



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Crisis Center operates the Youth as Resources development effort and other programs.

## THE CRISIS CENTER

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**Spokesman:** Gavin Mariano, program coordinator

**Tell us about your Youth as Resources program:**

"The Crisis Center began in 1971. It has since evolved into an agency that is comprised of seven programs. All programs are designed to give children, youth and families the tools and resources they need to improve the quality of their lives. One of the seven programs is Youth as Resources, which is the youth development program of the agency."

**When did this program begin?**

"It's been a part of the agency since 1998. YAR was a national model brought here by Americorps volunteers. The executive director, Shirley Caylor, decided to retain the program because of the sheer good work that it did for the youth in our community."

**How does YAR work?** "Youth from

this area (Lake and Porter counties) join YAR and sit on the advisory board, which raises money and, each quarter, awards that money in the form of mini-grants to other existing youth groups in the area. The groups that apply for grants carry out creative and educational service projects."

**Tell us about the grants:** "The grants range from \$40 to \$400 each. The projects must be youth-led. YAR offers youth a chance to present project proposals to their peers instead of a group of adults. Whether it's being a part of the advisory board or part of the group applying for the grant, there are plenty of skills to be gained, including social responsibility, public speaking and math skills."

**What are the ages of those on the advisory board?** "Typically, 13 years and up can join by visiting us online or by calling me. The meetings, held once a month in different locations, are fun, informal and we have free food. We

have at-risk kids, honor-roll kids, different socioeconomic backgrounds, even college kids."

**How do kids apply for a grant?**

"They may apply with the help of an adult adviser in youth groups that are associated with a not-for-profit organization. You can download an application or call me."

**How does Youth as Resources raise money?** "The advisory board raises money through fun fundraisers, such as car washes, gift wrapping and donations from area businesses."

**For what projects has YAR given grants?** "Past projects include refurbishing a playground at a battered women's shelter. Elementary kids also made care packages and sent them to our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan."

**Anything else you would like to add?** "We are recruiting youth to serve on the advisory board."

— Compiled by Janis Moore, Past-Tribune correspondent