

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE NETWORK NEWS

A Chester Education Foundation Initiative



January 10, 2008

Meeting Topics:

- 21st Century SKILLS Afterschool Program
- SPOTLIGHT: Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union
- East Gateway Triangle Project
- Chester Youth Collaborative (CYC)
- Justice Week in Chester
- Wells Fargo College Bound Program
- CTC Sustainability: Web-based Evaluation
- CEF 20th Anniversary Oldies Dance Party

The next meetings of the CTC Network:

February 14, 2008

March 13, 2008

9am to 11am

SE Conference Room, 1st Floor
Crozer-Community Hospital
2600 West 9th Street, Chester

For more information:

Neilda Mott, CTC Network Director
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Directory: (Sign in as a guest)

<http://delcoresources.webexone.com>

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

January 10, 2008

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Stephanie Scappa-Hall, Assistant Program Director, Chester Education Foundation (CEF), reported on **21st 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. Activities include Money Matters, a course provided to fifth and sixth graders by Simply Outrageous Youth; next semester students will launch a small business. Last month fifth and sixth graders completed their bridge building under the guidance of an engineering professor from Swarthmore College; they then crushed their bridges to test their load bearing capacity. The strongest bridge could sustain 350 pounds of load. Additional activities include an art class for fourth graders and activities sponsored by the Presidential Service Corps at Widener University. Social Work Consultation Services (SWCS) offers the **Second Step** anti-violence training at Columbus. SWCS is also available for one-on-one counseling meetings with students at the request of either parents or teachers. Tuesdays through Thursdays at Columbus are devoted to academic enrichment, including homework help and the 100-Book Challenge reading program. This year's academic theme is geography and students receive incentives for regular attendance. Sixty-five students are currently registered in the Columbus program and an additional second grade class will be starting this month.

Markiya Collier, Program Coordinator, CEF, announced that most students registered for the Smedley Middle School component of 21st Century SKILLS are attending every day. Some are inviting friends, or boyfriends and girlfriends, an additional challenge to the staff. Regular labs on math and reading are part of the Smedley curriculum. Students also attend labs at Widener where they work with college students and faculty. Activities at Smedley include programming on dating and relationships as well as tap dancing. The *Start 'Em Up* business class learned business terminology and concepts, then made and sold candles and votive containers at Wal-Mart, earning \$86 in profits, which students divided among themselves. On December 20th

students and staff were joined by parents for an end-of-year celebration that showcased what the children had learned. Together with Columbus fifth and sixth graders, the Smedley group will be going to see *The Great Debaters* later this month.

Elaine Greene-Upton, Program Director, CEF, reviewed the Chester High School portion of 21st Century SKILLS College Afterschool program. Students receive monthly food rewards as an incentive to participate in the program, which is run on a drop-in basis. Staff are available to offer tutoring from 2:30-5:30 p.m. in all the high school content areas, with special emphasis on improving reading skills. In addition to tutoring, students participate in a range of activities, including Boys to Men, Big Brothers Big Sisters, leadership training, Urban Princess etiquette training, a poetry workshop, a book publishing project, and the 100-Book Challenge. SWCS runs a chat room where students can talk about teen issues. Our partners, Widener University and Swarthmore College sponsor the Trio program which supports students in taking the SAT exam and provides college tours. A recent interviewing game had boys interview girls, and vice versa, who then gave a speech of introduction which was judged by a jury of peers.

There are spaces available at both Columbus and Smedley and enrollment in the high school program is open. Volunteers are also needed to share 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.



*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 **Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union**.*

Richard Elam, Community Relations Manager, described many of the educational programs for which Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union (FMFCU) was honored by the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce as company of the year. These include basic banking education (and services), which features information on why people should open a bank account rather than purchase money orders at pawn shops or other locations. The credit union runs a program for kindergartners and has student-run branches in Delaware County high schools. Richard noted that young people who receive a financial education often function as resources for their parents and families. He also pointed out several financial instruments made available to members of the credit union, including savings accounts that offer six and seven percent interest on a portion of the balance. Such high-interest accounts are in line with the credit union's purpose

of building a solid community and keeping money in the community, as well as teaching the value of savings. Franklin Mint, like all credit unions, is owned and operated by its members.

Because Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union offers tax classes during tax season, and is one of several Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites in Delaware County, discussion turned to an overview of the VITA program. Designed to help low- to moderate-income people with simple tax returns (no itemization), VITA offers free tax returns prepared by IRS-trained volunteer tax preparers. Filing is electronic, and refunds come in three to five days for those who have a bank account. Those who have returns done at FMFCU can open an account at time of filing; people can split refunds between savings and checking accounts and save some or part of the money they get back. PathwaysPA coordinates the VITA program locally. More information on VITA will be available at next month's CTC meeting. In the meantime, call PathwaysPA at 610.543.5022 or visit the IRS website, www.irs.gov/vita for non-local sites. Mobile tax preparers will go to large organizations upon request.

For more information on Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union, please call Richard at 610.619.7490.



Gladys Ramirez-Wrease, East Gateway Triangle (EGT) Coordinator, thanked members of CTC for the warm welcome: her first day on the job was last month's meeting, December 10. December 10 was also the kick-off event for implementation of the East Gateway Triangle Project. Given the holiday atmosphere, those who participated enjoyed singing holiday songs as well as sharing food and community celebrations. Gladys reviewed steps underway for implementing the project, which will serve the area between Edgmont and Providence, 13th and 24th Streets. Project planning and implementation have been funded by grants from Wachovia Bank. Among the initiatives already underway, launch of the community center at Smedley Middle School awaits approval by the Chester Upland School District (CUSD). When approval has been received, scheduling of services by agencies will begin. The EGT Neighborhood Association hopes to be part of the Smedley community center; it is also working on a neighborhood newsletter. The association plans to hold a working breakfast on a Saturday; the idea is to get neighbors to come out, get to know each other, and share ideas. Because part of the East Gateway Triangle Project's purpose is to increase home ownership in the area, Chester Community Improvement Project (CCIP), EGT's parent organization, will hold a foreclosure prevention workshop on February 12, 6:00 p.m., at North Chester Baptist Church, 2331 Providence, Chester.

For more information on the East Gateway Triangle Project, please call Gladys at 610.876.8663.



Janet Riley Ford, Senior Program Coordinator, Chester Youth Collaborative (CYC), briefly described CYC's components, from youth council and community council to youth serving organizations, and its mission of helping youth reach their full potential and transition successfully into adulthood. She also described several upcoming opportunities with CYC. In addition to recruiting for a second cohort of 20 rising ninth to tenth graders to participate in this summer's Student Success program at **Delaware County Community College**, a program in which students receive three college credits for summer work, CYC is launching a summer camp plus year-long tutoring for 20 rising seventh and eighth graders. Sponsored by Exelon, the summer camp will focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Also this summer, the Philadelphia Youth Network will work in partnership with CYC to provide 25 paid internships to youth 16-20 with Chester or area businesses. Janet remarked briefly on the new Wells Fargo College Bound program. The program, which will provide up to 10 rising eighth graders with mentoring and tutoring through high school and into college, is further described later in this issue. For more information on CYC activities, please call Janet at 610.497.7422.



Richard Carter, President, Human Rights Coalition (HRC) of Chester, spoke about **Justice Week**, a week of demonstrations and exercises designed to show what the HRC has to offer in Chester. The theme of the week will focus on the judiciary system, faith communities, and agencies learning how to work together on behalf of kids involved in criminal activity. Representatives from all constituencies will have the opportunities to listen to the testimony of people like Richard, an ex-offender who spent 24 years in prison and whose mission is re-enfranchising prisoners and ex-offenders by showing them somebody cares. Richard talked about the difference between thinking like a criminal and thinking like a "normal" person: this is the kind of information he feels those working with kids in the criminal justice system need to understand. In addition to informative sessions, Justice Week will showcase programs in Philadelphia, Camden, and Chicago that offer diversified housing solutions, especially affordable housing for people coming out of prison. Bread & Roses will also offer a workshop for organizations that need start-up capital for working on criminal justice and racial justice issues. An anti-violence component focused on gun violence will also be offered. Richard asked members of the network for

support for this venture. Justice Week is currently scheduled for the second week in March. For more information, or to get involved, please call Richard at 215.390.4114.



Christopher Keiser, Vice President and Managing Counsel, and Wanda Clark, Program Associate, Wells Fargo Bank, introduced the bank's pilot program, **College Bound**. With a branch at the wharf, Wells Fargo has been committed to giving back to the community, has been involved both with Habitat for Humanity and the United Way. College Bound is an initiative intended to go further, reaching kids who want to pursue higher education but have challenges or are at risk. Students will be selected for the program, which is being developed in partnership with CYC. The program will offer academic tutoring, mentoring, peer support from bank employees and community members, career and educational opportunities including visits to local colleges and businesses, and recreational activities designed to develop interpersonal skills. Keeping parents involved throughout the process will be an important feature of the program, which will support kids through high school, through the process of selecting colleges and making applications, and through the first six to 12 months of college. College Bound is currently recruiting rising eighth graders who have ability but are at academic and social risk. Applications are due in March, with interview to follow in April and selection of participants in May. A fun pre-academic summer program will help prepare students for the fall. The program is focused on Chester, but applications from students in other parts of Delaware County will be considered. For more information, please call Wanda at 610.595.5427, x55427.



Neilda Mott, Program Director, CEF, gave a heads-up on the **CTC sustainability grant**. Penn State will be conducting a web-based survey of CTC network members. This survey is important for implementation of the sustainability grant, so if you are contacted by Penn State, please take the time to fill out the survey. It matters. For more information, please call Neilda at 610.364.1212.



Cheryl Cunningham, Executive Director, CEF, thanked all who attended **CEF's Twentieth Anniversary party**. The oldies dance party, held at **Harrah's** in Chester, was a glamorous, fun event that brought the community together in celebration of Chester's strengths and vitality. Some people came out to support CEF because of the help their children had received in afterschool programs while others just wanted to have a good time in a great venue. **Harrah's** did a

great job on all the necessary elements of a good party – the food, the décor and the service and Patty Jackson from WDAS provided the music which made the event feel like a grand reunion. Many who attended, plus the 60 people on the waiting list for the sold-out event, hope that CEF will have a party again next year.

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.

The **Generation of Destiny Alternative Steps Mentoring Program** is accepting applications for students in ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades. The mentoring program meets on Mondays and Fridays beginning January 25. For more information, please call Danika Robbins-Summers at 610.497.2100.



Chester Community Improvement Project (CCIP) will host a **foreclosure prevention workshop** on February 12 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at North Chester Baptist Church. The goal of the workshop is to provide support for families interested in preventing foreclosure and to educate people about maintaining their homes in times of financial hardship. The workshop will introduce families to resources currently available in the area. For more information, please call Gladys Wrease at 610.876.8663.



Anna's Place is still in its beginning stages and has delayed its opening as a hospitality center for the community. At this time Anna's Place welcomes any group that would like to use the site for workshops in areas like health and education. For more information, please call Sister Connie Davis, OSF, at 484.361.5900.



Keen's Martial Arts Academy is now enrolling children ages 7-12 and teenagers in its **Karate Summer Camp**. The camp will feature classes in martial arts, stretching and fitness, weight lifting, the Chinese and Japanese languages, and more. For more information, please call 610.872.4814 or visit www.kmaa.info.



Eastern University will be offering a **BA in Organizational Leadership** designed for adults 21 years and older. The program will enable students to complete a bachelor's degree in an accelerated format. Classes meet the same night each week, 6:00-10:00 p.m., one course at a time. Courses will include Skill and Character Development, Organizational Theory, and Organizational Function. This program makes a sequence with the Harcum College Without Walls AA degree in Leadership. For more information, please call 610.341.1700 or visit www.eastern.edu.



CHOICES (Coalition of Hope Offering Inner-City Empowerment Services, Inc.) will hold its **Fifth Annual Miss Chester Sweetheart, Princess, Jr. Teen and Teen Pageants** on May 3 at Widener University. Registration for the pageants will take place Monday, January 28, at 6:00 p.m. in the Chester High School Auditorium. Females 3-18 years of age residing in Chester, Chester Township, Upland, and Toby Farms are invited to come out and register to showcase their talent, intelligence, beauty, and style. Contestants will participate in workshops on public speaking, hygiene, and etiquette etc., as well as in community service projects. Contestants will be competing for cash prizes, a title, a trophy, and the opportunity to represent the City of Chester at various events. Financial support, sponsors and volunteers for the pageants are also needed. For additional information, contact Pageant Director, Desiree Potts, 610.800.2453.



The **Chester Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.** has a variety of events to support its community programs and scholarships for girls. On February 23rd at City Hall from 8pm to midnight, an *Expression of the Arts* will bring song, spoken word, dance and other arts and artists together in support of chapter programs. Contact Maria Batts-Campbell at 302.475.1186 for tickets or information.

Save The Date for this year's **Delta Regional Day of Service** which will again focus on education on Saturday, March 8th from 10am-3p. A Kid Zone, and a parenting resource fair have been added to the program, *You, Your Child, The School – A Winning Partnership*. Details on workshops, speakers and location are available on the chapter website, www.dstchesterpaac.org. There is no cost to attend this event.

Upcoming Events

February 12: Chester Community Improvement Project (CCIP) foreclosure prevention workshop, 6:00-8:00 p.m., North Chester Baptist Church. For information, please call Gladys Wrease, 610.876.8663.

February 23: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Chester Alumnae Chapter. *Expression of the Arts.* Chester City Hall. 8:00 PM - 12:00 Midnight. Tickets - \$17.00 to benefit chapter programs.

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.

March 8: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Chester Alumnae Chapter. Regional Day of Service: *You, Your Child, The School – A Winning Partnership.*

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