

LEOMINSTER CHAMPION

Leominster,
MA

LEOMINSTER'S OWN WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

Neighborhoods

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United Way celebrates innovation

Over 100 middle and high school students, including students from Leominster, met in Gardner Thursday for United Way Youth Venture's regional year-end celebration to share programs they created, launched and led to benefit the community.

The ideas were presented from 50 teams, representing 15 schools from North Central Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. They ranged from hosting a senior citizen prom by a team from Gardner High School to creating an environmentally friendly bus in Merrimack, NH.

"Youth Venture Teams are a powerful way for young people to demonstrate that they have the drive and the initiative to become 'changemakers' in their communities," said Becky Cyganiewicz, coordinator for United Way Youth Venture.

At Leominster High School, the "Traveling Through the World Team," led by Francis Valladares- Reyes and Thamara Raggi, celebrate cultural diversity by conducting Samba dance lessons, soccer games and ethnic cooking for both students and parents.

According to Cyganiewicz, the students use their own talents and interests, and exercise social responsibility and entrepreneurship in finding ways to contribute to their communities. To become a venturer, they must create an action plan and present their venture idea to a selection panel of community members.