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## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS: **Huron High School hosts 'Challenge Day'**

March 16, 2010

If this were your perfect day, how would you want people to treat each other?



Huron High School students and members of the community listen to the rules for creating a safe environment during the Challenge Day Program.

Lizzy Alfs | Contributor

This was the question asked Monday to a group of 100 [Huron High School](#) students as the school hosted its [Challenge Day](#).

The [Challenge Day Program](#), founded in 1987, trains representatives who travel to cities across the U.S and Canada and conduct a day of experiential workshops. It has been hosted at Huron High more than 10 times over five years.

According to the organization's [website](#), the program works to create a safe environment for youth to connect to their peers and community through “the celebration of diversity, truth, and full expression.”

Issues addressed during the workshops include violence, bullying, substance abuse, racism, stereotypes and self esteem.

**Linda Hibbs**, coordinator for the event at Huron, described [Challenge Day](#) as a fun, intense and often emotional program.

“It’s like riding an emotional rollercoaster,” Hibbs said. “They play games, but they also do some heavy-duty thinking about topics that are hard to think about and even harder to talk about.”

Workshops help make students realize they are not alone in their struggles and give students a chance to apologize to or thank their peers. Small group activities also create a sense of family where sharing is easier for the participants.

Huron English teacher **Quinn Strassel** was one of the 30 adult facilitators for the program. Strassel said sharing the experience with the students was powerful for him.

“This is where we can openly say what we are going through, what is holding us back, or what good things are happening for us,” Strassel said. “Now we can bring that into the larger school environment and I think that can have a really positive impact.”

Hibbs said the program makes students step out of their comfort zone to help make a difference in their lives and also in the community once [Challenge Day](#) is over.

“The program addresses leadership in a lot of different ways,” Hibbs said. “We feel over the past five years it has made people more tolerant of each other and be more open to other people’s experiences.”

For senior [Huron](#) student **Sruthi Naraharisetti**, attending the program for the third time has helped her become a student leader.

“It is important to have a student act as a leading example in groups to show that it is okay to share,” Naraharisetti said.

[Challenge Day](#) at [Huron](#) has also led to follow-up activities like the creation of the Act Now Club for students who want to put [Challenge Day’s](#) mission into action on a daily basis.

To pay for program costs, the Parent Teacher Student Organization for [Huron](#) hosts fundraisers and applies for grants.

The [Ann Arbor PTO Thrift Shop](#) is also working with the Challenge Day group and two other organizations in its "Show

Your Support" program. Customers at the thrift shop are given tokens for every \$5 spent and the tokens are used to "vote" for the group they want to support. At the end of a two-week period, the groups get a certain amount of money based on the number of tokens received.

For more information on how to donate or get involved, [email](#) Linda Hibbs.

*Lizzy Alfs is a junior at the University of Michigan majoring in English. She is also a news reporter for the Michigan Daily. [Email](#) her with events and news relating to Ann Arbor's North Side.*

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<http://www.annarbor.com/neighborhoods/ann-arbor-north/huron-high-school-hosts-5th-challenge-day/>

A correction was made to this story based on the following information from Leslie Wolfe, assistant manager at the Ann Arbor PTO Thrift Shop:

"The Huron Challenge Day group is participating with two other school groups in one of our programs called "Show Your Support" where customers are given a token for each five dollars they spend at our resale shop. They then can "vote" for whichever group or groups they want to. At the end of the two weeks, we count up the tokens and each group will receive a different amount of money based on if they came in first, second or third. However, we do not take monetary donations as the article could be interpreted to suggest. We do take clothing, furniture,

household items and more year round. Our profits from selling these items is what we use to support a variety of groups from the Ann Arbor Public Schools. Thank you for any changes you can make so that we don't have confused customers or school groups! We appreciate it!"



[Stefanie Murray](#)  
AnnArbor.com Staff

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Posted 19 hours ago

Please know that the Huron High School Challenge Day program has run for five years rather than five events (Huron has hosted more than 10 Challenge Days). Glad to see the article about our dear Huron parent & tremendous volunteer, Linda Hibbs! Please know that Linda has poured a lot of energy & love into our school, and the Huron PTSO is grateful for her efforts. Linda has been instrumental in other schools' Challenge Day events too. She has spent more than 20 hours per week for the past five years on the Challenge Day events. Thanks for coming to Huron, Lizzy - we appreciate your work. ~Michelle Machiele, Huron PTSO Co-President



[Michelle Machiele](#)

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Posted 16 hours ago

Thanks, Michelle! We added a sentence to clarify your point and removed the number from the headline. We'd love to cover more events like this at Huron, so be sure to let us know of upcoming

activities (or even just outstanding students, teachers or parents) that you think deserve attention!



**Stefanie Murray**  
AnnArbor.com Staff