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KEYS INITIATIVE AND UNITED WAY OFFER  
3RD ANNUAL YOUTH & FAMILY VOLUNTEER FAIR

DeKalb County KEYS (Keep Engaging Youth to Succeed) & Kishwaukee United Way are hosting their 3rd annual **Care or Be Square Youth & Family Volunteer Fair** for DeKalb County middle and high school youth and their families on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at the DeKalb Park District's Hopkins Park Terrace Room (1403 Sycamore Road, DeKalb) from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Volunteerism for youth makes good sense. "Youth who volunteer are more likely to do well in school, graduate, vote, and be philanthropic," cites the *UCLA/Higher Education Institute*. In addition, "young people who volunteer --just one hour a week-- are 50% less likely to abuse drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or engage in destructive behavior," according to the Search Institute. On the local front, Mary Hess, Asset Specialist at DeKalb County KEYS Initiative and Ben Gordon Center's Prevention & Education Program says "Based on a 2013 survey conducted with DeKalb & Sycamore teens, 51% of the participating teens said they serve in the community at least one hour per week. This number is 5% higher than our 2007 figures. We're happy to continue to offer this Fair so our young people know that they can make a valuable contribution in the communities where they live."

The **Care or Be Square Youth & Family Volunteer Fair** is free and open to students and their families in DeKalb County middle & high schools and is designed to facilitate volunteer connections and help ignite the volunteer spirit that helps to shape our thriving community. The Fair hopes to educate students & their families about the numerous opportunities that exist to compliment youth interests and promote volunteerism.

Last year, more than 20 local organizations were on hand to talk about the various volunteer opportunities available. Pay-It-Forward House is a non-profit organization that has been a fair vendor from the start. "We were pleased with the number of students & parents who attended and the event was well organized. We look forward to participating again," says their volunteer coordinators, Marge Johnson & Dixie Zander. New this year, will be special volunteer 'mentors' who will be on hand to answer questions about why *they* volunteer and why it has made a difference in *their* lives. All fair visitors will receive a guide to help them navigate the fair and pursue volunteer opportunities after the fair. Information about community service-based scholarships will be available, as well. All fair visitors will have a chance to win an I-Pod touch.

"We are excited to co-host the Volunteer Fair again this year in conjunction with a great community partner, KEYS. The promotion and coordination of volunteer service opportunities is integral to our mission." says Dawn Littlefield, Kishwaukee United Way Executive Director. "We want to strongly encourage students & families to join us for this one-stop volunteer 'shop' to learn how they can give back to others through volunteering."

To get further information, including vendor registration forms, contact Mary Hess at 815.756.8501, ext 111. ###