

Reaching Out

Norristown Area Communities That Care for Youth

Keeping Youth Safe & Drug Free

Winter 2013



How to Help Your Children Succeed in School

Behind most successful students are parents who take an active interest in their children's work and school well-being. Children of involved parents typically get better grades and have fewer behavior problems in school.

BACKTALK, the Communities that Care (CTC) youth group, meets every Wednesday at 4 p.m. The purpose of this group is to reduce drugs, alcohol and violence within the Norristown area.

After hearing about the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy, the members of BACKTALK wanted to send some inspirational messages to the children and staff of Sandy Hook Elementary School.

As a group, we decided to create a collage of meaningful phrases to show our support and empathy for the tragic experience they endured.

These are only a few of the youth residing in Norristown that care about living peacefully in their communities. If anyone would like to join our group, please contact Taylor Hayes at 610-630-2111 ext. 266.

"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." —Martin Luther King, Jr.

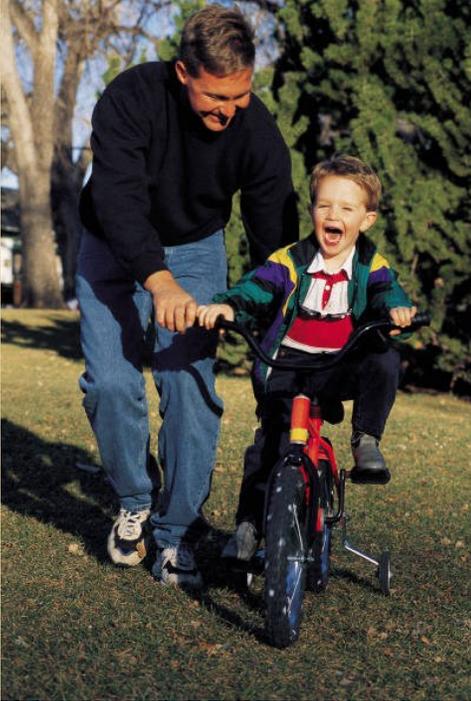
It is important to stay informed about your child's school performance. Attend school conferences and e-mail teachers for a quick status report if you suspect a problem. If your school posts grades online, be sure to check them often. Communicate with your child's teacher about whether or not your child is giving their best effort or whether she has noticed any changes in your child's behavior or grades. Find out if your child's teacher has concerns about the friends your child has chosen. Be clear on the teacher's policy for making up missed work and how they prefer to keep in touch throughout the year.

Here are a few additional tips on how you can help your child succeed in school:

- ◆ Make sure your child is at school every possible day. There is no substitute for attendance.
- ◆ Designate a time and place for your child to do homework. If they don't have homework, use that time to read. Routine is important.
- ◆ Have a regular bedtime that allows your child to get a minimum of eight hours of sleep.
- ◆ Provide a healthy diet, including breakfast, every morning.
- ◆ Teach your child character. It will improve their social and academic skills.
- ◆ Make time every day to talk to your child about their day's activities. Let them know you care and really listen to what they have to say.

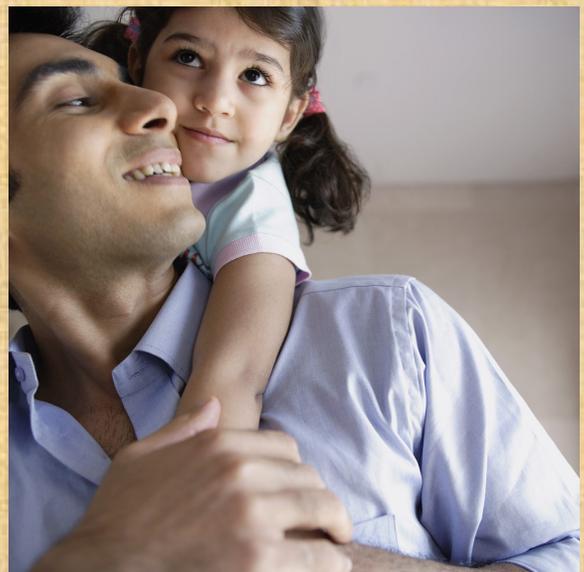
Strong Families = Productive + Happy Children

Families that spend quality time together are more likely to have children that grow up to be successful, happy and productive adults. Quality time does not have to be expensive, just activities that parents and children enjoy doing together. Below are some suggestions that have been proven to strengthen families:



- ◆ Have a loving family environment where your children know they can talk to you about how they feel and what they are going through.
- ◆ Be a good role model for your children. Don't do drugs or abuse alcohol.
- ◆ Know your children's friends and keep negative influences away from them.
- ◆ Spend regular, quality time with them. Go to museums, the zoo, and church together. Do chores side by side. Take pictures and make a family album. Play dress up.
- ◆ Make sure they are educated on the dangers of alcohol and drugs.
- ◆ Let your children know the consequences of drinking or doing drugs.

- ◆ Enroll them in positive activities.
- ◆ Take trips.
- ◆ Go to the park and play ball or tag.
- ◆ Eat dinner at the table.
- ◆ Play make believe. Sing songs. Do puzzles.
- ◆ Play sports.
- ◆ Movie and game night.
- ◆ Read books together.
- ◆ Attend church.
- ◆ Go to the library.



Community Supports Our Children at “Youth Speaks”

By *Viviann Schorle, Coordinator, Norristown Violence Prevention Initiative*

We gathered at the Greater Norristown PAL Center on Friday, January 11, to give youth a voice. We had more than 25 youth from 12-18 years of age and over 15 adults.

We had an open discussion about the issues that plague Norristown. We told them to bring their voice and an open mind and they did! We had dinner, filled out the Norristown Community survey, broke up into smaller groups, and that is when the magic happened.



At first, most of the youth were shy and unsure of how to answer the questions, but with the help of the positive male role models facilitating each group, it soon got noisy. As I walked around helping get supplies and keeping track of our schedule, I was happy to observe that the youth were speaking.

The groups were asked to “Pick the top three reasons you believe there is violence in this community.” Here are their answers:

1. **Bored.** They want more to do in a positive way. Some specific requests were sports activities, arts and creative activities.
2. **Family.** They feel they need more support and stronger families, more involvement of family in their lives
3. **Mentoring.** They want more positive adult role models to talk to.

Youth in Norristown want **RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS!** Not just any kind but the **good, positive kind**. What are you going to do about his? You can contact me, Viviann Schorle, coordinator of the Norristown Violence Prevention Initiative, if you would like to get involved in all the positive things going on in Norristown. I can be reached at 610-630-2111 ext. 257 or vschorle@fsmontco.org. Se habla Español.

We are not alone! These organizations sponsor positive programs for our youth too.

- Doris Smith-Starks, Norristown Townwatch, 610-270-0421, dsmithstarks@norristown.org
- Ken Fennal and Ms. Faye, Greater Norristown PAL, 610-278-0040, ken.fennal@greaternorristownpal.org
- Councilman Milner, www.councilmanmilner.com, 610-272-8080
- Kristl Wiernicki, Partners for Families/Greater Norristown Area Ministerium, Bishop McCray, 610-277-7985, klwiernicki@verizon.net
- Trey Haddrick, Men of Excellence, NMOE19401@gmail.com

We're working together to get our youth what they want—positive relationships!



KEEPING YOUTH
SAFE
&
DRUG FREE

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www.NorristownCTC.org

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 the 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.

For more information, visit our website at www.NorristownCTC.org.

Youth Empowerment Program

The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) is a year-round educational program for all students who are currently enrolled in school. YEP offers many services to students who meet the requirements. Some of the YEP programs include:

- ◆ Summer Programs
- ◆ After-School Programs
- ◆ Job Readiness/Job Prep
- ◆ Life Skills Workshops

Although this is an open enrollment program, positions are limited. When there are openings, students are recruited through public and alternative schools, community organizations, county agencies, and by referrals from parents, guidance counselors and community leaders. Students will remain in YEP until they graduate from high school.

Questions? Please contact montcoworks@montcopa.org or call 610-278-3541 for more information.

Who can find the time to keep up with their kids lives?

www.FindYour25thHour.org