



# Community Partnerships

The Newsletter of the Local Management Board of Allegany County

Vol. I, No. 8

July 2005

***Building the community's capacity to provide parents and caregivers the resources to create nurturing, stable environments for our county's children***

## PLAY Program Off To Great Start

The PLAY (Parents, Law Enforcement, and Youth) Program is making a positive difference in the lives of Allegany County's children and families. PLAY has been funded by the Local Management Board of Allegany County, Inc. for the purpose of providing recreational and mentoring opportunities for middle school-age children and their families.

Twenty-one middle school students from across the county and their families have taken part in the program since it began in early May, including a

boys' group and girls' group in the Cumberland area and a boys' group in the George's Creek area.

Members of local law enforcement agencies are leading the groups in a variety of recreational activities and community service projects. Children, parents, and program staff have worked together to complete cleanup projects along Virginia Avenue, by Westmar High School, and at the Springdale Avenue playground in addition to planting flowers and pulling weeds in the Downtown Mall area.

Some of the participants are creating a program scrapbook.

Program participants have enjoyed outings to see the Altoona Curves and to host a picnic for extended family members at Rocky Gap State Park.

Additional activities are planned for these groups through the month of October with new groups scheduled to begin in December.

For more information about the PLAY program contact Lori Sadlier of the Multi-Agency Team at (301) 777-2008.

## Meetings & Trainings

### Local Management Board

#### LMB Directors

July 19 @ 8:00 AM  
LMB office

### *Diabetes, Obesity, and Depression: A Clinical Conundrum*

July 29 @ 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Robinwood Medical Center, Hagerstown  
For more info: (301) 790-8907

### *Maryland Disaster Mental Health Volunteer Training*

All trainings 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM  
July 20 (Catonsville)  
July 26 (Essex)  
August 16 (Chesapeake College)  
For more info: kannelli@dnhm.state.md.us

## GOLD NUGGETS

The Local Management Board of Allegany County, Inc. is currently sponsoring community workshops aimed at increasing awareness of Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets. During each of these workshops, participants are given the opportunity to identify simple ways they might build assets among youth in our community. *Community Partnerships* will highlight some of these "gold nuggets" in this and future editions.

Some gold nuggets from recent workshops include:

- ▲ Include children as well as parents in homeowners' association directories. Encourage members to get to know neighborhood children by name.
- ▲ Make a list of all the adults who interact with your children and send them a thank you note.
- ▲ Organize or take part in activities for children and youth in your faith community.
- ▲ Promote and encourage activities among neighbors. Make it intentional!
- ▲ Emphasize to parents that they are not alone in building assets for their children.
- ▲ Get to know your child's best friend!
- ▲ Take your child on a one-on-one picnic and ask her or him to bring a favorite book.

# Local Program Provides Support to Fathers

The Fathers for the Future Program serves fathers and young men expecting to be fathers. The primary emphasis is on fathers with children under four years old, a critical phase of development in children.

Craig Cross, Program Coordinator, goes to area high schools and talks with young men who are fathers, or expectant fathers, about parenting issues. Cross also provides parenting classes, job support, various men's support groups, information presentations, recreation opportunities, and supervised visits, for men and their children under four, at The Y.M.C.A Family Center.

"This is probably the most challenging position I've ever held," says Cross. "Most men feel that to be involved in a group like this is an admission that they need help, and men generally don't like to ask for help." According to Cross, the program does not focus on the negative, but rather on what men are doing right. The parenting classes follow a curriculum called *The Nurturing Parenting Program*, Cross says, "but mostly it's a few guys talking about what it's like to be fathers."

"I work with a lot of fathers who, for one reason or another, don't get to see their children," says Cross. The Family Center offers these dads a neutral ground, complete with a Child Development room (playroom to the kids) where the fathers can see their kids. "The vast majority of fathers I've met and served desperately want to be a part of their children's lives," adds Cross. One father, who gets supervised visits with his son once a week, talked about how much it meant to him. "I don't know what I'd do without this program. Basically, I would not get to be a part of my child's life without it. For that I'm very grateful."

"One father I taught parenting to, a military man, tough as nails, just broke down and starting weeping when talking about wanting to spend more time with his kids," says Cross. According to Cross, the "machismo factor" is also an issue that keeps men from attending, or from really showing their true selves. "Whether they are in the ninth grade or middle-aged, they act tough and indifferent to the issues at hand, or they say parenting is easy. Anyone who has ever been a parent would disagree."

Another project that Cross is seeking support for is The Western Maryland Fathers Coalition, a group seeking to unite fathers for the purpose of bringing together the wisdom and talent of area fathers to give back to the community.

The Fathers for the Future program is based at The Family Center, one of Maryland's Family Support Centers, located at 205 Baltimore Avenue in Cumberland in the newly renovated YMCA Gilchrist Center. The YMCA administers this program with funding from the Local Management Board of Allegany County, Inc. For more information, or to request a calendar of events, call (301) 724-5445 x105.

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If you would like to receive this newsletter, please send an E-Mail to [robin.summerfield@allconet.org](mailto:robin.summerfield@allconet.org) and include "Add to Newsletter" in the subject line.

Information about programs or upcoming events may be submitted using the contact information below.

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