

## Young people inspire with volunteerism

### United Way programs give teens a voice and purpose

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At a time when skepticism is mounting, one need only look at young people in our community for inspiration.

Just this week, United Way of Larimer County officials announced that more than 900 students volunteered 4,000 hours to raise \$20,600 from the community in an energetic high school fundraising challenge. The money will go to the United Way's Community Impact Fund.

Two students, Paul Kauzmann and Lydia O'Reilly, who sit on the United Way of Larimer County board of directors, came up with the idea earlier this year because both wanted to contribute to the agency as do other directors. They also wanted to send a strong message that high school students can make a big difference in their community.

The Bohemian Foundation is matching the \$20,600 with a donation to each participating high school. The donation will be equal to the amount each school raised, and students will have a voice in deciding how the money will be spent.

Meanwhile, in another positive example, dozens of teens spent a part of their Spring Break volunteering through the "Alternative Spring Break, Youth Responding to Poverty" program facilitated by United Way of Larimer County.

Students worked at either the Sister Mary Alice Murphy Center for Hope or the Food Bank for Larimer County to lend a hand and to learn more about how poverty and homelessness impacts the community.

Both efforts symbolize that many young people in Fort Collins have the capacity to understand the connection of poverty to their community and the ability to do something about it.