

# COMMUNITIES THAT CARE NETWORK NEWS

*A Chester Education Foundation Initiative*



***December 13, 2007***

*Meeting Topics:*

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century SKILLS Afterschool Program
- Chester Arts Alive!
- SPOTLIGHT: Urban Family Council
- East Gateway Triangle Project
- The Nia Center at Freeman Cultural Arts
- Chester Youth Collaborative (CYC)
- CEF 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Oldies Dance Party
- Something Significant, Something Fun

*The next meetings of the CTC Network:*

**January 10, 2008**

**February 14, 2008**

**March 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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**December 13, 2007**

## **MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

**Stephanie Scappa-Hall, Assistant Program Director, Chester Education Foundation (CEF)**, reported on **21<sup>st</sup> Century SKILLS Afterschool Program** activities at Columbus Elementary School. On Mondays and Fridays second- to sixth-grade students from Stetser, Main Street, and Columbus take part in educational activities like building bridges or exploring leadership. Tuesdays through Thursdays are devoted to academic enrichment, including homework help and the 100-book challenge. In tune with this year's theme of geography, special December activities featured holidays from around the world. Students receive incentives for regular attendance at the afterschool program, which includes a focus on anti-violence training through the Second Step curriculum provided through Social Work Consultation Services (SWCS). SWCS is also available for one-on-one meetings with students at the request of either parents or teachers. In addition, CEF has partnered with Widener's Presidential Service Corps to have the second and third graders visit Mondays for homework help and activities. Chester PALS is providing an art class, taught by William Dandridge III, for the fourth graders; and the fifth and sixth graders are participating in an engineering class in which they are building bridges and testing them for how much weight they can hold. Fifth and sixth graders are also working with Simply Outrageous Youth for their Money Matters Class. An end-of-2007 party will be held for students and their families on Friday, December 21.

**Markiya Collier, Program Coordinator, CEF**, described recent activities in the middle school segment of 21<sup>st</sup> Century SKILLS. Held at Smedley Middle School, the program offers "voice and choice," with students selecting from a variety of club activities. Dance (courtesy of Chester PAL), art, and cooking are 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 2-1 ratio of participants to staff and student volunteers from Swarthmore College and Widener, each

student has a mentor to talk to on a regular basis. Smedley students also benefit from the Second Step curriculum for violence prevention.

**Elaine Greene-Upton** reviewed the Chester High School portion of 21<sup>st</sup> Century SKILLS, where the aim is for 110-140 students to attend each day. Students receive food rewards as an incentive to participate in the program, which is run on a drop-in basis for registered students. Staff is available to offer tutoring in almost all the high school content areas and to monitor computer use. 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.

There are spaces available at both Columbus and Smedley; and enrollment in the high school program is open. Spaces are also available for volunteers interested in sharing their talents with students. To learn more, or to volunteer, please call Stephanie at 610.859.6011, Markiya at 610.859.6008, or Elaine at 610.364.1212.



**Donald Newton, Managing Director Andre Café Acoustique**, and member of the **Chester Performing Arts Project**, gave a passionate account of **Chester Arts Alive!**, an arts enrichment initiative launched four years ago in an effort to revitalize the performing arts and arts community of Chester. Chester Arts Alive! was born of a partnership between the Chester Housing Authority, regional investors, and local artists and art organizations. As a result of this work, the Chester Housing Authority was awarded a HOPE VI Revitalization grant for the building of a Chester Arts and Cultural Center. The HOPE VI project is now underway, with the focus on preparing to operate the arts center when it opens. Two million dollars is still needed to break ground on the center, which will be built in the last phase of development. In addition to planning for the future, the organization kicked off its Annual Family Holiday Festival on December 6 at the YWCA of Chester and with caroling organized by Freeman Cultural Arts Complex.

The Holiday festival culminates with a special live Jazz performance at Andre Café on December 15 with the Mean Machine at 8pm. That Saturday many family activities, such as a Kwanzaa celebration, are planned in Freeman Cultural Arts, the YWCA of Chester and other venues. Chester Arts Alive! seeks to forge collaborative partnerships with artists and cultural institutions from the Greater Delaware Valley. For more information, please call Donald at 610.800.9681.



*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 the **Urban Family Council**.*

**Tad Mahan, Director of Development**, spoke on behalf of the Urban Family Council, which recently launched initiatives in Chester. The Urban Family Council is an independent, donor-supported, faith-based non-profit community organization that has provided educational services to adolescents, young adults and their families throughout the Delaware Valley for more than 20 years. Urban Family Council believes that words and actions are powerful tools for positive change; its educators emphasize, "The messenger is the message!" Their most recent endeavor is *Building Healthy Families*, a youth and family development program. Because Urban Family Council seeks to serve the entire family, this multi-faceted curriculum has been written and designed to be age-appropriate for students K-12, as well as their parents and guardians. Urban Family Council presents its programs in public and private schools, community organizations, churches and other faith communities. For more information, please call Tad at 215.663.9494 x17.



**Natacha Pascal, Assistant Executive Director, Chester Community Improvement Project (CCIP)**, gave an update on activities in the East Gateway Triangle, which covers the area between Edgmont and Providence, 13<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets. The project has been awarded a \$700,000 grant from the Wachovia Foundation to help revitalize the area adjacent to Widener. Money will be used to buy properties and fix them up for low- to moderate-income families. The project is working with the school district to develop Smedley Middle School as a site for a new community center; additional sites are planned throughout the community to make offerings more accessible.

Natacha also introduced the newly hired **East Gateway Triangle Project Program Coordinator, Gladys Ramirez-Wrease**. Gladys was welcomed by the members and invited to return on a regular basis. 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 Gladys at 610.876.8663.



**Delores Freeman-Clybourn, Director, Freeman Cultural Arts**, showed a video on the **Nia Center**, the non-profit branch of the Freeman Cultural Arts complex, which

sponsors free programs in areas like creative writing, sewing, and ballet for students. Among the activities featured at the Nia Center are sewing lessons provided by the costume director of the Prince Theater. The Nia Center also runs satellite programs from the Wilson Center, due to be renovated by PennDOT, and other locations. Delores also announced tours of Chester available through Freeman Cultural Arts, and invited agencies to consider holding an event at the gallery, which has space available to rent. The Nia Center desperately needs funds to continue its programming. Delores reminded the Network members of the importance the arts has played in all our lives and how it continues to be necessary for students to develop skills across many disciplines. If you can help, would like more information, or are interested in partnering with the center to offer classes, please call Delores at 610.872.9570.



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**Janet Riley-Ford, Program Coordinator, Crozer Wellness Center**, announced that the **Chester Youth Collaborative (CYC) Youth Council** received the Youth Group of the Year award from the New Light Leadership Coalition at a Baltimore conference. The Youth Council, comprised of youth aged 12-22 who participated in leadership training, works to further CYC's mission of helping youth reach their full potential and transition successfully into adulthood. Janet also announced a CYC Open House, December 20 from 3:00-7:00 p.m. at Chester City Hall. She noted that each youth-serving organization in CYC will be asked to nominate a parent to receive a Parent of the Year award. In addition to the award, nominees will be asked to serve on CYC's Parent Advisory Board. CYC is

currently recruiting for a new cohort of ninth and tenth graders to participate in its Delaware County Community College (DCCC) Student Success 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. For more information on CYC or any of its activities, please call Janet at 610.497.7422.



Chester Education Foundation's **20<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party. Tickets are available at CEF, 2600 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite GS-100, or Freeman Cultural Arts, 419 Edgmont Avenue. Tickets can also be purchased online with PayPal. For more information, please call **Carita Morgan, Assistant Executive Director, CEF**, at 610.364.1212.



The meeting ended with a two-part breakout session: one significant and the other more for fun. The significant part of the session requested that network members submit suggestions for what changes they would like to see in our CTC Network meetings. The suggestions included the following (*each \* indicates an additional person who made that suggestion*):

- Outreach to local businesses for increased fund raising, corporate partnerships and volunteer work
- Clip-on name tags (to be returned at end of meetings)
- 30-45 minute mini-trainings\*\*\* on pertinent topics to build capacity (fundraising\*\*, technical skills, music, arts, transportation, study of musicians and artists, etc.)
- Presentations of data from Delco Resources
- Mini-training segments on social development strategy and other research-based models/processes
- Discussion of useful ways to bring CTC resources together
- More school board and CUSD administration involvement (principals)
- More parent involvement\*
- CTC informal gatherings
- Invitations to funders
- Invitations extended to students/youth\* and clients to CTC meetings

- Invitations extended to community residents, city council, mayor, churches, school, police department
- CTC community events showcasing members' work
- Create CTC website with login for member organizations
- CTC brochure/media kit featuring all organizations
- Updates from school district with progress reports

This information will be shared with the CTC Sustainability committee which will reconvene after the new year.

The fun quiz was designed to develop a fuller understanding of the way the network celebrates the holidays and was taken from an internet email making its rounds through the web. Those present answered the quiz, then compared their responses to those by people they knew (or thought they knew). All were invited to substitute traditions from other religions or beliefs in place of Christmas-specific questions like, "When do you put up the tree?" "Real tree or artificial?" "When do you take the tree down?" (Sample answer: "What tree?") Participants had fun with questions like, "Do you like eggnog?" "What is the worst gift you received?" "What is your favorite thing to eat at Christmas?" and "Have you ever recycled a Christmas present?" "Who is the hardest person you have to buy for?" included a prior response from someone, "My mom—I can never get something that cost enough to say how much I love, respect, and honor her." "Favorite Christmas movie" generated *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. (It's a Wonderful Life, anybody?) "When do you start shopping for Christmas?" generated the most together answer: "We do 'power shopping.' We sit down over breakfast, decide on a list of gifts for everyone a few days ahead, think about the list for a day, and fix it after sleeping on it. Then we go out and get all the shopping done in a few hours the next day." If you can't beat that, "Can you name all of Santa's reindeers?" On Dasher and Dancer and Donner and Blitzen... Happy holidays to all!

## 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.*

**Anna's Place**, a hospitality/drop-in center located at St. Katherine Drexel Evangelization Center, Second and Norris Streets, Chester, is now open. The center offers the chance to relax, make new friends and visit with old ones, enjoy hot

drinks, think, pray, play cards or board games, read the newspaper or magazines, and share ideas, skills, and talents. For more information, please call Sister Connie Davis, OSF, at 484.361.5900. Also mentioned was information about Sister Mary Peter who usually attends Network meetings, who has been recuperating in her Aston residence from several injuries.



**Freeman Cultural Arts** will hold its **Holiday and Inventory Reduction Art Sale** December through January, Mondays-Fridays 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. and Saturdays 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. In addition, Freeman offers many programs and activities for the community. Stop in or call to make an appointment for a tour—or offer to volunteer. For more information, please call Delores Freeman-Clybourn at 610.872.9570 or email [msdeefree@aol.com](mailto:msdeefree@aol.com).



**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](mailto:hearl@pathwayspa.org). VITA offers free income tax assistance for low income families and individuals at sites throughout the community.



**Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania** provides legal services in the fields of housing, child custody, public benefits, unemployment, Protection from Abuse, Social Security, utilities, and bankruptcy. For more information, please call Sam Brooks, staff attorney, at 610.874.8421 x316 or email [sbrooks@lasp.org](mailto:sbrooks@lasp.org).



Flu shots are still available. Unlike previous years where a shortage may have existed, this year there are more than enough for anyone who wants a flu shot. If you have clients who need a flu shot, please contact Amy Nardi at **Delaware County Intercommunity Health**, 610.891.5311, or email [NardiA@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:NardiA@co.delaware.pa.us).



# Upcoming Events

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

**January:** Freeman Cultural Arts Inventory Reduction Art Sale, Mondays-Fridays 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. and Saturdays 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. In addition, Freeman offers many programs and activities for the community. For more information, please call Delores Freeman-Clybourn at 610.872.9570 or email msdeefree@aol.com.

**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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