

Advocates and local leaders head to Albany for 2010 Advocacy Day

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By: Christine VanTimmeren | WHEC.com



A number of people from Rochester are headed to Albany today to lobby for a number of initiatives.

Local youth, parents and advocates of after-school programs left just after 7:00 this morning. They will talk with elected officials today to request \$5 million over four years to implement the Rochester After-School Plan. They also want to restore statewide after-school funding.

Caroline Merenda is part of the Greater Rochester After-School Alliance and she believes these after-school programs are extremely important. They keep children off the streets, away from drugs and crime, and give them something to look forward to.

Megan Wright is a 6th grader at School 17, she says if it weren't for the after-school programs at her school, "I would probably be outside or at home alone and probably getting into trouble. Because this program keeps kids off the streets and tells kids what's right and wrong because some kids don't know what's right and wrong."

After school, Megan is able to do things like attend STEP class, help with dinner, do her homework, and even learn about photography.

"You get to meet a lot of new friends, it's so fun because you're not doing everything alone, you're doing it with somebody else with you, and nothing is fun alone," Megan says. "So if you have a group of kids doing something you all love to do it's just fantastic."

Mayor Duffy, along with other local leaders, is also headed to Albany today.

He will try to garner support in the state legislature for five initiatives, including the Rochester After-School Plan. He believes initiatives like investing \$40 million for the Institute of Sustainability at RIT, \$150 million for the Interstate 390 Interchange project, and providing mandate relief for local governments will promote job growth and improve the local economy.

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