



# Reaching Out

## Norristown Area Communities That Care for Youth

Keeping Youth Safe & Drug Free

Spring 2007

### Communities That Care

By Angela S. Bell, Community Mobilizer

#### What is Communities That Care?

Communities That Care (CTC) is a risk-focused approach to reducing adolescent problem behaviors through community mobilization and planning. Local citizens and community leaders work together to identify the risk factors that increase the likelihood of problem behaviors developing, and enhance protective factors that can shield youngsters from problems. The risk and protective factors are used to implement a comprehensive plan to step ahead of the problems with far reaching and long-lasting solutions.

#### What are risk factors?

Risk factors are those conditions that increase the likelihood that a child will develop one or more behavior problems in adolescence. CTC attempts to identify and reduce or counter the risks present in the community, home and school, in an effort to help our kids make positive decisions related to drugs, violence, and early sexual activity.

#### What are protective factors?

Protective factors, like individual characteristics, bonding, healthy beliefs and clear standards, are aspects of adolescents' lives that counter risk factors or provide a buffer against them. A key strategy of CTC is to enhance the protective factors that promote positive behavior, well being and personal success.

#### CTC Risk Factors

The Norristown CTC for Youth Prevention Board has identified four priority risk factors that can

lead youth in the Greater Norristown Area to adapt problem behaviors:

- *Availability of Drugs and Firearms*
- *Family Management*
- *Lack of Commitment to School*
- *Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior*

#### What can parents do to support the work of CTC?

- Share in the decision making by joining our CTC for Youth Prevention Board
- Spend more time with your kids to reduce their risk of using alcohol or drugs
- Lend your expertise (grant writing, graphic design, program development)
- Donate your services to support youth-based organizations, agencies or programs.

For more information on CTC, please call 610-630-2111 or visit [www.norristownctc.org](http://www.norristownctc.org).

### Norristown Area Teen Drug Use Declines

According to recent CTC youth surveys, drug use among students in the Norristown Area School District has been declining over the past five years. Positive, involved parents is a key factor in this reduction.

# FIND YOUR 25th HOUR

10 MINUTES AT THE BUS STOP



Everyone could use an extra hour each day to talk to their kids, but who can find the time?

Robin found an extra hour in her day...  
here's how:

**10 minutes waiting for the bus**  
**20 minutes over dinner**  
**20 minutes doing laundry**  
**10 minutes before bed**

= The 25th Hour

That elusive 25th hour. The time you need to keep up with your kid's life. People are discovering it every day. It's easier than you think to stay involved in your child's life. Have a conversation with your kids. In the car. Grocery shopping. At the bus stop. While doing laundry. No deep thoughts, no birds and bees, just "Can you tell me about your day?" can make all the difference.

The **25th** Hour

Every minute adds up to something special.

Tell us how you discovered your 25th hour  
(610) 630-2111 or [www.FindYour25thHour.org](http://www.FindYour25thHour.org)



# Programs Offered Through Communities That Care

By Alissa McBride, Community Prevention Coordinator

**Communities That Care (CTC)** has put together a collection of programs and services that directly address our community's unique needs. These include prevention education through forums, presentations, community outreach, summer recreational calendars, and informational meetings. In addition, we have a series of programs to assist families, youth and schools in keeping our young people on the right track. Below is a listing of our existing programs.

**Families That Care: Guiding Good Choices** is a five-week program designed to assist parents in learning about developmental stages and other factors in the home, school and community that put their children at risk for making destructive behavioral choices, including abusing drugs and alcohol. Parents learn how to set clear guidelines and consequences, coach their children on resisting peer pressure and manage family conflict. Its primary objectives are to strengthen family management skills and parent-child bonding. This program is in direct response to the Family Management risk factor. For information on Guiding Good Choices, please call 610-630-2111, ext. 239.

**Life Skills Training** is an eight-to-10 week program that

is currently being provided to every 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grader in the Norristown Area School District through the health curriculum. It is a national model substance abuse prevention program that teaches personal self-management skills, social skills and drug-related resistance skills. This program is in response to two of our priority risk factors: Lack of Commitment to School and Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior. For information on Life Skills Training, please call 610-630-2111, ext. 267.

**Norristown Police Department (NPD) SafeKids: Out of Harm's Way** is an initiative designed by the NPD to minimize the risks that children face in the home, school and community. A primary goal of NPD SafeKids is to reduce the risk of violence, especially among children. This program addresses our Availability of Drugs and Firearms risk factor. The program has three components: youth education in the classroom; parent

education at community locations; and community outreach/free gun locks. For information on NPD SafeKids, please call 610-270-0977.

**Families That Care: Staying Connected to Your Teen** is designed for parents of youth grades 9-12. Its goals are to improve communication skills and strengthen family bonds which reduce the risk factors associated with teen drug and alcohol use, as well as other anti-social behaviors. Parents learn new strategies for setting guidelines, providing supervision and assisting their sons and daughters in moving toward a healthy and successful adulthood. This program specifically addresses our Family Management risk factor. For information on Staying Connected, please call 610-630-2111, ext. 239.

**SPARKS (Strong Parents Actively Raising Kids Safely)** is a national model family counseling program that helps improve parent-child communication and conflict resolution.

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“Thank you again for the profound impact you’ve had in our lives these past five weeks. It has truly been an enriching experience that has left me and my husband with a wealth of information to aid us in raising our children.”

—A.S. commenting on Guiding Good Choices

Norristown Area  
**Communities  
That Care**



**for Youth**

KEEPING YOUTH  
SAFE  
&  
DRUG FREE

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[www.norristownctc.org](http://www.norristownctc.org)

*Programs continued from page 3*

It has been shown to improve school attendance, conduct and achievement, as well as strengthen family bonds. SPARKS is designed to impact our Family Management, Lack of Commitment to School and Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior risk factors. For information, please call 610-630-2111, ext. 260.

**The Sisters Program** assists young ladies in developing self-esteem, giving them a foundation for a lifetime of good decision making. The groups focus

on healthy relationship skills, communication skills, decision making, body issues, exposure to new experiences, goal setting, giving back to the community and age-appropriate fun. Sisters assists in counteracting two of our risk factors: Lack of Commitment to School and Friends Who En-

gage in the Problem Behavior. For more information, please call 610-277-2200.

For more information on Norristown CTC and our current programs and activities, please call 610-630-2111 or visit [www.norristownctc.org](http://www.norristownctc.org).

**“Our counselor...was very knowledgeable and conducted our sessions so we could gain insight into our problems. We were able to resolve our major issues and have benefited from our time [in the SPARKS program].”**

—A Norristown family commenting on SPARKS