**Opportunities are Abundant for Young People**

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“Opportunity knocks but once” is a proverb dating back to ancient times.  Its meaning is simple:  when you get a chance to make your situation better, you’d better act quickly---because it may well be your only chance.  But what if you don’t recognize the opportunities that are in front of you because nobody has ever taught you what to look for?  Or what if you can’t recognize these chances because you have too many other barriers that are drowning out the persistent pounding on your door?

We are very fortunate in our community to have literally hundreds of youth programs that help young people recognize the opportunities available and help those youth develop the knowledge and the skills they need to take full advantage of these chances to grow and develop.  We have summer programs that keep young brains thinking and learning during summer breaks so that young minds can go back to school refreshed but not regressed.  We have afterschool programs that help young people develop leadership, social, and interpersonal skills that they need to be successful in school, in the world of work, and in life itself.  We have programs that expose young people to the arts, to music, to robotics, to plant science, to computers and technology, to sports of all sorts, and to the vast assortment of possible careers they might want to choose.  All these programs are focused on the same goal:  helping our children and youth become positive, productive, and contributing citizens---now and for the future.

MCCOY’s Youth Activity Directory (YAD) connect young people with more than 800 youth programs here in central Indiana. Opportunities include school year, leadership/volunteer, life skills, mentoring, special needs, summer camps, and year round programs, as well as family fun and family support resources. This year MCCOY is also offering the information in a free app, which will allow for greater access of information for the young people in our community.

The app will offer features not available on the printed version, such “search ability”. Users can search for activities by type, zip code, location services, or key words. It also features an events calendar where local family-friendly activities can be found as well as trainings, workshops and conferences on youth development. The app can be downloaded for free from Apple’s App Store or Google Play by visiting. <http://mccoyouth.org/youth-activity-directory.html>.

The YAD offers countless opportunities to help develop youth into future leaders. To download the YAD app or reserve printed copies, visit: <http://mccoyouth.org/youth-activity-directory.html>.