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Tennessee's Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

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"Promoting Change Through Youth Voice and Leadership"

October 1, 2011

Dear Community Partner,

On behalf of Tennessee Voices for Children, I would like to introduce a developing dynamic group of young leaders eager to make great strides in the state of Tennessee. The Youth In Action Council is comprised of youth ages 11-19, devoted to increasing awareness on issues surrounding youth with mental health diagnoses. The youth participants are a diverse, co-ed, multi-cultural group, dedicated to having their voice heard on issues that concern them the most. The Youth In Action council was founded in 2000 and we are opening recruitment for new members for our Middle Tennessee council, to create an awesome movement with our existing councils located in Jackson and Columbia. Although the members of the Youth In Action Council are different and unique individuals, they will be united with the common goal of erasing the stigma associated with mental health issues through leadership, education, and advocacy.

We hope to identify council members that have experience or a proactive interest in mental health issues, whether personal or through a close family member or friend. This group will speak from their personal experience, whether good or challenging, to change the way that people view and work with youth on mental health issues. This year we would like to partner with their peers, educators, principals, and other youth advocates in the community to lend assistance with leadership, communication, and training skills development. The council will actively be involved in speaking to adults and youth at state and national conferences, schools, legislative policy transformation meetings, and educational seminars about mental health issues and guiding their system of care from a youth perspective. The council members will also participate in community awareness campaigns, service learning projects, fundraising, volunteer activities and let's not forget our "fun time" events. Through this effort, we envision youth with mental health issues will flourish as leaders in our community.

We would like your assistance and support by referring any youth that you believe to be a good candidate for this council. We will have our next scheduled council meeting, **October 12, 2011 6:00 pm at the Martha O'Bryan Center, Nashville, TN.** Due to continued expressed concerns from many educators and partners on the issue of transportation, we are willing to hold meetings at your school or location after school or during summer programs/sessions to accommodate youth and parents, if you have 5 or more identified council candidates. We are always looking to involve youth in our council, especially those who are often misunderstood because they may have some challenges. We believe youth will gain many rewarding benefits such as leadership skills, improved self-esteem, confidence, and an empowered voice that will carry into their daily lives. You may distribute our materials to others that may benefit from this information. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We thank you for all you do on behalf of youth in Tennessee and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards,

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