

Pennsylvania Awarded Youth Suicide Prevention Grant



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration recently awarded a youth suicide prevention grant to the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The award is for \$500,000 per year for three years, for a total of \$1.5 million. The grants are authorized as part of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, sponsored in Congress by Senator Gordon Smith of Oregon who lost his son to suicide in 2003.

The Pennsylvania grant project, entitled "Suicide Prevention in Primary Care," will develop a suicide prevention program for youth ages 14-24 within the primary care medical system that will provide screening, assessment, family engagement, and linkage to treatment. It will be piloted in Schuylkill, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, three counties with some of the highest rates for suicide death and hospitalization for self-injury in Pennsylvania.

These three pilot projects will focus on five primary objectives: 1) create a partnership within each county of policy makers, medical and behavioral health care providers, local suicide task forces, family members, and local medical and behavioral health insurance companies; 2) provide a youth suicide "gatekeeper" training program for participating pediatricians, family physicians and nurse practitioners; 3) provide medical practitioners free access to a web-based, patient self-report screening tool to assess for suicide and related risk factors; 4) increase the integration of behavioral health services with physical health services; and 5) provide clinical training in best practice therapy models for youth who are suicidal to the behavioral health providers who will receive referrals of these at-risk youth.

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Suicide Prevention Grant *cont'd from page 1*

In its grant proposal, Pennsylvania documented the need to address youth suicide prevention. From 2003 to 2005, 514 Pennsylvania youths committed suicide. Youth suicides have occurred in every county over the last five years. Of the counties with population densities great enough to calculate suicide rates, 53% in the 14-24 year-old range have rates greater than the national average. Furthermore, 15% of Pennsylvania counties have rates at least twice the national average. Clearly, the proposal said, "The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania needs a better system of early identification, assessment, triage and treatment of adolescents ages 14 to 25 at risk for suicide, in order to reduce the number of deaths and hospitalization for self-injury in the Commonwealth."

Representatives from the mental health, substance abuse, juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems in each county support the goals of this grant. Each county has well-developed primary care systems, adequate mental health services, appropriate emergency room services, and has access to inpatient psychiatric hospital beds. Two of the counties have very strong suicide prevention task forces. These groups will be active participants in moving the proposed projects forward.

The overarching goal of the "Suicide Prevention in Primary Care" project is to identify barriers, solutions and resources that will allow the state to expand the primary care suicide prevention project across the commonwealth. As the projects are developed in the three pilot counties, progress reports will be posted on the Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative's new web site at www.payspi.org, along with resources and other information that will help other counties think about how they could replicate the project. The web site also contains other news and information about Pennsylvania's youth suicide prevention efforts and resources for youth and family members, young adults, survivors of suicide, and professionals.

Save the Date/Call for Presentations 20th Children's Interagency Conference

The 20th Children's Interagency Training Conference will be held **May 5-8, 2009, at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College, PA**, with the theme "Involving is Solving...The Changing Focus of Children's Behavioral Health." Continuing in the tradition of previous interagency conferences that welcome all child-serving systems partners, including juvenile justice, the conference will spotlight the hard work, improvements, adjustments, and implementation of new ideas that are transforming Pennsylvania's children's behavioral health system to one that celebrates family voice and choice, youth guidance, and natural supports. The conference was previously sponsored by the former PA CASSP Training and Technical Assistance Institute, and is now sponsored by OMHSAS and the Youth and Family Training Institute at the University of Pittsburgh.

The Youth and Family Training Institute invites proposals for presentations for the conference on such topics as school-based behavioral health, early childhood mental health, youth suicide prevention, evidence-based practices/promising practices, trauma-informed care, family/youth engagement, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, reactive attachment disorder, and cross-systems collaboration (including juvenile justice, child welfare, drug and alcohol, education, etc.). Presentations in these areas will receive priority consideration if they demonstrate efforts in family voice and choice, youth involvement/guidance, and natural supports. **The deadline for presentation proposals is October 31, 2008.** The call for presentations, with guidelines, is available online. You can submit a proposal electronically by filling out the form available at <http://www.wpic.pitt.edu/oerp/yfticonf/>.

Auberle SNAP™ for Boys Program Achieving Success

Auberle – a facility located in McKeesport – has been dedicated to the mission of helping abused, neglected and troubled children and families throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania to heal themselves since 1952. Today, Auberle is exhibiting positive results with its SNAP™ for Boys Program.

The SNAP™ (Stop Now and Plan) program was developed more than 20 years ago in Toronto, Canada, in response to rising incidents of juvenile delinquency and to reduce juvenile recidivism. The goal of SNAP™ is to provide guidance and support to the top two percent of the most at-risk boys (ages 6-11) who have had a first encounter with the police.

SNAP™ helps children and parents deal effectively with anger by teaching them to stop and think before they act – responding in a way that makes their problems smaller, not bigger. With help and practice, children and parents are able to stop, calm down and generate positive solutions at the “snap of their fingers.” For instance, a boy and his family – and others as appropriate – may participate in two core components with the goal of preventing future anti-social behavior and reducing the chances of coming in conflict with the law. Experienced and highly trained SNAP™ staff work together with the family to assess the problem behavior and create an action plan.

The Youth Crime Prevention Council, Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners (PSVP) and Allegheny County Juvenile Probation Department collaborated to bring SNAP™ to Allegheny County. “Supporting efforts that help to reduce

juvenile delinquency and rehabilitate youth is a priority for our department,” said Allegheny County Juvenile Probation Director Jim Rieland. “In other communities, SNAP has proven to be successful with 70 percent of participants staying crime-free. We’re looking forward to its positive impact in Allegheny County”. Successful implementation of the program could save the county \$4 million in court cost and detention fees. Auberle was chosen to implement the 2-year pilot through a competitive bid process that included over 60 agencies in Allegheny County.

Since the program began in January of this year, a total of 67 young boys and their families have been enrolled. Child Behavior Check List (CBCL) scores – a clinical tool used to measure the range of the boys’ conduct, rule-breaking and aggression scores – have shown a 7-point drop, approximately, over the course of the last two sessions. Thirty-six percent of the boys have actually shifted out of the Clinical Range on their CBCL scores since completing the group component of the program. Parents are reporting a high satisfaction rate upon completion of their parenting groups and all participants have said that the program has led them to a better understanding of their child’s problems and has made them feel more confident as a parent.

Auberle SNAP™ for Boys Program is looking forward to continued success with this evidence-based program. For more information about the program please feel free to contact Diane George, Auberle SNAP™ for Boys Program Manager at (412)-673-5856 Extension 1232 or at dianeg@aublerle.org.

OJJDP Announces More Than \$293 Million in Grants

Reprint from [JUVJUST](#),
a service of the [OJP](#) from [OJJDP](#)

On October 3, 2008, the [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP) issued the following [press release](#):

Washington—Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey today announced more than \$293 million in grant awards to help at-risk youth and improve juvenile justice systems nationwide. These grants, administered by OJP’s

[Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#) (OJJDP), support community efforts to prevent crime and protect public safety through focusing on the well-being of our nation’s young people.

“The Department is committed to fighting gangs and gang violence through both enforcement and prevention,” said Attorney General Michael

B. Mukasey. The grant awards announced today are an important investment in our efforts to provide youth with alternatives to the destructive lifestyle of crime and gangs.”

OJJDP awarded more than \$125 million directly to states and territories in formula and block grants to implement a range of programs that support safe communities.

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OJJDP - Grants *cont'd from page 3*

These funds will support delinquency prevention activities, efforts to enforce underage drinking laws, and accountability-based programs to reduce juvenile offending and strengthen juvenile justice systems. The Office also awarded more than \$167 million in discretionary grants to support a range of delinquency prevention and child protection activities.

Recognizing the multifaceted needs of youth, OJJDP invested more than \$71 million this year to help develop and enhance the capacity of communities to provide mentoring services to at-risk youth and support anti-gang strategies nationwide.

“OJJDP has long been a leading supporter of mentoring programs as an effective way to prevent at-risk youth from becoming involved in delinquency and

to help already delinquent youth change their lives for the better” said Jeffrey L. Sedgwick, Assistant Attorney General for OJP.

This year, mentoring grants will focus on the needs of underserved populations, including at-risk youth in Native American and Alaska Native communities and Latino communities that have gang problems. The funding also supports a variety of child protection activities. OJJDP awarded more than \$17 million in grants to state and local law enforcement agencies under its [Internet Crimes Against Children \(ICAC\) Task Force Program](#) to support joint local, state, and federal efforts to investigate and prosecute online crimes against children and keep children safe from online predators.

This week, the Department also announced the launch

of its new crime prevention initiative, [Celebrate Safe Communities](#) (CSC). In partnership with the National Sheriffs' Association and the National Crime Prevention Council, OJP is promoting the new event throughout the country, October 2 - 4.

Celebrate Safe Communities is a new initiative taking place throughout the country and will help local communities organize safety-focused events. October is [Crime Prevention Month](#), and CSC observes the month by spotlighting communities' crime prevention efforts, enhancing public awareness of vital crime prevention and safety messages, and recruiting year-round support for ongoing prevention activities that help keep neighborhoods safe from crime.

York County Juvenile Court Hosts 19th Annual Awards Breakfast



The York County Court of Common Pleas held its 19th Annual Juvenile Justice Awards ceremony on October 7, 2008.

Employees of the juvenile probation department select recipients by majority vote, and the county judges present the awards at a formal breakfast scheduled each year during Juvenile Justice Week.

The theme for 2008 was “Essential Piece”. Those serving in the juvenile justice field were encouraged to reflect on their unique importance in the “big picture” of balanced and restorative justice, and to persevere through the myriad of challenges and the sometimes-elusive sense of success.

Attendees included representatives from the York County Court of Common Pleas, the County Commissioner's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Sheriff's Office, private citizens, the Juvenile Probation Department, human services departments, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, and many other local community partners.

Juvenile Justice Week Activities to Showcase Newville Facility

By [Kelly Wilson](#), The Sentinel, October 6, 2008

<http://www.cumberlink.com/articles/2008/10/06/news/local/doc48ea1556ad315554303955.txt>

The Cumberland County Juvenile Probation Department is getting ready to showcase its accomplishments this week as part of Juvenile Justice Week.

The arrival of a new juvenile facility in Newville prompted concerns from area residents when the plans were first unveiled, and officials are looking forward to some positive interaction now that the facility is up and running in the former Mifflin Elementary School.

"The community was pretty much up in arms," said Tom Hughes, probation officer with the department.

By opening the facility doors to neighbors, Hughes said, he hopes to remove some of the mystery and show residents that the participants are just kids from this community and others like it.

Because this is the first year the center has been part of a promotional event like this, it's going to hold activities only Tuesday through Thursday. The big highlight of the week is Wednesday's tour of the facility, run by Cornell Abraxas, which should help visitors get to know the place and get a better understanding of what goes on there.

"Confidentiality has given people a lot of room to develop falsehoods in their minds," Hughes said.

"It's hard to expect the general public to understand what we do when we can't tell them what we do."

NO CRIMINALS

The school isn't a holding place for criminals, he said. School districts have the option of sending kids who simply pose disciplinary problems at school.

Facilities like this are meant to put kids on the track to a more successful future, Hughes explained. It practices a philosophy of balanced and restorative justice.

These are simply good kids who messed up, Hughes said.

That's certainly how Malie McLaughlin sees them.

She has been receiving the benefits of the center's community service work since she first heard about the program. The senior citizen

is one of many clients who are helped by the students, who make the trip to McLaughlin's Camp Hill home to do chores such as yard work.

It's been great having them around to help, she said. Her children lend a hand when they can, but she's on her own for many of the little day-to-day things.

McLaughlin said she loves the kids and she encourages others to take advantage of the program, not only because of the convenience of having the work done but because of the good that the program does for local youth. "I'm really impressed with them (staff and participants)," she said. "They have a difficult job because a lot of people are afraid of them, which I think is silly."

COOKING, TOO

On Tuesday afternoon, the center will be back in McLaughlin's yard and on Thursday the kids are to make spaghetti sauce at Project SHARE in Carlisle using vegetables they've been growing at the Dickinson College farm in South Middleton Township.

"We wanted to top it off with a spaghetti dinner so they can actually eat what they've been making," Hughes said.

The facility sees very few repeat residents, Hughes said, and it's expanding its services to help keep it that way.

As a Cornell Abraxas project, the center is a custom design planned with the community's needs in mind, he said. In this facility, that includes housing to help 18- and 19-year-olds while they transition into the workplace.

Giving them job skills, teaching them how to build and present a resume and helping them with interviewing helps them to keep from falling into a life of crime, Hughes said.

The facility being referenced in this article is CASA (Cumberland Abraxas Student Academy), which is operated by Abraxas Youth & Family Services. This is a community-based facility that houses Cumberland County's Day Treatment and Non-Residential Treatment programs, in addition to accepting students from school districts throughout the county for alternative education placement. There is also an Independent Living component within the facility, designed to provide temporary housing and life skills to help older adolescents transition into adulthood

NORRISTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Provides Children and Parents a Valuable Safety Message

By: Kelly Brown, Family Services

In response to the increasing exposure of our youth to firearms and violence, the Norristown Police Department (NPD), in partnership with Norristown Area Communities That Care for Youth (CTC), has developed the **SafeKids: Out of Harm's Way Initiative**. **SafeKids** is designed to prevent Norristown area youth from becoming victims of violence and/or unintentional firearms accidents in their homes, school and in the community. The partnership combines the efforts of numerous organizations and has a three-pronged approach to reducing the risk of violence: youth education; parent education; and community outreach.

As the primary component of **SafeKids**, NPD officers provide important, life-saving messages to elementary school students in the Norristown Area School District. NPD officers use **Eddie Eagle** (the nationally-recognized model program) to teach second-grade students four important steps to follow if they find a gun. "With guns present in 50 percent of households nationwide, this is a potentially life-saving message for children," said Lt. Kevin McKeon, commander of criminal investigations, NPD. These steps are presented in an easy-to-remember format consisting of the following simple rules: If you see a gun —

STOP!

Don't Touch - Leave the Area - Tell an Adult

In addition to the goal of preventing tragic firearm accidents among children, another primary objective of **SafeKids** is to increase the positive affiliation between area youth and NPD officers. "We want the children in our community to know that police officers are here to help and keep them safe" said McKeon.

In addition to the gun safety lessons taught throughout Norristown second-grade classes, NPD officers return to the classrooms in third and fourth grades. The third-grade lessons include use of the national program **Stop Bullying Now**. Officers speak with students regarding the negative effects that bullying has on them, their peers and their schools. The officers also discuss problem-solving strategies for reducing and intervening in bullying behavior.

The addition of the fourth-grade lesson was in response to an overwhelming message to both children and adults in the community to "Stop Snitching" or "Snitchen' Leads to Stitchen". Many Norristown elementary schools were experiencing an increase in problems with students knowing about negative – and in some instances life-threatening – behaviors of their peers and not informing school staff.

Through this lesson, NPD officers are using their positive relationships with the students to provide the message that "Telling is Helping."

"Providing our youth with the knowledge and skills to avoid involvement in violence and to assist their community by intervening in problems is a primary objective of NPD's outreach efforts to youth," explained NPD Chief Russell Bono. "We are hopeful that the students will take these messages home and share them with their parents." "We are very pleased to partner with the NPD on this project," said Dr. William Dura, director of pupil services, NASD. "**SafeKids** has been an invaluable addition to the safety education offered through our elementary schools, as well as a resource to our elementary school staff."



Under the coordination of Lt. Kevin McKeon and Lt. James Hetrick, the **Eddie Eagle** program is presented by the following NPD officers: Sgt. Richard Clowser; Sgt. Bob Greenaway; and Officers Dan De Orizo, Brian Kozera and Matthew O'Connell. For more information on **SafeKids: Out of Harm's Way**, call Lt. Kevin McKeon at 610-270-0977.

SafeKids: Out of Harm's Way is sponsored by Norristown Area CTC, a risk-focused approach to reducing youth problem behaviors through community mobilization and planning. For more information on Norristown Area CTC, please call Angela Bell, CTC community mobilizer, at 610-630-2111, ext. 236.

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on Probation, Parole and Corrections**

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THURSDAY

November 20, 2008

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**Registration
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**Reclaiming Our Communities:
Reducing Drug Use in Rural
Pennsylvania**

Drug use in rural communities across Pennsylvania is a growing phenomenon that has enormous health implications. This conference will explore the characteristics of rural communities that support or hinder the use of drugs and discuss the impact of rural drug use on individuals, families and communities, thereby heightening the awareness of the prevalence of rural drug use throughout the Commonwealth. This conference is intended for anyone involved in addressing drug use in rural Pennsylvania, including, but not limited to, policy makers; rural advocates; county-based mental health/mental retardation administrators and other county officials; school officials and clinicians; law enforcement Penn State Cooperative Extension Educators; researchers; insurance companies; state agencies and community-based social service and health care administrators.



LOCATION/SITES

Northeast: Luzerne County Community College
Nanticoke, PA

Southeast: Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Kutztown, PA

Southcentral: WITF, Inc.
Harrisburg, PA

Central: The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA
Pennsylvania Highlands Community College
Johnstown, PA

Northern Tier: Community Education Council
of Elk and Cameron Counties
St. Marys PA

Northwest: Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Clarion, PA

Southwest: California University of Pennsylvania
Southpointe Center
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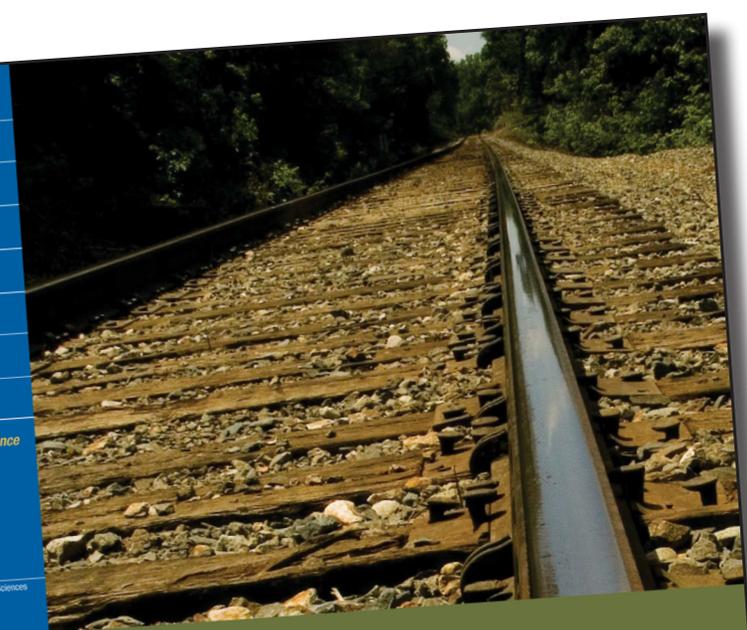
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**Reclaiming Our
Communities:
Reducing Drug
Use in Rural
Pennsylvania**

November 12, 2008
9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

A State Wide Web-based Conference



CRAWFORD COUNTY JUVENILE PROBATION SCORES FOR THE COMMUNITY

By Holly K. Varndell, Crawford County Juvenile Probation Supervisor

A beautiful, sunny Saturday – September 20, 2008 – helped host the 8th Annual Black and Blue Softball charity tournament coordinated by Crawford County Juvenile Probation. Juvenile Probation Supervisor Sam Pendolino and Community Based Officer Kris Kearns organized the tournament. The tournament was held as a community activity and fundraiser for the Crawford County Juvenile Probation Advisory Board, having been recently reformed as the Crawford County Children's Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC includes representatives from AmeriCorps Vista, Crawford County Drug and Alcohol, Crawford County Human Services, Crawford County Adult Probation, county school districts, mental health providers, and other various agencies and providers.



The purpose of this charity tournament event was to raise funds to provide future community activities for local families and children. Additionally, donations will be given to provide Christmas gifts for needy children in the area. The tournament was a huge success, as \$7,662.00 was raised.

The tournament consisted of teams fielded by several social service agencies and providers, included: Crawford County Bar Association; Crawford County Care Center; Crawford County Human Services; Meadville City Fire Department; Meadville City Police Department; Quality Living Center; SCI Cambridge Springs; Stairways; UCIP; Vallonia, Inc.; and, of course, Crawford County Juvenile Probation Department. Many area juvenile placement facilities also participated, including: Abraxas; Bethesda; Hermitage House Youth Services; Keystone Adolescent Center; Mid-Atlantic Youth Services; Pathways Adolescent Center; and The Summit Academy.

This tournament could not have been successful without the help of our generous local businesses and other sponsors who were more than willing to donate money, prizes, or food for the concession stand. This could not have been successful without all the hard work of the members of the probation staff, volunteers from the CAC board, and all those that donated to the great cause.

The plan is to continue to host the event in years to come, so that the Crawford County Juvenile Probation can have a small part in making the lives of Crawford County families and children better, and provide fun filled events for the community to attend. If anyone is interested in participating in the tournament or helping sponsor this event, please contact Sam Pendolino at spendolino@crowford.pa.us or 814-336-4061.



This publication is produced monthly at the Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research at Shippensburg University.

Guest articles are always welcome; please submit them by e-mail or on a disk. We particularly enjoy your photographs.

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