
Abington's Caring Community Recognized at State Conference; TV Series to Feature Abington High School Students and Programs

As the first municipality to be offered the opportunity to participate in the Communities That Care (CTC) Initiative--which gives communities a way to develop comprehensive prevention responses to adolescent problems—Abington has surpassed expectations. In fact, Abington Township has carried on well beyond the initial three-year funding in developing programs to improve the lives of its young people.

That effort was noted in April when the Governor's Community Partnership for Safe Children hosted the annual Communities That Care Conference in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Dr. Amy Sichel, Superintendent of Schools, and Lieutenant Dennis McCauley, Abington Police Department, provided a breakout session that explored how communities can continue CTC initiatives, mobilizing resources and obtaining additional financial assistance after funding sources have expired.

The Abington School District team, led by Dr. Sichel, was recognized by Clay Yeager, Director of the Children's Partnership, for being one of three featured school districts in the

country for Michael Pritchard's new PBS television program "Saving Our Schools from Hate and Violence" to be broadcast later this year. Mr. Pritchard and Heartland Media came to Abington Senior High School for a week this spring to conduct and film a student forum called "Life Steps: Promoting Social, Emotional Intelligence in Youth." At the Pennsylvania conference, Mr. Pritchard acknowledged the outstanding students and programs that he found while filming at Abington Senior High School.

For this forum, more than 150 young people discussed a variety of important issues in twelve teen talk groups. Some of the topics covered included "Knowing Who You Are," "Taking Charge," "Creative Problem Solving," "Getting Along with Others," "Building Character," "Developing Healthy Relationships," and "Doing Your Best." The forum gave students an opportunity to vent on a variety of issues and to formulate ideas and solutions. "Service Learning" was added so that students could share the nature of their projects and tell what they learned from their experiences.

PAL Centers: A Weekend Option for Abington Teens

For Abington teens, there is an answer to the question "What can I do?" on summer weekends. The Police Athletic League (PAL) welcomes teens 12 years and older every Friday and Saturday night from 7:00-11:00 p.m. at Glenside-Weldon Elementary School, 432 Easton Road, Glenside, or at Willow Hill Elementary School, 1700 Coolidge Avenue, Willow Grove. With summer weather, many activities will move outside. They will include basketball, girls and boys softball, football rockets, water activities, pong paddles, horseshoes, double Dutch, volleyball, and more. The Glenside site will hold a cookout in early July to celebrate the first anniversary of its opening.

Sodas and snacks can be purchased from a refreshment table. Site directors and volunteers supervise all activities, and police officers stop by to join in activities with the kids. Youth must sign in and out and after their first visit are issued a PAL identification card to present on future nights. Abington's PAL centers are sponsored by the Abington Township Police Department but funded by donations from individuals and businesses alike. There is a continuing need for contributions and volunteer chaperones. For more information, call Community Service Supervisor David Rondinelli at 267-536-1100 ext. 1074.
