

COALITION CHRONICLE

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FROM THE STAFF

A warm welcome to sunnier days and the Spring Edition of our quarterly newsletter! We're tapping into spring's natural energy and planting the seeds to "STOP" underage drinking in its tracks. In the United States, alcohol kills more youth than all illegal drugs combined.

As everyone is gearing up to resume the delight of yard work (or for some folks the drudgery), we've been very busy with many programs and

events, such as the Town Hall Meetings and the Youth – Law Enforcement Forum.

Our "HEARTS" are filled with joy as we get inspired. This after school program is a place where Boyertown's Junior High students combine fun and homework to achieve more in their lives. Older students even come back to volunteer!

As we finish our spring-cleaning and plan our garden and landscaping projects, we look forward to Summer Holidays and

honoring both our mothers and fathers.

The *Not Tonight* Campaign is in full swing and gaining steam as we help support a multitude of Sober Prom and Graduation Celebrations throughout the county. Like a well-tended garden, the connections we nourish now will flourish for years to come.

Anita

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A FATHER'S LOVE

The unconditional love of a father is one of the greatest gifts to a child. Unfortunately, this is difficult for many fathers because of the model that was given to them by their fathers. Regardless of experiences, however, every dad owes it to his child(ren) to become the best father they can be.

A father's love is unconditional ... giving much and asking nothing. There are no strings attached. Fathers need to show and tell their children that they are loved, especially during the teenage years. They need acceptance and affection from their dads.

SEE THEIR UNIQUENESS

Every child is unique with his or her own gifts and talents. Have you ever observed your child in action? Marveled at what he or she does well? Wonder what is it like to do what they do? These are indicators of the gifts and talents that are unique to them. Sometimes parents try to coerce children into working harder at something at which the child feels he or she does not excel, or simply does not enjoy. Fathers need to encourage, nurture, and provide the tools required to develop each child's

individual gifts and passions.

BUILD THEM UP

It is amazing how much negativity surrounds our children. *Focus on the Family* reports that children in the average home receive 10 negative comments to every positive comment. By the time a child has graduated high school, they've heard over 15,000 negative comments. They also report that 80% of children age five feel good about themselves and by the time they are 12 only 10% feel good about themselves.

It is important that fathers play an active role in filling their children's emotional tanks. There are a few ways to do that. One way is to stay away from phrases like "you always" and "you never." Noticing every failure will have lasting consequences. If we really think about it, children don't always forget to do their chores or homework. They aren't always late for dinner. Stick to the positives; recognize them when they do their chores, let them know you notice when they get home by dinner or curfew, and acknowledge them when you come home before checking your e-mail or picking up the newspaper.

"It is a wise father that knows his own child."

~ William Shakespeare

Making eye contact when talking to them is also important. You may be able to listen while watching TV or reading, but your kids don't know that.

Bob Keiderling is a senior associate with Great Dads and a National Ministry Consultant for Man in the Mirror Ministries. Bob resides in Bethlehem, Pa with Donna, his wife of 28 years. They have 3 children; Jenn 27, Amy 26, and Bobby 23



SPOTLIGHT ON...DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT

On April 6, 2006, the Disproportionate Minority Contact Sub-Committee held its second Youth/Law Enforcement Forum at the Wyndham Hotel in Reading, PA. The forum was moderated by Michael Lyndsie and focused not only on the relationships and perspectives of Law Enforcement and Youth but also on those of the parents.

The April 6th Forum was such a phenomenal success that the four hour time period was not enough to contain all of the positive

information that was shared. Parents, community leaders, police officers, middle and high school students and many other community representatives offered their individual and unique perspectives into the possible causes and solutions to the breakdown in communication between not only youth and law enforcement but between the community and its leaders and elected officials.

Over 65 audience members were engaged by an eight member panel

consisting of law enforcement officials, students and community leaders who participated in role-playing activities, described and interpreted scenarios and asked and answered many thought-provoking questions.

Future youth and law enforcement forums are planned and will address the issue of communication from an even broader perspective.

-Gene Deren



SPOTLIGHT ON... BOYERTOWN HEARTS AFTER-SCHOOL ACADEMY

A program with heart.

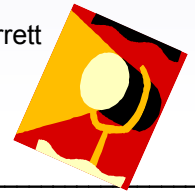
The Boyertown Homework, Enrichment, Arts, Review, Technology and Safety (HEARTS) After-School Academy is a junior high program in its sixth year of operation in both junior high schools in the Boyertown School District. HEARTS is a safe, caring adult-supervised program, which operates on an open door policy for all junior high students and focuses on keeping teens safe and off the streets from dismissal until 5:00 PM. It is funded through the Communities That Care Grant along with other grants and local donations. There is a \$1.00 student fee per day to attend, with sponsorships available for families who find that this fee is a

hardship. Students complete homework and catch up on school and computer work during the first hour. Snacks are then served, followed by enrichment sessions that include a wide range of activities from crafts to sports to computer fun. Senior High students, many of whom attended HEARTS in junior high, serve as volunteers and can earn high school credit for their community service. Currently there are approximately 50 high school volunteers in the program. The director, a teacher and an aide are also in attendance daily to assist the students.

Approximately 250 to 300 junior high

students attend per year and, once registered, can attend at any time. This successful program has proven over time to increase grades and completion of homework for those students who attend, and a direct correlation has been found showing that the more days a student attends HEARTS, the less absences from school they had. HEARTS has truly proven to be a place where Boyertown's young teens can hang out with old friends, make new friends, increase their academics, and have a lot of fun!

- Chris Barrett



STOP ACT SOBER TRUTH ON PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING

As part of my responsibilities here at Community Prevention Partnership of Berks County, I have the privilege of talking to youth, young adults, community leaders, parents and policy makers on the dangers of substances used by youth. My presentations are frank and to the point. I usually start out with the question, "What is the number one drug used by youth today?" Respondents favor tobacco use and/or marijuana as the number one drug used by youth.

The truth of the matter is that alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among America's youth. A higher percentage of youth aged 12 to 20 use alcohol (29%) than use tobacco (24%) or illicit drugs (14%), making underage drinking a leading public health problem in the United States. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) data shows that by the time they reach

the eighth grade, nearly 50 percent of adolescents have had at least one drink, with more than 20 percent report having been intoxicated. It is a fact; in the United States alone, alcohol kills more youth than all illegal drugs **combined**. There is no doubt that alcohol use by youth is a complex, persistent social problem that threatens the immediate and long term well-being of our youth.

In an effort to begin addressing the many harms related to underage drinking, members of Congress introduced the "Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act". This act addresses four areas of policy development: 1) Improve federal coordination and leadership on underage drinking prevention; 2) Begin a national campaign to prevent underage drinking; 3) Provide funding for community and college campus efforts to prevent underage drinking; 4) Provide additional research and data

collection on underage drinking.

It is anticipated that future funding will become available for organizations to design, test, evaluate and disseminate strategies to maximize the effectiveness of community-wide approaches to underage drinking.

The public health, safety, consumer protection, education, child and family welfare and faith communities have fought for years to elevate underage drinking on the national public policy agenda. It is no coincidence that the federal government is now taking a stand to promote effective measures to reinforce the efforts of many. The Underage Drinking Act is symbolic of this effort and represents an important step in developing an effective national response to the devastating public health and safety problem of underage drinking. Our communities and our children deserve no less. -Yvonne Storman

UPDATES

Boyertown Communities That Care (CTC)

The Boyertown Area *Communities That Care*® submitted a sustainability proposal to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to fund the initiative for another year.

The goal of the Boyertown Area CTC is to implement programs that decrease the risk factors and increase the protective factors found in the community.

The Boyertown Area *Communities That Care*® initiative supports the HEARTS (Homework, Enrichment, Arts, Review, Technology, Safety) after-school program, which is accessible to all district junior high students.

Reading Communities That Care (CTC)

The Creating Lasting Family Connections (CLFC) training program, delivered in Spanish to adults and in English to youth, concluded on March 27, 2006. Fourteen parents and nine youth graduated from the program. Two adults were recognized for their perfect attendance.

The Latino ad-hoc committee of the Reading CTC had its first formal meeting on March 29, 2006. Brenda Franco and Millie Molina were elected chair and co-chair of the committee.

Tobacco Free Berks Coalition

Join the Tobacco Free Berks Coalition at a Reading Express Football game! The Coalition will be at the game to bring attention to World No Tobacco Day. The game is at 7:00 p.m. on May 27th, 2006 at the Sovereign Center. World No Tobacco Day is held annually on May 31st to bring awareness to the health and dependency issues related to tobacco use. Please be sure to join us for this very important event by stopping by our booth to pick up information, ask questions and check out a few demonstrations.

Ecstasy and Other Club Drugs

The first and second phase of the Ecstasy Social Norm media campaign unfolded in both Reading and Wilson High Schools.

An Ecstasy and Other Club Drugs presentation was given to the PTO at Lincoln Park Elementary School.

The Ecstasy Task Force Quarterly Meeting was held at BCIU.

Youth Development

The Youth Development Coalition is a collaboration of youth serving organizations in the City of Reading who are committed to ensuring youth are given support and resources to grow, develop and thrive in a community that is challenging and evolving.

A nationally recognized curriculum assists youth workers in enhancing their skills and expertise and caters specifically to the needs of youth. Training is free and youth workers and advocates who attend the training receive certification.

Reading is proud to have two master trainers who are qualified to facilitate the training. It is anticipated that a two-day training will be available in the latter part of summer. For more information, contact Yvonne L. Stroman at

ystroman@communitypreventionpartnership.org

Drug Free Communities Update (Community Mobilization Coalition)

The Drug Free Communities Program will hold its third quarterly meeting of the year on Thursday, April 20. This meeting will serve the purpose to disseminate information and allow participants to network as per usual, however the month of April is also **Volunteer Appreciation Month**, therefore the group representatives will be acknowledged and honored for their dedication to making Berks County a healthy place to live, one project at a time.

On April 8, the Fleetwood Area Youth Coalition held a Healthy Kids Day,

where there were displays set up such as the Red Cross, Wal-Mart Vision Center with free vision screening and a variety of anti-drug/alcohol/tobacco information. The day also featured a talent show, in which the participants incorporated their reasons for remaining drug, alcohol and tobacco-free.

Many other Community Mobilization Coalition groups are gearing up for their annual post prom and/or graduation parties. Some parties are held at Ozzy's Sports Fun Center, some go bowling, and yet others put much time and effort into decorating a school and bringing activities in for the kids to enjoy. No matter the location or the activities, the goal is still the same: to keep kids safe and sober on a very exciting night of their lives.

Strengthening Families First (SFF)

Strengthening Families First will be hold the next coalition meeting on May 3rd in order to bring together agencies with similar missions to strengthen marriages and families, share our successes, acquire a better understanding of what is available in our community, and plan for a collaborative future.

SFF is also planning a fundraiser at Ozzy's Sports Fun Center that will take place July 29 & 30. Contact Nancy Bucci at 610.376.6988 for more information regarding these events.

Wilson Communities That Care

The Wilson Communities That Care will be sponsoring a Talent Show on Friday night, May 12th from 7:30pm to 10pm at the Wilson High School Auditorium. Come and enjoy the many talents of the Wilson High School students. A Silent Art Auction will be held in the Wilson High School Auditorium Lobby on May 10th, 11th, and 12th from 8am to 5pm and will end the night of the Talent Show. Many of different types of art work will be available for bidding. Do not miss out!

NOT TONIGHT

2006 Berks County Prevention Campaign

The *Not Tonight* Campaign and Strengthening Families First: Berks County Healthy Marriage and Family Coalition would like to thank all those who helped make "Date Your Mate" a huge success. Below is a list of restaurants that participated and the dollar amount they contributed to "Date Your Mate."

<i>Date Your Mate</i>	
Name of Restaurant	In-kind Donation
City Limits	\$479.00
Blue Orchid	\$600
Friendly's	\$1386.73
Canal Street	\$1475.80
Kutztown Tavern	\$1610.75
Crab Barn	\$3639.25

CAMPAIGN DONORS

Platinum Benefactor (\$10,000)

- Reading Eagle

Gold Benefactor (\$5,000)

- Land Display
- Y102/WRAW

Event Sponsor (\$1000)

- Land Display
- Sovereign Bank
- Wal Mart

Friend (\$100)

- Associated Wholesalers Inc.
- Community Care Behavioral Health
- Gage Personnel
- Sheraton Hotel
- Tray-Pak

K U D O S

O The mission of the Partnership is to make a difference by offering a variety of prevention services to the Berks County community that help to address problems associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. In an effort to carry out this mission, the Partnership collaborates efforts with schools to provide education and resources to identify problems and address

strategies to combat these social issues. To that end, Kudos goes out to the school districts of Reading and Wilson for their willingness to collaborate on a social marketing campaign. The schools agreed to assist the Ecstasy and other Club Drugs Task Force with the development of a student task force, providing meeting space, dissemination of student surveys and

displaying posters and tent cards. Our project would not be possible without their commitment and collaboration.



NOT TONIGHT

2006 Berks County Prevention Campaign

EVENT UPDATES

February: *Not Tonight* and Strengthening Families First encouraged couples throughout Berks County to “**Date Your Mate**” during the month of February. Recognizing that healthy relationships between parents are at the center of strong families, and strong families are a protective factor in preventing substance use, the campaign promoted “intentional dating” - making a conscious effort to focus on your relationship and your partner. Participating restaurants joined the initiative by offering a “Buy One Entrée, Get One Entrée Free” to the couples. While event planners hoped for 100 participating couples, final tabulations show **over 600 couples took advantage of this great offer and made their relationship a priority!** All participants were enrolled in a prize drawing for future “dates,” and one lucky winner even won a one night Romance Package stay at the Sheraton!

March: *Not Tonight* partnered with all five area colleges and universities to encourage students to celebrate **Sober Saint Patty’s Day**. With green beer flowing freely on a day when everyone is Irish, *Not Tonight* and the Berks County College Consortium encouraged students to “Celebrate Sober. Celebrate Safe.” Posters and “light-n-whistle” key chains with the prevention message were distributed to all five campuses.

April: *Not Tonight* partnered with Caron Treatment Services to focus attention on the **serious issues of underage drinking, youth substance use and teen addiction**. Over 20 people attended the educational event held at Governor Mifflin High School on April 4th. In addition, the important message that parents need to talk to their children about the subject reached thousands of Berks County homes through ads run in the Reading Eagle and flyers sent home through schools!

UPCOMING EVENTS

May: The Fundraising Committee is currently still seeking corporate sponsorship, but with help from the local business community, *Not Tonight* will be encouraging youth to celebrate prom and graduation safely. The media slogan for the month is “Risk ruining one of the best nights of my life? NOT TONIGHT! Sober Prom and Graduation 2006.” In addition to advocating healthy choices, this message will help to reinforce the substance-free alternative activities that many dedicated parent and civic groups throughout Berks County organize annually.

June: The event team for the ConGRADulations Celebration is hard at work organizing a GREAT event for Berks County high school students to send off the Seniors of 2006 and welcome the start of summer! The event will be held Friday, June 2nd from 6-11 PM at Ozzy’s Sports Fun Center. In addition to the fun activities always available at Ozzy’s, the event team is organizing a Teen Idol Contest for participants to show off their vocal talents. The event will also feature music, karaoke and other activities by B & B Light and Sound, as well as fun, crazy competitions for hot prizes! The event team is currently looking for chaperones. Contact Jenny at 610.376.6988 or jmaurer@communitypreventionpartnership.org if you’re interested in helping out!

July: *Not Tonight* will be encouraging adults throughout Berks County to celebrate the Fourth of July and other summer festivities safely by drinking responsibly and having a designated driver. The Fundraising Committee is still looking for corporate sponsorship for the outreach campaign.