



High Mountain Youth Project NEWSLETTER

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LINCOLN COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

www.highmountainyouth.org

May 2019

3rd Annual Great High Mountain Bed Race

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The 3rd Annual Great High Mountain Bed Race and Green Chile Cook-off is less than a month away! This year the “kick off” parade will begin at 9:00 am on Saturday, June 1st with the bed race following at 9:30. The parade route will be extended this year to allow spectators to choose their favorite bed (and team) to cheer on to victory during the race. Six teams are currently signed up for the race, but there’s still plenty of time to form your team and build your bed. A bed-building workshop will be held on Saturday, May 11th, from 2 - 4pm behind Ruidoso Animal Clinic; please email Luther Light at highmountainbedrace@gmail.com to reserve your space at the workshop.



Bed race winners, Heber “Freshboyz” Ramos and team (2018)

Schedule of Events:

The “Parade of Beds” will form at Zipline Park on the corner of Country Club Drive and Sudderth Drive between 8:30 – 9:00 am and “roll” through mid-town Ruidoso to Grindstone and Sudderth Drive where the race will begin at 9:30 am. The Green Chile Cook-off and other festivities will follow the race at Zipline Park from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm. Once again, there will be a myriad of games and booths at the park to test the skills of all ages. Six local restaurants have already shown interest in participating in the Green Chile Cook-off. Participating restaurants will serve their favorite green chile dishes during the event and judges will announce the first, second and third place winners at 1:00 pm along with the “People’s Choice” award which will be based on votes from the crowd. A “No-Chile” food tent will be available to provide other types of foods.

KC Dorgan’s Zipline will be available with all proceeds going to High Mountain Youth Project (age restrictions for the zipline may apply). The “Celebrity Jail” will return this year, with local “personalities” seeking bail money from friends and family to earn their release. Local radio station KWES will broadcast from Zipline Park from 10:00 until noon. A silent auction is being planned with bids accepted until 1:00 pm on the day of the bed race. This year, the auction will include two nights’ lodging and breakfast at the Hilton Hotel in Houston, TX, entry to Space Center Houston (next to Johnson Space Center), and a round of golf for two at Bay Oaks Country Club in Houston.



Land Titles won the “People’s Choice” award.

The Branding Outlet of Ruidoso is donating Bed Race T-shirts again this year. The T-shirts are priced at \$10 each and can be ordered ahead of time by sending an email to: info@highmountainyouth.org; include quantities, sizes and a phone number in your email. Proceeds from The Great High Mountain Bed Race and Green Chile Cook-off will help support High Mountain’s Drop-In and Study Center, located at 700 Mechem Drive in Ruidoso.

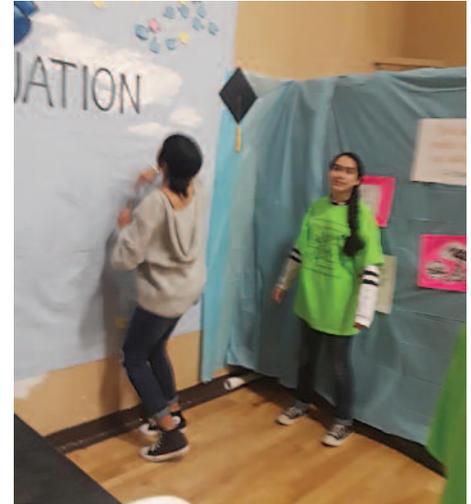
Heber “Freshboyz” Ramos and his team won both the 1st Annual and 2nd Annual Great High Mountain Bed Race and they’re eager to defend their title. Get your teams together and get them in shape! It’s time to “take these guys down”!

HMYP Program Manager Attends Community Dinners

In recent months, HMYP Program Manager, Lucy Rodriguez has been attending community dinners sponsored by local churches to share information about HMYP's Drop-in and Study Center. The board appreciates Ms. Rodriguez's initiative to attend the dinners to reach individuals in the community and share information about the Drop-in and Study Center and its services. Ms. Rodriguez and HMYP board members were recently invited to attend "Literacy Night" on Tuesday, May 7th, from 4 – 6 pm at the Ruidoso Middle School. HMYP looks forward to the opportunity to provide information (and literature) about the Drop-in and Study Center to Middle School parents.

HMYP Participates in Maze of Life

On March 7th and 8th, 228 Eighth grade students from Lincoln County and Mescalero Reservation had the opportunity to travel through the "Maze of Life" at the Ruidoso High School. The Maze of Life is an interactive health fair sponsored by the Lincoln County Health Council's Youth Engagement Committee, Lincoln County DWI Prevention and Region 9 Education Cooperative. HMYP was one of twenty community agencies to offer interactive booths to work with students on issues that are of concern to them. Other agencies included COPE, ICAN Nutrition, Ruidoso Public Library, the NEST (the local domestic violence shelter) and Lincoln County DWI and Drug Enforcement. At HMYP's booth, students were asked to jump as high as they could (without a step and a second time with a step) and place a post-it on the wall. HMYP's Drop-in and Study Center offers a place to study, the use of laptops for homework and tutors (if needed) to help them stay in school and graduate, thereby offering them a "step up" that they might need to help them succeed.



Jasline Polendo, along with other Natural Helpers, assisted HMYP staff and volunteers with 8th grade students who visited the HMYP booth.

BEHIND THE SCENES:



President Clayton Alred leads the HMYP board and staff in a "SWOT" Analysis.

HMYP Board Does SWOT Analysis: President Clayton Alred called for a special meeting for board members and Drop-in Center staff on February 20th. The purpose of the meeting was to identify organizational characteristics and concerns in four broad categories: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) related to HMYP's organization. All items discussed were accepted and recorded for consideration. "Student Attendance" at the Drop-in and Study Center was identified as the most significant concern to the organization. After identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (re-categorized as "challenges"), the participants voted on the characteristics in each category that they believed to be most important (other than student attendance). Some of the characteristics identified were: **Strengths:** Volunteers/Donors, P.R. (writing and graphics), fundraising activities, mission and their Drop-in facility; **Weaknesses:** Stigma (students don't want to be identified as homeless), fewer Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Members attending meetings, and lack of community involvement; **Opportunities:** Sponsor TePee Lounge lunches at the high school, develop a "Youth Advisory Committee" to involve students in

suggesting improvements for the Drop-in and Study Center, offer HMYP speakers to more community organizations to share information about the drop-in and study center services, consider networking with similar organizations, and increase social media campaigns that target youth to change student perception; and Threats: Staff, volunteer and board member "burnout", limited personnel for fundraising and special events and (especially) lack of funding to proceed with an overnight shelter.

As a result of the most popular suggestion under "Opportunities", the board sponsored weekly lunches at Ruidoso High School's TePee Lounge (the high school's culinary arts dining room). A HMYP board member and staff member joined students for the meals and shared information about the Drop-in and Study Center with the hope that the students will share the information with their friends.



Calvary Church Women's Conference: On the 5th and 6th of April, High Mountain Youth Project Drop-in and Study Center Program Manager, Lucy Rodriguez was invited to attend a Women's Conference at the Calvary Church where HMYP was sponsored along with other helping agencies. Mrs. Jeannie McGregor was HMYP's sponsor and presented information on the Drop-in and Study Center and what the center has to offer as well as volunteer opportunities. Other helping agencies featured were Christian Services of Lincoln County, Mescalero Care Center Volunteers, Prisoners of Hope Motorcycle Ministries, New Covenant Christian Church University of New Mexico (UNM) Campus Ministry, Kairos Outside Prison Ministry, Lincoln County Food Bank, Lone Tree, End it, a coalition of organizations fighting against slavery, Celebrate Recovery, a 12 step program dealing with addictions, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Life Way of Lincoln County Pregnancy Center and the NEST. The conference was well attended and several of the attendees expressed an interest in volunteering at the drop-in center and will schedule a tour of the center sometime in the future.

Americorps Volunteers Return to HMYP: Americorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) is a national service organization for young adults aged 18 -24 who want to give back to their communities while earning credit toward college or vocational education. This year, a group of nine Americorps NCCC volunteers arrived at Ft. Stanton in mid-April, and, together with other community service projects in Lincoln County, will be serving as Youth Workers at the HMYP Drop-in and Study Center alongside staff and seasoned volunteers. On Tuesday, May 1st, eight Americorps volunteers received a basic orientation to serve as Youth Workers at the Drop-in and Study Center. Students who visited the evening drop-in center last year while the Americorps volunteers were serving as Youth Workers, thoroughly enjoyed spending time with the "younger" volunteers.



A Note from the Editor:

High Mountain Youth Project's Drop-in and Study Center was founded in 2014 to address a continuing need in our community to provide assistance to teens who are trying to stay in school and graduate. Some of these teens are "couch surfing" or living with relatives, while others have to wear the same clothes day after day without washing. Some of them never know where they'll be able to take their next shower or eat their next meal or what they'll do if their only pair of shoes falls apart.

The Great High Mountain Bed Race is the largest fundraising event sponsored each year to support the High Mountain Youth Project Evening Drop-in and Study Center. Individual donations provide the majority of the funding needed to keep the Drop-in and Study Center open.

If you have considered supporting our cause but haven't gotten around to it, please consider making a tax-deductible donation today by sending your check to: High Mountain Youth Project, P.O. Box 2646, Ruidoso, NM 88355 or by donating online through High Mountain Youth Project's website: www.HighMountainYouth.org.

We thank you for your support of this important cause.

Make a Difference in Someone's Tomorrow **—VOLUNTEER TODAY—**

High Mountain Youth project (HMYP) is looking for volunteer Youth Workers to staff its Evening Drop-in and Study Center. The Center is open daily and provides services for students aged 14 – 19 who need assistance.

The Center offers snacks and a hot meal, a place to shower and do laundry, and a place to study, use computers and receive help with homework. It provides a safe and healthy environment where students can relax, and interact with other students and trained, caring adults. For more information, email info@highmountainyouth.org or call 575-808-8633 and leave a message.

We envision a loving and caring community where all youth are protected, empowered, loved, respected and treated with dignity.

Our mission is to involve the communities of Lincoln County, New Mexico, in providing a comprehensive safety net for high school students experiencing homelessness.