

SCHOOLS

Summit to empower teens

Workshops and forum planned for local high school students

By Mary Vause

JAMES CITY — Why hold a youth summit?

“The goal is to empower and educate youth to be strong, active citizens in the community,” said Karen Goins, project coordinator at the Historic Triangle Substance Abuse Coalition. She has been working with local schools and service organizations since July to prepare for the event.

The coalition is holding the youth summit this Friday, Jan. 27, at the Historic Triangle Community Services Center on Waller Mill Road. Beginning at 9

a.m., local high school students can choose two of any eight “bounce sessions” to take part in. At these workshops, youths can get the scoop on topics like stress management, job interviews, civic activism and what to expect at college. There will also be food, T-shirts, free prizes (including the chance to win an

What we need

WORKSHOPS

At the youth summit, high school students can choose two of the following eight workshops to attend:

- Ultimate Hustler: Managing Finances.
- Take a Chill Pill: Stress Management.
- Express Yourself: Public Speaking.
- How to Make that Money: Job Interview Skills.
- Your Voice Counts! Use It!: Youth in Action.
- College 101: What Parents Won't Tell You.
- Walking in Queenly Ways.
- How to be a Strong Man.

Source: Historic Triangle Substance Abuse Coalition

iPod) and free admission to the Battle of the Bands that evening at the James City-Williamsburg Community Center.

The coalition advertised through WJC and York Schools as well as faith-based groups, and hopes to draw at least 100 high-schoolers to the event. To make the festivities more appealing to the target audience, Goins gathered input from teens on everything from

food items to workshop content.

After learning about how best to adjust to a young adult lifestyle in the coming years, the teens will get an opportunity to make their voices heard. At 11:45 p.m., “key stakeholders” such as county supervisors, School Board members, City Council members, business owners and organizational leaders will arrive at the youth summit.

However, their purpose will not be keynote addresses or inspirational pep-talks for the young people. It is their turn to do the listening, although Goins said a future event could have more interactive discussion between the generations.

The teens will have all morning to mull over a several general questions before the afternoon forum:

- What's going well in Williamsburg?
- What are some changes that need to be made?
- What are youths' as well as adults' roles in making these changes?

“It will be up to the youth to determine where the conversation goes,” said Goins.

“Their concerns might be focused on schools, community, and also why some youth are drinking on Friday nights.”

She added that some common complaints she hears from local youths is that “there’s nothing to do in Williamsburg” and that most recreational activities are too expensive for teens.

“Since the youth are the next voters and are going to be the future citizens of Williamsburg, it’s really important to give them a voice now and to show them that they can impact change,” said Goins. “Adults need to know what the youth need, and the youth need to be able to vocalize their needs.”

Want to go? High school seniors interested in attending the youth summit should call Karen Goins at 476-5070 by Thursday.