

# Business

## Entrepreneurial youths open business center

ORANGE — Young Entrepreneurs Society (YES) members recently opened the North Quabbin region's first full-service business center at 26 South Main Street.

Services include copying, faxing, passport photos, office supplies, a high-speed Internet kiosk, an ATM and FedEx shipping. The center also offers meeting and classroom facilities and other business support services.

Tim Cohen-Mitchell, Yes Inc. co-founder and executive director, said the BizCenter is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. "YES teaches business, job readiness and financial skills to young people in the North Quabbin region and Franklin County. We

could find no better way to provide our alumni with real-world training and local business connections than to have them offer services directly to our region's business community," Cohen-Mitchell said. "We hope to serve as a center of support for the many local business customers who need a well-equipped 'back-office.'"

The need for such a center was established through market research conducted by local youth and business owners who wrote the national award-winning BizCenter business plan as part of the Co-op BizTeam YES program in 2002. The plan helped secure a mortgage and line of credit to purchase the facility in 2003. It took some 50 businesses and

individuals some 18 months, 4,500 hours of volunteer labor and \$10,000 in cash and in-kind donations to renovate the facility, which dates to the late 1800s. Grand opening events are planned for the fall.

The BizCenter is cooperatively managed by a BizTeam of six YES alumni, ranging from 14 to 25 years of age, effectively creating new jobs and vitality downtown. Town Administrator Rick Kwiatkowski

welcomed the BizCenter's opening.

"This is another sign that our economic development efforts are being noticed and appreciated," he said. "In recent months, Orange has completed renovations to the auditorium in town hall to host various recreational events, including a Don

McLean concert at the end of the year. The YES business center will help increase business activity in our downtown while offering critical support services to the many small businesses in the North Quabbin."

YES, which in June marked its sixth anniversary, also offers entrepreneurship, job readiness and financial education through its after-school and summer BizVenture! and GirlVenture! programs and operates the Odd Jobs Exchange, a free classified advertising service for youth selling odd jobs services. Contact the YES BizCenter at (978) 544-1865 or YES at (978) 544-1869 or visit [www.yes-inc.org](http://www.yes-inc.org).

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