

ACT HAPPENINGS

Take Home and Share with Your Family!

SUMMER, 2001

What Is “Communities That Care” and What Does It Mean for Abington?

In recent years, many people have heard the phrase “Communities That Care,” but not everyone has had an opportunity to know what it is and what it means for Abington.

Communities That Care (CTC) is a research-based model that was developed by two professors at the University of Washington. It provides communities with a way to develop comprehensive prevention plans for adolescent problems. The professors determined that children are influenced from four social areas: home, school, peers, and the community in which they live. To be effective, a program must address reducing risk factors in all four areas. Therefore, the CTC model was designed for use by a community-wide prevention board or team of leaders from these four areas.

In Abington, this team is the board of the Abington Community Taskforce (ACT), comprising community members from civic, educational, law enforcement, recreational, religious, and social service agencies. ACT serves as an oversight board for the CTC initiative that was brought to Abington to implement juvenile prevention and intervention programs.

The CTC model stresses developing strategies to decrease risk factors and

increase protective factors in order to prevent adolescent health and behavior problems. The CTC approach has been a natural fit with ACT—both value the importance of preventing delinquency before it occurs, and both understand that this goal can only be accomplished when community agencies work together.

ACT board members have recognized that prevention and intervention programs can be costly. By using the CTC model, grant monies have been obtained both to fund programs for youth and to hire a Penn State professor as a consultant to serve as CTC coordinator. Dr. William Geary, Assistant Professor of Administration of Justice, serves as a researcher and evaluator for ACT member agencies that implement CTC programs. His goal is to help agencies continue to provide the highest quality programs that are also cost effective.

CTC membership for ACT also has a direct relationship to some grant monies received. For example, public funding agencies, such as the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, offer grant opportunities exclusively to those communities using the CTC model. The *(continued next page)*