

Orange youth business group gets \$10,000, AmeriCorps worker

By CAROL LAURIAT
Recorder Staff

ORANGE — The Young Entrepreneurs Society Inc. has received \$10,000 to fund classes and help meet operating expenses, plus an AmeriCorps member who will work with at-risk youth.

YES trains young people, age 35 and under, how to start and operate their own businesses and offers classes in Orange and Montague. Currently, the group is working through the Young Entrepreneurs

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Society Regional Coordinating Committee to spearhead entrepreneur awareness throughout Franklin County. The plan is to reach potential entrepreneurs through "Biz Camps," which will be offered in school, after school and during summer.

YES Executive Director Tim Cohen-Mitchell said the organization received an \$8,000 sub-contract with the Community Coalition for Teens to support two YES classes in Orange, \$2,000 from the Icarus Foun-

dation based in Northampton for general expenses and a full-time AmeriCorps volunteer through Franklin County Dial-Self Inc.

Each year, the Greenfield AmeriCorps Program helps area agencies by placing 15 member-volunteers, who work to help expand existing programs, while creating new opportunities for at-risk youth.

AmeriCorps member Michelle Buja of Orange is serving the Orange YES program as member services coordinator.

"My job is to work with society members to create a range of leadership development and business support activities for program students and graduates," Buja said.

She will assist with classes and development of a business incubator at the YES site at 1 South Main St.

Cohen-Mitchell said the bulk of the program's success is due to the financial and substantial in-kind support from area individuals, organizations and businesses.

"We are extremely grateful to our local supporters and delighted to have the community so involved in so many ways," Cohen Mitchell said. "Seeing parents, business owners, the schools and area organizations building a supportive community around our member-participants ensures that they can be 'at risk' of graduating high school, finding a job, starting a business, getting a GED, or developing positive relationships instead of being

'at-risk' in the ways we typically see."

For more information, contact YES at (978) 544-1869, or at yes-cafe@yahoo.com.

You can reach Carol Lauriat at: clauriat@recorder.com