

## Guilford's Got Talent Returns

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Photo by Peter Holm

The winner of the 2011 Guilford's Got Talent contest, Cadence Richmond, accepts her trophy from John "Cadillac" Saville. This year's contestants have the option of a submitted video audition or auditioning in person at the Community Center.

Calling all Guilford kids: Do you think you have a beautiful singing voice that deserves to be heard? How about dance moves that you want to show off? If you or someone you know between the ages of 1 and 18 wants to show off a special talent, whatever it may be, Guilford's Got Talent wants to see it.

Guilford's Youth & Family Services (YFS), Parks & Recreation, and Developmental Assets for Youth (DAY) bring back Guilford's Got Talent, the second annual talent contest for Guilford kids, giving them the opportunity to take the stage on Sept. 9 on the Guilford Green to show their town their special talents.

To participate, kids have the choice to submit a video no longer than three minutes showcasing their talent or simply sign up for a live audition on Wednesday,

June 27 at the Community Center from 10 a.m. to noon-but hurry; availability is limited, according to Recreation Supervisor Ellen Clow.

"This year we decided we would offer a date for children to audition for those who struggle with technology in sending their videos in," said Clow. "Children will be judged in front of a panel of judges within a two-hour slot performing any talent for about five minutes."

Clow, along with YFS Program Director Karolin Regan, said they hope to get 25 performers this year, building on the 20 entries last year. They also plan to add two more judges, who are all part of the Guilford community, to make it a total of five on the panel this year, including a spot open for a Guilford youth.

"We would like to get five judges this year and we want the fifth spot to be a youth," said Regan. "It can be any older child living in Guilford who is interested in judging the contest. It should be fun."

There is no doubt the talent show is fun, but, more important, it may help boost a child's self-esteem in the process, which is DAY's mission, according to Prevention Coordinator Dana Pelliccio.

"DAY is all about taking a positive approach to reduce substance abuse for kids in this town," said Pelliccio. "In a survey taken in 2009 by the town's youths, it showed that they believed they were not valued enough in town, so we decided to focus our time on providing activities for them to show them that we do value them, and the contest is a way to show them they are."

Last year's contest proved to be such a positive experience for the children involved that Clow received inspiring feedback from the mother of last year's first-place winner, Cadence Richmond.

"We got an email from Cadence's mom saying how the contest was a huge stepping stone for her and that she went on to other performances." Clow said. "The contest really was such a self-esteem booster for all the kids involved. In the end, every child there was a winner."

Video submissions for Guilford's Got Talent can be sent via email to [clowe@ci.guilford.ct.us](mailto:clowe@ci.guilford.ct.us) or mailed to 32 Church St., Guilford, CT 06437, attention Ellen Clow. For more information on auditions and the contest, call 203-453-8068 203-453-8068. For contest rules and entry information, visit [www.guilfordparkrec.com](http://www.guilfordparkrec.com).