importance of focusing on goals as a way to make their dreams come true.

WNY United Prevention Specialist **Theresa Villano** worked with the **Buffalo Bills Women's Association**, **Gretchen Geitter** and **Allison Jojnowski** of the Buffalo Bills to organize the appearance of the players.



“TAKE A STAND” BANNER CONTEST AND WALK

You could hear the chant “BE DRUG FREE”, as over one hundred of kids marched down Niagara Street in the first “Take a Stand” Banner Contest and Walk on October 27th. WNY United and West Side Community Services partnered to produce this event for local schools and community organizations. Contest participants were asked to create and carry a banner that presented a strong, positive prevention message. Each banner was paraded in front of a judging table manned by **David Rust**, Director of the Erie County Youth Bureau, **Nadia Moore**, Program Coordinator, Erie County Youth Bureau, and **Maria Whyte**, Erie County Legislator. While the judges tallied their votes, the parade to Niagara Street began, escorted by Mike Licata of the Erie County Sheriff's Department and including the Buffalo Police Explorers, Officer Gennie Rak, „National Guard, Sabretooth, Buster Bison and the Buffalo Jills.

The walkers returned to West Side Community Services for refreshments and a brief ceremony. Lucy Candelario, Executive Director, welcomed the participants and asked Daryl Barber, Youth Director at WSCS to emcee. The

program included: Gabrielle Vazquez, National Anthem; Leugim Castillo, Pledge of Allegiance; Sergio Trujillo, Pledge of Allegiance in Spanish; Dilexy Torres, “Take A Stand Drug-Free” Pledge.

The keynote speech was given by Chief Brian Patterson, of Buffalo Police Department, B District. He encouraged all to set goals, and to follow their

dreams. Legislator Whyte announced the results of the banner contest, indicating how difficult the decision had been. First place was awarded to Dr. Antonia Pantoja Community School of Excellence #18, second place to West Side Community Services, and third place to Southside Elementary #93.

We would like to thank the following schools and organizations for helping to make the first Take A Stand Banner Contest and Walk a huge success: Dr. Antonia Pantoja Community School of Excellence #18, Native American Magnet School #19, Hillery Park Elementary #27, Southside Elementary #93, and West Side Community Services.



Come visit Storybook Land at First Night Buffalo

You will feel like you “enter” each story with the help of the magnificent backdrops created by WNY United staff Samantha Zappala, and AmeriCorps staff Julia Hopson. The backdrops form a 12' x 8' “theater” to make the attendees feel like they are part of the story. You will also hear WYRK radio personalities such as Brett Alan and Wendy Lynn read the stories. Everyone will have the opportunity to meet the characters The Grinch, Olivia, Very Hungry Caterpillar, Wild Thing and Max (from Max & Ruby). It will be a magical experience for all!



Samantha Zappala creating The Grinch Who Stole Christmas Storyboards

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We would like to welcome Brian Chella, Carrie Meyer, Mary Lou Montanari, and Mary Ellen Mulvey to the WNY United Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse Agency Board. Thank you so much for joining us and our mission to spread this important message.

What Is WNY United?

WNY United Against Drug & Alcohol Abuse, Inc. is a grass roots initiative designed to increase awareness, educate, and mobilize area residents to participate actively in proven strategies to prevent substance abuse. We actively promote healthy choices. Funded by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services through the Erie County Department of Mental Health. Additional funds provided by the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, the Rich Family Foundation, the John R. Oishei Foundation, the WNY United Foundation, the Erie County Youth Bureau, and private contributions. Member of Px20, the Erie County Prevention Alliance.

WNY United Digest is published quarterly. We encourage community members to submit dates of interest and articles for sharing in this newsletter.

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