



# PREVENTION POST

## Spring 2006

[WWW.CENTRECOUNTYCTC.ORG](http://WWW.CENTRECOUNTYCTC.ORG)

Our *VISION* for our communities is that there will be a places where all children are safe, connected to others, encouraged to learn and explore their world, and supported by a web of concerned adults. Our communities will have gathering places, where people of all ages learn, play, and meet with each other. All adults in our communities will be accountable and share responsibility for nurturing, educating, and supporting our children, our families, and each other.

### CREATING CARING COMMUNITIES IN CENTRE COUNTY

*Communities That Care*® is a process, initiated by the research of Hawkins and Catalano, that engages community members in a broad-based prevention coalition with the goal of promoting positive youth development and reducing adolescent problem behaviors such as violence, drug and alcohol use, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and delinquency. Community members assess risk factors and resources in their community, prioritize prevention targets, and then implement evidence-based strategies and programs to address those factors that put youth at risk for problem behaviors.

In the mid 1990s, the Governor's Partnership for Children and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) spearheaded a plan to implement CTC® projects throughout Pennsylvania utilizing a combination of state and federal Title V funds. CTC® sites initially received funding for planning and coalition building and then were eligible for funding to implement research supported programs chosen to address the prioritized risk factors in their community.

Centre County *Communities That Care*®, a collaborative initiative with the involvement of Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, and Penns Valley school districts, was initiated in 1999. A risk and resource assessment was completed and Centre County CTC® continues to administer the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) every two years in partnership with the Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, and Penns Valley School Districts to identify risk factors directly from local youth. Data is assessed and utilized to drive the implementation of effective, research-based programming for youth and families in Centre County.

#### LOCALLY IDENTIFIED PREVENTION TARGETS

- ◆ Support the school commitment and academic success of local youth
- ◆ Promote skills in youth that aid them in resisting peer pressure and prevent them from engaging in impulsive, sensation seeking, or anti-social behavior
- ◆ Strengthen local communities and link families and youth to available resources
- ◆ Increase family bonding and communication skills
- ◆ Involve adults and the community in raising youth awareness of the dangers of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug (ATOD) use

### UPCOMING PREVENTION BOARD MEETING

July 13, 2006

*Prevention Board meetings are held at Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology from 9:00–11:00 a.m. Parents are welcome to attend!*



**REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITIES OF BALD EAGLE, BELLEFONTE, AND PENNS VALLEY**

# **CENTRE COUNTY *COMMUNITIES THAT CARE*<sup>®</sup>**

## **PROMOTING PREVENTION**

### **CTC<sup>®</sup> SUPPORTS THREE SCHOOL DISTRICT PREVENTION COORDINATORS**



Through funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Centre County *Communities That Care*<sup>®</sup> initiated the creation of three school-based Prevention Coordinator positions within the County. Gary Heverly, Katie Pollack, and Pam Strouse, the CTC<sup>®</sup> supported Prevention Coordinators for Bald Eagle, Penns Valley, and Bellefonte Area School Districts, are shown from left to right.

#### **BALD EAGLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT - *GARY HEVERLY***

Gary Heverly is the Prevention Coordinator for Bald Eagle Area School District. In his role as Prevention Coordinator, Gary is responsible for the coordination and implementation of several violence and drug and alcohol prevention programs. Currently, Bald Eagle Area School District is conducting the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) program in grades K-4, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in grades 5 through 8, Life Skills Training in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and Project Towards No Drug Abuse for high school students. Gary also serves as a support for the guidance office in the high school, conducts home visits for students and families in need of support, and serves as Project Director for Centre County *Communities That Care*<sup>®</sup> grants. Gary holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Community Counseling. Prior to his school district employment, he served as a program manager for various mental health and drug and alcohol programs and for the Division of Family Services in Delaware.

Gary Heverly can be contacted at 814-355-5731.

#### **BELLEFONTE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT - *PAM STROUSE***

Pam Strouse is the Prevention Coordinator for the Bellefonte Area School District. Pam is responsible for coordinating the implementation and evaluation of numerous prevention programs including the PATHS program (grades K-5), the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, the Life Skills Training Program (grades 6-8), and Project Towards No Drug Abuse (grade 9). Pam also procures and coordinates grants for the district to support numerous prevention initiatives within the Bellefonte Area School District. In addition, Pam serves as a liaison between the school district and Centre County *Communities That Care*<sup>®</sup> and is the current Chair of the Centre County *Communities That Care*<sup>®</sup> Prevention Board and Executive Committee.

Pam Strouse can be contacted at 814-355-5466 extension 5804.

#### **PENNS VALLEY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT - *KATIE POLLACK***

As the Prevention Coordinator for the Penns Valley Area School District, Katie is responsible for coordinating the implementation and evaluation of several prevention programs including the PATHS curriculum (grades K-4), the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (grades 5-6), and Project Towards No Drug Abuse (grade 11). In addition, Katie provides social skill instruction to elementary students, supports school-based tobacco prevention efforts, and assists with securing and managing grant funding for numerous violence and drug prevention initiatives within the district. For the last three years, Katie has served as the Secretary for the Centre County *Communities That Care*<sup>®</sup> Prevention Board and Executive Committee.

Katie Pollack can be contacted at 814-422-8822.

# BULLYING PREVENTION

Unfortunately, bullying is an issue that far too many youth deal with as part of their daily life at school. National statistics estimate that between 20 – 25% of school-age children in the United States experience bullying. This is alarming, especially when research studies clearly demonstrate disturbing short- and long-term effects on children who are bullied such as low self-esteem, physical illness, absenteeism, anxiety, and depression.

Bullying can take on many forms including verbal teasing, exclusion, gossip, threats, withdrawal of friendship, property damage, malicious notes posted on email, cell phone text messages, Internet harassment, and various acts of physical aggression. Recognizing that bullying can have devastating consequences and can make learning difficult, if not virtually impossible for some students, Centre County *Communities That Care*® has supported the adoption of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (BPP) in each of its three representative school districts.

The Bullying Prevention Program focuses on changing the way the entire school system operates—not just what goes on between students. The program seeks to promote change by intervening on three levels: school-wide policies, classroom instruction and interaction, and directly with individual bullies and victims. It is phased in gradually, first training staff and then implementing it with students by posting school rules against bullying and holding weekly classroom meetings to discuss how students are treating each other. The program has been proven to reduce bullying incidents, vandalism, fighting, theft, and general school misbehavior. It also has been shown to promote positive interaction between students and positive attitudes towards school work and school in general.

**BALD EAGLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT** - Two bullying prevention committees have been trained at Mountaintop Elementary and the Jr. High School and are now meeting twice a month. During June, Wingate and Port Matilda Elementary prevention committee members will be trained. Mountaintop Elementary will train its entire teaching staff and the transportation staff in June. A district-wide transportation training will be held in May. Gary Heverly, the district's Prevention Coordinator, received his Olweus Bullying Prevention trainer certification and is responsible for conducting the trainings.

**BELLEFONTE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT** - The Bellefonte Area Middle School formed a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee and completed a two day training in June of 2005. The committee has facilitated several full staff trainings and meetings. Classroom meetings, a key component of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, were introduced as Star Clusters in the fall of this school year. Staff members meet weekly with a small group of students to discuss topics relevant to creating a caring school community, such as bullying prevention, teambuilding, getting to know you, communication, and respect for others.

**PENNS VALLEY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT** - This year staff members from the Penns Valley Intermediate School— secretaries, custodians, principals, aides, teachers, counselors, and nurses—came together to form the Bullying Prevention Committee. After completing two full days of training, the committee began to work on the establishment of school rules, guidelines, and procedures for effectively addressing incidents of bullying. This spring, the committee conducted a series of trainings for the Intermediate school teachers, support staff, and bus drivers in bullying prevention and intervention. Currently, there are plans to continue the phase-in process at the Intermediate school and to extend the Bullying Prevention Program into lower and upper grade levels in future years.

*Although addressing bullying can be a complicated process, Centre County Communities That Care® has taken important first steps to helping kids feel safer and happier in school.*



## INTERNET SAFETY

On Friday, May 5, 2006, Centre County *Communities That Care*® was pleased to host *Internet Safety: What Every Parent Should Know!* Chuck Favata, a computer specialist from Holland, Pennsylvania, presented on the dangers faced by teens as they seek entertainment online in chat rooms, on sites such as *My Space*, and through *Instant Messenger*.

**Protect your children!**  
Parent resources can be accessed at:

[www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)  
[www.NetSmartz.org](http://www.NetSmartz.org)  
[www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)

## KICK BUTT'S DAY

On April 5th, the Penns Valley Junior and Senior High celebrated Kick Butt's Day, a nationally recognized day of tobacco prevention. Celesta Powell, an alternative education counselor, coordinated the event. Tobacco prevention fact sheets were created and distributed. School teachers and staff wore t-shirts displaying a unified message of tobacco resistance and cessation. Eleventh graders, under the direction of Becky Deihl, a health teacher, created public service announcements that ran on the morning announcements. The dangers of tobacco use were focused upon and the voluntary smoking cessation program offered within the District was promoted. Not On Tobacco or N-O-T is an evidence based cessation curriculum developed by the American Lung Association that is available to students that desire to quit smoking.





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**CENTRE COUNTY *COMMUNITIES THAT CARE*®**  
CONTRIBUTING TO HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

**AMERICA'S DAY FOR KIDS**  
**SEPTEMBER 9 & 10, 2006**

The America's Day for Kids Planning Committee is looking for individuals, organizations, and local groups to devote time and service to the planning of this year's America's Day for Kids. Each year, a day is set aside as communities across the country hold events that encourage caregivers and children to spend engaging and enjoyable time together. This national celebration was created in response to research demonstrating that meaningful time spent with adults is essential to the development of positive self images and a sense of belonging in youth.

Over the last couple of years, local National Kid's Day activities have been hosted in Bellefonte, Bald Eagle, Penns Valley, and State College communities with the expertise and enthusiasm of dedicated volunteers. It is hoped that, this year, activities, such as block parties, congregational picnics, and downtown festivities will be hosted in communities across the County. There are many ways for you to contribute to this year's events, including event planning, marketing, coordinating games, performing a talent, or financial sponsorship.

For more information, contact Ed Horning at 814-355-4897.

**COLLECTIVE ENDEAVORS ~ YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Centre County *Communities That Care*® fosters a structured process aimed at facilitating collaboration among organizations and leveraging community resources to address locally identified risk factors for youth problem behaviors. Together, as partners, community organizations, parents, and youth, can positively impact local adolescent development.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO FIND OUT HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED, CONTACT:**  
Kimberly Cassidy, Community Mobilizer ~ 814-404-9511 ~ [centrecountyctc@yahoo.com](mailto:centrecountyctc@yahoo.com)