

McKean County STRENGTHENING *families* PROGRAM

For Fifth and Sixth grader and Parents

SFP HISTORY IN MCKEAN COUNTY:

The McKean County Strengthening Families Program is now in its fourth and final year of funding through a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Over the past four years, **364** families have successfully completed the program. SFP was offered for free in all school districts to all fifth and sixth graders and their parents.

Though the grant from PCCD is ending in July, The Guidance Center has partnered with McKean County CYS so that the program can continue to be offered in the county.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK:

Participants of SFP reported enjoying the program and seeing significant impacts upon their family. When asked what was the most valuable thing learned, participants said:

“That my child is very close to the teen years and that the most important thing in getting through those years is to stay calm, show love and be consistent.” – parent

“How to stay calm – remember they are kids and need love and limits.” – parent

“How to handle peer pressure. How to calm myself down when I’m mad. How to reach my goals. What a true friend is. How to understand parents.” – youth

“There are goals you have to work harder to reach, but the outcome will be good.” – youth

PROGRAM CONTENT:

SFP 10-14 was developed for Project Family of the Institute for Social and Behavioral Research at Iowa State University. The program consists of seven highly interactive, video-based sessions conducted over seven consecutive weeks. The program has received numerous global and national recognitions including being named as a Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) Blueprints for Violence Prevention Model Program. The content of the program is designed to:

- Enhance and promote effective parenting skills, such as setting limits, using appropriate consequences, communicating expectations, and protecting against substance abuse and problem behaviors
- Build life skills in youth, including goal setting, stress management, conflict resolution, empathy and appreciation, and peer pressure resistance
- Strengthen family bonds by creating a shared understanding of family values, building family communication, promoting joint problem solving skills, and enabling families to recognize individual and family strengths and spend special time together.

2009/2010 MCKEAN COUNTY PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

Number of 7-week Programs Offered:

- Fall 2009 – 3 programs
- Winter 2010 – 6 programs

Participation:

- 122 Parents/Caregivers served with 89 graduating.
- 81 Youth served with 70 graduating.

Attendance:

- 73% of adults attended 5 or more sessions.
- 86% of youth attended 5 or more sessions.

Impact Highlights:

Participants were given a survey at the end of the program measuring how they think they improved over the course of the seven weeks. Parents, on average, reported a:

- 40% increase in stress management skills.
- 44% rise in communication of family rules.
- 37% boost in positive family communication.

Youth conveyed a:

- 67% jump in stress management skills.
- 35% gain in empathy towards parents.
- 41% surge in peer resistance skills.

Parents also saw a noticeable change in their youth:

- 95% claimed their youth’s behavior at home, at school and in the community had improved since beginning SFP.
- 61% reported that, since beginning SFP, their child’s performance and their grades had improved.

Other Comments:

Participants stated the most valuable thing they learned was...

“To not argue with my child; but to state the rule, consequences and loss of privilege if they fail to comply.” – parent

“How to make friends and to tell a good friend from another.” – youth

PROVEN PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:

Research studies conducted 4 or more years after program completion show that **YOUTH** participating in a SFP 10-14 program led by trained facilitators are:

- Significantly less likely to have used alcohol
- Significantly less likely to have initiated alcohol, cigarette, methamphetamine, or marijuana use
- Significantly less likely to have reported aggressive and destructive behavior
- Demonstrate a delayed onset of problematic behaviors
- Demonstrate increased resistance to peer pressure.

Participating **PARENTS** demonstrated the following proven results:

- Increased ability to set appropriate limits
- Increased ability to show affection and support for their children
- Less frequent use of alcohol and cigarettes

COST BENEFITS:

- Analyses by researchers from the Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy have found economic returns of up to \$9.60 for every dollar spent implementing SFP 10-14 and a cost benefit of up to \$5,805 for each youth participating in SFP 10-14.
- The Penn State Prevention Research Center released a 2008 report demonstrating a return on investment for sites implementing SFP 10-14 in Pennsylvania of over \$13 million, which reflected a savings in future crime and substance use costs of \$872,133 per community.

MCKEAN COUNTY PROGRAM FIDELITY:

Model Adherence: Observations of two parent, youth, and family sessions per 7-week program are expected of sites funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Based on fidelity observations of at least 6 sessions, facilitators are effectively delivering the program content as intended by the program developer and engaging participants **97.8%** of the time.

Participant Ratings of Staff: Both adult and youth participants rate the facilitators and the average facilitator rating is a **4.7** on a scale of 5.

SUPPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY:

The Guidance Center was able to partner with the United Way of the Bradford Area and the McKean County Department of Human Services for the Fall 2009/Winter 2010 programs to supplement the diminishing funding from the PCCD grant.

Because of this support, along with staff from Alcohol and Drug Abuse services, a limited number of programs were able to be offered in the fall, when the PCCD grand funding was not available due to the PA state budget impasse.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

The Guidance Center anticipates being able to offer the next session of the McKean County Strengthening Families Program in the fall of 2010.

Protective Factors *Targeted for an Increase*

- Child and family management practices, including monitoring, age-appropriate parental expectations, and consistent discipline
- Effective and empathetic parent-child communication
- Promotion of healthy beliefs and clear standards
- Family bonding and supportive family involvement
- Goal setting and positive future orientation
- Positive parent-child affect
- Emotional management
- Pro-social family values
- Peer pressure refusal skills

Risk Factors *Targeted for a Decrease*

- Child and family management practices, including harsh, inappropriate, or inconsistent discipline, indulgence, poor parental monitoring, demanding/rejecting behavior, and poor communication of rules
- Child aggressive or withdrawn behavior
- Favorable attitudes toward problem behaviors and substance use
- Friends who engage in problem behaviors – Negative peer influences
- Poor social and stress management skills
- Family conflict
- Early initiation of problem behaviors
- Early and persistent antisocial behavior
- Poor school performance

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR AN UPCOMING SESSION:

call 362-1834 or
visit www.sfpckean.net.