Illini Union Office of Volunteer Programs

Issues

Education:

All children should be encouraged to live up to their potential, and every child should be celebrated for his or her own uniqueness. It's easy to focus on the differences, but there are two important things that you should keep in mind. All children are first, last and always children; and second, all children have special needs.

-Wolery, Strain, & Bailey

(http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/equity)

Education in the United States has been lagging especially for those that are underprivileged. These groups struggle to keep children in school while the necessity for other basic survival needs is compromised. This is a growing issue that will continue to give rise to a separation between the haves and the have-nots.

Did you know that:

- Nine-year-olds in low-income areas are 3 grade levels behind their peers in higher-income areas. Fast-forward and these students are seven times less likely to graduate from college. (Teach for America, http://www.teachforamerica.org/)

- The Illinois legislature's Task Force on School Finance concluded that 80 percent of the state's students lack the resources for an adequate education. Per pupil expenditures range from under $3,000 to more than $11,000; the local property tax base provides nearly 60 percent of all education dollars in the state and the current state budget is already operating well beyond its means. (http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/pbriefs/95/95-1gc3.htm)

- Nearly 1 in 5 children (more than 12 million) in the U.S. live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 2000 Update). The U.S. child poverty rate is higher than that of most other industrialized nations.

- The national average for state-revenue used to fund education is 50%. Illinois is only 36%, ranking 48th nationally. (Center for Tax and Budget Accountability “Funding a Quality Education Requires Fiscal Reform” http://www.woodsfund.org/community/Folder_1036081004377/File_1084970741080)
Recent research indicates that even mild under-nutrition experienced by young children during critical periods of growth may lead to reductions in physical growth and affect brain development (Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy).

**National & Local Education Reform Agencies**

- dedicated to providing the facilities, services and support necessary to instill a sense of community spirit, achievement, cooperation and self-esteem in the youth of our community.

- helps girls build character and skills for success in the real world. Girl’s involved take part in but are not limited to: troop meetings, summer camp, works toward awards and recognitions and participating in community service.

- promotes basic education for poor and underprivileged children in India. Asha-UC holds General and Projects Group meetings at the Asian American Cultural Center (corner of Mathews and Nevada). Usually meet every Sunday, with the General meeting at 4:00pm and Projects Group meeting at 5:00pm.

**Orpheum Children’s Science Museum** - [http://www.m-crossroads.org/orpheum/](http://www.m-crossroads.org/orpheum/)
- provides children of all ages the chance to explore and learn science at their own pace in an informal setting. One of the objectives of the Museum is to provide interactive, accessible science exhibits which facilitate learning for students of all socioeconomic groups.

**C-U Special Recreation** - [http://www.cuspecialrecreation.com/](http://www.cuspecialrecreation.com/)
- serve people with disabilities by providing a variety of quality recreation programs and services which enhance quality of life.
For More Information Visit:


http://www.ed.gov/ The U.S. Department of Education provides information about a variety of education-related topics.

http://www.cuvolunteer.org The most comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities in Champaign County, search by agency, issue, time commitment, and more.