

Kind Words From Recent SDOP Grant Recipients:



On behalf of the youth and adult staff at **The Center for Teen Empowerment**, we thank you for your grant to the youth organizers at Teen Empowerment. This will be used for our second annual Southwest Rochester Peace March. It is designed to kick off a safe summer vacation season and highlight the role quality education, stable housing, jobs, health and justice play in creating community peace. Typically, summer months see an increase in violent activity and crime among youth. The youth organizers (14-20 years old) believe that by bringing together the community in events such as these, building relationships between youth and between youth and adults, and providing alternative activities that meet the needs of our peers and help them better understand the way their behavior affects society and how society affects their behavior, we can shift the social norms among youth away from negative behaviors and toward positive community involvement.

Every day at Teen Empowerment, youth—some who have been incarcerated, are living in foster care, are struggling to raise their own children, are out of school with no diploma, whose lives have been violently disrupted by drugs, shootings, and even homicide in their families and neighborhoods—find our strengths and voices as we take on the challenging job of Teen Empowerment Youth Organizer.

We are proud to count you as a partner in our efforts.
Center for Teen Empowerment



On behalf of the **Conkey Cruisers**, thank you for your generous donation to our health initiative. Because of your gift, our second year was even more outstanding than the first. Since our inaugural ride July 7, 2012, we have received numerous honors including congressional recognition, inclusion in President Obama's

Fitness is Fun newsletter, and I was selected as a 2013 President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition Community Leadership Award Recipient. However, none of these accolades surpasses the extension of God's love through programs such as the Self Development of People.

Conkey Cruisers' Bicycling-to-Better-Health Voyage has taught safe cycling to over 200 participants and guests. In addition to cycling, we also provide healthy snacks, health screenings and nutrition information. As I note in my new book, *Collard Green Curves-A Fat Girl's Journey from Childhood Obesity to Healthy Living*, I don't want any child to bear the burden of growing up fat like me. The proceeds from the book are used to purchase bicycles for the program. A significant neighborhood bonus is the decrease in criminal activity during Conkey Cruisers operations.

We are delighted that Presbytery of Genesee Valley has joined our efforts to transform our neighborhood, and live safe and healthy. Your support is helping to save lives and empower a neighborhood.

Thank you,
Theresa Lou Bowick BSN, RN, Conkey Cruisers Captain



The **Coffee Connection** is a not-for-profit business that sells fair trade, organic coffee to retail and wholesale customers while providing a site for employment training for women in recovery from addiction.

Many women in the greater Rochester area suffer with problems of drug and alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, poverty, and childcare problems. Unfortunately, these problems are often coupled with a lack of both education and the necessary skills to get and maintain a steady job. At the **Coffee Connection**, we realize that sometimes it is not enough for these women to be thrust into a world of work, and that a harsh transition can often lead to a relapse into old habits and lifestyles. That is why our program seeks to assist these women in all aspects of their lives. When working for the **Coffee Connection**, they receive counseling and support from those who have been in similar situations, while also gaining valuable job and interpersonal skills training.

Some of our folks (we now have two men!) consider their recovery to be rather fragile. Their strategy for keeping clean and sober is meetings, sponsor, keeping busy, doing meaningful work, spending time in safe places, and being around healthy and supportive people. That's what they find at the Coffee Connection. "This is what I need to stay clean and sober." It's working.

We want to say thank you for believing in us and supporting us in so many ways.
Coffee Connection

Some Words from SDOP Grant Recipients

Driver's Training Program at Rochester Refugee Resettlement Services

The Drivers' Training Program started on October 22, thanks to the support from the Self-Development of People committee and others. We have up to 50 refugees from countries like Burma, Nepal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We divided the refugees into two groups, those with experience driving and those who haven't driven before. For example, Maung Maung and Djifa Kothor, refugees from Burma (Myanmar) and Togo, both of whom have lived in the United States for over six years now, have been the chief instructors and organizers of the program. These two young men, driven from their countries, and having found a new home in our city, are giving back to the refugee community and to our city by taking the refugees on the road every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday, teaching them parallel parking, k-turn, etc.



Sisters of P.O.W.E.R.

We are a group of women workers who are members of People Organizing for Worker Empowerment & Respect from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and communities coming together to:

- Advance Empowerment, Employment, and Cooperative Entrepreneurship for working sisters
- Grow a safe, loving community of sisters who know the inherent value of our work and labor inside and outside of the traditional workplace
- Support and affirm each other in our daily work and existence
- Share our herstories, our lived experiences, our cultural practices, and our wisdom with each other
- Address the institutionalized racism and sexism that relegates us to un/under-employment, poverty wage jobs, and invisible work
- Create alternatives to access living wage work and a sustainable family income
- Empower ourselves and our communities with tools and strategies to engage in radical self-love, self-advocacy, economic self-sufficiency, and self-actualization

Our program will begin this April.