

## **Background on Plymouth Christian Youth Center**

PCYC is a non-sectarian non-profit 501(c)(3) community-based organization with a fifty-two year history of providing services on a non-sectarian basis to youth and families of diverse cultures. Founded by Luther Seminary students out of a Lutheran tradition of social justice, it was first housed in an old hotel on Plymouth Avenue near Washington, and relocated to the present location in 1969. Over 100,000 have participated in the various educational, social, recreational and neighborhood programs since its founding. Focusing on at-risk/at-promise youth in North Minneapolis, PCYC gives kids with enormous obstacles the opportunity to grow up right and fulfill their equally enormous potential.

The mission of Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC) is *to enrich the skills, prospects and spirit of North Minneapolis youth in partnership with families and communities.*

PCYC programs include diverse options for children, youth and families conceived to meet the agency mission and goals. Services are offered through two program divisions: the Education Division (Alternative School) and Youth and Family Development. Programs in these divisions include:

### Youth and Family Development Programs

- After School Enrichment provides academic, social and recreational learning experiences during non-school hours for neighborhood children ages kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Summer Friends offers a summer program for children ages kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade combining academic enrichment with recreational and social experiences.
- Capri Summer Cultural Arts Program provides an intensive performing arts experience for youth ages 9 to 13. Youth work with professional artists from the Twin Cities to create an original performance which is staged at PCYC's Capri Theater.
- Friendship Groups and Clubs, offered at Minneapolis elementary schools for more than 30 years, help nearly 600 children in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade learn behavior management and social skills and overcome isolation.
- Rocking Readers links volunteers with kindergarten children in the public schools, introducing the children to reading and conversation in one-to-one reading sessions.
- STEEP (Steps Towards Effective and Enjoyable Parenting): Working with up to 25 teen moms and their babies at a time, STEEP uses an "attachment model" with home visits and social support groups to enhance parent-child relationships and to help mothers connect to resources to strengthen their developing families.

### Education Division – Alternative School

- The PCYC Alternative School, operating as a contract alternative with Minneapolis Public Schools, serves approximately 300 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who have not been successful in their regular public school setting. The PCYC Alternative School offers a basic, state-mandated curriculum, working toward the achievement of a high school diploma through small learning communities in cultural arts, service learning and technology.

- The Alternative School After-School Program provides academic, social and recreational learning experiences during out-of-school time for students in the Alternative School.
- The Health and Wellness Program provides comprehensive health care and social work services for adolescents in the Alternative School including health self-assessment, vision and hearing screening, health education classes and groups, fitness and nutrition activities, and student and family support services. Northpoint Health and Wellness Center partners to offer an in-school health clinic. PCYC is also piloting a wellness program in mind-body skills to teach youth how to maintain control of their mental and emotional well-being and reduce stress.

As an agency PCYC also offers numerous community-building and cultural arts activities which span both divisions and also involve community. These include neighbor groups, cultural arts for and by the community and PCYC participants and regular community activities and events. The PCYC neighbors' group acts as a neighborhood block club and also serves as an advisory task force helping to shape new initiatives and provide input on strategic planning. PCYC sponsors weekly Saturday afternoon movies for families centered on the Capri Theater. At the Capri, PCYC also sponsors theater, music and art performances for the community, and also encourages theater use by artists seeking an appropriate venue. The popular Children's Christmas Gift Sale, an annual event at PCYC for over 40 years, gives nearly 1,000 neighborhood children can purchase (for \$1) up to five new items as presents for their family members. The event involves hundreds of volunteers from across the Twin Cities in this effort to help children learn the joy of giving. PCYC also sponsors several community gatherings and dinners throughout the year.

Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC), is located at the intersection of West Broadway and Oliver Avenue North in North Minneapolis.

### **Rationale for Improvements to the Capri Theater**

The attached budget includes the cost of completely replacing the theater seating in the Capri Theater.

To function as an adequate performance space for youth participants as well as other community arts organizations and community artists, the Capri needs immediate improvements to create a more viable performance and visual arts venue until we complete a capital campaign, to be initiated later this year, to completely renovate the theater. To ensure effective summer programming, PCYC would need to replace damaged and worn seating left over from the last renovation (some time in the 60s). The existing seats are set uncomfortably close together by today's standards, and offer less leg room than the current coach seat in a airplane. Many seats are missing backs or arms, leaving only the bolts on which to rest elbows, and many also have worn or torn upholstery.

With this improvement, the Capri could serve as a venue for PCYC's many programs (including theater performances by the Summer Cultural Arts Program, Positive Cool (spoken word and music production, described below), Saturday Family Movies, teen talent shows, etc.

The theater, which is the only remaining theater in North Minneapolis, would also be a value asset for partnering arts groups, performers and artists who need a professional venue for their productions.

Wireless microphones will be required for professional productions, and we have also included them in the budget.

### **Music production/spoken word technology**

PCYC currently has a sound studio which includes four stations for digital music production. The budget calls for the addition of six sound stations.

PCYC offers music production and spoken word activities through Positive Cool, an after-school program for youth in grades 9 to 12, and for youth in summer arts programs. Under the instruction and coaching of a skilled technology artist, youth learn to create their own music and sound design. They learn to use interactive software such as Garage Band to create original music, burn their creations onto CD's, record live audio, shoot and edit video footage, produce video and audio clips, and broadcast their products on MTV, create their own websites, and showcase their talents and creations at community gatherings.

Music production can be seen as a "drop-in" program, though once youth have begun learning music production they would need to follow through to gain expertise in using the technology available. Paired with spoken word classes, this option has high appeal to youth, and provides an attractive summer option.