

Spring 2009

Weller Health Education Center

we know kids

In this issue ...

And the survey says (what we have learned about kids from our surveys) [PAGE 1]

Apply for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program [PAGE 2]

11,500 participants in tobacco programs [PAGE 3]

Dental grant details [PAGE 4]

And the survey says ...

violence is becoming more prevalent at schools and at a younger age.

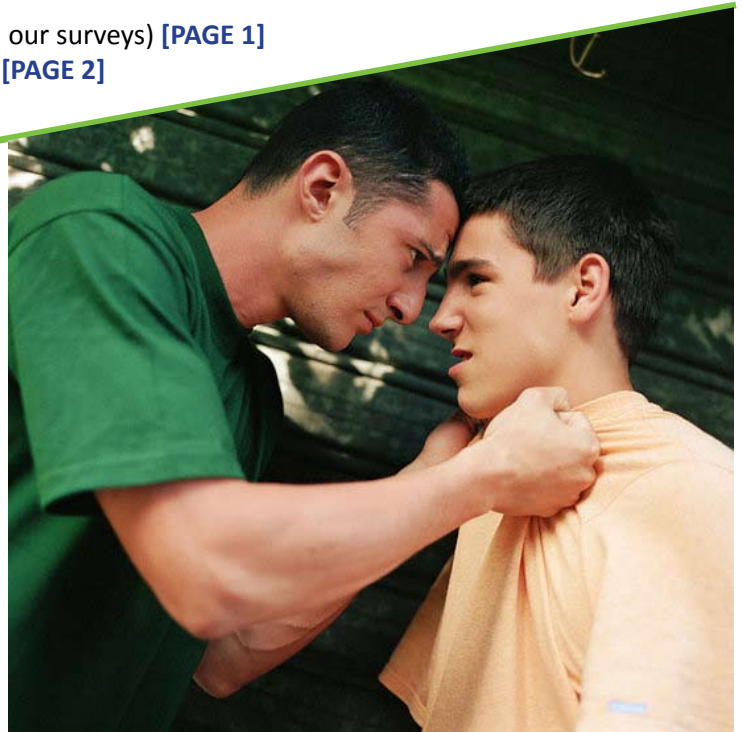
Dating violence, bullying and abusive relationships with peers exceeds the national average for teens in northeastern Pennsylvania. Recent health risk behavior surveys conducted by Weller and the Center for Organizational Research and Evaluation at Penn State University reveal that teens are twice as likely to be a victim of dating violence compared to the national average. In the East Stroudsburg Area School District, 20 percent of the students in a relationship have been physically abused and 25 percent have been verbally abused by a partner. 16 percent of high school students in the Easton Area School District were afraid to attend school in the month prior to the survey for fear of personal safety on their way to and

from school. Between relationship violence, weapons, bullying and harassment, it is easy to understand why children in our area are afraid of attending school at a rate three times the national average.

Experts believe that violent behaviors are beginning at a much younger age than in past generations and that early adolescence is the time to begin preventive education. As children enter their teenage years, they are faced

with many developmental, social and emotional changes. Teens are beginning to take their first steps toward independence and learning the consequences of the decisions they make. Unfortunately, many children learn relation-

survey ... continued on page 3



Weller now offers more program choices to fit your schedule

After school, pre-school, six-week nutrition and fitness ... and more!

Most schools are familiar with our 45-minute program model delivered in your school on your schedule. What you may not realize is that many of the 28+ programs we offer can be customized to create weekly after-school sessions, modified to fit into a pre-school format or incorporated into a six-week intense focus on the topic of your choice.

Currently, we are conducting six week sessions that focus on nutrition, physical activity, self-esteem and bullying prevention. These programs utilize measurable, behavior-focused strategies to promote healthy eating and physical activity and improve bullying awareness and prevention. Our hope is that students will make the connection between behaviors

and health risks and understand the impact of their choices.

Please contact us if you are interested in learning more about how we can create a customized program for your school or facility.

Earn tax credits while supporting health education for kids!

Last year alone, corporate contributors to the PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit program helped the Weller Center provide potentially life-saving health education programs to more than 69,000 public school students throughout eastern and central Pennsylvania. If your business is subject to one of six Pennsylvania taxes, you, too, can re-direct a portion of your tax dollars to support vital health education programming for students in Pennsylvania.

It's easy!

Businesses subject to the following taxes may complete a simple one-page application to apply for tax credits:

- Corporate Net Income Tax
- Capital Stock Franchise Tax
- Bank & Trust Company Shares Tax
- Title Insurance Company Shares Tax
- Insurance Premiums Tax
- Mutual Thrift Institutions Tax
- Personal Income Tax of S Corporation shareholders or partners in a general or limited partnership. (A copy of the EITC Irrevocable Election to Pass Through form is available at www.revenue.state.pa.us.)

Apply now before all tax credits are claimed!

Tax credits are available on a first-come basis until all are allocated. In the last few years, all available tax credits were allocated on the first day. The application deadlines for the program, administered through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), are quickly approaching:

May 15 – June 30, 2009

If you are entering into the second year of a two-year commitment, your application is due between May 15 and June 30. Applications must be received by the Department no later than June 30.

July 1, 2009

If you are a first-year applicant and plan to apply for a one-year commitment (75 percent tax credit) or year one of a two-year commitment (90 percent tax credit), your application will be accepted beginning July 1. These applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis until the funds are exhausted.

July 8, 2009

Businesses that wish to apply for the Personal Income Tax Credits for S Corporation shareholders, or partners in a general or limited partnership, may not apply for credits until after July 8, 2009.

How to apply

Visit www.newpa.com, keyword EITC, to read more about the program and to download a copy of the one-page application. Or you can call DCED at (717) 787-7120 or e-mail tknorr@state.pa.us.

Why choose Weller?

The Weller Health Education Center is approved by DCED to receive tax credit contributions as an Educational Improvement Organization. Our outcomes-based innovative health education programs on character education, growth and development, hygiene/reproductive health, nutrition and fitness, and drug and alcohol prevention are utilized by more than 200 Pennsylvania school districts each year.

By designating your tax credit dollars to the Weller Health Education Center, you'll impact tens of thousands of students' lives. If you have additional questions, please contact the Weller Center at (610) 258-8500 or visit www.wellercenter.org. Thank you in advance for your continued support!



A big thank you to our partner schools

Every summer we meet with schools in our service area to discuss their program needs for the upcoming school year.

Those who choose to become partner schools receive reduced fees for programs, priority scheduling and are on top of the list for grant-funded programs.

Our partner schools in the 2008-09 school year were:

- Boyertown Area School District
- East Penn School District
- Easton Area School District
- Moravian Academy
- Nazareth Area School District
- Northampton Area School District
- Pocono Mountain School District
- Wilson Area School District

Thank you to all our partner schools! We look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss your plans for next year.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Weller partner, please contact Ann Biernat-Rucker at (610) 258-8500 ext. 26.

Donate online to the Weller Center!

Visit www.wellercenter.org and click on "Give a Gift and Support Weller." It is fast, easy and secure. We need your support to continue to provide these much needed programs. Thank you for your generosity!

survey ... continued from page 1

ship rules from peers at school and may not be receiving the guidance they need from home. School-based interventions provide educators with a captive audience for teaching important healthy relationship guidelines.

At Weller, five of the six programs under character education address building healthy relationships with the following topics: expressing feelings in a healthy way; different strategies when dealing with bullies; the social challenges when entering middle school; cultural diversity; and how to have a healthy relationship with your peers. Weller is also in the process of developing a program for middle school students that will be available this September to specifically address the escalating violence issue.

Good health is more than just vaccines and dental care. Emotional well-being and the feeling of being in a safe, secure environment have a significant impact on a person's overall health as well.

Save the date!

Friday, October 16, 2009

7th Annual Outstanding Friend to Kids Awards

The 7th annual Outstanding Friend to Kids Awards will honor individuals and organizations that are making a powerful, positive impact on the lives of children in our area.

This year's breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Last year more than \$40,000 was raised to support the Center's programs.

For more information, or to become an event sponsor, please contact the Weller Center at (610) 258-8500.

Nominate an Outstanding Friend to Kids!

Nominations are now being accepted for four awards to be presented at the 7th Annual Outstanding Friend to Kids Awards breakfast, **October 16, 2009**, at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

These awards are given to individuals and or-



ganizations that have gone above and beyond to make a positive impact on the health and well-being of children in our community.

The categories are:

- Young Achiever (under 18 years of age)
- Community Service Organization
 - Children's Advocate
 - Philanthropist

More details and the nomination form are available on our Web site, www.wellercenter.org.

11,500 children participated in tobacco prevention programs

Thanks to a grant from the Partnership for a Tobacco Free Northeast PA

In the 2008-09 school year, more than 11,500 students in elementary, middle and high school participated in tobacco awareness programs, sponsored by a grant from the Partnership for a Tobacco Free Northeast PA.

Students saw either "Safety Matters," "Smokin' Joe's Gotta Go," "Tobacco Free, You and Me," or "Smoke 'N Croak" - all delivering the important message about the hazards related to smoking, second-hand smoke and other tobacco products.

In "Smoke 'N Croak," developed for students in grades six through eight, the long-term effects of smoking are explored by showing students how smoking can damage the body. Through the use of a short video clip, students are introduced to a young man whose tobacco use quickly changed his body and his life forever.

We are grateful to be able to deliver these important messages to the children in our area and thank the Partnership for a Tobacco Free Northeast PA for providing the funds to make this possible.



Weller receives grant for dental programs in the School District of Lancaster

The Weller Health Education Center helped improve children's dental care in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, thanks to an award of \$5,000 from the American Dental Association Foundation's (ADAF) Samuel Harris Fund.

The grant is dedicated to helping second and third grade students in the School District of Lancaster learn the importance of good mouth care, healthy eating and dental visits through the program "Dental Detectives" offered by the Weller Center. The elementary schools participating in



this program were Fulton, Ross, Wickersham, Buchanan, King, Hamilton, Wharton and Price.

The programs began on March 3, 2009, at Ross Elementary School and concluded on May 14 at Fulton.

"We are very pleased to have been selected from the hundreds of worthy applicants to receive funding from the

ADAF's Samuel Harris Fund," says Melissa Lee, president and CEO of Weller. "We look forward to applying these funds to our program that

will help improve the dental health of children in the School District of Lancaster."

The ADA Foundation is a catalyst for connecting people and changing lives through better oral health. The ADAF makes grants in the areas of dental research, education, access to care, and charitable assistance for dentists and their dependents.

Established by the ADA Foundation in 1999 to help support community dental programs, the Harris Fund is a permanent endowment established through a generous gift by Dr. Samuel Harris. Grants of up to \$5,000 go to educational and preventive programs that set goals to help improve children's dental health. This year, 70 programs received funding out of more than 275 submitted applications.

Overweight students miss more school days than their healthy-weight counterparts

Research from Temple University Center for Obesity Research and Education (CORE) indicates that overweight/obese children miss more days of school than their healthy-weight classmates. The study was conducted with 1069 students in fourth through sixth grade from nine elementary schools in inner city Philadelphia. Previous studies have also indicated these overweight children have poorer academic outcomes.

It makes sense for schools to continue their push to provide students with information about the benefits of maintaining a healthy weight through good food choices and an active lifestyle.

Small changes in schools lead to big results

when it comes to preventing childhood obesity. According to a study published in *Pediatrics* magazine, when schools are able to implement a multi-faceted nutrition intervention policy including school self-assessment, nutrition education, social marketing and parent outreach, the school environment was fundamentally changed.

Some of these changes schools can implement include: Nutrition education programs for students and teachers; children rewarded for healthy snacking with raffle tickets to win prizes; soda in the schools is replaced by water, 100 percent fruit juice and low-fat milk; and challenging students and their parents to be more active.

Only 7.5 percent of the children became overweight in the research sample compared to over 15 percent of the children in the comparison schools.

The researchers also recommended that obesity prevention programs begin even earlier than fourth grade as the incidence of overweight children in grades four through six is already at 41.7 percent.

The Weller Health Education Center addresses healthy eating and the benefits of an active lifestyle in all five nutrition and fitness programs, developed for different grade levels. Please contact us if you would like to learn more about these programs or any of the other 23 other programs we offer.

Published by the Weller Health Education Center, 325 Northampton Street, Easton, PA 18042 • (610) 258-8500 • www.wellercenter.org

The Weller Health Education Center seeks to measurably improve children's lives by giving students the tools they need to make informed and healthy life choices.

Official registration and financial information for the Weller Center can be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.