
New Youth Initiative Program Offered to Youth Groups

Bringing together young people for entertaining programs that foster positive peer relationships, healthy decision-making skills, and enhanced self-confidence is a main goal of the Youth Initiative recently introduced to the Abington community. This program also hopes to identify young people with leadership interests and skills and provide avenues for them to contribute their talents in the community, including participation in the Abington Community Taskforce (ACT).

The first presentations were made at Abington's two Police Athletic League centers during May and featured *Common Ground*. This show uses images from contemporary culture to encourage young people to get involved, to give their best to every effort, and to bring dignity and grace to their lives and the lives of others. The second part of the Initiative involves a trivia game show event put on by Unique Entertainment.

The Youth Initiative was developed through ACT's Religious/Social Service committee. Groups of 50 or more young people from 12 to 18 years old are eligible for future programming, provided through a grant and overseen by Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau. Religious, recreational, educational, civic, and social service groups serving youth are invited to inquire about this program. Contact Deborah Sapin-Feldstein at Aldersgate: 215-657-4545.

Aldersgate: A Valuable Resource for Youth and Adults

For more than 30 years, Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau located at 42 N. York Road, Willow Grove, has been serving the community through a series of programs. The goal is to make a positive difference for youth and their families who may be experiencing challenging circumstances. If any of the following services relate to your needs, you are encouraged to contact Aldersgate at 215-657-4545.

- ◆ **Counseling** is provided to children and adults, families and couples on a range of issues from family and marriage counseling to alcohol or drug abuse. This service is based on a sliding fee scale, with subsidies for those who are eligible.
 - ◆ **Foster Care Placement** is available for children from infancy through 18 years of age. This service takes children who have been moved from their homes and places them in a stable family situation in an approved household. Every effort is made to re-unite children with their natural families. If this is not possible, a permanent placement is arranged.
 - ◆ **Home-Based Services** provide intensive support within homes to prevent the out-of-home placement of children who are at risk. The goal is to keep families intact.
 - ◆ **School-Based Support** sends Aldersgate counselors to schools to work with individuals and groups from kindergarten through 12th grade. Counselors coordinate with student assistance teams of faculty and staff in prevention, education training, and crisis intervention.
 - ◆ **Prevention** emphasizes educating youth and their families at their schools and other locations about preventing substance abuse and encouraging healthy behaviors and safe interactions among young people and adults.
 - ◆ **Substance Abuse Awareness** provides the community with up-to-date information about alcohol and other drugs and offers intervention services to strengthen decision-making skills and the ability to lead a drug-free lifestyle. Each year, hundreds of teens, parents, and DUI (Driving Under the Influence) clients participate in substance abuse education classes and individual counseling. "Aspire" is one such program for teens arrested for underage drinking.
 - ◆ **Youth Outreach** offers prevention education programs for minority youth and their families. An Aldersgate staff member leads weekly rap groups for teens at area sites to discuss peer and school pressures, substance abuse information, and personal concerns. Workshops and short-term counseling are also provided.
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