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## Youth Walk aims to raise funds, get kids outside

Thursday, July 30, 2009

By Sarah YagerSpecial to the Register

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NEW HAVEN — Nearly 900 young people will descend on the Green on Thursday for Youth Walk 2009, a fundraiser organized by the Citywide Youth Coalition.

Seventeen youth-serving organizations from Greater New Haven will participate in the walk, the fourth since 2005, ranging from the New Haven YMCA to the Diaper Bank to Hopkins School.

The event kicks off at 9:30 a.m., with registration and musical entertainment. After a welcome and warm-up, participants will begin walking around the Green, earning pledge money for every lap they complete. The Youth Walk will end with lunch and a talent exhibition.

The goal for this year's event is \$16,000. Rachel Heerema, executive director of the CWYC, said the total earnings of the Youth Walk have not been tallied in the past, as proceeds from the event go directly back to the youth organizations to support fall programming, field trips and scholarship programs.

For some participating organizations, bringing in cash takes a back seat to getting youth active and outside. "Some programs are trying to raise a lot of money, and some are just trying to get kids on the Green," said Heerema.

The Citywide Youth Coalition began in 1976, with a mission "to make sure that youth in New Haven and Greater New Haven have an excellent chance to succeed," said Heerema. CWYC is supported by private donors and membership dues from 200 participating youth-serving organizations.

The coalition supports and strengthens neighborhood programs, aids in networking and does advocacy work, said Heerema.

To pledge support for a participating organization, visit the Youth Walk Web site at [www.cwyc.org/youthwalk2009.html](http://www.cwyc.org/youthwalk2009.html).

Sarah Yager is a Register intern.

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