

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE NETWORK NEWS

A Chester Education Foundation Initiative



November 8, 2007

Meeting Topics:

- 21st Century SKILLS Afterschool Program
- East Gateway Triangle Project
- Chester Youth Collaborative (CYC)
- CTC Sustainability Committee
- Delco Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition
- Chester Children's Chorus
- CEF 20th Anniversary Dance Party
- SPOTLIGHT: Learning for Life and Cradle of Liberty Council of the Boy Scouts of America

The next meetings of the CTC Network:

January 10, 2008

February 14, 2008

9am to 11am

SE Conference Room, 1st Floor

Crozer-Community Hospital

2600 West 9th Street, Chester

For more information:

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Stephanie Scappa-Hall, Asst. Program
Director

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Web www.chestereducation.org

Directory: (Sign in as a guest)

<http://delcoresources.webexone.com>

*Sponsored through the
PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency
(PCCD)*

November 8, 2007

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The 21st Century SKILLS afterschool program is back in full swing. **Stephanie Scappa-Hall, Assistant Program Director, Chester Education Foundation (CEF)**, reported that activities at Columbus Elementary began October 22 with second to sixth grade students from Stetser, Main Street, and Columbus. On Mondays and Fridays students enjoy education activities like building bridges or exploring leadership. Tuesdays through Thursdays are devoted to academic enrichment, including homework help and the 100-Book challenge.

This year's theme is geography, with a focus that will expand from the city and state to the country and the world. December will feature holidays from around the world. Students receive incentives for regular attendance; last year outings took them bowling, as well as to the Franklin Institute and the Brandywine Art Museum. In a new policy, teachers and staff held a family orientation in which they met the parents of all 43 registered students. The orientation has been making a big difference in attendance. An ongoing focus of the Columbus program is anti-violence training. Students work with the Social Work Consultation Services (SWCS) Second Step curriculum; SWCS is also available for one-on-one meetings with students at the request of either parents or teachers.

Markiya Collier, newly hired to a full-time position as **Program Coordinator** at CEF, declared that she was excited to be at the meeting to talk about the middle school segment of 21st Century SKILLS. Held at Smedley Middle School, the program began November 1. Lots of spaces are open, with only 22 students enrolled out of a capacity for 50. "Voice and choice" is the word of the day, with students selecting from a variety of club activities, with dance (courtesy of Chester PAL), art, and cooking being favorites. Students' academic work is in lab format, with homework help and intensive work on reading and math, including time at the Widener math lab. Another focus of the program is building self-esteem and self-respect, so that students are able to communicate, understand each other, and resolve

conflict. With a low ratio of participants to staff and student volunteers from Swarthmore College and Widener, each student will have a mentor to talk with on a regular basis.

Elaine Greene-Upton, Program Director, CEF, announced that of 236 students enrolled in the high school portion of 21st Century SKILLS, and 80 to 90 show up each day. The aim is support 110-140 high school attendees per day. The high school team encourages regular participation using food for incentives for attendance and participation such as pizza parties. Staff is available to offer tutoring and to make sure that students are using computers for appropriate school work, and not social networking. Students participate in a range of activities, including Boys to Men, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Urban Princess etiquette training, a poetry workshop, and a book publishing project. With the goal of teaching kids how to write and edit, the publishing project plans to produce *Untold Stories of Chester*, featuring stories gathered and written by students.

Both Markiya and Elaine called for volunteers to share talents and interests with students. Opportunities for students to gain additional skills are always welcome and experience has shown that students are sometimes receptive to surprising things. Who would have imagined a group of boys who liked knitting so much they knitted while waiting in the hall? This year 21st Century SKILLS will continue the focus on reading and math—the 100 Book Challenge will be used for all grades at all three sites—and making strategic efforts to coordinate what's going on after school with what's been going on during the school day. The **Chester Upland School District (CUSD)** provides security and transport at all sites every day. If you have questions or talents you'd like to volunteer, please call Stephanie at 610.859.6011, Markiya at 610.859.6008, or Elaine at 610.364.1212.



Natacha Pascal, Assistant Executive Director, East Gateway Triangle Project (EGT), gave advance notice of a press event to be held Monday, December 10 at North Chester Baptist Church, Providence at 23rd. The project has been awarded a \$700,000 grant from the Wachovia Foundation to help revitalize the area around Widener. Money will be used to buy properties and fix them up for low- to moderate-income families. The press event will feature awards to residents who were active throughout the application process, plus a party. Natacha also reviewed plans for the new community center to be housed at Smedley Middle School. The project is working with the school district to develop this site; additional sites are planned throughout the community to make offerings more accessible. For more information on the East Gateway Triangle Project or efforts by the **Chester Community Improvement Program (CCIP)** to help residents stabilize

credit and purchase homes, please call Natacha at 610.876.8663. On a personal note, everyone asked to see pictures of CTC's newest member, Yana, Natacha's daughter.



Janet Riley-Ford, Program Coordinator, Crozer Wellness Center, reviewed the purpose and components of the **Chester Youth Collaborative (CYC)**, which helps youth 12-22 reach their full potential and transition successfully into adulthood. Janet noted that CYC is now working with the 14 high school students who stayed with last summer's **Delaware County Community College (DCCC)** Student Success program. CYC is also recruiting for a new cohort of ninth and tenth graders to start the program this summer. The joint CYC-DCCC program enables Chester High School students to improve study and life skills while acquiring their first three credits toward college. Participants also learn how to create and register a website, as well as design animation files using Macromedia FLASH.

Janet distributed copies of the current issue of *The Bridge*, the CYC newsletter, and reminded everyone that the 34-member youth council will be holding a series of town meetings. For more information on CYC or any of its activities, please call Janet at 610.497.7422.



Neilda Mott, Program Director, CEF, gave an update on the progress of the **CTC sustainability committee**. Funded through **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)** by a \$22,000 matching grant to plan CTC's future, the committee has been meeting monthly right after the regular CTC meeting. In order to give its members time to have longer, in-depth conversations, the committee will hold a half-day retreat at Swarthmore College. The committee will come back to the larger meeting in January or February to report its thinking and ask for questions and comments. For more information on the sustainability committee or to participate in the process, please call Neilda at 610.364.1212.



Myrna Russi (Acevedo), Crozer Keystone Healthy Start, reported for the **Delaware County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition** that an event designed to promote awareness of the new vaccine for human papilloma virus (HPV) was well attended. HPV is a leading cause of cervical cancer and the new vaccine represents a real breakthrough in preventing the disease if administered at an earlier age. The coalition is planning more activities for the future, including

events during Teen Pregnancy Prevention month in May. The coalition's next meeting will be Friday, November 16, at 9:30 a.m. at Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU), Yale Avenue, in Morton. For more information, please call **Kate Blackburn, Wellness Center**, 610.497.7422, or **Joanne Craig, Healthy Start**, 610.497.7468.



The **Chester Children's Chorus (CCC)**, which began as a boys' choir over 14 years ago and is now a full co-ed chorus comprising senior, junior and training levels, will give its annual **Holiday Concert** on Saturday, December 15, 8:00 p.m., at the **First Pentecostal Holy Church**, 324 Pusey Street, Chester. Admission is free and tickets are not required, but the space fills up fast, so get there early. John Alston, CCC Director, is working with CUSD on plans for a school of the arts that will not be a charter school, but rather, it will be a Chester Upland School District School of the Arts. A community meeting to discuss the idea was held at Columbus Elementary November 8. For more information on the school or the children's chorus, please call 610.328.8180.



CEF's **20th Anniversary Dance Party** will be held Saturday, January 5, 2008, at Harrah's Chester Casino and Race Track. Patty Jackson from WDAS 105.3 FM will be guest hostess, with special invited guest Joe "Butterball" Tamburro. The \$55 ticket price includes a two-hour buffet and two drinks. Come dance the night away at this oldies party that will include music from the fifties through the eighties! People are still talking about the 15th Anniversary Party at the (then) newly opened Wharf at Rivertown and this event will be even bigger! Natacha Pascal was the lucky winner of a free ticket to the dance at a raffle during the CTC meeting. **Another raffle may be held next month.** For tickets or more information on the anniversary party, please call 610.364.1212. Tickets can be purchased at either CEF offices in Community Hospital or at Freeman Cultural Arts, 4th & Edgmont Avenue in Chester.



*The CTC Spotlight is a feature intended to help the network learn more about the resources in our community. This month's spotlight is on **Learning for Life** and the **Cradle of Liberty Council of the Boy Scouts of America.***

Cleveland Lynch, Boy Scout District Executive, described scouting as being about building young boys into men. He remarked that at the moment there is only one Scout troop in Chester, led by Al Davis, and that he hopes to change that by working with churches and other local organizations.

Cleveland described the traditional scouting structure as one in which parents fund the program for their children. Scouting has three levels: Cub Scouts for boys from first through fifth grades, Boy Scouts for boys and young men not yet 18, and Venturing, a youth development program for young men and women 14-20. While Cub Scouting focuses on family- and group-centered activities that provide learning and fun, Boy Scouting adds an emphasis on outdoor activity, developing leadership skills, and service. Participants in Venturing learn how to work together by organizing and implementing their own events, like trips.

Yasseline Diaz, ScoutReach Executive, noted the ways in which ScoutReach is different from traditional scouting. Because the program is geared to underprivileged youth, both urban and rural, it provides scholarships. ScoutReach also hires cubmasters, known as Program Specialists, for its Cub Scout troops. Typically retired mothers and grandmothers, or college students, Program Specialists lead children in 30 weeks of scouting and afterschool programming dedicated to character development and sports. The aim is to provide a full scouting program to children whose families could not afford it. Boys who are new to the program can earn reward points which they turn in for traditional scouting uniforms, camping gear, and the opportunity to participate in activities. Yasseline expressed the hope that ScoutReach would be implemented in Chester, mentioning conversations in progress with community charter schools, the YWCA, Columbus Elementary, and other local institutions. She also briefly described the "Good Guys" program, in which older men provide positive role models. Yasseline identified Philadelphia Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers as the "ultimate good guy." Through his initiative, police officers and fire fighters have signed up to become role models.

According to **Tracey Johnson, Program Specialist, Learning for Life** is a values-based curriculum that aims to reach from kindergarten to young adults. The emphasis in the early years is on character. For high school students, career becomes a focus. Career worksite exploration gives kids the chance to see behind the scenes of professions of interest to them, from sports management to nursing.

For more information on any of the above programs, please call Tracey at 215.988.9811 x141.



Edith Cleveland, Program Director, Social Steps Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program, invited everyone to shop at the Social Treasures Thrift Store, whose proceeds benefit Social Steps, a program designed to help adults with chronic mental disabilities acquire social skills. Participants learn how to interact with people and live in community. In addition to shopping at the thrift store, people can help by

donating small furniture for sale. Items sought include end tables, nightstands, coffee tables, chairs in good condition, pictures, stainless steel pots, and seasonal items. The store does not accept couches, bed frames, electrical items, linens, stuffed pillows, or clothing. It also does not take consignments.

A second way to help is by donating personal hygiene items for use by program participants. Items needed include new underwear (medium and large, male and female), shaving cream, disposable razors, deodorant, soap, combs, non-allergenic laundry detergent, shampoo, conditioner, hand and body lotion, mouthwash, toothpaste, Depends, Band-Aids, Chap Stick and Vaseline. To learn more, please call Edith at 610.497.7677.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

To accommodate all the important and interesting information to be shared, CTC meetings begin promptly at 9:00 am. Please arrive a few minutes early and take advantage of the networking opportunities.

Delaware County Family Centers Positive Parenting Workshop (PPW) will be held November 20-December 10 from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital in Darby. For more information, please call Karen J. Clark at

610.494.9280 or email kclark@dcui.org.



Chester Weed & Seed invites all residents from West Ninth Street, Highland Gardens, Wellington Ridge, Buckman Village, and People Street, along with other members of the community, to an **Open House** at the police sub-station located in the lobby of Community Hospital. The open house, Thursday, November 29, from 1:00-4:00 p.m., will provide residents and community leaders with the chance to come out and enjoy some refreshments while getting information and resources. To learn more, please call Nafis Nichols or Lisa Dennis at 610.485.7034.



PathwaysPA is looking for volunteers to help out with its **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** program. Anyone interested in serving as a tax preparer or greeter, or in helping with data entry, is asked to call Henry Earl at 610.543.5022 or email hearl@pathwayspa.org. VITA offers free income tax assistance for low income families and individuals at sites throughout the community.



Upcoming Events

December 6-15, 2008: Chester Arts Alive! Holiday events schedule.

Dec. 6, Opening Ceremony, YWCA of Chester, Music and entertainment, 610-800-9681

Dec 8-9, Potter's Guild Holiday Sale, Wallingford ~ 610-566-1713;

Dec 8, Crafts, Artist's Reception, Freeman Cultural Arts, 610-872-9570.

Holiday Caroling, call 610-872-5970 for dates and times.

Dec. 9, Gospel Concert, Grace Community United Methodist Church, 610-800-9681.

Dec. 14, Café Acoustique, Jazz, Latin, more, 610-742-1422.

Dec. 15, Breakfast with Santa, YWCA of Chester, 610/876.8226.

Dec. 15, Pre-Kwaanza, 610-800-9681.

Dec. 15, Chester Children's Chorus (see below).

December 15: Chester Children's Chorus Holiday Concert at First Pentecostal Holy Church, 324 Pusey Street, Chester, 8:00 p.m. Admission free. For more information, please call 610.328.8180.

January 5, 2008: Chester Education Foundation's 20th Anniversary Dance Party, Harrah's Chester Casino and Race Track. For more information, please call 610.364.1212.

Ongoing: Harcum College recruiting for spring semester of **College Without Walls**. Please call 610.364.1212 for more information.

Ongoing: PathwaysPA is looking for volunteers to help with **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** during tax season. Please call Henry Earl at 610.5543.5022 or email hearl@pathwayspa.org.

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