

Summer 2006

INSIDE:

ACT - Against Violence

Parent Group

Prosecutor Visits
Support Group

ESPI Update



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The Permit Has Arrived!

PEI Kids' Anticipated Renovations to Begin

Spring 2000 does not seem very long ago. It was then, that PEI Kids (at that time Prevention Education Inc.) moved into its own freshly renovated building. Each Program Coordinator and Director had their own private office, spaces were welcoming and child-oriented, and the agency enlarged its asset-base with ownership.

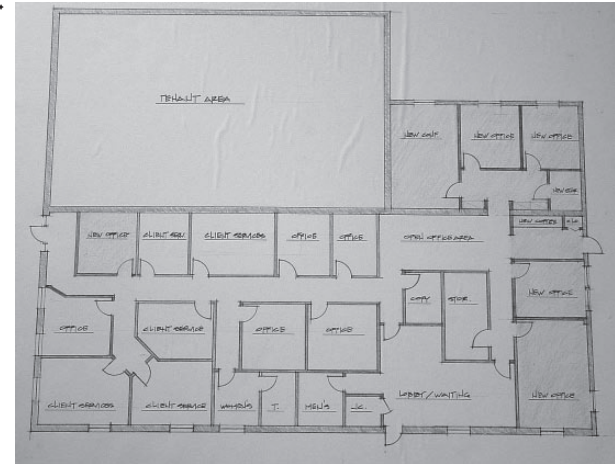
Then came new positions: the Operation Officer and then the Director of Public Relations. Open, public space began to fill. Then new programs and program expansions: the Anger Management Project, Girls At Risk: Urban Survival, Wednesday Night Anger Management, ACT - Adults & Children Together - Against Violence, Early Suicide Prevention & Intervention, K-2 Bullying Prevention, increasing demand for *all* prevention programs... we are bursting at the seams!

The agency has had quite a growth spurt - with more programs come more staff, more materials and more resources. The need for privacy is paramount for our counselors and visitation staff. Compliance with HIPAA regulations are also a concern.

So with just 5 years as building owners we initiated the planning stages of our first renovation! Finally, we are moving into the implementation phase.

With drawings complete, bids accepted and our general contractor ready to roll, our permits cleared the Township's review process. Construction is anticipated to begin after we all celebrate Labor Day.

The rear portion of the building and the garage will be reorganized and converted to utilize the available space more efficiently. The waiting room will be reduced slightly in



The Plan!

Juvenile Intervention Services:

- Juvenile Offenders Outreach Program (JOOP)
- Anger Management
- Trenton Middle School Anger Management

Behind the Scenes with Juvenile Intervention Services

by Robert Fiorello, J.I.S. Coordinator

For seven years I have piloted JOOP. In the past several years, programming centered around kids likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system or who have had minor infractions, has increased. My day-to-day activities vary

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* Company/organization names for identification, not endorsement, purposes.





Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Downing addresses the Crisis Intervention Parent Support Group.

Understanding Megan's Law

Assistant Prosecutor and Chief of the Megan's Law Unit, Jennifer Downing, joined the Crisis Intervention Parent Support Group in August to help them further understand Megan's Law. Of course, ideally every parent should have such an opportunity to ask specific questions and really wrap their understanding around the law and the way it works. For parent's of children who are dealing with the trauma of sexual abuse - a new urgency exists.

The NJ law, passed in 1994, requires that communities be notified if convicted sex offenders posing risk to public safety live or work in the vicinity. Prosecutors determine the level of risk offenders pose to public safety using many factors including statues and the Attorney General's guidelines. Offenders are placed in one of three tiers based upon the risk of re-offending: Tier 1 - low risk, Tier 2 - moderate risk and Tier 3 - high risk.

Ms. Downing explained in detail the 13-point process used to determine an offender's tier. She also highlighted the requirement for offenders to register where they are living, and re-register if moving. Parents were given the opportunity to ask questions, which one parent stated, "Ms. Downing answered (our questions) in detail with sensitivity to the feelings of the victim's families."

Law enforcement is notified regarding all three tiers of offenders. Schools, day care centers, summer camps and registered community organizations are notified regarding Tier 2 and 3 offenders. Members of the public are notified by law enforcement officials through a door-to-door process regarding Tier 3 offenders. The public can access the offender registry on-line. The on-line registry contains Tier 3, and some Tier 2 offenders. Tier 1 offenders and juvenile offenders are not included in the on-line registry.

For more details visit www.state.nj.us/njsp/info/reg_sexoffend.html.

W R

Check out the PEI Kids' website! We have updated our look, added additional tips for parents, made it easier to contact us and more!

Please feel free to send feedback to dnadeau@peikids.org. Help us make our site better!



In the Pursuit of Even More Excellence!

The staff members of the Client Support Services Department are already superb, but in order to remain fresh and up to date on the latest happenings Director Jan Welsh has instituted a series of staff workshops.

On June 30th all Supervised Visitation staff participated in a workshop entitled "Documentation in the Client's Record." The workshop stressed the importance of the written observation of supervised visits and how to produce records that are easily understood and contain information pertinent to the program's goals of service. Our own Dr. Juanita Johnson Brooks led the workshop.

In November, a second workshop will be held for all Client Support Services staff on Defensive Driving. Our drivers log tens-of-thousands-of-miles every year! The workshop will be facilitated by The Princeton Driving School.

PEI KIDS IS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING A
SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL CHILDREN.
PEI KIDS WORKS WITH THE CHILD, FAMILY AND CAREGIVER TO PROVIDE
PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS RELATING TO PERSONAL SAFETY,
SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE OVER ALL WELL-BEING OF THE CHILD.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 BOX

There is still time!

Register now!

Falcon Creek Golf Course,
McGuire Air Force Base,
Wrightstown, NJ

**Monday,
September 18,
2006**

Sponsorship opportunities remain!

Contact Martina Davidson,
609.695.3739

or
mdavidson@peikids.org,
for specifics.

**Proceeds support PEI Kids' growing
programs!**

THANK YOU!

PEI Kids would like to extend our
gratitude to:

Bob Reasso's

Rutgers Soccer School

and

Computer + Kids

Summer Program.

Due to the generosity of these camps,
PEI Kids was able to stretch Zeitz
Campership funding further, allowing
more children to participate in a week-
long summer camp activity.

greatly between the school year and the summer, but the following is a generalized summary of a typical work day.

8:00 a.m.: Listen to new voice mail, usually from attending probation officers to catch up on how their probationers are doing in programs, a past client just checking in or to ask for assistance (probation concern, finding a job, family situation, etc.)

8:15 a.m.: Review Youth Detention Center (YDC) list to gauge recidivism rates (kids on this list have re-offended and are incarcerated at the Youth House). This is the "WHO" and "WHEN" segment of the morning. In the summer months it is almost always more extensive as a result of youth having more free time. Review incoming referrals for programs.

9:00 a.m.: Contact probation Intake Unit to ascertain what crimes our past/present clients were arrested for, resulting in placement in YDC. Check with probation officers to ensure mutual clients are fulfilling obligations stipulated in probation agreements, particularly community service and fines restitution.

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.: Attempt to contact parents to discuss client attendance/needs. Prepare program introduction letters, attendance warnings, termination notices. Prepare Violation of Probation notices for kids who are not attending programs for attending probation officers, prosecutor and public defender. *On Tuesdays and Thursdays during the school year at this time, I would be teaching Anger Management/Violence Prevention in a Trenton Middle School.

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.: Prepare lessons for upcoming program sessions (Tuesday/Thursday in schools, Wednesday at Naples Center, JOOP on Saturdays). Research and prepare current events and group readings for individual programs. By this time of the day, received contact from at least two more attending probation officers. Update client notes.

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.: Lunch at Candela's!

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.: Continue with updating client notes and corresponding with probation officers.

Additionally: I meet with Sam Naples Center's Director, Lonnie McQueen weekly to discuss client behavior and assist in the identification of potential sources of conflict with the center populations. I also sit on the Trenton Youth Services Commission and the Mercer County Anti-Gang Task Force.

Wednesdays our Anger Management Program meets from 5-7:30 p.m. and on Saturday JOOP meets from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. During the summer, though the Middle School Anger Management Project is not taking place, we conduct an additional section of JOOP during the week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



Tips for Parents

<http://lds.about.com/library/gallery/clipart/katesclipart/kids/>

It's Nobody's Fault - New Hope and Help For Difficult Children

by Dr. Harold Koplewicz

Reviewed by Jennifer Adonizio, LSW



As a semi-regular feature of PEI Kids' Postings we will be asking parents and experts to review books, magazines, web-sites, etc. pertaining to child welfare issues. Reviewers' opinions are not necessarily those of PEI Kids and do not constitute an endorsement of the material reviewed.

When children are born, parents hope and wish for the best. Parents wait in desperation for the healthiest baby- five fingers, five toes, good eye sight and hopefully no disabilities. What parents don't think about is the possibility of mental illness and quite frankly, why would they.

However, as time goes by, more and more young children are being diagnosed with mood disorders (depression, bi-polar etc.), anxiety disorders, eating disorders etc. The question that remains in most parents' minds when the diagnosis of mental illness is given is usually something like, "What did I do wrong?"

Dr. Harold Koplewicz (director and founder of the New York University Child Study Center) normalizes and offers comfort and assurance to parents dealing with children diagnosed with mental illness in his book entitled, *It's Nobody's Fault - New Hope and Help for Difficult Children*.

Dr. Koplewicz dedicates a chapter to each of the most prevalent diagnosis in children and adolescents today. He walks the reader through anxiety disorders, mood disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), tourettes syndrome and eating disorders. In these chapters he educates the reader on the ideology and symptoms associated with each and gives parents advice on how to cope and overcome the stress that unfortunately, goes hand in hand with a child diagnosed with mental illness.

He opens each chapter with a case example of what he has seen in his office and goes on to talk about the behavior and thought process of the child. He then takes the parents through the brain chemistry and treatment needs for the particular diagnosis. Finally, he ends each chapter with advice to the parents for parenting the child.

Dr. Koplewicz is empathetic of the needs of both the child and the parent. He recognizes that neither children nor the parents ask for the diagnosis of mental illness. He understands the basic and most complex needs of the child in the home, school and social world in order to be successful. Furthermore, he identifies with the parents in such a way that lets the reader know that being a

parent of a child is more than what they bargained for and can be a challenge to find a way for their children on a daily basis.

In short, Dr. Koplewicz gives the reader hope for their children and reassurance that mental illness is like any other illness, it can be diagnosed, treated and managed all the while telling parents, it's not your fault.

I would recommend this book for teachers, school guidance counselors and therapists working with children and their families. I would also recommend that parents read it. There is some technical jargon, but the author explains himself thoroughly so those not associated with the counseling world would be able to, at the very least, grasp the concepts.

Jennifer Adonizio is a licensed social worker and a certified memory impairment specialist who studied at the Rutgers University School of Social Work.

Jennifer has worked with children in the day care setting as a teacher and child advocate, and has counseled the adolescent mental health and addictions population. Currently, Jennifer is working with children and their families as coordinator of the Early Suicide Prevention and Intervention Program (see below).

PEI Kids' Newest Addition: Helping Kids & Families

The Early Suicide Prevention and Intervention Program (E.S.P.I.) has taken off to a strong start! To date, the program has had seven families participate in counseling and several will continue into the school year.

In addition, a workshop has been presented to the Mercerville Elementary School guidance and teaching staff. Workshops are currently scheduled through November for the Hamilton and East Windsor School Districts. There is still time for workshops to be scheduled for the upcoming school year! PEI Kids is certified by the NJ Department of Education as a provider of professional development hours. This workshop also fulfills teachers' obligation to Statute Title 18A:6-111 (2 hours of education regarding suicide prevention). Please contact Jennifer Adonizio for more information at 609-695-3739.

The counseling component of the program is designed to assist children between the ages of 5 and 12, who have suffered loss, trauma or are expressing symptoms of depression. E.S.P.I. is actively scheduling children and their families for counseling.

size in order to replace storage lost in the garage conversion. The front entrance area and the Executive Director's current office will also be modified to create an additional office in that portion of the building.

Obviously, for a non-profit agency this sort of renovation can be very costly. Fortunately for PEI Kids, we have Board members who specialize in these activities! Board President, Vince Piacente heads Inside Architecture, P.C. and has provided his expertise and services. The same is true of Board Member Vince Scozzari, Jr. of V.J. Scozzari & Sons. Their generosity has limited the expense of this project and PEI Kids is exceptionally thankful for that and for their dedication to our mission!

Executive Director, Evelyn Gill sums up the agency's sentiment stating, "Since the purchase of our building not that long ago we have been fortunate in both our corporate and individual support. Because of this support we have been able to expand our services and programs to the children of the Mercer County community. Now we have the opportunity to expand our physical facility to meet the growing demands of our programs. I am thankful for the forward thinking of our Board of Trustees as yet another phase of the PEI Kids journey begins."

IN MEMORIAM

William Nester

1923-2006

Bill served on PEI Kids' Board of Trustees for 16 years faithfully attending our Board meetings and promoting the agency. He introduced PEI Kids to countless individuals through his extensive community network. He was also very active in our fundraising events, particularly in the early days. He would quietly work behind the scenes collecting auction items and enticing guests to attend events.

Bill was also very active in his church, the Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church, and in the Rotary Club of Lawrenceville.

His bright outlook, dedication to family, friends and community members, as well as his incredible energy will be sorely missed by

*PEI Kids' Board of Trustees,
Resource Development Committee and staff.*



PARENTING - THE TOUGHEST JOB THERE IS!

PEI Kids has joined forces with other local organizations that have parent groups and who work with parents to offer a 5-session workshop to help make the toughest job a little bit easier.

As a result of the workshop series it is our hope that parents will develop a greater understanding of their child's development, how they influence their child and with tools to model behaviors that will positively impact their child.

The workshop content is based on the ACT - Adults & Children Together - Against Violence curriculum. PEI Kids has partnered with organizations such as Mill Hill Child & Family Development Center, HomeFront and the Department of Children & Families.

Participating parents have great things to say about the program!



Save the Date!

Friday November 3, 2006

Wine tasting & Hors d'oeuvres

Prepare for a fabulous array of
top scoring wines!

For more information contact Denise at 609-695-3739 or dnadeau@peikids.org

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