

Hopkinton youth takes leadership to the national level

by Erica Brown

Hiller Matthew Dry sits on the National Youth Advisory Board for the Souper Bowl of Caring which equips and mobilizes congregations, schools and businesses to positively impact their communities by collecting money or food on or near Super Bowl weekend in an attempt to end hunger by donating to a charity of choice.

Dry worked with Grace United Methodist Church last February to help collect food during the Souper Bowl of Caring and 100 percent of the effort went to Project Just Because. Around that time, Dry's mother, Pastor Leigh Dry of Grace United Methodist, suggested he apply for a National Youth Advisory position with the organization, and a bit surprised Dry was one of 16 youths across the country selected to participate.

In his application, he focused on his Hopkinton Eagle Scouts experience and explained how the leadership techniques he had learned with the Scouts could be applied to the Souper Bowl of Caring on a national level.

The 16 youths congregated last July in Columbia, South Carolina for four days to brainstorm ways to promote the Souper Bowl of Caring. Working in groups of four, Dry was placed on the Media and Marketing team which created the idea to network with NFL teams to garner media spots and/or other financial support to fight hunger. The team created a template that organizations can use to solicit home football teams during Super Bowl weekend.

"The meeting was really fun," commented Dry, "they (Souper Bowl of Caring) did a very good job mixing work with fun and I think we all learned a lot from it." During the four day meeting, the sophomores, juniors and seniors worked at food pantries and went to an amusement park, but the outing that most touched Dry was the day the group of 16 set up a food pantry starting at 4 a.m.

"Very few people understand how lucky they are to have everything they have," noted Dry from the experience.

Dry served coffee at the food pantry and was able to meet just about everyone that came in for a precious hot meal.

"You could tell that the economy had hit hard," said Dry. He noted that the pantry's clientele were not all homeless and some came in with I-Phones and Blue Tooth headsets. He admits to feeling nervous at first but felt the experience was educational in many ways.

He was particularly affected by one man who appeared very weathered and hungry and when Dry attempted to clear some plates from a table, the man told Dry to "Hold on Son," and he collected a half eaten biscuit from a near-by tray to add to his own meal.

Dry encourages anyone who is interested in ending hunger to please visit the Souper Bowl of Caring website and the organization can help get individuals or groups started with an action plan for Super Bowl weekend. Souperbowl.org.



Matt Dry

staff photo

Leah Raczynski selected for Mission of Peace

The Mission of Peace (MOP) is a yearly journey of discovery and Shalom to nations in our global community sponsored by the Northeast Jurisdictional Council on Youth Ministries (NEJCYM) of the United Methodist Church. MOP participants worship in churches, meet youth in churches and civic organizations and share with people who have a similar longing for peace and understanding.

Leah Raczynski, who will be entering 9th grade at Hopkinton High School this fall and is a member of Grace United Methodist Church in Hopkinton, has been selected as one of four New England regional delegates for the 2009-2010 Mission of Peace. This year's MOP travels to Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore, India from December 27, 2009 – January 12, 2010.

The MOP journey leads each participant to discover God's Spirit at work in the world. It is an experience of God's extended family. It is primarily a people-to-people experience in which delegates learn from their hosts how they live as disciples of Jesus Christ in their country. It is a mission which has brought people closer to God's hope for community where all are sisters and brothers.

The Mission of Peace was brought into existence in 1984 by the NEJCYM Legislative Session at Albright College. Each year since, the NEJCYM Legislative Session has affirmed the priority of the Mission of Peace in order that new understandings of community and shalom might continue to develop. Participants must raise \$5,000 funds in support of their trip.

Donations in support of Leah's Mission of Peace are greatly appreciated. If you would like Leah to visit your church or organization to talk about the Mission of Peace, either before or after the trip, please call Reverend Leigh Dry at Grace United Methodist Church (508-625-1189).



Leah courtesy photo

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