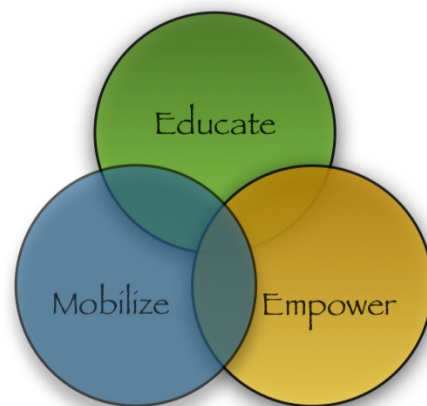


# Program and Information Packet

Contact:

Jeffrey G. Parker, Ph.D  
Department of Psychology  
University of Alabama  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35406  
(205) 348-2081  
J.G.Parker@ua.edu



# WINDS OF CHANGE: YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY RECOVERY



## Objective and Overview

Winds of Change is a series of youth-led discussions and educational exhibits addressing the experience of the April 27th, 2011 tornado and the recovery priorities for the Holt community and its neighbors. As an event for youth and by youth, Winds of Change is designed to add the missing youth perspective to discussions regarding community recovery. Among the topics that will be addressed are:

- commercial and economic needs of the Holt community
- youth-oriented employment and work training needs
- community history and vision for future
- recreational alternatives
- public transportation and infrastructure
- community representation and governance

The event will also feature the voices, videos, art, and photographs of Holt youth concerning the tornado and their community.

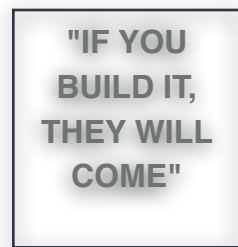
All exhibits are created by and hosted by Holt High School and Davis Emerson Middle School students with mentoring by UA undergraduate psychology students under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey G. Parker, Department of Psychology, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL

## A Positive Framework for Youth Development

Civic involvement is something that all cultures and countries hope to encourage among their youth. When youth are engaged and committed civically, they are knowledgeable about the social and political institutions that govern their lives; participate in civic life and cultural activities; are prepared to serve their communities and community organizations; and feel a concern and responsibility over the welfare of others, especially the most vulnerable members of their communities. Civically-

engaged youth do not just make good citizens however. As individuals, they develop social ties to peers who are committed to conventional behavior, develop compassion and empathy, and grow in leadership, social skills, and moral maturity.

Numerous social commentators have remarked on how common it is for contemporary youth to be apathetic toward community service and civic participation and how disengaged most groups of youth appear to be from politics and the political sphere.



Indeed, hundreds of books, papers, and essays have been written from diverse perspectives on why citizens in general and adolescents in particular are failing in terms of civic participation.

It has been common to attribute the lack of youth involvement in their communities to their age (“Teens are self-centered, after all”). This is a circular and pessimistic line of reasoning however. Our approach, in contrast, is grounded in the emerging science of positive youth development. ***We reject the premise that youth will inevitably be problems to themselves and others and instead provide youth with cultural and other opportunities that will permit them to thrive.***

## Goals

Winds of Change is for youth and by youth. Its goals include:

- Add the missing youth perspective and voice to the process of community recovery following the April 27th tornado
- Give youth the same sense of ownership over the recovery process that other community members have been enjoying
- Enhance the personal and organizational skills of the youth
- Foster their spirit of community engagement and sense of civic responsibility
- Enhance the broader positive profile of Holt High School, the community, and youth as citizens

## Dates

Winds of Change event being hosted by students at Holt High School on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of April 2012. There is a Community Open House the evening of April 19th, at 6:30pm.



## Program

Winds of Change is a set of youth-led discussions, surveys, and educational exhibits. Exhibits are youth-focused and interactive. All activities take place in the auditorium of Holt High School. Participants will be students of Holt High School and Davis Emerson Middle School. Over three days, we expect more than 500 student and community participants. Exhibits include:

### Forces at Work

This exhibit is designed to obtain the youth's perspective on the employment opportunities they desire and require. Activities include:



- educational material on national and local trends in youth employment
- educational material on the value of part time youth employment to youth
- Informational material on resumes and local job sources
- information on the college application process
- educational material on the legalities of youth employment
- an interactive poll that permits youth to express their priorities for part-time, youth-suitable jobs they'd like to see developed in the community as it recovers from the tornado.

## Back to the Future

This exhibit provides a portrait of the past and vision of the future through historical photos and other materials related to the community and Holt High School. Activities include:

- A wall timeline of Holt history from its founding to the present
- Facts and images of the April 27th tornado
- A Community Profile and Demographics
- Fact or Fiction? An interactive exhibit in which youth must examine purported historical documents and images related to the community and high school and sort the truth from the myths and fabrications.
- "Where were you the day... ". Graffiti wall of Youth tornado stories
- "Where we are going". An interactive exhibit that permits youth to express their vision for the future through words and images



## Going Our Way?

This exhibit explores the public transportation needs of the communities of Holt and neighboring Alberta. Of particular interest is the need to address the lack of adequate bus service for community members, especially the elderly. Bus service to the area was terminated unexpectedly several years ago and the community has had difficulty getting officials to address this need. The Going Our Way? exhibit includes:

- Information on Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act concerning nondiscrimination in public transportation
- Information on public transportation options and map of current bus routes in neighboring communities
- Educational material on how communities benefit from public transportation and who utilizes it



- Interactive map permitting youth to express their views on the optimal routes and stops for possible bus service to their community
- Laptop computer that permits youth to write and send emails to local officials to urge them to lobby for or champion the return of bus service to the community.

## **A Voice for Holt**

Holt sits at crossroads in terms of community governance. Holt is the largest unincorporated area in the state. As such, it lacks the zoning regulations and political representation enjoyed by other communities its size. The April 27th tornado and a



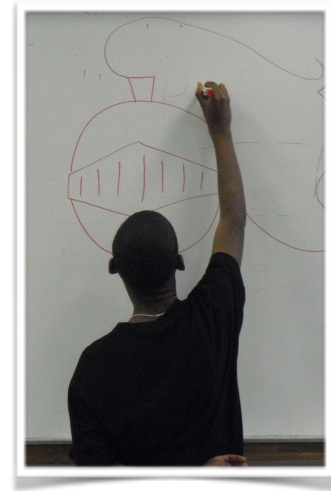
pending highway bypass through the area represent both opportunities and risks. If the community does nothing at all, it risks being swallowed piecemeal by surrounding communities eager for access and development property, particularly without broader political representation. A Voice for Holt explores these issues and provides educational material to youth on alternatives for community governance and leadership. This exhibit includes:

- Educational exhibits on the pros and cons of incorporating as a city versus annexation by neighboring Tuscaloosa
- Educational material on the forms of governance in other familiar communities, including the school's sports opponents across the state
- An educational exhibit on the pending highway bypass that will bisect the community
- An interactive map in which youth can play with and propose possible city boundaries
- Voting booths and ballot boxes that permit the youth to engage in a straw vote concerning whether they favor incorporation as a city or annexation by Tuscaloosa

## Say it Loud, Say it Proud

This exhibit celebrates the voices and vision of Holt youth and their unique perspective on their community. It includes:

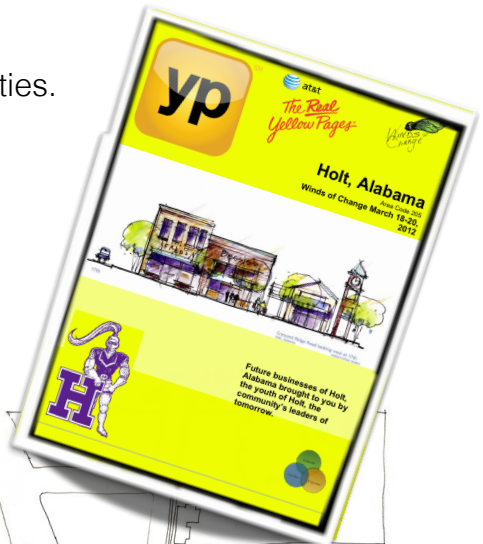
- Photographs of community life taken by high school and middle school students courtesy of the 100 Lenses Project
- A video kiosk in which youth record their impressions of their community and what it means to them
- Middle and high school youth art and stories celebrating lives and community
- "A Simple Twist of Fate". Art installation of tornado debris with a living tree commemorating community members lost to the tornado.



## All Up in Our Business

This exhibit focuses on the community's commercial priorities. Activities include:

- Educational material on youth spending trends nationally and locally
- An interactive map of the community that features photographs of existing, locally-owned businesses in the community and permits youth to suggest the type and locations of desired youth-oriented business after considering potential



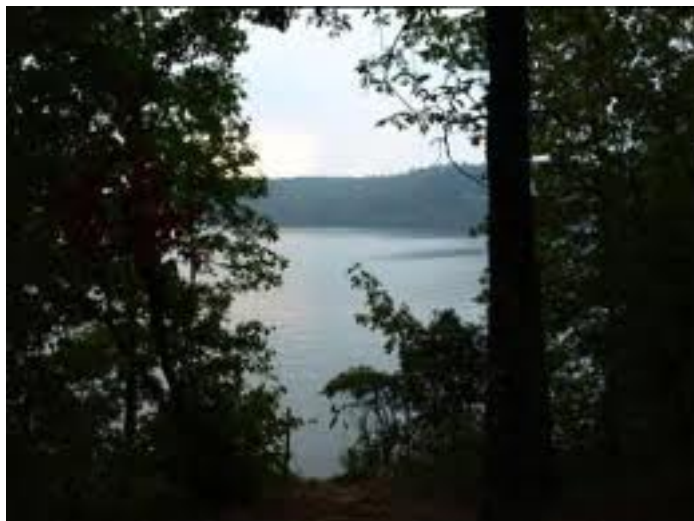
zoning and other factors

- Large interactive "Yellow Pages" book in which youth select and suggest youth-oriented businesses and other organizations and institutions they would like to see developed

## **Parks and Wreckreation**

This exhibit explores the community's current and future recreational opportunities through educational materials and an interactive survey. The exhibit includes:

- An educational exhibit on nearby Hurricane Creek Nature Preserve including the damage it suffered during the tornado
- Educational material on the health and other benefits of parks and other forms of community recreation for youth and others
- Maps depicting the locations and styles of parks in surrounding communities
- Tree of Hope. A tree salvaged from the tornado debris on which youth pin their hope for recreational opportunities for the community
- A photo collage of the two local parks in the Holt area and their current conditions
- An interactive map that permits surveying the youth for the types of recreational outlets they desire and where they would prefer to locate them in their community



## **Other**

Other exhibits explore tornado safety and other topics.





## Sponsors and Endorsements

Winds of Change enjoys the endorsement and encouragement of a growing list of community sponsors including...

*Tuscaloosa's One Place, Alabama Department of Human Resources, Probate Judge Hardy McCollum, District Attorney Tommy Smith, University of Alabama School of Social Work, University of Alabama College of Nursing, Tuscaloosa County Sheriff Ted Sexton, Holt in Action, Holt Community Partnership, Tuscaloosa County Schools; Holt United Methodist Women; Representative Bill Poole; Hurricane Creek Preservation Society; Representative Christopher England; State Senator Gerald Allen; Nick and Terry Saban*

In addition a growing list of individuals, businesses, and organizations have supported the event through prize donations and other contributions, including...

*Nucor Steel; The Locker Room; Any Length Metal Roofing Co.; Leland Lanes; Newks; University of Alabama Athletic Association; Chick-fil-A; Taco Casa; the Lankford Family; Randall-Reilly Publishing; Crownover and Standridge Law Office; Dreamland BBQ; the Waysider; Shark's; Baumhower's Wings; Lenny's Sub Shop; Steamers; McAlister's Deli; Full Moon BBQ; Sonic; Archibald's BBQ; Phifer Wire; General Aviation Center of Tuscaloosa; Pro-Signs, Inc.; TuscaBlue; Gene Stutts; Bob's Collectibles; Representative Bill Poole*