



ACT Happenings

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Spring 2004

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First Teen Forum Launches Effort To Seek Youth Input

As the Abington Community Taskforce (ACT) marks its 10th anniversary as a committed, concerned coalition of community organizations who partner on behalf of youth, one of its key goals is to bring the youth voice to the table. To begin this vital process, ACT held its first Teen Forum last October. Eighty-two 9th, 10th, and 11th grade Abington students attended this day-long event, facilitated by 20 adult volunteers from ACT member organizations. The Forum's main objective was to hear from teens about their most pressing issues and give them an opportunity to contribute solutions.

A broad range of teens participated in the Forum, with representation from a variety of sectors in Abington Junior and Senior High Schools as well as from the religious community and those who have successfully completed Youth Aid Panel.

Keynote speaker Dave Trevaskis pointed out that public life is for everyone, not just celebrities and politicians. He called upon teens to become involved at a time when it is easier than ever before to remain uninvolved, spending lots of time online instead of with people. He emphasized that only by getting involved with others for some community good can young people hope to effect changes and make a

difference. He further explained that by taking time to think through issues and possible solutions, young people are taking a step to serve and improve their community. He encouraged teens and adults to partner to effect change.

Sandra Freedman, Director of Pupil Services, presented students with some significant statistics from both the PRIDE and Communities That Care (CTC) self-reporting surveys recently given in Abington schools. She highlighted results concerning both negative and positive risk factors, from drug and alcohol use to religious involvement and opportunities for community volunteer service, respectively.

Students then broke into small groups to brainstorm the top 10 problems or challenges facing them. They narrowed this list to five focus issues: stress, violence/safety, standardized tests/academic pressures, social pressures/keeping one's morals, and parents and adults not listening. During the second breakout session, they discussed and presented possible solutions.

Those students who felt drawn to explore issues further and help create a model for youth

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An Invitation to 3rd Annual Recognition Reception

On Wednesday, April 21, 2004, the Abington Community Taskforce (ACT) will host its third annual ***Citizens That Care Recognition Reception*** at Manufacturers' Golf and Country Club, Fort Washington, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Citizens from all walks of the community are cordially invited to honor individuals who have distinguished themselves on behalf of ACT's mission, recognize outstanding students for their service to the community, hear about ACT's goals and accomplishments over the past year, and meet and greet community leaders and

members.

Honorees for 2004 are **Dr. Donald Clark**, President, Willow Grove Branch NAACP; **Philip Kind**, Distinguished Community Philanthropist; **Lewis Klein**, Founding President, Abington Police Athletic League; **Diane Misko**, Dedicated Community Volunteer and Teacher, Copper Beech Elementary School; and **Brian Reiff**, Retired Faculty Advisor to Key Club and Teacher, Abington Senior High School.

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Workshops on Adolescent Eating Disorders, Self-Esteem

Holy Redeemer Health System is offering two important workshops on adolescent topics of concern to many parents. Join Barbara Jacobson, LCSW, for **“Understanding Eating Disorders”** on Monday, May 3, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Women’s Health Center, 821 Huntingdon Pike, Huntingdon Valley. This workshop will include information on the various forms of disorders, how to recognize symptoms, and what to do if you are worried about the possibility of your adolescent child being affected. The cost is \$5.

Another topic of concern is **“Self-Esteem in Adolescence.”** Kiri Rogers, LCSW, will lead a discussion on ways of building and increasing self-esteem among your adolescent children. The cost is \$5. This workshop will be held Wednesday, May 5,

7:00-8:00 p.m. also at the Women’s Health Center. For registration and information about either of these evenings, call 1-800-818-4747.

The next session of **“Healthy KidZone”** for children ages 10-14 and their families runs from Thursday, March 11 through Thursday, May 6, 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Abington YMCA. This 8-week program includes one-on-one and group sessions with a YMCA exercise specialist and a Holy Redeemer registered dietitian. Parents/guardians must attend four designated sessions with their children. For registration and information, contact either Holy Redeemer at 1-800-818-4747 or the Abington YMCA at 215-884-9622.

Babysitting Workshops for Pre-Teens and Teens

Two community organizations are offering babysitting programs this spring for young people who would like to increase their knowledge of childcare responsibilities.

The third weekend of every month, Holy Redeemer Health Systems runs a two-day **“Safe Sitter”** program for boys and girls ages 11-13 years old. This program discusses child development, age-appropriate activities, and basic life-saving skills. It also teaches sitters how to handle emergencies when caring for younger children. Safe Sitter is held at Holy Redeemer Child Care Center, 1648 Huntingdon Pike, Meadowbrook (on the Hospital campus) from

9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday and costs \$40. For information and registration, call 1-800-818-4747 or visit www.holyredeemer.com.

Abington Memorial Hospital, in cooperation with Child, Home & Community, Inc. will run a one-day **“Babysitting Workshop”** on Saturday, May 1, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. It will teach basic childcare, age-appropriate activities, how to handle family routines and emergencies, and other relevant topics. Certificates are issued upon completion. The fee is \$30. Register with Child, Home & Community, Inc. at 215-348-9770.

For a weekly updated listing of parenting seminars, workshops, discussion groups and related activities as well as programs specifically for youth, visit www.abingtonact.org and click “Parenting Programs” as well as “Special Programs” under “Things To Do.”

Come to ACT’s 3rd Annual Citizens Recognition Reception

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ACT’s mission is to create a responsible, caring, and safe community throughout Abington Township and Rockledge Borough, particularly for young people and those who support them. Representatives from ACT’s 29 member organizations work in partnerships to provide a host of healthy, entertaining, and supportive community programs and activities for area youth and their families.

The evening will include hors d’oeuvres and

a buffet. Reservations start at \$60 per person with levels of support ranging to \$2,500. Community businesses are encouraged to become sponsors of this annual event. Those making reservations at \$100 a person or more will be listed in the program.

ACT is a nonprofit, community-based corporation. For reservations, call 215-517-2720 and leave your name, address, and phone number or visit www.abingtonact.org and “Contact Us.” To read more about this event, click “Special Events.”

Register Now for Abington YMCA Summer Camps

It's not too early to request a schedule of day camps offered by the Abington YMCA for summer, 2004. These camps range from specialty sports, gymnastics, performing arts, and other assorted themes to adventure camps (super day trips) and leadership in training camps. They range in age from 4-5 year-old groups through high school students. New among these camps are **Teen Adventure** for 13-15 year-olds, featuring day trips to amusement parks, historical sites, and museums; **Ice Hockey** and **Learn to Ice Skate Camp**; and a **Philadelphia Zoo Camp**.

Parents can learn more at **Parent Informa-**

tion Night, Wednesday, May 12, 7:00 p.m. at the Abington YMCA. This evening provides an opportunity for parents to meet the camp directors and ask questions about the summer program. Registration for summer camps begins Monday, March 8, for full facility members and Monday, March 15, for program and new members. A \$25 non-refundable deposit is due for each 1-week session. For more information, call the YMCA at 215-884-9622 or visit www.abingtonymca.org.

Sign-Ups Begin in March for 10th Annual 24-Hour Relay

Students and adults are wanted for Abington's largest annual fundraiser to benefit local youth programs, the 24-Hour Relay Challenge. Marking its 10th anniversary, this year's relay will be held Saturday, May 22 to Sunday, May 23, at Memorial Field. Team sign-up packets are available to the community in early March at the Abington Township building reception desk (1176 Old York Road), at Abington Junior High School (see Mrs. Sheila Shapiro), and at Abington Senior High School (see Dr. Mark Pellico). Student teams must have two adult chaperones. A

\$100 non-refundable deposit is required but is put toward the team fee of \$500 (\$50 per person).

Hundreds of community volunteers also make this event a great success. Volunteer opportunities in 4-hour shifts range from registration, team check-in, and safety and security to serving food, overseeing entertainment activities, and helping with a variety of miscellaneous needs. To pursue this option, contact Jack Murphy at 267-536-1071.

Students Sign Up for 6th Annual Rock-a-thon

Students can combine a fun evening with service by signing up now for the 6th annual Rock-a-thon to be held at Abington Junior High School from 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., beginning Friday, March 26. Eligible participants include sixth through ninth graders who live in Abington Township and Rockledge Borough. This year's event will once again raise funds to ease the suffering of child abuse and will also make a contribution to the field facility being built at Abington Senior High School.

There are places for 80 teams of five. Each team member will rock for 15 minutes and then have an hour to enjoy food, music, games, and activities. Students must sign up as a complete team. The team

fee is \$100 or \$20 per person. Checks should be made payable to C.A.P.T. (Citizens And Police Together) whose funds return to the community by supporting youth programs and events and providing mini grants and scholarships.

The Rock-a-thon is sponsored by the Community Partnership of Youth and Adults, a C.A.P.T. group. For information, Abington Elementary School students contact Detective Bob Allmond at 267-536-1105, Abington Junior High School students contact Detective Joe Dalton at 267-536-1098, and Abington area parochial and independent school students contact Sgt. Dan Buckley at 267-536-1077

Social Events, Memorial Bricks Support New Field Facility

Excitement is mounting as fundraising efforts have been launched to provide the Abington community with a first-class field facility on the grounds of Abington Senior High School. The Abington School District has teamed up with the Abington Educational Foundation and the Abington High School Alumni Association to raise \$1 million toward this state-of-the-art facility. Highlights of its features include locker rooms, a concession stand, onsite restroom facilities, a gated main entry with integrated ticket kiosk, an eight-lane rubberized track, field lighting for evening events, and ADA accessible ramps.

Hundreds of community members experienced Activity Day in early January when the official groundbreaking ceremony was held and the entire high school community rallied to put on an all-day event for all ages, featuring a huge array of activities, entertainment, and food. Thanks to great community participation, the event raised \$68,000. Now community members can look forward to several more social fundraising opportunities.

Upcoming events begin with a beef and beverage night at the North Penn VFW, Jenkintown & Edge Hill Roads, Glenside, featuring DJ'd music and a spread by Casual Catering. On Friday evening, April 23, the community is invited to a blues/jazz concert by the John Hoey Orchestra who played for Gov. Rendell's inauguration. The concert will take place in the auditorium of Abington Senior High School. Manufacturers' Golf & Country Club will be the site of an elegant evening out on Thursday, June 3.

For those who would like to support the new field facility in a lasting way, special recognition paving bricks are available for purchase. People may choose to honor or memorialize an individual, club, or organization or even list family members on either an 8"x 4" brick for \$100 or an 8"x 8" brick for \$250. To receive more information, call 215-881-2500. Stay tuned to the ACT web site and local media for details about upcoming events.

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ACT Presents Library Books in Memory of Adele Block

Each Abington School District school library is now the recipient of a set of new books presented by the Abington Community Taskforce in memory of past School Board Director Mrs. Adele S. Block. Mrs. Block served on the school board for 25 years, almost until her death in February, 2003. The Taskforce

honored her posthumously as its 2003 Distinguished Citizen at its Citizens That Care Recognition Reception last April. The books presented in her memory reflect both her love of reading and several areas of her interest.

Forum Seeking Youth Voice in Abington Community Taskforce

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involvement were invited to sign up for future planning meetings. Some of these interested young people attended a November follow-up meeting to determine which issues can be addressed by teens and which ones require more adult support. Another planning meeting will be convened this spring.

Moving forward, ACT's objective is to empower teens to become part of the process of creating a more caring, safe, and responsible com-

munity and to give them an opportunity to get involved in ACT as a way to accomplish this goal and have their voices heard. Interested teens should contact Jim Sheldon, Executive Director, Abington YMCA, at jsheldon@philaymca.org.

The ACT Agencies & Religious Community Committee, chaired by Jim Sheldon, organized and coordinated the Teen Forum.

The Abington Community Taskforce (ACT) is a coalition of parents and Abington- and Rockledge-based educational, religious, social service, recreational, civic, and law enforcement agencies. Its mission is to create a responsible, caring, and safe community. ACT welcomes comments, suggestions, and ideas for future events, programs, and articles. For more information, contact ACT at 1176 Old York Road, Abington, PA 19001, 215-517-2720, or online at www.abingtonact.org ("Contact Us."). ACT would like to express appreciation to Abington Memorial Hospital for its assistance in printing this publication.

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