

Youth directors throw successful first event

By Raphael Kohan/ Correspondent
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SHERBORN - This past Saturday, Nov. 18, the Sherborn Community Center - with its two youth directors at the helm - held its first-ever event for high school students: a Black & White Dance.

Alexa Collins and Kate Vacovec assumed the roles of youth directors in June and have been working ever since in preparation for this, their first event, and for the other events they anticipate holding during the remainder of their one-year term.

"Programs in the past have not been geared towards high school students," said center Director Jim Byrnes. "That's why these positions were created. With more kids you inject energy and fun, and with more fun, more kids will come. Parents are starting to support the center as well, which is nonprofit."

Byrnes has been a mentor for the two girls, and has observed them throughout the planning and implementation processes.

"They are totally reflective of what you want your child to be," said Byrnes of the girls. "They're entrepreneurs in their own way. They're presenting at board meetings, executing strategies and commenting where appropriate; they're looking at balance sheets. They'll walk away from this not only as trailblazers, but also with a full board experience that most people don't get until later in life."

The Black & White Dance was open to Dover-Sherborn High School freshmen and sophomores. Vacovec and Collins did not want to throw "just another dance," though. They wanted theirs to be classy, and the dress code for the event reflected as much. Girls were to wear black and white dresses and, for the boys, black and white shirts with colored ties.

In an effort to ensure the success of their first event, Collins and Vacovec worked hard to get the word out. Besides announcing the event to their schoolmates, they placed press releases in local papers as well. Before the event, however, the girls had sold only 40 tickets between them.

"We were really nervous because it could be a big hit, or not a lot of people could show up," said Vacovec. "But everything went amazing, and everyone came looking for a good time. And that's what they got."

One-hundred-eighty people turned out for the dance, dwarfing the anticipated attendance of 100.

"We worked so hard with everyone who helped out," said Vacovec. "Even if it [their term as directors] were only this one event, it has been such a great experience, learning what goes into the planning of an event."

But the girls are not done yet. For their next event, they plan to throw a Valentine's Day dance for the middle school students. And from the lessons of their first dance, they plan to improve upon what has all ready been a successful formula.

Byrnes expects big things from the girls. And with these young women at his side, the center looks to play a bigger and bigger role in the lives of young people in the community.

"It's such a jewel in our community; it's our goal to fill it and make sure people use it," said Byrnes of the center. "I expect the girls to maintain and exceed the current standard they have today. They're going places, and I'm proud to know them."