





Young people are our future. You may have heard it a million times, but often as a society we do not look to them for solutions as we should. Youth are a valuable resource of inspiration, talent, knowledge and energy; and they do truly hold the future in their hands. Shouldn't we then be investing more in them, and listening more to them? These are questions Bill Drayton, founder of Youth Venture, was not afraid to answer- "yes." He recognized that young people are a vibrant-yet largely overlooked and underutilized- source of power of capacity for creating and leading positive community change. Young people involved in Youth Venture `develop leadership skills, build confidence, provide countless services to their communities, and most importantly, are given the chance to make lasting positive change on others, as well as themselves. At the same time they learn how to confront problems, face them, and find creative solutions.



Leaders within the United Way of North Central Massachusetts realized that we as a community were not meaningfully acting to help cultivate the next generation of leaders, volunteers, and philanthropists. Prior to the formation of this partnership, the United Way was unknown and irrelevant to far too many young people. Too much of our investment in youth was in the form of remedial and intervention services; the United Way wanted to also invest in youth proactively and offer the opportunity to contribute to the betterment of their communities.



In 2002, believing in the capacity of young people to create change, the United Way partnered with Ashoka's Youth Venture, and later in 2005, with Mount Wachusett Community College. In fifteen years, we have seen the benefits of investing in young social entrepreneurs. It is our hope that through the United Way Youth Venture experience, young people of North Central Massachusetts will carry over the positive experience into later aspects of life; and elder generations will begin to see youth as capable, responsible, valuable members of society.

Becoming a Changemaker is something that a young person will hold onto for the rest of their life. Empowering young people is perhaps the best and biggest investment for a better future for all of us.

The Venturer Voice, the official blog of United Way Youth Venture, is a platform for members of the UWYV community to share their insights and experiences with others across the nation and all over the world. By encouraging our community to find their voice, we empower our youth and continue to further the mission of United Way Youth Venture.



If you are interested in becoming a blogger for the Venturer Voice, please fill out and return the release form on the final page to Eden Shaveet at eshaveet@mwcc.mass.edu

Blog Series and Sample Prompts

Here is a sample list of our ongoing blog series for which we seek and encourage contributions:

- 1.) **"My Venture Story"** – Includes contributions written by current Venturers, Alumni, Champions, etc., regarding how they became involved in Youth Venture and what their journey has entailed.
- 2.) **"Words of Wisdom"** – Includes contributions written by local business and community leaders who would like to pass on insights, knowledge, and lessons they learned throughout their journey that brought them to where they are today.
- 3.) **"Through the Eyes of..."** – Includes contributions written by Champions, Allies, family/support systems, school administrators, etc., who would like to share what UWYV has looked like through their eyes, and meaningful observations made from their perspectives.
- 4.) **"Life after Launch"** – Includes contributions from launched Venture Teams, detailing what has happened since the launch of their Venture, and how their lives have changed.

In addition, here are a few sample topics that you may find yourself interested in writing about. Feel free to use this list to brainstorm ideas for future posts.

*Please note that these are only suggestions. Bloggers are welcome to be as creative and original as they would like (within the parameters of the **Blog Post Guidelines and Regulations** as stated on page 5).*

Ideas for Current Venturers:

1. What is it like to be a Venturer at your school?
2. Describe or share a favorite UWYV workshop
3. Why did you choose to join UWYV?
4. Interview fellow Venturers on your team, or on another team
5. Interview a Champion or Ally
6. Give advice to any students who may be interested in launching a Venture
7. Share an update or progress report on what your Venture Team has been up to!
8. How has being a part of UWYV affected your performance in school?
9. A letter to other schools: why UWYV should be offered to your students
10. What do you hope to accomplish in your life? How do you think UWYV will help you attain those goals?
11. Write about a mentor, or someone who has inspired you in your life

Ideas for UWYV Alumni:

1. What was it like to be a part of UWYV? What is your Venture Story?
2. Describe the best experience you had while you a part of UWYV. Does that experience still impact you today?

3. Advice to current Venturers from an Alumni perspective
4. How did the adults who supported you in your Venture experience (Champions, Allies, Support Systems) impact your Venture? Were they role models to you? Would you consider ever taking on that role in adulthood?
5. What are you up to now? What has life brought to you since UWYV and do you feel that UWYV made an impact in helping you get there
6. A letter to other schools: why UWYV should be offered to your students, from someone who benefitted from the program?
7. A Venture status update! What happened to your Venture? Did you keep it going? Did you pass it down? Did it stop all together? Would you consider continuing your Venture initiatives today?

Ideas for Champions:

1. Why did you decide to become a part of UWYV? What struck you about the program?
2. What has been your greatest experience thus far in your Champion role?
3. Advice to those interested in taking on a Champion role in the future
4. UWYV through the eyes of a Champion
5. How has being a part of UWYV affected your experience in your school/in your life?
6. Update on what your Venturers are up to!
7. If UWYV had been offered to you while you were a student, what would you have done for a Venture? Is pursuing that initiative really still off the table?
8. A letter to other schools: why UWYV should be offered to your students, from the involved-adult perspective

Ideas for Allies and Support Systems:

1. What is it like acting as a support to a Venture Team/Venturer?
2. What advice do you have for other families/potential Allies who do not know anything about the program?
3. What differences or changes have you observed in your kids/Venturers? Has UWYV impacted their lives?
4. Has UWYV impacted or changed your life at all?
5. UWYV through the eyes of an Ally/Mom/Dad/Sister/Brother/Aunt/Uncle/Coach/Friend/etc.
6. If UWYV had been offered to you while you were a student, what would you have done for a Venture? Is pursuing that initiative really still off the table?

Helpful Tips!

- Make your blog exciting! Engage your audience with photos, videos, and external links. For example, if you are interested in including an online video to supplement your post, Youtube videos can be embedded in blog posts. *(Remember to credit the creator of the video in your post if the video was not created by you).*
- Proofread your blog with a friend or trusted adult. It is a good idea to seek constructive feedback before submitting a blog post.



Blog Post Guidelines and Regulations

- All blog posts must remain appropriate and acceptable for all audiences.
 - No swearing or provocative language is permitted in any blog post.
 - Spelling errors should be avoided in all blog posts.
- All blog posts must be original content created by YOU. Submitting plagiarized work is prohibited.
- At least one appropriate and original photo must be submitted with each blog submission.
 - ***NOTE: Please ensure that all those in the photograph have signed a photo release form for United Way Youth Venture. To obtain photo release forms, see a UWYV staff person.***
 - ***Do NOT*** use images you found online as many images found in Google search are copyrighted. Only submit photos that you yourself took or created.
- The Venturer Voice cannot be used to market external products or services unassociated with United Way Youth Venture.
- Any and all submissions to the Venturer Voice are the lawful property of United Way Youth Venture and may be shared on UWYV's social media accounts, in email communications, or through other media channels.
- The Venturer Voice reserves the right to:
 - Edit or shorten any blog post submission prior to posting.
 - Refuse to accept or post any blog submissions that violate any of the above guidelines.



Meet The Venturer Voice Staff

Who in the UWYV staff plays a role in organizing the blog?

Eden Shaveet: Eden serves as the 2017-2018 Commonwealth Corps Venture Retention and Engagement Innovator with United Way Youth Venture. Among other service responsibilities, Eden is responsible for coordinating the Venturer Voice Blog and compiling appropriate submissions. She will be your main contact for submissions and any questions regarding The Venturer Voice. Email: eshaveet@mwcc.mass.edu Phone: (978) 630-9471

Donna Toothaker: Donna is the Outreach & Communication Liaison for United Way Youth Venture. She oversees the marketing endeavors of United Way Youth Venture, which encompasses such entities as the Venturer Voice. She will be your main contact for any marketing-related questions. Email: dtoothaker@mwcc.mass.edu Phone: (978) 630-9138



Blog Submissions

To submit a blog post to the Venturer Voice, please email your blog post in a **word document** attachment to Eden Shaveet at eshaveet@mwcc.mass.edu.

To include photos or links (such as a YouTube link), attach the photos to the email as a jpg. file and paste your links in the spaces in which you would like the video to appear.

Please note that not all blog post submissions will be published, but by emailing a submission you are granting United Way Youth Venture the right to publish what you have submitted



Privacy

Keeping sensitive student information secure is of the utmost importance for United Way Youth Venture. This section describes how information, photos, and content student bloggers provide us will be disseminated and shared via the internet.

- All chosen Venturer Voice blog submissions will be made publicly accessible through the Venturer Voice blog.
- Our blog is hosted through WordPress, and all posts will be posted and managed by network staff through the admin account.
- Contributors under the age of 18 will be identified only by their first name and by their United Way Youth Venture site, unless otherwise specified by the blogger.
- United Way Youth Venture may use Venturer Voice blog posts, photos, and other submitted content on UWYV's social media accounts, in email communications, or other media channels.

Venturer Voice Release Form

(Please sign the form below. If you cannot return the hard copy to a UWYV staff member, then please print this form, sign it, have a parent sign it (if under 18), take a photo of the form, and send it to eshaveet@mwcc.mass.edu)

I, _____, hereby allow United Way Youth Venture, its representatives and employees the right to copyright, use, and publish my Venturer Voice written, photo, video, or other media submissions in connection with the United Way Youth Venture program in print and/or electronically.

I agree that United Way Youth Venture may use my statements, photographs, and videos with or without my name and for any lawful purpose, including such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, and web content.

I understand that plagiarism means taking and using the ideas, writings, or works of another as if they were one's own. I guarantee that all written, photo, video, or other media submissions to the Venturer Voice are my own work.

I, hereby, consent to the use of these photographs, statements, and videos without financial compensation. I have read and understand all information above, as well as all information contained within the **Venturer Voice Blog Contribution Guide**:

Signature _____

Printed name _____

Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Date _____

Parent or guardian's signature _____
(if under age 18)