

Teens from across the city unite at Boys & Girls Club

TEENS PUT THE FUN IN FUNDRAISING at the annual Unity Weekend basketball tournament on Saturday, Feb. 9, at the Charlestown Boys & Girls Club / Ansin Youth Center. Teen members from five Clubs of Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston will play basketball to raise funds for BGCB's Youth Service Providers Network.

YSPN is an innovative BGCB program, in partnership with the Boston Police Department, whose clinically trained social workers connect at-risk youth with appropriate prevention and intervention services. Ed Ansin, owner of the WHDH and WLVI television stations, conceived Unity Weekend in 2001 as part of his long-term commitment to YSPN. Ansin and his brother, Ron Ansin, continue to be YSPN's most steadfast financial supporters and Unity Weekend remains a way to provide annual operating funds for the program, whose annual operating budget is approximately \$850,000.

The tournament features eight mixed teams composed of teens from BGCB's five Clubs in Charlestown, Chelsea, Dorchester, Roxbury and South Boston. The four girls' and four boys' teams are sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, John Hancock, The Bank of New York Mellon and The Boston Celtics/Boston Celtics Shamrock Foundation. WHDH and WLVI provide promotional support and news coverage. Each sponsor contributes \$20,000 toward the



Youth participants in the annual Unity Weekend basketball tournament.

event.

"This tournament unites youth from very different parts of the city for a day of teamwork, friendship and sportsmanship," said Linda Whitlock, Nicholas president and CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston.

Since its inception in 1996, YSPN has served more than 8,000 youth and families from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The program is designed to address the unique needs of disadvantaged and at-risk urban youth and their families by plac-

ing licensed clinical social workers in district police stations throughout the city. With a referral from a police officer, YSPN provides intake/assessment, crisis intervention, advocacy, referral, clinical case management and ongoing individual and family therapy to

youth and their families.

Additionally, when there is an incidence of community violence, YSPN provides critical incident trauma services to individuals and groups. YSPN has been heralded nationally for its work in violence prevention and crisis response.