

OOT CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

OPERATION OUR TOWN: A DECADE OLDER AND WISER

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:
MICHAEL A. FIORE

Ten years ago, when we were giving our first year report at a Blair County Chamber Breakfast Club meeting, attendees praised our first year of progress. But they also asked, "Where will Operation Our Town be in three years? Will this continue?" Now it is 10 years later, and

what an amazing 10 years it's been. Never would I have believed that we would be where we are today. One interaction with Attorney General Agent Jim Walstrom and some meetings after that, have led to a "spider web" effect, where hundreds of people have been aided by Operation Our Town. We've created solutions to respond to the numerous issues that the ever-changing

drug trade throws at our communities. Ongoing issues haven't changed and they always find different circumstances and levels of sophistication. It's like a game of Whack-a-Mole: We are able to stop one problem, but two more can pop up in its place. This is a war, not a battle, and we strive to manage it the best we can with our three main focuses on law en-

forcement, prevention and treatment. That's where we get into the heart and soul of Operation Our Town – community outreach with investments of both time and money. We would never have the resources and grants to give if it weren't for volunteers, community leaders and community agen-

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Group shot of the OOT 2015 Golf Tournament participants

Operation Our Town held its 3rd Annual Golf Tournament on September 15, 2015 at Park Hills Golf Club. The golf tournament yielded a net profit of over \$68,000 thanks to our 48 teams and 80 sponsors! Many thanks goes out to the OOT Golf Committee, Park Hills Golf Club, BG student volunteers, and all volunteers who helped to make the event a success.

US Foods sponsored the Neighborhood BBQ on Monday evening in conjunction with the golf tournament. The food was provided by US Foods and prepared by

OOT 2015 GOLF TOURNAMENT

RANDY FEATHERS, GOLF TOURNAMENT CHAIRPERSON their chefs. Golfers, sponsors, and their guests enjoyed entertainment and an opportunity to meet and greet with Operation Our Town grant recipients. Five retired Blair County Chiefs were recognized with plaques for their service to Blair County: Milton R. Fields, Jr., Ron Heller, Jeff Ketner, Ron Givler, and Richard Books. The Opera-

tion Our Town Board of Directors was also recognized for their continued service to Operation Our Town with a plaque from the Steering Committee.

The golf tournament was held on Tuesday and gave golfers the opportunity to choose from an 8:00 am or 1:00 pm tee time. Sheetz did a great job of feeding the golf-

ers by providing a cooked breakfast, lunch, and snacks on the golf course. The golf tournament included the return of the popular "Golden Ticket" contest. Ten golfers in the morning session and ten golfers in the afternoon session that found a "golden ticket" in their chocolate bar were given the opportunity to putt for a \$5,000 cash prize donation from Park Hills Golf Club. The winner of each session was the golfer that got their putt in the hole or closest to the hole. The \$5,000 winner of the morn-

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE

RODNEY GREEN, LEADERSHIP & SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSULTANT

Throughout the past year, the OOT Early Childhood Education Roundtable has focused on a number of awareness and advocacy activities to spread the message that "quality early learning makes a difference." Highlights of the year include the following:

- **Parent Education Early Childhood Partnership with UPMC Altoona** – One of the OOT Early Childhood Roundtable goals was to educate new parents on the benefits of quality early learning experiences for their children. To accomplish that goal, the OOT Roundtable group met with social work and pediatric care officials from UPMC Altoona. The meeting resulted in UPMC agreeing to share information on the use of the PA PROMISE program and it's unique learning tool at www.earlylearning-gps.com. This partnership will ensure that more parents will have access to an easy-to-use app that will guide them through their child's early development. The Roundtable is greatly encouraged by this development and in 2016 will be targeting other Blair County healthcare organizations to create similar educational partnerships.

- **Obtaining a second Nazareth Family Foundation Grant** – For the second time, the Roundtable obtained a \$5,000 grant from the Nazareth Family Foundation. The grant monies are being used to create an "Adopt-A-Center" in collaboration with the Altoona Police Department and the Begin With Us Early Learning Center. Lt. Jeff Pratt and Detective Matthew Starr will be coordinating regular visitations of APD staff to the Begin With Us Center. The goal is a

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2015 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Operation Our Town holds a Grant Cycle once a year to support prevention and treatment programs in Blair County. All nonprofit organizations, schools, and government agencies are eligible for grant consideration.

The 2016 Grant Cycle will open on May 2, 2016 with a deadline for grant applications on June 10, 2016. Applicants have the option of using the "\$2,999 & Under" or "\$3,000 & Above" grant applications to apply for funding. For more information, please visit OperationOurTown.org and click on the Grants tab on the homepage.

A total of over \$55,000 in grants was awarded by Operation Our Town during the 2015 Grant Cycle to the following prevention and treatment programs:

- Altoona Area School District Foundation: SOAR (Study, Overcome, Achieve, Reward)
- Altoona Boxing Club: Youth Boxing
- Altoona Housing Authority: Public Housing
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Blair County: One-to-One Youth Mentoring
- Blair County Adult Parole & Probation: Cognitive Behavioral Thinking Groups
- Blair County Chamber: Early Childhood Education Summit

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OOT 2ND ANNUAL STUDENT GOLF TOURNAMENT

SHAWNA HOOVER, OOT EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR



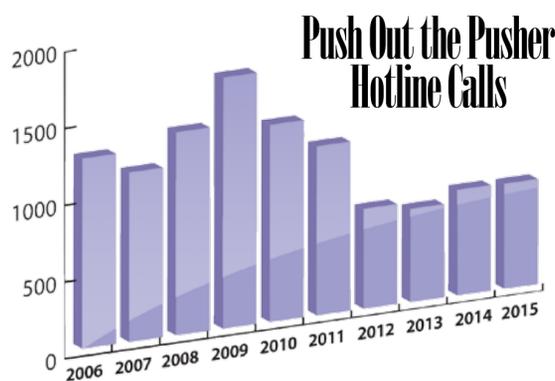
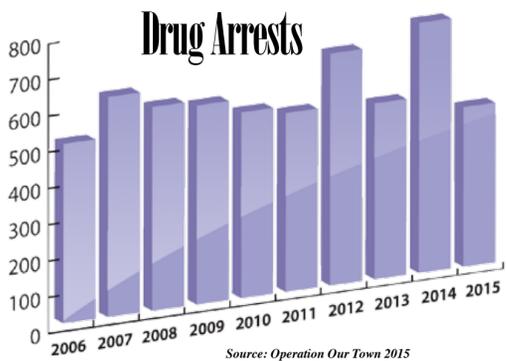
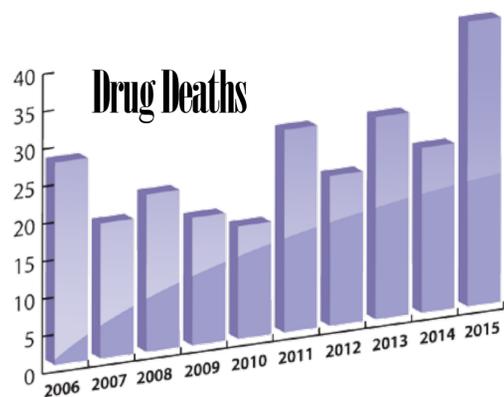
In addition to the main golf tournament, Operation Our Town held its 2nd Annual Student Golf Tournament on September 14, 2015 at Park Hills Golf Club for high school golf teams from Blair and surrounding counties. Eighty golfers from ten area school districts participated: Altoona, Bellwood-Antis, Bishop Guilfoyle, Central, Central Cambria, Everett, Hollidaysburg, Huntingdon, Penn Cambria, and Richland.

A new addition to the Student Golf Tournament included an exciting prize for the winning golf teams. A \$2,500 grant was to be awarded to the winning boys and girls teams' school district to be used for a current or new school program that is aimed at the education and prevention of drug use. The winning boys team was Everett Area High School and the winning girls team was Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School. Everett Area High School used their grant to host a motivational speaker, Craig Hillier, who presented an all-school assembly on the message of Stretching Yourself through Respect, Responsibility and Resiliency. He also held a leadership

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POLICE REPORT



Drug Prosecutor Summary

PETER J. WEEKS, ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Throughout 2015, 254 cases were assigned to the drug prosecutor position. Those 254 cases involved 154 defendants. There are currently 292 active felony cases pending. The District Attorney's Office continues to attempt to incarcerate individuals who violate their bail conditions, and a Pennsylvania Supreme Court case from December 2013 has allowed us to successfully forfeit money posted by some of these individuals. Additionally, there were 7 defendants successfully tried in 12

trials: Brandon Midder (aggravated assault and flight (aided in a homicide) plead guilty at the beginning of trial), Stephen Piner (Plead guilty on day 3 of trial - cocaine delivery organization), Davon Smith (3 trials - firearm violations/heroin sales/ag-

gravated assaults), Larry Smith (2 trials - firearm violation/drug deliveries), Steven Espenlaub (2 trials - firearm violations/robbery, burglary and impersonating a police officer), Kenneth Sponsler (heroin sales and

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Law Enforcement Year in Review

ANTHONY L. SASSANO, REGIONAL AGENT IN CHARGE, PA OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL BUREAU OF NARCOTICS INVESTIGATIONS AND DRUG CONTROL

The 2015 calendar year demonstrated that narcotic abuse, addiction and distribution remain high in Blair County. You name the drug of abuse and it can be purchased locally. Heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, opioid narcotics,

bath salts, synthetic marijuana and marijuana are available. Following national and regional trends, heroin is the drug of choice due to its relatively cheap price and availability. Although legislation was passed in October of 2014 creating the Pre-

scription Drug Monitoring Program, the program remains non-operational due to the budget impasse. Upon implementation, I would anticipate an improved approach to both enforcement and treatment.

Heroin and opioid pill addiction

results in many drug overdoses. In November of 2015, the Drug Enforcement Administration published calendar year 2014 fatal drug overdose data for Pennsylvania. According to that data, in 2014, there were 2,497 fatal overdoses in Pennsylvania.

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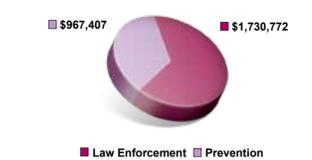


COMMUNITY

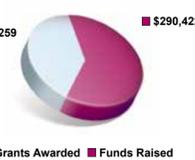
2007 - 2015 OOT Money Raised



2007 - 2015 OOT Grants Awarded



2015 Results



Cable Access Shows

DIANA MCCLURE, KELLER ENGINEERS

For the past ten years, we have been blessed to have Operation Our Town helping to keep Blair County a safe, vibrant community for family, friends and neighbors. Taking back our neighborhoods is a powerful resource in Operation Our Town's toolbox.

"Keep it Safe, Keep it Going" is another Operation Our Town slogan. In order to continue moving forward, we must remain aware of what is happening in our neighborhoods and community. One means of educating the community about

available services, activities, programs and resources is Operation Our Town's Taking Back Our Neighborhoods Cable Access TV show.

Operation Our Town's Marketing Committee invites guests to appear on the show with host, Dean McKnight. For the past six years, Dean has volunteered his time and talents entertaining and educating viewers by discussing a variety of topics with his guests. Following is a brief summary of the 2015 shows, as well as a sneak-peek at the upcoming 2016 series.

2015 Shows:

The January/February show, entitled

"Youth Drug Prevention", featured Sandi Smith, Homerun Against Drugs Program; Dr. Maureen Letcher from Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School; and Molly Rimbeck, Blair County Juvenile Drug Court. Our guests discussed prevention through anti-drug programs for elementary school children, drug testing in high schools, and drug court for juvenile drug offenders.

The second show, Summer Activities for Kids, aired in March and April, and included guests from organizations that provide supervised summer activities and programs for Blair County youth. Guests Richard Bishop, Northern Blair Recreation Center; Tim O'Brien, Young Life;

Kim Clemens, Ski Gap Community Center; and Craig Clark & Jon Frank from Blair County Youth League provided information about scheduled youth summer programs and enrollment.

Episode three, Keep it Safe, Keep it Going, focused on the partnerships between law enforcement and pharmacies to combat prescription drug abuse, as well as an update on the Blair County Neighborhood Watch Program. Our panel included Greg Drew, Value Drug Company; Judy Rossier, Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships; Jackie Bernard, Blair County District Attorney's Office; Officer Mark Lingafelt,

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2015 GRANT RECIPIENTS

(Continued from A1)



- Catalyst Church: Community Outreach
- Central Blair Recreation & Park Commission: Jefferson Park Playground Project
- Every Life Matters Pregnancy Support Services: Blair County Jail Parenting Program for Female Inmates
- Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation: After School & Summer Program
- Hollidaysburg Area YMCA: Family Y-Nite
- Joshua House, Inc.: Cross-Town Basketball League
- Northern Blair County Recreation Commission: Northern Blair Rec Center Family Nights
- Ski Gap Community Action Council: Pavilion/Picnic Tables to be used during Community Events
- The ROCK: After School Program
- United Way of Blair County: Family Resource Center - Parents as Teachers Program and Make Parenting a Pleasure Parenting Class
- Young Readers Council: Home Run Against Drugs Give-A-Book Program

Message from the DA's Office

JACKIE ATHERTON BERNARD,

FIRST ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

PETER J. WEEKS, ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The Blair County District Attorney's Office and Operation Our Town have a shared mission to ensure public safety. Serious and violent crimes continue to threaten this security. Yet, Operation Our Town is a proven partner in "Taking Back Our Neighborhoods." From the beginning, Operation Our Town partnered with us in law enforcement to improve equipment, support special operations, and assist in securing a drug prosecutor. As a result, offenders committing drug and drug-related crimes or other violent offenses are afforded thorough investigations and fair prosecutions.

Ensuring public safety is not only accomplished by enforcing the law. Prevention is equally important. Operation Our Town and the District Attorney's Office joined forces again to protect our community with the installation and promotion of Medication Collection Boxes in three local police departments. The Medication Collection Boxes are an effective way to prevent legally obtained opiates from being diverted for illicit abuse by others. Members of the Pharmacy Roundtable recognized the need for such a service within our community. Likewise, law enforcement was dealing

with opiate overdoses and prescription pill sales. The District Attorney's Office sought and obtained a grant for the location of the Medication Collection Boxes. Three Chiefs, active on our Law Enforcement Roundtable, namely, Hollidaysburg Borough, Tyrone Borough, and the City of Altoona, placed permanent Medication Collection Boxes in their police departments for public use. Municipal leaders in those communities and businesses like Value Drug Company and Blair County Drug and Alcohol Partnerships supported the effort and the District Attorney's Office were able to collaborate with the Pharmacy and Law Enforcement Roundtables to address the diversion of drugs. Operation of the boxes for 6 months in 2014 resulted in 511.2 pounds of drugs being collected and in 2015, over 1,400 pounds of drugs have been removed from the street for illegal use or sale. (See the statistics included in this newsletter for a quarterly breakdown). For these reasons, every person who uses a drop box is a local crime fighter!

Another crime deterrent program funded by Operation Our Town in 2015 is "Cops in Shops."

"Cops in Shops" allows police officers,

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ALTOONA MIRROR & OPERATION OUR TOWN ESSAY CONTEST WINNER

SHAWNA HOOVER, OOT EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR

Congratulations to Kayley Burke, a sophomore at Altoona Area High School, whose essay was chosen as the winner of the Altoona Mirror & Operation Our Town Essay Contest! She won \$250 in gift cards to The Meadows Original Frozen Custard in Hollidaysburg! Co-sponsors of the essay contest were the Altoona Mirror, Evey Black Attorneys, and The Meadows Original Frozen Custard of Hollidaysburg. Below is her winning essay on why being drug and alcohol free is important to a student's success:

Drug Free Me is the Most Outstanding Me!
Submitted by: Kayley Burke

I am amazing! I am a great student, aspiring athlete, and contributing member to my church, school, and community. Why would I take drugs or drink alcohol to keep me from being MY BEST? The answer is I won't. Instead of quoting statistics that are readily available online, I would like to give a teenager's take on why I and other teenagers should JUST SAY NO to drugs and alcohol.

As I entered high school this year, I realized I am

becoming a young adult. I am still a kid at heart, but I have tough courses at school and am vying for positions on basketball, tennis, and track teams. I am aware of those around me that do not make good choices and drink alcohol or take drugs. My question to them? Why? If you are unhappy, they will not be a cure all to your woes. In fact, they will only make the situation or problem worse. If you are bored, unhappy, or on the verge of succumbing to peer pressure, here are some alternatives to drugs and alcohol.

• Join a sport, club, or

activity at your school. There are so many in my own school, and I bet if you look around, you will find something that interests you. Sports are great, they keep you fit, you make friends and get to be part of a team. If athletics are not your thing, there are plenty of other options. Student council, drama, music (chorus, band, etc), and many others are out there. Maybe you have a friend in one of these groups, ask to go with them to a meeting.

• Volunteer! There is no better way to feel better about yourself than giving back to your school, community, or church. I have volunteered with Miracle League of Blair County and the Central PA Humane Society. There are retirement homes, churches, and many other organizations that are looking for teenagers to help out. After helping others, I guarantee you will feel energized and better able to make healthy, good choices for yourself.

• Talk to an adult. There are trusted counselors at school, clergy, parents, and other relatives to talk to if you feel you are about to do something you should not. There is always someone out there willing to listen and help you make good choices. One bad mistake could change your life forever, so do not take that first drink, or take that one pill. And if you have already drunk, or took a drug, then just STOP! If you do not know how, then

get help. As teenagers, we can't help but think about what the future holds for us. Will I go to college? Will I be happy? Will I do the right things? We can start a great future right now by being drug and alcohol free. If one young person reads this and thinks about not doing or stopping drugs and alcohol, then that would be awesome. BE OUTSTANDING! BE DRUG & ALCOHOL FREE!



Pictured from left to right: Rachel Seiler (Altoona Mirror), Amy Rosensteel (Evey Black Attorneys), Kayley Burke (Essay Contest Winner), Shawna Hoover (OOT Executive Coordinator), Randy Feathers (OOT Board Member)



JENN NEFF RELIANCE BANK
OOT MARKETING ROUNDTABLE

Just Say No. This said to a teenager may get an eye roll. BUT... "It Pays to Pass". Now THAT gets their attention. Being the mother of 3, I've learned that nothing will get a teen's attention more than the promise of something they can spend. And when it comes to keeping our local teens drug free, Operation Our Town is more than willing to dangle that carrot.

The OOT Marketing Roundtable had been brainstorming, trying to come up with a way to educate teenagers on the importance of being drug free. A plan came into fruition when we caught wind that the Hollidaysburg Junior and Senior High Schools have a voluntary drug testing program. After A LOT of brainstorming, numerous emails, and a tremendous amount of preparation, our pilot program, "It Pays to Pass," came to life.

Hollidaysburg students in 7th through 12th grade fill out the paper work (with their parents' consent) to volunteer for their school's drug testing program. When they bring in their completed form, they will receive a free t-shirt. The Hollidaysburg School District tests one student at each school each week (that's two students per week total). Volunteering students are drawn randomly. If the student is chosen, tested, and passes, they receive a \$25 gift card. That's it! It Pays to Pass. It's a total win-win. The students not only get a free t-shirt and the opportunity to receive a \$25 gift card, this gives them an out. This helps them avoid peer pressure and gives them a sense of pride by showing their community,

teachers, family and friends that they are responsible and making good choices. In the end, that's our ultimate goal. We want to help teens make the right choice and educate them on the dangers of drugs.

Operation Our Town is so grateful to all of the local businesses that have donated gift cards and/or made monetary donations to purchase gift cards. We wouldn't be able to continue this program without you. That being said, we need more! Our goal is to collect as many gift cards and monetary donations as possible so that we may be able to offer this program to all of our community schools. Donations can be mailed to:

Shawna Hoover, Executive Coordinator, Operation Our Town, 5508 6th Avenue - rear, Altoona, PA 16602.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

(Continued from A1)

simple one: develop caring and trusting relationships with pre-school age children. In the post-Ferguson world, we believe that we can't do enough to help local law enforcement agencies be perceived in a positive fashion.

• **Sponsored a second Early Learning Summit on November 3, 2015** - OOT was a premier sponsor of the Blair BASICS Early Learning Summit, held at The Casino on November 3, 2015. Over 100 early learning providers and caregivers were able to attend this professional learning opportunity. The keynote speaker was Dr. Judy Cameron, a professor from the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Cameron's presentation focused on programs that teach young children social-emotional skills,

problem-solving skills, and language skills to help them develop strong brain circuits that they will benefit from throughout life. She also shared information about the long-term benefits of quality and stable early learning experiences and how they impact school functioning, achievement in life, and effects on health. In addition to the keynote presentation, the summit included a plenary panel discussion that included Mrs. Mary Zajac from Penn Mont Academy, Mrs. Leslie Estep from Tyrone Area School District, and Mrs. Jessica Hatch from Child Advocates of Blair County.

Overall, 2015 was a very successful year and the Early Learning Roundtable is poised to move ahead in 2016 with new strategies and goals.

Because We Care

JESSICA DIGENNARO, PRESIDENT & FOUNDER

Because We Care was established for one mission: to put personalized teddy bears in the hands of local police officers. Our men and women in uniform are usually the first to come in contact with a child that has experienced a traumatic event. The goal of Because We Care is to ensure those police officers have something positive to bring to a child in order to establish a relationship. Whether it is a car accident, fire, domestic disturbance, incident of abuse or neglect, or any other horror a child should happen to undergo, Because We Care helps build a relationship between the reporting officers and the children involved.

The founders of Because We Care are moms that have seen firsthand the struggles that police officers face when interacting with children in these difficult circumstances. These moms have worked in social services, the correctional system, and education. After

discussing the importance of establishing a positive rapport during the initial contact, Because We Care was born. The organization was established in October 2015. Their mission started by providing the Altoona Police Department with bears, affectionately named

lice Department on October 24, 2015, Because We Care has expanded to provide bears to Logan Township Police Department, Tyrone Police Department, and Blair County Sheriff's Department. Each department has its own personalized bear, chosen by leaders in

the department. Because We Care provides these bears free of cost to the police. Gallitzin, Cresson, Sankertown, and Cresson Borough Police Departments will be welcomed to the Because

We Care family as of March 6, 2016. In addition, the first ever joint venture between the Allegheny Township Police Department and the Allegheny Township Volunteer Fire Department began on January 22, 2016. This is the first time a joint police/fire venture has been undertaken.

Additional police departments have expressed interest in joining the Because We Care cause. Recently, the Central Pennsylvania Community Foundation has been working to provide an avenue for charitable donations. If you choose to donate, it is important to know that 100% of all donations go to the purchase of bears for our local departments. You can also designate the department your donation supports. Checks can be made out to Because We Care Foundation - CPCF and mailed to:

Because We Care
1330 11th Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601
Non-charitable donations can be made out to:
Because We Care
P.O. Box 1183
Altoona, PA 16603

For more information or to donate, please visit the Because We Care Facebook page at Facebook.com/BeCauseWeCareAltoona/.

Or contact:
Jessica DiGennaro, President & Founder
Because We Care
P.O. Box 1183
Altoona, PA 16603
(814) 515-3472
BecauseWeCareAltoona@yahoo.com

the department. Because We Care provides these bears free of cost to the police. Gallitzin, Cresson, Sankertown, and Cresson Borough Police Departments will be welcomed to the Because

donations and been widely publicized in the traditional media, as well as through social media. Funding for the bears has come from private individuals, local businesses, and fundraising

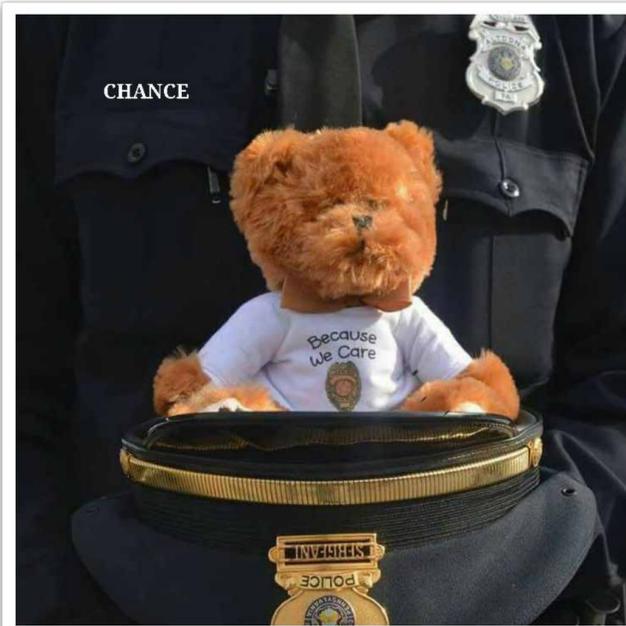
their efforts would eventually lead to an annual youth basketball tournament held at a beautiful, new recreational complex. Nor

the city or that a third one would be in planning today. Together with a network of volunteers and the support of organizations including Operation Our Town, that group, now known as the Booker T. Washington Revitalization Corporation, is helping to eliminate blight, create recreational opportunities, and form community bonds right at home.

From those humble beginnings, the goal grew

and grew until, after three years of planning, fundraising and spreading the word, the new park was completed by volunteer builders in 2011. The site included a revamped basketball court, outdoor exercise equipment, a full children's playground, and later a picnic pavilion. The idea behind the facility was to build a place, located in the heart of the neighborhood, where families and friends could meet to enjoy some fresh air and the company of others, a place to build a sense of community. In that spirit, the

(Continued on A5)



"Chance." "Chance" represents the chance officers have to make a difference in a young child's life during a stressful situation.

From the initial launch of "Chance" to the Altoona Po-

Booker T. Washington Revitalization Corporation

DAVID CUNNINGHAM, PRESIDENT

Great things sometimes start small, and so it was with the BTW Park. Residents in Altoona's Fifth Ward neighborhood came together with the simple goal of replacing hoops and backboards at the basketball court located at the corner of 19th Street and 13th Avenue. In days past,

West, Johnny Moore and Danny Fortson. In 2008 however, that same court



was of little use: cracked, rusted, and broken. None of those few residents would have believed that

would they have believed that they would then go on to build a second complex in the Dutch Hill area of

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

(Continued from A4)

group also started a new annual tradition: the Booker T. Washington 3-on-3 basketball tournament. The tournament, scheduled for June 11th this year, has grown from just a few student teams to over fifty, ranging in age from fourth grade to twelfth. The event features games on both the court and in the street, along with food, music and camaraderie.

After the success of the project, the group felt like they had to continue the good work in other parts of the city. They found their next inspiration in the aged Prospect Park. Located along 15th Street, the park was home to an old swing set, some rusty spring riders and the ghost of a court. A few more civic-minded individuals joined in, and by 2014, that site was transformed into the largest play area in the city.

Next up is Hamilton Park, on Cherry Avenue near Juniata Gap Road. It's not much to look at now, but again with some cooperation, the plan is to make it something to be proud of. Today, the Booker T. Washington Revitalization Corporation is led by a board of twelve who meet once a month. They are always looking for new members to take up the challenge of transforming their town. If you would

like to help in ways big or small, please contact Mike Hofer at (814) 949-2231 or visit their Facebook page at Facebook.com/BTWRP. Between projects, the group also co-hosts the annual Community Classic Dinner. This event, held at the Bavarian Hall in partnership with the Central Blair Recreation Commission, is an opportunity to recognize those individuals in our community who have given

their time, skills, and resources to create a better future. The event also raises funds to continue the work of the group. On February 20th, this year's dinner honored Mr. Don Witherspoon, president of the Blair County NAACP and one of those neighbors who, back in 2008, thought the court could do with some new hoops and backboards.

Healthy Blair County Coalition

COLEEN HEIM, DIRECTOR

The Healthy Blair County Coalition (HBCC) is a community partnership collaboration with the intent of providing a comprehensive assessment of the needs and assets in our community. Its purpose is to identify community assets, identify targeted needs, and develop an implementation plan to fill those needs. In 2007, the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office invited organizations to collaborate on a community-wide needs assessment. Then, as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which requires a hospital organization to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) at least once every three years and adopt

an implementation strategy, the three hospitals located in Blair County chose to collaborate, not only with each other, but with the exciting partnership. A CHNA was conducted in 2012 and again in 2015. The latest findings and recommendations will be published in the Community Health Needs Assessment Report by June 2016.

In Blair County, the community health needs assessment focused on ten areas: economics, education, environment, health, housing, leisure activity, safety, social, transportation and other.

The CHNA used a mixed methodology which included community input, as well as collection and analysis of inci-

dence data through secondary research. The needs assessment focused on the following areas:

- Neighborhood and Community Strengths
- Community Challenges and Issues
- Household Challenges and Issues
- Involvement in Community Initiatives/Projects
- Healthcare Challenges and Issues (e.g. access, gaps, prevention/education needs, etc.).

A random sample of 3,000 households from Blair County was used, so that each zip code was represented. In addition, seven different organizations conducted the survey with their clients/families. Other surveys or interviews were also conducted with key informants/leaders, service providers, faith-based communities, businesses, associations, and healthcare providers.

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Community Revitalization Roundtable

PAT MILLER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, ALTOONA-BLAIR COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Operation Our Town has announced the formation of a Community Revitalization Roundtable to begin to look at community and business development opportunities in targeted areas within Blair County. The initial roundtable will target the areas near UPMC Altoona hospital campus, an area encompassing portions of the city's downtown, Lower Fairview and Logan-

The goal of this initial community revitalization roundtable is to facilitate partnerships between the community, businesses and neighborhoods to address issues related to blight and develop an action strategy to focus on economic assets and deficits that exist within the identified neighborhood area, which will result in a holistic approach to community and neighborhood revitalization.

Martin Marasco, Presi-

dent & CEO of Altoona-Blair County Development Corporation is chairing this effort with Altoona City Manager Marla Marcinko and Pat Miller, Executive Vice President of ABCD Corp., serving as co-chairpersons. Potential partners are currently being identified who will work with Operation Our Town, the City of Altoona and ABCD Corp. representatives in forming this initial roundtable.

Early initiatives will include identifying the specific area boundaries for this revitalization effort and evaluating programs which may have an early impact within that area, such as the recently formed Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act Program, the Enterprise Zone, the City Revitalization Improvement Zone (CRIZ), the county/city land bank and support that could

be offered through the Commonwealth's Neighborhood Assistance Program.

The roundtable's initial meeting will be scheduled before the end of the first quarter of 2016. Interested individuals and/or organizations are encouraged to contact Marla Marcinko at AltoonaCityHall@AltoonaPa.gov or Pat Miller at ABCD Corp. - PatM@abcdcorp.org.

Neighborhood Watch Program

BLAIR COUNTY SHERIFF MITCH COOPER



With the ever-increasing calls for police service; coupled with the ever-decreasing availability of funding for those services, there has been no greater time or need for police and community to form partnerships.

Nearly forty years ago, Neighborhood Watch was created to assist in bringing

members of law enforcement and community together to help each other in the protection of neighborhoods from criminal activity, as well as assisting in solving other quality of life issues. The folks who reside in our communities are truly the greatest asset to police in keeping neighborhoods safer.

We are very fortunate here in Blair County to have had the benefit of the partnership of Operation Our Town for nearly ten years. Operation Our Town has certainly been very supportive of the Neighborhood Watch program and its three tenants:

1. Be Aware of Your Surroundings.
2. Neighbor Looking Out For Neighbor.
3. Reporting Suspicious Activity to Law Enforcement.

Please plan on attending a meeting in 2016. County-wide meetings will be announced throughout the year.

BUSINESS

Central PA Landlord Association

BILL KITT, PRESIDENT, CPLA

The Central PA Landlord Association (CPLA) is growing and making a difference in our community. We encourage all landlords to join to help continue our success in supporting and educating landlords. There are many benefits to joining the Landlord Association, but the biggest benefit is landlords helping landlords.

The CPLA is changing the image of today's landlord. We care about safe, affordable housing, while maintaining housing for our neighborhoods and our tenants. Our goal is to provide landlords with the knowledge, resources and tools they need to succeed. We offer our landlords a library of documents that cover policies, regulations, and compliance. Our landlords meet once a month to hear guest speakers, such as attorneys, magistrates, fair housing representatives, etc.

The CPLA also has an active Pennsylvania Realty Owners Association (PROA) representative who provides updates on pending legislation that affects our landlords locally and statewide.

We believe better landlords help build and maintain better communities. Therefore, we are proactive in our efforts in working with local municipalities and interest groups to provide our support in their efforts. Our relationship with Operation Our Town has been beneficial

in coordinating landlord workshops, roundtable meetings, and reaching all segments of the community.

Our annual landlord educational workshop was held on November 4, 2015 at Park Hills Golf Club. There were over 100 landlords in attendance. The workshop was a joint effort between Operation Our Town, Altoona Housing Authority, and the Central PA Landlord Association.

(Continued on A15)

2015 BLAIR COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY DRUG COLLECTION BOX DATA

Location	1st Qtr. 2015	2nd Qtr. 2015	3rd Qtr. 2015	4th Qtr. 2015	Total
Altoona Police Dept.	194.96 lbs.	253.6 lbs.	253.36 lbs.	163.36 lbs.	865.28 lbs.
Hollidaysburg Police Dept.	44.5 lbs.	77.3 lbs.	143 lbs.	48 lbs.	312.8 lbs.
Tyrone Police Dept.	39.56 lbs.	26.1 lbs.	70.8 lbs.	113.44 lbs.	249.9 lbs.
Countywide	279.02 lbs.	357 lbs.	467.16 lbs.	324.8 lbs.	1,427.98 lbs.

The Workplace's Role in Drug Prevention and Intervention

DONNA CRUSE, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT/LYTLE EAP PARTNERS

First of all, the workplace is one of the few places where there is a captive audience of adults. The other two places are church and prison. Church is voluntary and prison is, well, let's say that it is "after the fact" and for this article we are looking at how to prevent drug issues and crime. Often times the workplace is the place where substance abuse is first identified in an employee. A supervisor who is trained in recognizing job performance issues will document issues such as decline in productivity, excessive absenteeism, poor quality of work, missed deadlines, bad attitudes, etc. But in order to facilitate this as an opportunity for the employee to get help, the workplace must provide an avenue for that. That is what Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are designed to do, plus much more! Ideally, if they have an EAP in place, the supervisor will include their EAP

in dealing with these performance issues.

We encourage employers to implement a Drug-Free Workplace Program with a comprehensive Substance Abuse Policy and Procedures, outlining that drug testing and follow-up testing will be administered. This enhances the deterrent to employees against substance abuse.

We provide supervisor trainings to help the supervisors and managers recognize job performance issues, but NOT to diagnose what the cause of the problem could be. That is what the EAP is in place for! The employee may be showing signs of decline in performance, but this could be a result of an un-addressed health problem or family stresses. Maybe it is substance abuse. Su-

pervisors and managers refer the problem employee to the EAP and allow the EAP to take it from there. Our counselors will assess and diagnose what the issues are. If it is a substance abuse issue, the counselor will refer that employee to the appropriate treatment. If there is something else going on, the counselor will help the employee deal with that to get his performance back on track. The supervisor continues to monitor the job performance.

So, the employee gets the help they need and then they can return to work as a productive employee. And, at the same time, the workplace gets their productive employee back, without the headache of trying to diagnose what is

going on. Win-win!

In addition to being a referral source for identified issues, the EAP is also a great resource for help with other issues that could ultimately lead to drug abuse or addiction. Employees can tap into the EAP voluntarily (and confidentially) for help in dealing with family issues, stress management, legal and financial concerns, emotional and mental health concerns. This is where an employee and/or family member can turn to find help along the way, so they do not turn to drugs and/or alcohol. Most EAPs currently provide web-based resources in addition to face-to-face counseling. With these resources available and for no cost, help is easy to

access. Prevention and intervention are right in front of them. At Lytle EAP Partners, we have had employees contact us years after their initial intake to say "thanks again" for helping me, and some have said "thanks for saving my life from my addiction."

Does your company have an EAP in place? Are they accessible for consults and training? Are your supervisors knowledgeable about how to make a referral to the EAP? Do you have Drug-Free Workplace policy and procedures in place? These resources are essential in preventing and addressing substance abuse in the workplace. For more information on this, contact Donna Cruse at djcruse@lytleap.com.

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LOCAL

Altoona Housing Authority

CHERYL A. JOHNS,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Altoona Housing Authority is a Municipal Authority that was formed in 1949 to administer and develop safe, affordable housing for low and moderate income families within the City limits of Altoona. The first development created was Pleasant Village to address the housing shortage following WWII.

The housing inventory for the Authority consists of 536 public housing units, 985 Section 8 voucher units, and 126 non-subsidized units at Pleasant Village, with a staff of 30 employees.

As Co-Chairperson of the Operation Our Town Housing Roundtable, it is extremely important for agencies and landlords to get involved in their community. In collaboration with Operation Our Town and the Central Pennsylvania Landlords Association, the Authority hosted a Landlord Education Workshop on November 4, 2015

with over 100 in attendance. Focus was on the importance of inspections, lease enforcement, process for evictions, knowing the warning signs for illegal activity in rental units, resources for landlords renting to persons with disabilities, fair housing regulations and an overview of the Section 8 program. It is our intention to hold a landlord workshop annually, educating current and prospective landlords on regulations associated with being a responsible landlord.

The Authority takes great pride in educating landlords with the necessary resources, including a Section 8 Landlord Handbook including various resources from agencies to enable landlords to better understand their responsibilities. On April 8, 2016, the Authority is hosting a presentation to provide an overview of the benefits of the Section 8 program to prospective landlords that have questions on the program. A few of the benefits of the program include pre-screening of applicants, guaranteed rent payment by the Authority, annual inspection to ensure the property meets inspection standards, mar-

keting of properties, consistent tenant base for occupancy, and mainly the satisfaction in providing housing assistance to low-income families that need a safe, affordable, and sanitary place to call home.

Providing a safe and secure living environment for residents in any of our developments continues to be a main priority for the Authority. The Authority contracts with the City of Altoona to provide a full-time Altoona Police Department Community Officer on-site at our family development, Fairview Hills. The Authority continues to take the "pro-active" approach in having a visual presence at our development with having our police officer knowing the residents and advising on suspicious activity that needs to be addressed, instead of waiting on a situation to escalate, now making us a "re-active" community. Based upon the 2015 Annual Altoona Police Department statistics, incidents at Fairview Hills amounted to .0009% of the total overall numbers.

In the spring of 2016, the Authority will be installing cameras at Fairview Hills, thanks to a grant

from Operation Our Town, for added security and safety of our residents.

For 2015, the Authority was once again designated as a High Performer by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in their Section 8 and Public Housing Programs, ensuring compliance for Financial, Management, and Physical Condition of our properties.

The Operation Our Town Housing Roundtable meets every other month to identify solutions to potential problems, as well as implementation of educational techniques for renting properties to responsible tenants.

If you are interested in serving on the roundtable, please contact Mrs. Cheryl A. Johns, Executive Director of the Altoona Housing Authority, at (814) 949-2000.

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OOT Pharmacy Roundtable

GREG DREW, R.PH., PRESIDENT,
VALUE DRUG COMPANY

2015 was another busy year for Operation Our Town's Pharmacy Roundtable. As a reminder, the Pharmacy Roundtable focuses on opportunities for the pharmacy community to help with drug abuse prevention in Blair County. Our mission was amended this year to better reflect our efforts and goals, the new mission reads "To assure the safety of pharmacy employees and patrons, and to improve relationships with local and state law enforcement, while enhancing the commitment of community pharmacies efforts to reduce the supply of prescription opioids in the community available for diversion and abuse." The Drug Enforcement Administration, in its 2015 National Threat Assessment, points out "For instance, each day in the United States, over 120 people die as a result of a drug overdose. In particular, the number of deaths attributable to controlled prescription drugs (CPDs) has outpaced those for cocaine and heroin combined. Additionally, some opioid CPD abusers are initiating heroin use, which contributes to the increased demand for and use of heroin."

Pharmacists in the community are on the front lines in the battle with drug abuse by reducing diversion, educating the public on the proper use and disposal of controlled prescription drugs, and preventing crimes associated with drug abuse that threaten the pharmacy industry.

To this end, the Pharmacy Roundtable educates pharmacists on ways to assist in this important venture and works on projects to assist the community. It is important to note that the Drug Enforcement Administration holds pharmacists accountable for ensuring that controlled substances are used for a legitimate medical purpose, not simply to verify that a licensed physician has written the prescription. The pharmacist must use reasonable due diligence to verify that the prescriptions they fill fit this requirement. This means research into both patients and prescribers to the extent possible and refusal to fill prescriptions which don't meet the legal standards. One initiative this past year was to develop a proactive pharmacy alert message system that allows pharmacists to report suspected prescription forgeries and have that information immediately distributed to all pharmacies in Blair County and surrounding towns. We also have publicized

that this reporting and alert program can be used by pharmacists to warn others that a robbery was attempted or accomplished in a pharmacy so others may be on guard. With focused efforts by pharmacy and law enforcement to reduce diversion through prescription channels, pharmacy robberies have escalated as abusers and dealers seek alternate methods to obtain prescription controlled drugs.

Let's not assume that pharmacists can do this alone, it takes diverse stakeholders to help reduce the supply of prescription medications available for diversion and ultimate abuse. The Pharmacy Roundtable includes representatives of the PA Legislature, PA Department of the Attorney General, Blair County District Attorney's office, Blair County Drug and Alcohol Partnerships, and hospice facilities, in addition to local pharmacists and Value Drug Company. The mix of our committee members allows us to pursue many other initiatives not directly related to pharmacies, while still addressing the availability of the supply of controlled medications in the community, such as medication collection boxes, safety of medicines in the home, and community awareness.

We continue to track the development of PA's Prescription Drug Management Program, which will eventually provide visibility to doctors and pharmacists of people trying to accumulate significant amounts of controlled substances for diversion. Unfortunately, this program has been delayed in its implementation due to ongoing PA budget woes.

Along with the well understood problem of prescription drugs being obtained fraudulently through prescribers and pharmacies, a major source of prescription drug diversion is inadvertent diversion by legitimate patients and their families. One study showed that over 37% of drug abusers obtained their prescription



VALUE DRUG COMPANY
is committed to assisting community pharmacy's efforts to reduce the number of prescription opioids that are available for diversion and abuse.

VALUE DRUG COMPANY
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controlled drugs from friends and family, either through deception or theft. Compounding the issue is the need for disposal of prescription drugs upon death of a patient or a decision to discontinue therapy. We have worked to produce community awareness of medication collection boxes throughout the county for the disposal of unneeded medications. Thanks to the Police Departments of Altoona, Hollidaysburg, and Tyrone to help us achieve nearly 2 tons of prescription medication collected in 2015. We also supported and publicized the last DEA Prescription Drug Take Back Day in September.

Another collaboration with the Law Enforcement Roundtable and Blair County District Attorney's Office resulted in a re-launch of the Cops in Shops program. This program increases police presence and visibility in and around pharmacies to deter pharmacy robberies. The efforts resulted in a press conference on

January 19, 2015 announcing the program. In addition to law enforcement assistance, Operation Our Town and Value Drug Company made available window clings for pharmacies, increasing visibility of the program, as well as "no hats, no hood, no sunglasses" signs. Following the press conference, Value Drug sponsored an educational session with the Pennsylvania State Police to educate pharmacists on ways to prevent robberies, reduce the risk of injury, and how to obtain information useful to law enforcement in the event of a robbery.

Medication security in the home is another major source of prescription drugs getting into the wrong hands. Blair County Drug and Alcohol Partnerships has launched the 360 Rx Medication Safety Program to increase awareness of this problem and provide lockboxes for consumers to keep their medications safe in the home.

Finally, the Roundtable is now developing a Pharmacist Speakers Bureau to be available to provide talks in the community to increase awareness of this drug diversion problem. This will be in addition to our annual appearance on the cable access channel.

As you can see, we've had our hands full this past year, and I would like to thank not only the members of the Pharmacy Roundtable, who get their Friday morning started once a month with our 7:15 am Roundtable meetings, but also the Blair County District Attorney's Office, the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General, law enforcement representatives from throughout the county, Value Drug Company, the Blair County Drug and Alcohol Program and Representative John McGinnis' staff support. Thanks to all for helping us minimize the opportunity for prescription drug diversion in Blair County.

CENTRAL PA LANDLORD'S ASSOCIATION

**625 HAWTHORNE DRIVE
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WILLIAM KITT, PRESIDENT
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The Central PA Landlord's Association (CPLA) is growing and making a difference in our community. We encourage all landlords to join to help continue our success in supporting and educating landlords. There are many benefits to joining the Landlord Association, but the biggest benefit is landlords helping landlords.

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Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB)/OOT Judicial Roundtable

HONORABLE JOLENE KOPRIVA,
BLAIR COUNTY PRESIDENT JUDGE

The Blair County Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) continues to serve in a dual capacity as the Operation Our Town (OOT) Criminal Justice Roundtable.

In 2015, the CJAB/OOT Criminal Justice Roundtable approved and supported the following grants:

1. Vivitrol Pilot for County Corrections 26186
2. County Intermediate Punishment Programs 25993

The Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) continued training with a cohort in March 2015. Funding is available for more training in 2016 and overtime costs available as well.

CJAB/OOT participated in the Suicide Prevention Walk at Mansion Park in September 2015.

The Center for Excellence provided a Cross-systems Re-mapping in October 2015 for our community to look at intercepts in the criminal justice system where mentally ill people can benefit from diversion from criminal justice to mental health services for increased safety to the community. The report will inform us for our strategic planning, as did the initial mapping conducted in 2011. The 2015 priorities include: law enforcement training, collaboration, expand Mental Health First Aid, intercept zero, mental health assessment team and easy access to treatment.

The Mental Health Services committee, led by Judge Wade Kagarise, conducted individual interviews of committee members to assess the next steps for that committee to increase

capacity of mental health services in our community.

As part of the monthly meetings, the Communications Committee provides presentations for educating the members of CJAB/OOT Criminal Justice Roundtable. The presentations this year included: Blair Senior Services; PCCD PAYS Survey; VA Connection to Tomorrow's Hope; Contact Altoona 211; Family Drug Court, and J-NET.

The Housing Committee conducted a housing summit in April 2015 and will prepare an action/work plan with the results of that summit. The top 3 areas of the 7 priorities identified are educating tenants, educating landlords/developers, and housing reentry.

We conducted a food drive for the Bellwood area food backpack program, donated filled stockings for the teenage youth served by Blair County Children and Youth Services, and provided supplies for Stuff the Bus program for school supplies.

We received grant funds to develop and implement a Pretrial Services Program pilot project, under the direction of Blair County Adult Probation and Parole Department, which is now underway.

We continue the ongoing efforts to support our specialty courts and the DUI Court, led by Judge Daniel Milliron, which received statewide accreditation in 2015.

EPay, which allows defendants to pay by credit card on costs and fines accounts, has continued to increase revenue in the Blair County Costs, Fines and restitution department.

We thank all board members for their willingness to come together

The Best ME Is Drug FREE!

monthly and participate in an ongoing forum for communication and collaboration among key decision-makers for the purposes of evaluating, analyzing, planning, information sharing and integrating, and recommending action to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system.

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10 YEARS | (Continued from A1)

cies. We have been able to do so many great things and reach further than we could ever imagine, thanks to the funding provided by so many. Whether it was a \$5 donation from a grateful elderly woman for making her feel safe or a donation from our founding members, all levels of sponsorship have helped us reach success.

Most of our steering committee and founding members have been with the program for the full 10 years. With pledges reaching \$100,000 each now, they are essential to this and every anniversary. Thanks to them and community family leaders, they have all given us the ability to take back our neighborhoods.

To date, no other communities around the state have a program

like ours. Our grants have helped law enforcement do their jobs safely and come home to their families every night, kept kids off the streets while investing in them socially and academically, and helped those who need treatment to give them hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Success for us is driven from the outside by the lives we change. Every person in Operation Our Town is important because each person moves our partnership forward. With you, we can keep our community safe.

Blair County is a great place to be because of you. Thank you.

2015 GOLF TOURNAMENT | (Continued from A1)

ing session was Ryan Buchanan and the \$5,000 winner of the afternoon session was Jim Rea.

Save-the-Date for Operation Our Town's 4th Annual Golf Tournament that will be held on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at Park Hills Golf Club and promises to be bigger and better than last year! Golfers will still have the choice of an 8:00 am or 1:00 pm tee time. Sheetz will be providing a delicious cooked breakfast and lunch for morning and afternoon golfers to enjoy before they tee off, so come hungry! We also plan to do our exciting "Golden Ticket" contest for golfers in 2016.

Please consider supporting Operation Our Town through our annual golf tournament, as this has become one of our major fundraisers. The money raised from this tournament goes towards funding law enforcement and prevention programs aimed at reducing drugs and crime in Blair County. Please contact Shawna Hoover at (814) 296-8730 or Shawna@OperationOurTown.org for more details on how you can support this year's tournament!



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PROSECUTOR SUMMARY

(Continued from A2)

flight from the police), David Jamal Adams (heroin sales). The District Attorney's Office continues to file asset forfeiture petitions where property is utilized by drug dealers to facilitate drug dealing, or drug dealers acquire property because of their drug trafficking. Proceeds from asset forfeiture are utilized to purchase equipment and provide training and assistance that would otherwise not be possible. In 2015, \$13,593.06 was forfeited to the District Attorney's drug fund and we forfeited \$2,192.00 to PA Office of Attorney General. In 2015, there were 39 forfeiture cases finalized and 43 new cases were filed.

The cases prosecuted in 2015 continued the trend where individuals involved in drug trafficking are committing other types of crimes as well. In 2015, there were several defendants who were tried separately on gun and drug charges and two defendants tried on gun, drug, aggravated assault (all separate) and gun, drug, robbery/burglary (all separate). Many people claim that drug trafficking and use are victimless and nonviolent crimes that unnecessarily burden our prison systems. This is simply not true. Drug use impacts society, communities, and families. Those who sell and use drugs will commit crimes of violence to protect their trade and obtain their high. These crimes range from domestic abuse stemming from drug use, burglaries and thefts to obtain money and drugs, the illegal use and possession of firearms to facilitate drug offenses, and even shootings and other acts of violence by those involved in drug trafficking.

BLAIR COUNTY COALITION

(Continued from A5)

The household survey asked participants to identify the level of concern regarding 31 community issues. In 2007, the priority community issues identified for Blair County were crime (70.4%); alcohol and other drugs (69.3%); unemployment or underemployment (59.2%); lack of jobs (58.2%); lack of affordable medical care (57.2%); and poverty (50.9%). In 2012, several health related questions were added, so the results changed slightly with lack of jobs (72.9%); alcohol and other drug abuse (71.3%); unemployment or underemployment (71.1%); obesity (70.5%); poverty (63.8%); and crime (60.9%). The results of the 2015 CHNA were similar with obesity at the top (69.8%); alcohol and other drugs (69.5%); lack of jobs (67.8%); poverty/lack of adequate income (66.5%); unemployment or underemployment (65.4%); smoking and tobacco (60.2%); and crime (59.2%).

Then participants were asked whether any of the same issues had been a challenge or an issue in their household. Results were consistent for all three community health needs assessments with being overweight as the top challenge, followed by anxiety, stress, or depression and economic concerns.

Access to dental care was the greatest gap in health care services in Blair County. The greatest gaps in health education and prevention were obesity and alcohol and other drugs receiving the highest percentages.

The household survey captured some of the perceptions that residents have about their neighborhood and/or community. On a positive note, 70% of respondents felt that people in their neighborhood trust each other and 74% agreed that people in their neighborhoods help each other out when they have a problem or in times of crisis.

A survey was distributed to key community leaders to obtain their input on strengths and issues that impact residents and neighborhoods. Eighty-six percent agreed that the community is one where leaders from business, labor, government, education, religious, neighborhood, non-profit, and all other sectors come together and work productively to address critical community issues.

Based on key informant responses, poverty, unemployment/underemployment, alcohol/drug abuse, obesity, smoking and tobacco, and lack of jobs were ranked the highest among community issues. Key informants also agreed that obesity, alcohol and other drug abuse, and mental health/suicide prevention were the greatest needs regarding health education and prevention.

All other survey results and healthcare provider interviews were consistent with the responses outlined above for community challenges, gaps in healthcare, and/or pre-

(Continued on A12)

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YEAR IN REVIEW

(Continued from A2)

nia. That correlates to 7 people dying every day from drug overdoses in our state. In Blair County, the report indicated that there were 21 fatal overdoses. This ranked Blair County 43rd in Pennsylvania for fatal drug overdoses per 100,000 population.

Despite its lethality, heroin use has continued to rise due to its cheap price and availability. In 2015, fatal drug overdoses have risen in number, both within the Commonwealth of PA and in Blair County. According to statistics released by Blair County Coroner Patty Ross, in 2015 there were 38 fatal drug overdoses in Blair County, which is an 81% increase from the previous year.

In 2015, the PA Office of Attorney General, the Altoona Police Department and other municipal police departments operating as members of the Blair County Drug Task Force, were again very busy. Narcotics distribution investigations culminated in the arrests of 210 individuals with seizures of \$84,204.00 of narcotics. Of that total, the street value of heroin and opioid pills was \$46,589.00, or in excess of 50 percent.

Funding to enforce the Drug Act in Blair County comes from multiple sources. The bulk of the funding is derived from the PA Office of Attorney General Drug Task Force budget. Additional funds are provided by the Blair County District Attorney's Office, the Altoona Police Department, and Operation Our Town. The funding provided by them is extremely valuable in our effort to enforce the drug act. As a result of 2015 Operation Our Town funding, we were able to conduct 38 additional operations, essentially consisting of what we refer to as buy-bust-search warrants.

Additionally, Operation Our Town funding enabled officers to conduct 35 pharmacy details commonly referred to as "Cops in Shops." This crime prevention program was well received by the various pharmacies and served to maintain a positive relationship between the pharmacies and law enforcement. Perhaps most importantly, Operation Our Town funding, as in past years, provided monies to pay for a full-time drug prosecutor in the Blair County District Attorney's Office. The drug enforcement efforts on the street would be for naught if there was not a specialized prosecutor in the District Attorney's Office,

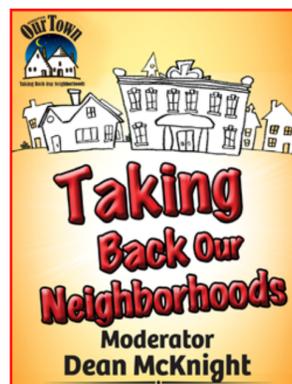
and Operation Our Town funding bridges that gap, resulting in successful prosecutions.

While the bulk of drug dealers arrested are street level, cases are being made against mid and upper level distributors. These types of cases take a longer time to investigate and use more law enforcement resources.

The sophistication of drug distributors is at an all-time high. In a large scale statewide Oxycodone distribution organization being prosecuted in Blair County, we have seen the use of high-grade prescription stock paper, drug control numbers, fake identification documents, and a constant variety of cell phone numbers, all of which were designed to fool the pharmacies and prevent apprehension by law enforcement.

Despite all the above, in 2015, Agent Duane Musser of the PA Office of Attorney General, led a collaborative effort of narcotics agents, municipal police officers, and support staff, to dismantle the organization by arresting 22 Philadelphia area residents and 5 Pittsburgh area residents. These individuals were criminally charged with passing 3,145 forged prescriptions for oxycodone in 44 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. They successfully obtained 59,000 oxycodone tablets with a street value of \$1.7 million. And yes, these individuals knew where Blair County was located. In fact, they passed 177 forged prescriptions in Blair County, making it the 4th most popular county for this organization to commit their crimes. Furthermore, from criminal activity in Blair County alone, this organization was able to make a profit in the amount of \$53,100.00. I believe everyone will agree these are staggering numbers. As demonstrated by this case, source city drug dealers and organizations continue to come to Blair County to commit criminal acts.

In 2016, the PA Office of Attorney General, the Blair County District Attorney's Office, the Altoona Police Department, and the other municipal police departments involved with the Blair County Drug Task Force will continue their efforts to make Blair County a safer place to live. We will continue to appropriately enforce the Pennsylvania Drug Act and provide counter drug educational programs, utilizing all available resources to implement this two-pronged approach. This includes the continued collaboration between law enforcement and our vital partner, Operation Our Town.



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Saturdays at 11:00 am
Channel 14 on Atlantic Broadband
2016 Shows
Drug & Crime Panel - Aired in January & February
Early Childhood Education Roundtable update - Air in March & April
Emergency Response - Air in May & June
Black Lives Matter - Air in July & August
It Pays to Pass - Air in September & October
Signs of Child Abuse - Air in November & December

BLAIR COUNTY COALITION

(Continued from A11)

vention/education needs. Lastly, an Economic Business Survey was conducted in collaboration with the Altoona Blair-County Development Corporation. When businesses were asked about the five most important concerns for the community, they listed alcohol and other drugs as the top concern (72.9%).

In summary, the results of three community health needs assessments over a span of eight years indicates that lack of a healthy lifestyle (e.g. obesity and diabetes); substance abuse; mental health issues; and poverty/economic issues are of greatest concern. Secondary data was gathered and analyzed and was shown to support the results of the needs assessment. In 2007, crime was the number one issue for residents and the second highest issue for community leaders, but fell out of the top ranking in the last two needs assessments. Perhaps because of the positive impact that Operation Our Town, in collaboration with local and state law enforcement, has had in Blair County, residents no longer feel that crime is a major concern. Although, it still ranks high enough that we should continue to focus on its impact.

According to the County Health Rankings Report, Blair County ranks 48 out of 67 counties with 67 being the least healthy. However, we have improved since 2010 when Blair County ranked 63rd. The Healthy Blair County Coalition is working with over eighty-six partners on a variety of strategies. There are six work groups focusing on workplace wellness, mental health needs, alcohol and other drugs, poverty, tobacco use, and healthy lifestyles (Let's Move Blair County initiative). The challenge is to motivate community leaders and citizens to use the community health needs assessment to understand the issues and to work collaboratively toward resolving them. The ultimate goal of this process is to improve the quality of life for the residents of Blair County. For more information on the community health needs assessment, implementation plans, or how to get involved, visit HealthyBlairCountyCoalition.org.

OOT Northern Blair County Roundtable

JIM KILMARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOSHUA HOUSE

The Northern Blair County Roundtable is a strong conglomerate of business, media, education, social and civic organizations in the northern Blair County area. We have three main focuses for 2016. First, build strategic partnerships between business, schools, law enforcement, and prevention community groups. Second, facilitate educational events between the business and educational community on issues that face local youth and families. And finally, to host a community forum to survey perceived needs and work with community leaders to address the survey results.

This roundtable has been instrumental in helping provide leadership and support to a number of programs and endeavors that have positively impacted the northern Blair County community. The Tyrone & Bellwood Back Pack programs kicked off in 2014/15 with the help of the roundtable. We provide leadership for an annual Tyrone Spring Clean-Up Day consisting of nearly 100 volunteers. And a community garden was a successful venture of the round table as well. If you would like more information about the Northern Blair County Roundtable or know of any community needs or projects in the Northern Blair County area that could be addressed by the roundtable, please contact Jim Kilmartin at Jim@JoshuaHouse.com.



2nd Avenue United Methodist Church

We are pleased to partner with Operation Our Town in making our neighborhoods great places to live!

With the gracious help of OOT grants, we provide **The R.O.C.K. Program (Reaching Out to Community Kids)** Wednesdays, 4:30-7:00pm during the school year

The program provides a hot meal, structured game time, physical recreation period in our gym, craft time, as well as an environment of teaching and reinforcing positive life choices.

We are also pleased to host the **Operation Our Town Faith-based Roundtable** every third Thursday at 2pm (take the elevator entrance to the 2nd floor)

2nd Avenue UMC is a vibrant faith community, sharing God's love in practical ways. Come worship with us on Sundays at 8:15am (traditional worship) and at 10:45am (contemporary worship and praise band). Plenty of parking and easy elevator access



130 2nd Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602
814-943-2072
www.2ndaveumc.org



DA'S OFFICE MESSAGE

(Continued from A3)

undercover and in uniform, to see and be seen in local pharmacies. The goal of this initiative is to proactively prevent pharmacy robberies and/or the passing of forged prescriptions. "Cops in Shops" is a coordinated effort between the Law Enforcement Roundtable, Pharmacy Roundtable, and the participating police department.

Although the District Attorney's Office works to dismantle the organizations profiting from drug dealing and resultant crimes, we increasingly see the cross-over of drug addiction and drug related issues in the commission of child abuse and elder abuse crimes. The District Attorney's Office, along with

other community agencies like Family Services, Inc., Blair County Children and Youth Services, and Blair Health Choices, are pooling resources to operate a Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Team (MDIT). The Blair County MDIT is leading a joint response to child abuse allegations and spearheading community awareness and support for a regional Child Advocacy Center to reduce the trauma to children and solidify the prosecutions of child molesters. To combat elder abuse, the District Attorney's Office works closely with Blair Senior Services to identify and prosecute the exploitation of older adults, including those

financially devastated by the addition of a family member.

We, in law enforcement, continue to adapt to the changes in the laws and tactics of the drug dealers to stay ten steps ahead of the offenders. The collaboration that we have between the business community, drug and alcohol treatment agencies, and prevention and social service groups is directly related to Operation Our Town and unmatched in other communities. It is this collaboration that strengthens and unifies us in our shared mission for a safer Blair County.

Save The Date!
OOT 4th Annual Golf Tournament

September 19 & 20, 2016
Park Hills Golf Club, Altoona

Schedule of Activities:

Monday, September 19th:

1:00pm - Tee Off Against Drugs Student Golf Tournament
5:00pm - US Foods Neighborhood BBQ

Tuesday, September 20th:

7:00am - Breakfast provided by Sheetz & registration for morning tee time
8:00am - AM Shotgun start
11:00am - Lunch provided by Sheetz & registration for afternoon tee time
12:45pm - AM Putting contest for \$5,000
1:00pm - PM Shotgun start
6:00pm - PM Putting contest for \$5,000
Cocktail reception following afternoon golf

Golf Sponsorship Levels:

PLATINUM - \$7,500
• 3 groups in tournament
• Company banner displayed, sign on driveway
• Company name listed in Event Guide
• Specialty Platinum & commemorative gifts for each golfer

GOLD - \$5,000
• 2 groups in tournament
• Company banner displayed, sign on driveway
• Company name listed in Event Guide
• Specialty Gold & commemorative gifts for each golfer

SILVER - \$2,500
• 1 group in tournament
• Company banner displayed, sign on driveway
• Company name listed in Event Guide
• Specialty Silver & commemorative gifts for each golfer

BRONZE - \$1,500
• 1 group in tournament
• Company banner displayed, sign on driveway
• Company name listed in Event Guide
• Commemorative gifts for one golfer

INDIVIDUAL GOLFER - \$300
• Individual entry in tournament
• Commemorative gifts for one golfer

Sponsorship Levels:

REFRESHMENT TENT SPONSOR - \$1,000
• Signage on one of four Refreshment Tents or provide your company's tent
• Company name listed in Event Guide

GOLF CART SPONSOR - \$1,000
• Signage on golf cart (limit 5 sponsors)
• Company name listed in Event Guide

HOLE IN ONE (\$10,000 OR CAR) SPONSOR - \$1,000
• Signage at the sponsored Par 3
• Company name listed in Event Guide

CLOSEST TO THE PIN - \$1,000
• Signage at the sponsored pin
• Company name listed in Event Guide

BEVERAGE & RECEPTION SPONSOR - \$500
• Company banner displayed during event
• Company name listed in Event Guide

"TEE OFF AGAINST DRUGS" STUDENT GOLF TOURNAMENT SPONSOR - \$500
• Sponsorship of School District of your choice within Blair & surrounding counties
• Signage displayed during the event on September 19th
• Company name listed in Student Golf Tournament event program
• School district of the winning boys and girls teams will receive a \$2,500 grant to be used for a current or new school program that is aimed at the education and prevention of drug use.

FLAG SPONSOR - \$250
• Flag with company logo on a sponsored hole of your choice

TEE SPONSOR - \$100
• Signage at the sponsored tee



A \$5,000 cash prize donation from Park Hills Golf Club will be awarded to the winners of the AM & PM putting contests!

ACCESS SHOWS | (Continued from A3)

Holidaysburg Police Department; Sheriff Mitch Cooper and Chief Deputy Holly Gamer, Blair County Sheriff's Department.

The July and August show, Drugs in the Workplace, brought together guests from private industry that have a common goal of workplace wellness. Guests Bill Young, Sheetz; Jamie Miller, Advantage Resource Group; and Donna Cruse and Steve Lytle, Lytle EAP Partners discussed the benefits of developing a workplace wellness program as a prevention tool and a resource to promote healthy choices. Drug testing as part of the hiring process, drug testing current employees, and Employee Assistance Programs were also discussed.

The September/October program entitled Housing in Blair County consisted of a panel discussion about the educational programs available through the Central PA Landlord Association, the housing opportunities through the Altoona Housing Authority, and the shelters and services provided by Family Services, Inc. Guests included Bill Kitt, Central PA Landlord Association; Kathi Ardizzone, Altoona Housing Authority; and Lisa Hann, Family Services, Inc.

The final episode of 2015, Starting an Operation Our Town Program in Other Counties, featured a discussion between Representative Bryan Barbin, Cambria County, and Operation Our Town Board member Randy Feathers. Cambria County has taken the first step in creating their own program by setting up a Push-Out-The-Pusher hotline. Representative Barbin also discussed why he approached the Operation Our Town Board, and provided an update on Cambria County's progress.

The 2016 line-up of topics include:

- Drug & Crime Panel - Featuring Criminal Justice students from YTI Career Institute, Altoona, asking a five-person panel comprised of experts in the criminal justice, law enforcement, and social service fields questions pertaining to the status of drugs and crime in Blair County and their effects on children and families.
- Early Childhood Education Roundtable update - Focuses on how to access early intervention services, an update of the roundtable's activities, and lessons learned from Dr. Judy Cameron's presentation at the Early Childhood Summit.
- Emergency Response - Discussing the local emergency response to a potential active shooter situation, including the importance of our local tactical trucks.
- Black Lives Matter - Featuring the President of the Blair County NAACP and local youth, discussing their relationship with law enforcement.
- It Pays to Pass - An update of the drug testing incentive program at the Holidaysburg Jr. & Sr. High School.
- Signs of Child Abuse - Signs of child abuse and sexual abuse, how to report abuse, and plans for a regional Child Advocacy Center in Blair County.

Taking Back Our Neighborhoods is aired on Saturdays at 11:00 AM and Tuesdays at 9:00 PM on Atlantic Broadband Public Access Channel 14. The shows can also be viewed anytime on Operation Our Town's website at OperationOurTown.org/oot-tv-show. Archived shows dating back through 2010 are also available to view.

Eleventh Street Tower
1100 11th Street
Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 949-2011

Green Avenue Tower
911 Green Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 949-2009

aha
Altoona Housing Authority

Providing safe and affordable housing for the City of Altoona, Pennsylvania
Welcoming you to move towards a brighter future with the AHA
2700 Pleasant Valley Boulevard, Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 949-2000

Fairview Hills
1614 1st Street
Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 949-2016

Pleasant Village
2700 Pleasant Valley Boulevard
Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 949-2010

Equal Opportunity Housing Provider
We are an Equal Opportunity Housing Provider. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or disability.

Blair County Agencies who are Partnered with OOT

Allegheny Township Police - 814-695-3333
Contact Person: Chief Leo Berg

Altoona Police - 814-949-2489
Contact Person: Chief Janice Freehling

Bellwood Borough - 814-742-7800
Contact Person: Chief Joseph Schlecht

Blair Township Police - 814-696-3846
Contact Person: Chief Rodger White

Duncansville Police - 814-695-1930
Contact Person: Chief James Ott

Freedom Township Police - 814-695-8545
Contact Person: Chief Terry Dellinger

Greenfield Township Police - 814-239-5313
Contact Person: Chief Andrew Campbell

Holidaysburg Borough Police - 814-695-3711
Contact Person: Chief David Gehret

Logan Township Police - 814-949-3364
Contact Person: Chief Tim Mercer

Martinsburg Borough - 814-793-2838
Contact Person: Chief Kerry Hoover

N. Woodbury Township - 814-793-4897
Contact Person: Sergeant Jeff Ketner

Roaring Spring Borough Police - 814-224-5382
Contact Person: Chief Gregory Wyandt

Tyrone Borough Police - 814-684-1364
Contact Person: Chief John Romeo

Williamsburg Borough - 814-832-2022
Contact Person: Chief Rowdy Kagarise

UPMC Police - 814-889-2121
Contact Person: Chief John Hawksworth

Pa State Police - 814-696-6100
Contact Person: Sergeant David Montrosor

Central PA Humane Society - 814-942-5402
Contact Person: Officer Paul Gottshall

Penn State Altoona - 814-949-5222
Contact Person: Interim Chief Christopher Cohn

Altoona VA Medical Center Police - 814-943-8164 ext 7059
Contact Person: Chief Paul Blanchard

PA Game Commission - 814-643-1831
Contacts: WCO Zellner & WCO Brehun

Blair County Sheriff - 814-693-3100
Contact Person: Sheriff Mitch Cooper

Be a Crime Fighter!

Let's get dangerous and potentially addictive drugs out of homes and off the street!

Free Medication Drop Boxes are available for you to discard unused medications! The best way to combat drug diversion and abuse is to get drugs away from folks who may be tempted to use or sell them. Drugs discarded into the dropboxes are safely destroyed by law enforcement.

Drop Off Locations:

Altoona Police Dept.
1106 16th Street Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 949-2489
24 hours per day / 7 days per week

Holidaysburg Police Dept.
401 Blair Street Holidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 695-3711
Monday – Friday, 7:00am – 11:00pm

Tyrone Borough Police Dept.
1100 Logan Avenue Tyrone, PA 16686
(814) 684-1364
Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm

Project Supported by:

Altoona Police Dept.
Holidaysburg Police Dept.
Tyrone Borough Police Dept.



Grant-Funded Program Administered by:



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE



BALD EAGLE LODGE #51

1979 REESE

HOLLOW ROAD

P.O. BOX 99,

PORT MATILDA, PA.

16870

SERVING OFFICERS
OF BLAIR, CENTRE,
AND CLEARFIELD
COUNTIES

STUDENT GOLF TOURNAMENT I (Continued from A1)

seminar for 80 student athletes and other school leaders entitled "Playing Beyond the Scoreboard." Holidaysburg Area Senior High School also plans to use the funds for an assembly for both the Junior

and Senior High School with a speaker who will address positive behavior.

The 3rd Annual "Tee Off Against Drugs" Student Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, September 19, 2016

at Park Hills Golf Club. This year's tournament will include the return of the \$2,500 grant to the winning boys and girls team's school district to be used for a current or new school program that is aimed at

the education and prevention of drug use. Businesses will now have the opportunity to sponsor a school district of their choice for \$500, which will include signage displayed at the event on September 19th and their

company's name listed in the event program.

We look forward to continuing the growth of the "Tee Off Against Drugs" Student Golf Tournament and educating the students on the mission of Operation Our Town. If your business would like to sponsor a school district in the Student Golf Tournament, please contact Shawna Hoover at (814) 296-8730 or Shawna@OperationOurTown.org for more details on how you can support this year's tournament!

Thanks to Operation Our Town for their assistance in the fight against drugs.

BLAIR COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHARD A. CONSIGLIO

LANDLORD ASSOCIATION I (Continued from A5)

The topics included:

- Eviction process
- Fair housing regulations
- Resources for landlords renting to persons with disabilities
- Importance of rental inspections
- Section 8 housing overview
- Section 8 from a landlord's perspective
- Signs of illegal drug activity
- How to market rental properties
- Student housing
- Good tenant management

- Pest infestation/bed bugs
- Veterans housing
- Medication safety in the home

Each topic was presented by professionals in their field. There was time for questions and answers, which was a valuable tool for landlords. Speakers interacted with the landlords. It was very beneficial to all that attended. We will have another educational landlord work shop in the fall of 2016. It will be advertised and posted on our website. All landlords should try to attend.

We also developed, in cooperation with Operation Our Town, a Quick-Tip Resource Guide for landlords. The Resource Guide is a valuable tool that connects landlords to resources related to landlords.

The following topics are listed in our guide with information and contact numbers. The guide is posted on our website.

- Blair County Municipalities
- Fair Housing-Equal Opportunities for all
- Drug Activity-Rental Properties
- Section 8 Housing
- Student Housing
- Disability Resources
- Veterans
- Central PA Landlord's Association
- PA 211 information
- Medication Collection Box locations

Check out our website at CentralPaLandlords.com. The CPLA residential listings website allows landlords to post residential and/or commercial property for sale or rent. The student housing website connects student housing landlords with students looking for off-campus housing.

Benefits of becoming a CPLA member include:

- Online rental listings
- Educational workshops
- Online business directory
- Membership to PROA
- Extensive online document library
- Legislative updates
- Membership to Johnstown Credit Bureau
- Monthly meetings
- Credit checks
- Address current issues
- Background checks
- Informative and educational speakers
- Collection services
- Issues addressed with local government
- Tenant database

I would like to encourage all landlords to join our association.

Monthly meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Contact the CPLA: CentralPaLandlords.com
William Kitt, President 814-695-2138

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Outstanding Agents.
Outstanding Results.

Mariska Eash
Realtor®
MariskaRealtor@Hotmail.com
1001 Logan Blvd
Altoona PA 16602

Mobile (814)414-8823
Office (814)946-9355
Fax(814)946-9396

Faithfully Seeking Your Help

LISA HANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FAMILY SERVICES, INC.

The OOT Faith-Based Round-table meets regularly, on the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 2 pm at Second Avenue United Methodist Church in Altoona. Our agenda over the past several months has been looking at new ways to make connections within Blair County to help at-risk people. How can we "wrap around" people in the recovery community? How can we match volunteers to the needs of our community, especially our grant recipients? How can we show the community that we are serious about ending drug abuse in our neighborhoods?

Each meeting is an opportunity to share information about projects and programs, hear from those who have experienced addiction first-hand, and seek new ways to meet the needs of those

who have been pushed to the side. We have had our assumptions challenged and have had opportunities to support round-table members in new endeavors.

This spring, we are planning a Lunch n' Learn highlighting changes in Domestic Violence Legislation, new services in Blair County, and drug trends. More details will be released in the near future.

One resource that we have discussed in the group is PA211. 2-1-1 is a FREE, accessible, 3-digit telephone number available to everyone. All residents have easy access to customized health, housing, and human services information in one place.

Every hour of every day, someone in PA searches for services, from substance abuse treatment to care for a child or an aging parent. By simply dialing 2-1-

1, trained information specialists can help by answering your questions and connecting you to thousands of health and human service programs.

We are continually seeking new members to join our round-table and share their needs, ideas and expertise. We need your help to faithfully serve our community.

RELIANCE BANK
Together we'll find a way.

RelianceBank.com
**ALTOONA
TYRONE
DUNCANVILLE
LAKEMONT
STATE COLLEGE**

800-570-0876

Cops in Shops – 2015 Report

BARRY HOWE, SUPERVISORY AGENT, PA OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL and Weis Pharmacy.

The Cops in Shops program proved to be beneficial for local pharmacies in Blair County. The program was re-launched in 2015 and funded by a grant from Operation Our Town. The Cops in Shops program is a cooperative effort between law enforcement and area pharmacies and places undercover and uniformed police officers inside and around pharmacies to increase police presence and visibility as a deterrent to criminal activity.

The blurring enabled officers to conduct 35 pharmacy details in 2015. Officers from Altoona, Greenfield Township, Logan Township, and Tyrone police departments participated in pharmacy details at the following pharmacies in Blair County: Community Pharmacy, CVS Pharmacy, Dick's Pharmacy, Giant Eagle Pharmacy, Kmart Pharmacy, Martin's Pharmacy, Rite Aid Pharmacy, The Medicine Shoppe, Thompson's Pharmacy,

and Weis Pharmacy. The pharmacy details gave officers the opportunity to meet the pharmacists in person and discuss any safety or security issues. The officers also offered the pharmacies Operation Our Town window clings to be posted at the front doors of participating pharmacies, advising customers that an undercover operation may be in progress and to encourage customers to assist with the program by removing hats and sunglasses prior to entering the store.

The program was well received by the various pharmacies and served to maintain a positive relationship between the pharmacies and law enforcement, which resulted in the safety of the pharmacy customers and employees.

Amtran

ERIC WOLF, GENERAL MANAGER

Amtran has been a long-time supporter of Operation Our Town by donating ad space for not one, but two promotional bus wraps over the years. OOT has been recognized across Pennsylvania and around the country as a model for collaboration against illegal drugs through the partnership of businesses and non-profit organizations, police, the courts, treatment providers, and the community at large. According to General Manager Eric Wolf, "We are very proud of our participation in Operation Our Town and look forward to working with them to unveil a brand-new bus wrap in 2016." He continued, "The fact is that anyone can be affected by illegal drugs, regardless of your education, income level, or neighborhood.

We can only be successful in fighting this problem by pulling together all of our community's resources."

Amtran is a joint municipal authority of Logan Township and the City of Altoona dating back to 1958. It was created as a successor to the trolley company, the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway. The organization currently has 47 employees and 28 buses carrying 1,000 people a day (not including the students that we transport for the Altoona Area School District). When you add in the school students, our ridership is more than 650,000 per year. We are also an important partner for Penn State Altoona, connecting their Iyaside and Downtown Campuses. Our funding is a combination of farebox revenue, along with support from federal, state, and local governments.



OOT Announces New Project

RANDY FEATHERS, OOT BOARD MEMBER



Operation Our Town announced that it will collaborate with various Law Enforcement groups to raise funds for various Special Operations vehicles. Operation Our

Town was advised that one of the two armored tactical trucks in Blair County was in need of approximately \$20,000 in repairs. The truck, which is used in both active shooting incidents and high-risk drug entries, would cost in the range of \$250,000 to replace. The truck can carry 14 officers seated in full tactical gear and another additional 12 officers on the outside of the truck. Among many other vital components of the vehicle, the truck has a flip-up plate on top for a sniper to operate from.

OOT Board member Randy Feathers, who will coordinate the effort, stated "At a time when communities throughout the United States are dealing with an increase in both mass shootings and terrorist activities, it is imperative that Law Enforcement in Blair County be given

all the tools necessary to protect our area."

In addition to this truck, there are other special operations vehicles in Blair County which will need repairs in the future. Board Member Feathers advised it is the goal of this project to raise at least \$50,000 to cover not only the current need of the above mentioned armored truck, but to have money stored away for future expenses.

It is hoped that the funds will be donated by various school districts, hospitals, colleges, businesses, and by private donations. If you are either interested or would like to assist with this project, please contact Operation Our Town Executive Coordinator Shawna Hoover at 814-296-8730.

Jackie Atherton Bernard
First Assistant
District Attorney

BLAIR COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

KEEP IT SAFE.
KEEP IT GOING.

Operation Our Town Donors

Operation Our Town was founded in 2006 with the support of many local businesses. The following founding businesses with an asterisk (*) committed at least \$10,000 per year for three years to fund local efforts to take back our neighborhoods from drugs and violent crime.

The success of Operation Our Town combined with the desire to improve our community has led additional local businesses to continue the work begun by our founding members by also pledging at least \$10,000 per year for three years to support local programs proven to reduce drug use and crime.

\$10,000 and up:

Alan Gehringer, Rhythm Systems
Altoona Area School District
Altoona First Savings Bank
American Eagle Paper Mills
Amtran
Anonymous donor
Arch Insurance Group
Blair Candy Company, Inc.*
Blair Companies*
Catalano, Case, Catalano & Clark-Radzietka
Chester E. Grannas Family Foundation
Courtesy Ford
Curve Baseball, LP
D.C. Goodman & Sons, Inc.*
Dean Patterson Chevrolet
Delta Health Technologies, LLC*
Fiore Buick GMC*
Fiore Toyota*
First National Bank
Folcarelli Supply Co.
Grainger Foundation, Inc.
Grappone Law Office*
Harry K. Sickler Associates*
Holiday Inn Express*
Kooman & Associates, LLC
Lawruk Machine & Tool Company, Inc.
Lawruk Realty*
Lee Industries, Inc.*
Leonard S. Fiore, Inc.*
M&T Bank*
McLanahan Corporation*
New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co.*
New Pig Corporation*
Norfolk Southern Foundation
NPC, Inc.*
Park Hills Golf Club
Patt Organization
Peak Media of Pennsylvania, LLC – Fox 8 TV
Reliance Bank*
Rotary Club of Altoona
Seltzer Financial Strategies
Sheetz, Inc.*
Small Tube Products
Striewig Bonding Agency
Stuckey Ford/Stuckey Subaru
The Hite Company*
Thompson Pharmacy
United Way of Blair County*
UPMC Altoona*
Value Drug Company
Ward Trucking, LLC*
Willard E. Campbell Enterprises, Inc – Hoss's
Wolf Furniture*
York Technical Institute, LLC

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Altoona Pipe & Steel Supply Company
Bernard Albert Good Post 8685
E.B. Endres, Inc.
First Energy Foundation
Inco Beverage, Inc.
Irwin Financial, Inc.
North American Communications
Reilly Creppage & Co.
S&T Bank

\$1,000 - \$4,999:
Ahold Financial Services – Martin's Food Market
Allegheny Brain & Spine Surgeons, P.C.
Allegheny Supply & Maintenance Co., Inc.
Allegheny Trucks, Inc.
Allied Growth Strategies & Management, LLC
Altoona Blair County Development Corporation
Altoona Center for Nursing Care
Altoona Mirror
AmeriServ Financial
Atlantic Broadband
Bavarian Aid Society
Benzel's Bretzel Bakery, Inc.
Best Line Equipment
Blair County Chamber of Commerce
Blair County District Attorney's Office
Blair Medical Associates
Blue Knob Valley Chainsaw Carving Competition
Bolger Brothers, Inc.
Buccinese Society
Burgmeier's Hauling, Inc.
Business Planning Service, LLC
Central PA Landlord Association
Cleveland Brothers Equipment Co., Inc.
Cohen & Grigsby, P.C.
Coldwell Banker Town & Country Real Estate
Concordia Society
Construction Applicators
Degol Organization
DelGrosso Foods, Inc.
Discovery House
Empower Business Solutions, Inc.
Fine Line Cabinets, Inc.
First Commonwealth Bank
Fringe Benefit Group
Galliker Dairy Company
GMRI, Inc. - Olive Garden
Golden Living Center – Hillview
Groff Tractor & Equipment
H.F. Lenz Company
Hollidaysburg Rotary Club
Infinity Insurance Management Service
Keller Engineers, Inc.
Koehle Maintenance
Kunzler & Company
Lezzer Lumber
Low Life Rider Chapter, Inc.
Lozinak Professional Baseball, LLC
Mady Corp, Inc. – Blair Co. Golf & Driving Range
Mock Creations
Mountain Research, LLC
Newborn Enterprises, Inc.
Northwestern Mutual
Northwest Savings Bank
Omega Bank
ORX
Penn State Altoona
Pennsylvania Prison Warden's Association
Pepsi Bottling Group, LLC
Providence Presbyterian Church
Pyramid Healthcare, Inc.
Roaring Spring Blank Book/Roaring Spring Water
Saint Francis University
Sam's Club #6460
Say-Core, Inc.
Sheehan & Associates
Shirley's Cookie Company, Inc.
Silk Mills Properties
South Hills School of Business & Technology
Stiffler, McGraw & Associates, Inc.
Swiss Club of Altoona
ThyssenKrupp – AIN Plastics
TJT Enterprises, Inc. - The Meadows of Greenwood
Top to Bottom Office Interiors
United Way of the Capital Region
Warren A. Gingrich Agency, Inc.

Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC
Young, Oakes, Brown & Co.

Under \$1,000:

1st Summit Bank
AFSCME Local 906 – Hollidaysburg Veterans Home
Allegheny Club of Hollidaysburg
Allegheny Mountains Convention & Visitors Bureau
Altoona Catholic Nurses
Altoona Center for Clinical Research, PC
Altoona Housing Authority
Altoona Jewish Community School
Altoona Police Narcotics Division
Associated Builders & Contractors
Back in Action Physical Therapy & Fitness Center
Baechle & Associates Architects
Baltimore Life Insurance
Bellwood-Antis School District Foundation
Bill Wertz & Sons
Blair/Bedford Builders Association
Blair Business Technologies
Blair County Anesthesia, P.C.
Blair County Crime Solvers
Blair County Health & Welfare Council
Blair County Police Departments
Blair Orthopedics
Blair Roofing
Carnegie Equipment, Inc.
Central Blair Recreation Commission
Central PA Cardiology, LLC
Central PA Digital Learning Foundation
Cesare Battisti Mutual Benefit Association
Ciocca Benton & Okonak, P.C.
City Beverage of Altoona, Inc.
Clear Creek Environmental
Clip Art Salon
Combined Insurance
Craig Fencing
Credit Control Collections
Cresson Lions Park Association
DeGrosso's Amusement Park
Despoy & Robertson Law Firm
DiAndrea Media
DiAndrea Promos
Dick's Pharmacy, Inc.
Drayer Physical Therapy Institute
Edward Jones Investments – Michael Harris
Edward Jones Investments – Richard Logan
Epworth Manor
Fairview United Methodist Church
Family Services, Inc.
Fiore Furniture
First Presbyterian Church
Fraternal Order of Police Bald Eagle Lodge #51
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #8
Freedom Excursions by Scully, LLC
Furrer Beverage Co., Inc.
G.B. Wineland & Son, Inc.
G&R Excavating
Global Impact
Gold Wing Road Riders Association Chapter PAS
Good Advertising
Graystone Court
Greendown Acres Mobile Home Park
Griffith & Petz Co.
Gwin, Dobson & Foreman
Haberstroh, Sullivan, Keating & George, LLP
HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital
Heidelberg Country Club
Hollidaysburg Area Junior High School Student Body
Home Health Resource
Home Nursing Agency
Investment Savings Bank
Jaffa Temple Altoona Shrine Club
Jim Bryan's Tree Trimming & Removal
J. Kirk Kling Law Office
Jones Funeral Home
Keystone Custom Homes
Keystone Real Estate Group, LP
Kids First Blair County/Lily Pond
Kiwanis Club of Tyrone
Klesius & Sheedy
Knights of Columbus Council 551
Kopp Drug
Kranich's, Inc.
Lakemont Lions Club, Inc.
Lake Raystown Resort
Llysven United Methodist Church
Logan Lodge #490 F&AM
Longstreth Brothers, Inc.
Loyal Order of Moose, Altoona Family Center #74
Lumax Lighting
M&M Roofing & Contracting, Inc.
Mainline Medical Associates
Manpower
Marianna's Fundraisers
Martin Oil Company
Matthew Greenwald & Associates, Inc.
McAleer's Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning
Mike's Court
Moore Power Sales
Moses & Associates, P.C.
Mountain Lodge #281 – Free & Accepted Masons
Mount Aloysius College – Physical Therapy Club
Nason Hospital
Nimquin, Inc.
Nittany Building Specialties, Inc.
Overhead Door Company of Blair County
Park Security & Installations, Inc.
Park Security Systems
Passarello Law Office
Pennsylvania Highlands Community College
Photo Flare
P. Joseph Lehman, Inc. Consulting Engineers
Presbytery of Huntingdon
Priority Management & Associates
Ravine, Inc.
Riley, Inc.
Rockhill Realty
Rotary Club of Roaring Spring
Sacred Heart Church
Saleme Insurance Services, Inc.
Second Avenue United Methodist Church
Secure-Tec, Inc.
Sigel's School of Dance
Spherion
Splish Splash Auto Bath
Stanley J. Krish Funeral Home, Inc.
St. Joseph Institute
Sub Zero Ice Cream & Yogurt
Teeter Group
The Crossroad
The EADS Group
The Medicine Shoppe
The Winds at Mattern Orchard
Tom & Joe's Restaurant, LLC
Tri-Star Ford of Tyrone
Tyrone Area Community Organization
United Veterans Association of Blair County
University Orthopedics Center
Wachovia Securities

Plus, over 140 individual citizens.

Our Town Times

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AASD Foundation

Helping Altoona Area School District students achieve excellence through promoting innovation and excellence in the classroom.

AND

Project SOAR

(Study, Overcome, Achieve, Reward)
Mentoring and assisting students in achieving post-secondary education.



Together investing in the future of our community and impacting student lives.

For more information about the AASD Foundation or Project SOAR, contact AASD Foundation Executive Director Paula Foreman at 946-8424 or visit our website at www.aasdfoundation.org.

OOT Steering Committee Members

Professional & OOT titles:

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