



Woodland Hills

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Visit our website to view our Annual Report and "Where Hope is Found" video.

Have an idea for future issues? If so, please email [Catrina Whitehead](mailto:Catrina.Whitehead@woodlandhills.org) at newsletter@woodlandhills.org.

Woodland Hills provides unwavering hope and opportunity for youth, families and communities.

Activities (continued)

Sheikh Ali from the College of St. Scholastica continues to provide Muslim guidance through Qur'an study and Pastor Jonas Dean offers a weekly Christian chapel.

Grandma's Restaurants, Inc. will host a holiday party for all residents on January 5. They will open the doors to Adventure Zone, an indoor game and recreation hall, for their use. Residents will have full use of the facility for free, all the pizza they can eat and receive a gift.

The Woodland Hills boys and girls varsity Friday night basketball league begins in January. The Wolves will play against other local varsity teams for a spot in the championship game at the end of the season. Additional information, including a schedule, may be found by visiting www.fridaynighthoops.org.

Other upcoming events include Winter Olympics (February 20-24), a Talent

Show (March) and an outdoor winter camping experience at Okpik, north of Ely, MN (date TBD).

The Youth Development Team strives to keep your children active, involved and experiencing new opportunities they may not otherwise have. If you have questions on any of these activities, or ideas on other opportunities, please contact your child's case manager.

Upcoming Activities

School Winter Recess	Dec. 23-Jan. 2
Grandma's Holiday Party	Jan. 5
Varsity Basketball Games	Fridays (Jan.-Mar.)
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day activities	Jan. 16
Boy's Varsity Basketball vs Mesabi Academy	Jan. 30 and Feb. 20
Winter Olympics	Feb. 20-24
Talent Show	TBD in March

A Definition of Success

My Definition of success, is being independent, and leaning less and less, on those people called your "parents". When you have what you need, to survive on your own, that doesn't mean the streets, it means in a home. Education is a major part, something that you need, book and street smarts, not falling into greed. Money is an object, it doesn't make you happy, it's something that'll help you connect, with real things that are your duty. The responsibility of positive decision making, now this one's crucial, not walking down a hall listening to shackles go kling-kling, that shouldn't be your usual. The idea of success, is to have these traits, and thank God that I'm blessed, to learn them in this place. Are you successful? In my eyes people need, success to be right,

they need it to see what's out of sight, success is like a seed. If one person is, successful, they can teach others to be, people can be full of good things to water certain needs. Positive influence is a big thing too, a nice role-model is what you should be, you don't have to be a thug, hard, or cool, if you're positive, you stand your ground, you're like a tree. If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything, and I'll still stay here humming, that success is the key. What's your definition of success? Is it anything like mine? Everybody stand up and yell this, that "Victory is mine and I will survive!" I am successful, what about you? And I hold full control, of my life and what I do.

~ John Trailblazer



December 2011

Woodland Hills provides unwavering hope and opportunity for youth, families and communities.



Empowering Youth. Teaching Responsibility. Healing Lives.

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Bringing Together Families, Communities and Woodland Hills

Happy Holidays From Woodland Hills

The holidays are upon us and our residents are as busy as ever. The community has embraced their hard work by treating them to a Winter Feast at Hope United Methodist Church on December 7 and Grandma's Restaurants will host a holiday party at their Adventure Zone for our youth on January 5.

Around campus activities are planned to help your child enjoy the holiday season. Groups are actively participating in a department decorating contest acknowledging the diversity of cultures from around the world. A special dinner is planned on Christmas Day for the residents featuring Cordon Bleu and Pastor Jonas Dean will offer a special holiday music program.

Woodland Hills understands this can be a difficult time of year and we make every effort to help you celebrate the holidays with your child. Below are a few reminders regarding visits and expectations in providing gifts for your child: On December 25 and January 1, visitation is from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Special considerations can be discussed if you wish to visit your child outside of these hours during holiday and cultural observances.

You are welcome to bring wrapped gifts when you visit. The following items can be in your child's possession while they reside at Woodland Hills:

- Clothing
- Books
- Hygiene products (need to be non-aerosol and without alcohol content)

• Gift cards (We ask that you give the card to Conference Center staff so it can be recorded and placed in a safe for the weekend since the Business Office will be closed.)

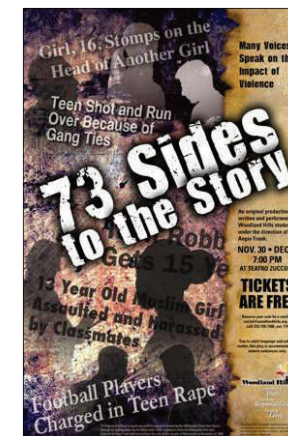
Items that should not be brought as gifts include:

- Electronics (i.e. MP3 players, iPod, iPad, iTouch, cell phones, DVD players, etc.)
- Food or candy
- Cash
- CD's or DVD's
- Glass items
- Expensive jewelry

If you have any questions about this, please contact your child's case manager. Thank you and Happy Holidays!

~ Mary Steiner, Director of Residential Services

Theatre for Social Action



Theatre for Social Action took place at Woodland Hills this fall. The Minnesota State Arts Board funded a project at Woodland Hills to explore the causes and impacts of teen violence. The Cougars, Lakers, Falcons, Pioneers, and Trailblazers worked on their original script titled, *73 Sides to the Story: Many Voices Speak on the Impact of Violence*. Community performances were held at Teatro Zuccone in the Zeitgeist Arts Building on November 30 and December 1 in front of

100+ community members each night.

The goal of Theatre for Social Action is to bring understanding to sensitive or controversial issues by offering multiple perspectives on the issue. When the multiple perspectives are performed on stage, it is easier for audiences to connect to the emotions and relate to what the character is experiencing. It is hoped that through this experience the

~ continued on page 2



Anastasia, Sally and Cheyanne of the Cougar group performing their side to the story.

"I can see all the things this project helped me accomplish. Such as, overcoming fear and anxiety, stress, don't be afraid of yourself, and that I'm a totally awesome writer."

~ Student Artist, 73 Sides to the Story

Theatre (continued)

audience opens their minds to think about the issue in more depth.

Students participating in this project read a newspaper report about an incident of teen violence and from that factual basis, imagined all of the characters involved. They explored how the mother of a victim feels, how the best friend of a perpetrator feels, or

the impact of the incident on a child in the neighborhood.

Two plays were also studied, *Fire in the Mirror* by Anna Deavere Smith and *The Larami Project* by Moises Kaufman, as examples of documentary theater and how performance can stimulate communication on issues of concern in communities. In all, five topics were interwoven with the

talents and interests of the students involved to produce a complete story.

If you have questions regarding Theatre for Social Action, please contact your child's case manager. A DVD of the performance will be available soon for viewing at Woodland Hills.

~ Angie Frank Teaching Artist

Woodland Hills Girls Help Darfur Women



For the second consecutive year, girls in the Laker residential care unit at Woodland Hills created batches of soup as a fundraiser for the Darfur Stoves Project. Working with Chef Colleen Betts, the girls made chicken noodle soup using a secret recipe containing healing and immune-boosting properties. Enough soup was made to fill the 42 orders they received from the public and

the money raised will be used to purchase energy-efficient stoves for Darfuri women.

On average, Darfuri women walk seven hours, three or four times a week to find enough firewood to cook for their families, risking personal violence with every step. This new stove requires half the fuel of a traditional one, reducing the amount of time they have to spend searching for firewood.

It's a project the Laker girls eagerly supported as many have experienced dangerous situations themselves. Their treatment at Woodland Hills is

helping them to heal, learn responsibility and be empowered to change themselves and the world. The Darfur Stoves Project allowed them to do just that.

The girls are proud of their efforts as they raised enough money through donations and soup orders to purchase 37 stoves for the women of Darfur. That's enough to put 675,250 meals on the table over the lifetime of the stoves. Congratulations Lakers!

For more information on the Darfur Stoves Project, visit www.darfurstoves.org.

Cultural and Recreational Activities

Woodland Hills embraces the diversity of its students and staff. The Youth Development Team (YDT) is excited to share the following activities that are meant to motivate, inspire and create memories for our students.

Did you know that Woodland Hills has an African American Student Alliance (AASA) group? Our boys group has been active in the community working on projects and participating in

events. They will observe Kwanzaa December 26-January 1 and also be part of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations in Duluth on January 16. Also in January, we are proud to announce the start of a girls AASA group, mentored by a volunteer from the University of Minnesota Duluth Multicultural Center.

The Native American Student Association (NASA) continues to be active and participates in

a monthly sweat lodge. A new drum group is planned and members will learn how to make and use one of their own drums. NASA members have also participated in powwows throughout the year. A much anticipated visit by world champion fancy dancer, Larry Yazzie, is being planned this winter. Details to be announced soon.

~ continued on page 4



Ken Stafford, Facilities Support Specialist; Jessica Sweeney, Recreation Manager; Cleo the llama; Anne Macaulay, Husbandry Program; Pastor Jonas Dean

Neighborhood Youth Services: Alum Shares Her Story

It's a toss up, really, as to who is more grateful.

As a child growing up in Duluth's Central Hillside neighborhood, Brigette Eckwood gravitated to the after-school program known as NYS.

"Everyday I would go there and get help with homework, play with my friends and eat dinner. I loved going because it was something positive to do in our community and something I felt a part of. Being surrounded by positive people helped me make positive choices."

That's exactly what Neighborhood Youth Services (NYS) provides to a diverse mix of 6-to-17-year olds for

free. From its base in the Washington Center in downtown Duluth, NYS offers individual and team recreation, arts activities, a job readiness program, computer lab, homework help, a mentor program, outdoor recreation and environmental education, and service learning projects.

"At NYS, I had opportunities to do activities as a kid I couldn't afford, like experiencing a water park and a Twins baseball game and participating in a dance group."

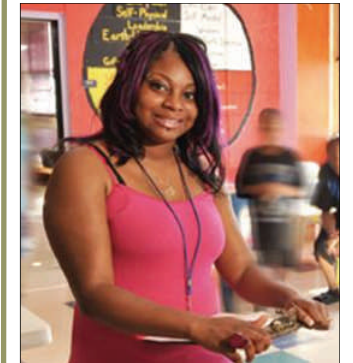
Now 22, Brigette is still involved with NYS but in a different capacity. She serves as a youth worker and program advocate, and is

wildly popular among the 600+ NYS youth and their families. Brigette draws on the drill team skills she learned as a youngster as she leads Majur Atraktion, a 24-member dance troupe that routinely performs in the community.

"I feel good about the path I took after graduating. I have a chance to serve my community and work with children. They need positive role models in their lives to enhance their future success."

To learn more about NYS, visit www.cuatnys.org or call 218.723.3523.

~ Cindy Finch Agency Relations Director



Brigette Eckwood, Mentor Duluth Advocate/ Youth Worker



The mission of Neighborhood Youth Services is to engage diverse youth by offering hope, a sense of belonging, and opportunities to reach their full potential.

Endowment Scholarship Funds Opportunities

The Endowment Scholarship Fund of Woodland Hills represents a commitment of educational support to help youth find their success even after they leave. Financial assistance is available for current and former Woodland Hills' youth interested in attending a trade school, college or similar career training program.

Two scholarship funds help make this possible.

The Johnson-Lundin Family Scholarship is a one-time award of \$5,000 for educational costs at an accredited college in Minnesota. While the selection process recognizes an applicant's GPA, the scholarship award is based on an applicant's determination,

work ethic and proven commitment to completing his/her education and being successful in a chosen field of study. Money can be spent on tuition, textbooks, tools, and program-specific supplies, such as lab fees or a calculator. Applications are due April 1.

Seeds for Success scholarships of up to \$2,000 are considered on the first of April, July and November. Funds can be applied to tuition, on-campus housing and textbooks. Awards are based on the student's educational plan, commitment to personal growth and intent to complete a service-learning project.

Applications to both funds is acceptable. To apply, a student must complete an application form and submit it to the Endowment Fund Committee of Woodland Hills. Applications are available by contacting Erik Mattson at 218.728.7500 ext. 171 or by visiting www.woodlandhills.org/about and clicking on "endowment scholarship fund."

~ Cindy Finch Agency Relations Director



Scholarship Deadlines
Johnson-Lundin Family Scholarship April 1
Seeds for Success April, July and November