



OUR TOWN TIMES

2020 ANNUAL REPORT | VOL. IX

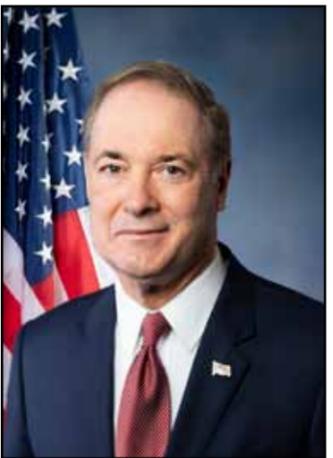
DRUG USE ▲ NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ▼ COMMUNITY SUPPORT ▲ EDUCATION ▲ LAW ENFORCEMENT ▼ VOLUNTEERISM ▲

REP. JOHN JOYCE LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST THE DRUG CRISIS
By Congressman John Joyce, MD

Our nation's drug and addiction crisis has devastated too many families in central Pennsylvania and has taken a tangible toll in Blair County and beyond. As a physician who has practiced in this community for more than 25 years, I have witnessed the ramifications of drug abuse and addiction firsthand. As your Congressman, I am dedicated to combating this crisis alongside the dedicated local, state, and federal leaders who are working to prevent addiction and protect central Pennsylvanians from dangerous illicit drugs.

Addressing the current drug crisis truly requires an "all-hands-on-deck" approach, as well as multi-faceted solutions ranging from education and prevention to enforcement and treatment. In Blair County, I am grateful for the work of Operation Our Town and the community leaders who are protecting our neighbors from illicit drug use and crime. By working together, all of us can do our part to prevent addiction and its impact on our community.

President Trump is prioritizing efforts to combat the drug epidemic, and I appreciate his partnership and leadership in this fight. It was my honor to welcome the U.S. Drug Czar to the 13th District of Pennsylvania for discussions with local leaders who are on the front lines of this work. Director Jim Carroll, who leads the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and serves as President Trump's top advisor on drug



issues, traveled to PA-13 for conversations with leaders from the law enforcement, healthcare, workforce, and education sectors. Together, we identified opportunities for all of us to collaborate on realistic solutions for the drug crisis, and I am looking forward to continuing this partnership with Director Carroll and the Trump Administration in 2020.

In Washington, I am helping to lead Congress' fight against this crisis. As a member of the Freshman Working Group on Addiction, I work across the aisle to identify and implement solutions for drug abuse and addiction. As a team, we are collaborating with experts at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other organizations to

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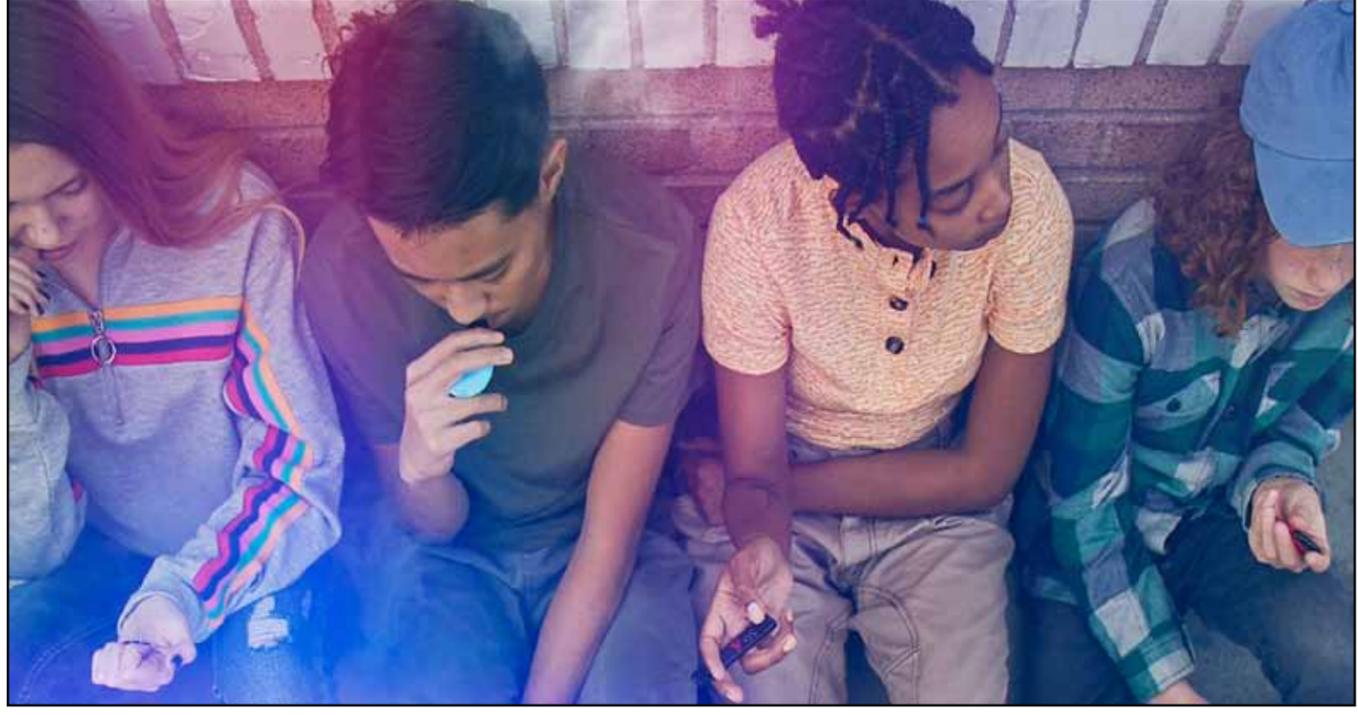
KIDS DEALING WITH DRUGS

THE STRUGGLE

By Rebecca Lidwell, Prevention Supervisor & Judy Rosser, Executive Director, Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships

Do you know someone struggling with alcohol/drug abuse or misuse? Chances are, you do. Nearly half of Americans are personally struggling with an addiction or have a close friend or family member struggling. According to the Addiction Center, almost 21 million Americans have at least one addiction, yet only 10% of them receive treatment. Stigma continues to be a large barrier as to why individuals do not seek treatment, but I hope that if you are reading this article, you realize that seeking help is one of the strongest things a person can do. The best way to tackle alcohol/drug abuse or misuse is by preventing it all together. When it comes to our youth, the most precise information we receive is from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS). This survey is conducted every other year for sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth grade students. Data from 2019 will become available in April 2020: [https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Pages/Pennsylvania-Youth-Survey-\(PAYS\).aspx](https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Pages/Pennsylvania-Youth-Survey-(PAYS).aspx). According to the 2017 data, Blair County just might be doing something right. Blair County's overall lifetime usage rates have dropped compared to the 2015 data (except among our 8th graders, which saw a minimal spike in alcohol and marijuana lifetime use

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DANGERS OF VAPING

By Rebecca Lidwell, Blair County Drug and Alcohol, Prevention Supervisor

EVALI is the name given by the CDC to the dangerous, newly identified lung disease linked to vaping. The name EVALI is an acronym that stands for e-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung injury. The illness was first recognized by the CDC in August 2019 after health department officials across the country began to work together to study cases of severe, sometimes fatal, lung infections that arose suddenly in otherwise healthy individuals. The number of people who needed to be hospitalized after experiencing symptoms ranging from shortness of breath to fever quickly rose in many states around the U.S. As more details emerged, doctors and researchers discovered that patients shared at least one common risk: all reported they had recently used e-cigarette or vaping products. Even though the agency announced that vitamin E acetate appears associated with this vaping-related illness, federal investigators have not yet identified a single ingredient (though there could be several) that causes EVALI. It's therefore unclear how the condition develops or why. In the most severe and life-threatening cases, it causes the lungs to stop functioning altogether. As of January 7, 2020, a total of 2,602 hospitalized EVALI cases or deaths have been reported to the CDC from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands. 57 deaths have been confirmed in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Pennsylvania has one confirmed death and a number of illnesses caused by EVALI.

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS - STUDENT EXCERPTS

By Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

The fight against drugs and crime begins with the youth in our community, because they are our future. This generation is facing many unique challenges and negative influences, so I wanted to share some of their thoughts and perspectives on how drugs have affected them in their own words.

The following below are excerpts of essays from Altoona Junior High students that were submitted for our annual Essay Contest in November 2019 that demonstrate students' awareness of the current drug problems and how it has affected their lives directly or the lives of people they know. (Please note that the names of the students were omitted for confidentiality purposes):

A 7th grade student described how drugs impacted their life: "My mother was an addict before, she went to rehab. It almost destroyed our family. Both of my parents were addicts before. It destroyed my family relationship. Drugs can destroy families and homes. Drugs can take children from their parents and their parents could become sick and even die. Drugs are not something you can use and be able to not use the next week. Your body becomes dependent on them. Drugs cause symptoms of withdrawal, making the user addicted and become dependent on them daily."

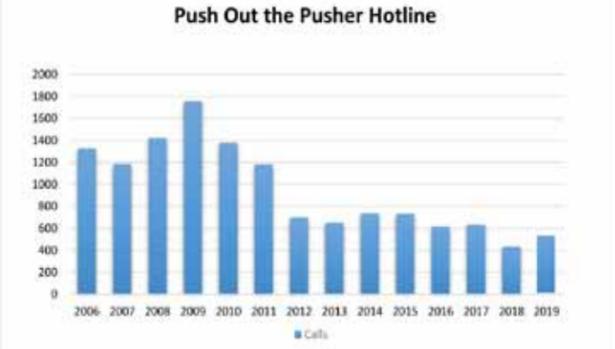
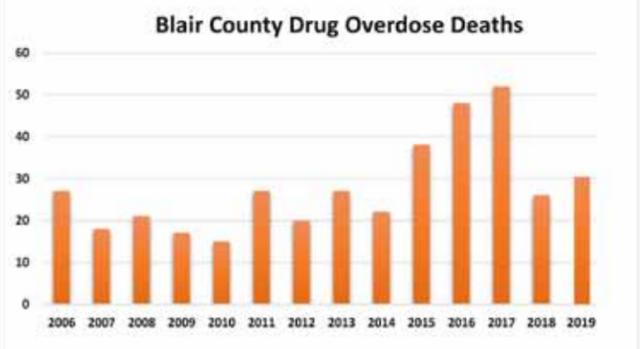
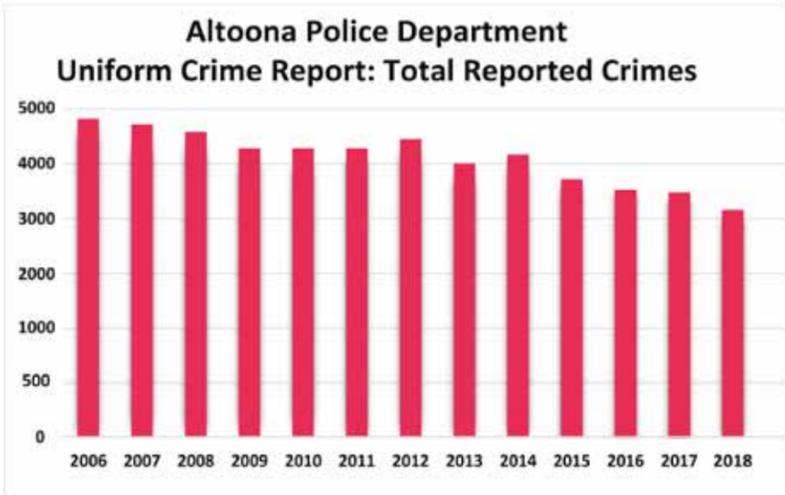
An 8th grade student also described how drugs impacted their family: "In my family, I had an uncle that was in his 30's and he started using drugs. He was addicted at first, but then he got himself to stop. One day, he couldn't help himself and started using them again. The next Valentine's Day, he died. It was really sad and that shows not to use drugs, because you never know if that could be you."

Another 8th grade student explained how drugs have affected other students: "I have known people that have been very good at sports and were offered to play football at good schools, but then they failed their drug test and all the scholarship money was no longer offered. Some mistakes caused by drugs, even if they were in high school, are still going to affect you in life."

This 8th grade student offers some wise words and suggestions for how students can deal with peer pressure: "There are several ways to prevent or overcome substance abuse. For example, the biggest reason teens start using drugs is because their friends utilize peer pressure. No one likes to be left out, and teens, along with some adults, find themselves doing things they normally wouldn't do, just to fit in. In these cases, you need to either find a better group of friends that won't pressure you into doing harmful things, or you need to find a good way to say no. Teens should prepare a good excuse or plan ahead of time to keep from giving into tempting situations."

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Local	A10

POLICE REPORT



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BALD EAGLE LODGE #51

1979 REESE
HOLLOW ROAD
P.O. BOX 99,
PORT MATILDA, PA.
16870

SERVING OFFICERS
OF BLAIR, CENTRE,
AND CLEARFIELD
COUNTIES

Source: Operation Our Town 2019

K-9 OFFICERS MAKE POSITIVE IMPACT

By Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

Law enforcement work is hard to protect our community every day, which is why they need the best tools and resources to help them do their job. K-9's continue to be a great asset to law enforcement because they can perform a variety of tasks within the law enforcement department, such as catching criminals, sniffing out drugs, and rescuing people trapped under debris. Officers and their K-9 partners team together with the community to prevent and deter unlawful activities that leave our citizens and business owners victimized. They also serve as ambassadors to strengthen public relations and opinions of the local law enforcement community.

K-9 Getro
Tyrone Borough Police Department
One of Blair County's newest K-9's is Getro of

the Tyrone Borough Police Department. K-9 Getro was born on June 6, 2018 and is an 18-month-old German Shepherd. K-9 Getro's handler is Officer Traci Winters. Officer Traci Winters graduated from the Municipal Police Academy at IUP in 2009 and was hired by the Tyrone Police Department in 2012. Officer Traci Winters and K-9 Getro graduated from training on August 2, 2019. K-9 Getro was made possible through donations from the community, businesses, and Operation Our Town.

K-9 Getro has been involved with the following activities to-date:

- Has been on approximately 215 calls.
- Involved with approximately 33 incidents.
- Conducted 2 building searches for criminals during suspected burglaries.

- Several building searches for narcotics.
- Multiple traffic stops, both without drugs and with drug finds.
- Called to assist PA State Police and Freedom Township Police.
- Numerous public demonstrations.
- His bark helped convince a wanted individual to come out of an apartment building, reducing risk to officers.

Law enforcement K-9's would not be possible without the support and donations from the Blair County community. If you would like more information about K-9 Getro or how you can help support K-9 Getro, please contact the Tyrone Borough Police Department. Blair County will continue to be well-protected by K-9's for years to come!



Pictured: Officer Winters and K-9 Getro.

Law Enforcement Year in Review

By Courtney VanOrden-Krout, Blair County Drug Task Force Coordinator

A National Look:
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there were approximately 68,500 overdose deaths in the United States in 2018. This was a 5% decrease from 2017 where there were 72,000 overdose deaths reported. Between 1999 and 2017, the number of annual drug overdose deaths in the U.S. ballooned from nearly 17,000 to more than 72,000, according to federal data.

The Opioid epidemic is still a concern, in part, due to new types of drugs finding their way onto the streets. Fentanyl and its analogs, a synthetic form of heroin, are a major factor in the increase of overdose deaths. Fentanyl is deadly because it is so much more potent than heroin, a lethal dose of heroin is considered to be equivalent to about 30 milligrams, a lethal dose of fentanyl or its analogs is considered to be a 3 milligram dose. For those not familiar

with the metric system, 3 milligrams is about 7 grains of table salt.

Pennsylvania:
The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Philadelphia Division annually collects and analyzes data concerning drug-related overdose deaths in Pennsylvania. According to the DEA data in 2018, there were 4,492 drug-related overdose deaths reported by

Pennsylvania coroners and medical examiners. This was an 18% decrease from 2017, but still breaks down to 12 people in Pennsylvania dying from drug-related overdoses each day. Fentanyl was the most frequently identified substance in drug-related overdose deaths (70%).

Blair County:
In 2018, the majority of drug cases in Blair County focused on heroin. In 2019, there was an influx of methamphetamine. 108 new drug cases were started in Blair County and 209 drug purchases were made. 54% of these purchases were for methamphetamine.

Starting in 2018, the PA Office of Attorney General, in conjunction with the Altoona Police Department and West Blair County Drug Task Force, conducted a large scale methamphetamine investigation. The case culminated with a seizure of 7 pounds of methamphetamine that were destined for Blair County and numerous arrests will be forthcoming.

Partnerships:
As the epidemic continues, new partnerships develop which result in new strategies to combat it. Partnerships between law enforcement, education, treatment, and

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Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) Report

By Honorable Elizabeth A. Doyle, Blair County President Judge

This past year has proven to be an eventful one for the Criminal Justice Advisory Board, also known as the Operation Our Town Criminal Justice Roundtable. In support of the resolution adopted last year by Blair County called the Stepping Up Initiative, the Blair County Prison hired a Mental Health Forensic Case Manager. Stepping Up is a mental health initiative for the prison population. In January, the board was presented with statistical reports detailing the number of people being connected with mental health treatment upon their release. The board received input from an array of stakeholders, including Dr. Carroll Osgood,

M.D., on ways to improve this important initiative.

Also in January, the board received an informative presentation from Ashley Owens, Esquire, the director of the Blair County Children's Advocacy Center (CAC). 2018 represented the first full year of operation for the center, which opened in October 2017. Attorney Owens informed the board that the CAC will continue to provide a child-friendly and neutral place for forensic interviews and medical examinations of the victims of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. She also updated the board on the statistics collected in 2018 from the CAC.

In February, the Housing Committee detailed their effort to have Blair County Adult Parole and Probation partner with local landlords to accept individuals who are currently being supervised. The goal of improving living conditions for those currently on parole and probation will hopefully lead to these individuals making better choices and not interacting with the criminal justice system in the future. Addressing the need for housing for people with a criminal history is an ongoing goal for the board.

In March, the board heard from Natalie Hockenberry from Blair Senior Services. Ms. Hockenberry gave an eye-opening presentation regarding elder abuse and the statistics collected from Blair County. She detailed the nature and types of abuse that occurs and the board heard that reports of such abuse are rising as public awareness of

the issue increases.

In April, the board was informed that an active shooter training would be given in northern Blair County. Lieutenant Kermit Alwine of the Blair County Sheriff's Department presented this training, entitled, Active Shooter and Stop the Bleeding, on April 25, 2019 at the Bullpen Restaurant in Tyrone. A daytime and evening session were provided free-of-charge to the community. The court appreciates the willingness of these members of law enforcement to provide such a valuable service to the citizens of Blair County.

May was "Stepping Up Month" and the board discussed decreasing the amount of time within which a person could receive a mental health evaluation when incarcerated. The continued goal is to connect people who interact with the criminal justice system as a direct result

of mental health, substance abuse, or co-occurring issues with treatment. This will reduce the burden on the criminal justice system. The aspirational goal is to break the cycle of re-incarceration and recidivism by connecting people with the services they require.

In August, Judy Rosser of Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships (BDAP) spoke to the board about the current state of substance abuse statistics in Blair County. I indicated to the board that the turnaround time for drug and alcohol evaluations was increasingly fast. Ms. Rosser indicated that the ongoing mission is to supply the evaluations as quickly as possible in order to divert people with substance abuse issues into the treatment they need. This prevents them from floundering and receiving new charges related to these issues.

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Blair County District Attorney's Office

By Peter J. Weeks, First Assistant District Attorney

The Blair County District Attorney's Office and Operation Our Town share a common mission of ensuring public safety. Serious and violent crimes continue to threaten this safety. 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 with the police departments in Hollidaysburg, Tyrone, Logan Township, and Altoona to protect our community with the installation and promotion of Medication Collection Boxes. The Medication Collection Boxes are an effective way to prevent legally obtained opiates from being diverted for illicit abuse by others. (See the statistics included in this newsletter for a quarterly breakdown). Every person who uses a drop box is a local crime fighter!

The District Attorney's Office works to dismantle the organizations profiting from drug dealing and resultant crimes. In 2019, the District Attorney's Office

successfully prosecuted dozens of defendants with a known history of involvement with controlled substances. Notably, the District Attorney's Office obtained a conviction following a jury trial of an individual who was charged with Criminal Homicide after he took another man's life as the result of drug trafficking. Another individual entered a plea of guilt and is currently awaiting sentencing after being charged for engaging in several drug transactions in which the Defendant was selling heroin that was laced with Carfentanil. Lastly, another individual was sentenced to a period of ten-and-a-half to twenty-one years for conduct involving several drug transactions, as well as being in possession of a firearm. The District Attorney's Office is committed to not only protecting the citizens of Blair County from illegal substances, but also from firearms that may come into the hands of individuals who are not permitted to legally possess them.

Many claim that drug trafficking and drug 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, stabbings, and other acts of violence by those involved in drug trafficking. Unfortunately, in 2019, several investigations involved violent drug traffickers from various parts of the Commonwealth, as well as surrounding states, who filtered into Blair County in anticipation of increasing their clientele. 2019 again saw a significant increase in methamphetamine use and trafficking, which poses a significant threat to law enforcement and the general public. The District Attorney's Office, along with law enforcement throughout Blair County, will continue to bring these offenders to justice. While we believe in providing treatment options for criminals who have drug and alcohol addictions, we remain committed to holding the safety of the community and the quest for victims above accommodations for those who commit crimes.

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.

Drug Prosecutor Position Summary

By Katelyn Hoover and Peter J. Weeks, Assistant District Attorneys

The OOT Drug Prosecutor grant position was created in 2007 upon the Blair County community's recognition that a need existed within the Blair County District Attorney's Office to handle the rising influx of cases due to drug crimes and drug related crimes. In 2019, the Blair County District Attorney's Office promoted Assistant District Attorney Katelyn Hoover to the Operation Our Town Drug Prosecutor position. Attorney Hoover came to this position as a newly licensed attorney with an eagerness to collaborate with law enforcement in its effort to protect the citizens of Blair County from succumbing to dangerous substances.

Attorney Hoover reported directly to the First Assistant and District Attorney. She acted as the county-wide coordinator for drug investigations, prosecutions, and related training. Attorney Hoover handled a full caseload consisting of drug trafficking felony cases, drug manufacturing felony cases, firearms felony cases, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, and endangering the welfare of children that correlate back to drug use, drug trafficking, or other drug violations. In addition to her own caseload, Attorney Hoover assisted First

historical drug investigations, as well as drug cases filed in Blair County by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

In addition to these responsibilities, Attorney Hoover filed and litigated bail forfeiture and revocation petitions, litigated and filed civil asset forfeiture actions, attended forensic interviews of abused children at the Blair County Center for Child Justice (CAC), and authored appellate briefs for past cases that resulted in convictions.

Throughout 2019, approximately 266 felony drug cases were assigned between the drug prosecutor position and the First Assistant. There are currently 318 active felony cases pending for Attorney Weeks, as well as 183 cases for Attorney Hoover. The District Attorney's Office continues to attempt to incarcerate individuals who violate their bail conditions.

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. These training opportunities allow our local law enforcement to stay up-to-date on the latest trends in drug trafficking.

The cases investigated and prosecuted in 2019 continued the trend where individuals involved in drug trafficking are committing other types of death cases,

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

BLAIR COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHARD A. CONSIGLIO

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Allegheny Township Police Department – 2019 Highlights Chief Leo Berg III

The Allegheny Township Police Department has settled into our new municipal building housing the police department and we are operational and very pleased with our new building.

The Department handled 5,203 incidents in 2019, slightly up from the 5,173 incidents we handled in 2018.

The Department continued to participate in the statewide Aggressive Driving and Buckle Up PA Programs that focus on traffic safety. Officer Paul Mummert was recognized for his level of efforts participating in the programs.

As part of the impaired driving enforcement, the Department also participated in DUI roving patrols and DUI Checkpoints that focus on detecting/arresting impaired drivers. Officer Paul Mummert is to be commended for his daily enforcement efforts with regard to impaired driving and number of arrested as a result of those efforts.

The Department investigated 341 Motor Vehicle Accidents in 2019, slightly up from 336 Motor Vehicle Accidents in 2018.

The Police Department was fortunate enough to add an additional full time officer to our ranks when we hired Officer Bryce Young, and then promoted Officer Richard Brant from a part time to full time position.

Once again, the Allegheny Township Police Department kicked off the year with a team at the Polar Plunge, raising money for Special Olympics. Then, throughout the year, the Department conducted Child Fingerprinting at Super Hero Day, Blair County RV Expo, and at Wal-Mart during the Children's Miracle Network event. We also partnered with Operation Our Town at some of these events and extend a special thank you to them!

The Allegheny Township Police thanks our community and programs like Operation Our Town, Blair County Crime Solvers, and Because We Care for your support and efforts to make Allegheny Township a great place to live and work. We look forward to serving our community in the years ahead!

Altoona Police Department – 2019 Highlights Sgt. Tom Venios

The Altoona Police Department and other law enforcement agencies statewide play an important role with PA Special Olympics in fundraising and participating in events year-round. For the second time, over 20 APD officers participated in the Special Olympics Polar Plunge. These officers raised over \$14,000 and, on a freezing February day, dove into the icy waters at Canoe Creek State Park. APD officers were excited to donate their time for such a worthy cause.

APD purchased body worn cameras for use by uniformed officers. This invaluable tool has assisted patrol officers in so many ways. Officer complaints



Pictured: Altoona Police Officer

have decreased and convictions have increased because of video evidence.

The Cesare Battisti Club generously donated a Home Again microchip reader to APD. Now, when officers find a lost dog, they can use the chip reader to determine if the dog is microchipped and obtain the owner's information. The chip reader has successfully reunited several dogs with their owners.

Officers of APD have participated in over 30 public events that occurred in the downtown area. Officers that are assigned to work these events not only protect the event and handle incidents as they arise, but their presence is one of our initiatives to better connect with the community. I personally played corn hole with some students from AAHS during an event. I won...

Blair Township Police Department - 2019 Highlights Chief Roger White

2019 was a busy but safe year for the officers of the Blair Township Police Department.

BTPD handled over 2,300 incidents in 2019.

The Department hired Ptlm. Matthew Fleck as a full time officer to bring us to full staffing of 5 officers.

The Department continued to focus on traffic safety via enhanced enforcement of the motor vehicle laws and actively participating in the statewide Aggressive Driving and Buckle Up PA Programs. Sgt. Roger Peacock Jr. was recognized by the PA Aggressive Driving Enforcement and Education Program for his efforts in this area.

The focus also continues on detecting/arresting impaired drivers. Ptlm. Nathan Hale was recognized for his efforts in this area and was awarded the Top Gun award for departments in our category in Blair County.

Chief Roger White received the PA Veterans of Foreign Wars John Radko Outstanding Police Officer Award presented by the Duncansville VFW.

The prevalence of alcohol and drugs continues to be a factor in a large percentage of incidents handled by the Department. Incidents involving individuals with mental health issues also increased in 2019.

2019 technology upgrades included upgrades to cell phones and new computers within the Department.

BTPD conducted its annual Trick or Treat Night outreach wherein officers distributed over 400 goody bags to children while patrolling the Twp. This is an annual effort made possible by the support and donations from many businesses located

within the community.

The Blair Township Police Department thanks its citizens and Operation Our Town for the continuing cooperation and support in their efforts to keep Blair Township the great community it is and we look forward to serving in 2020!



Pictured: Altoona Police Officer

Greenfield Township Police Department – 2019 Highlights Chief Ronald Sharkey, Sr.

2019 was a busy year for this department.

This department started to rebuild and made attempts to improve throughout the year.

There were new hires and some officers left to advance their career.

Throughout the year, the department has worked with Pennsylvania through PA Aggressive Driving and Buckle Up programs. This is one way our department attempts to focus on traffic safety and enforcement.

The department has a School Resource Officer in the Claysburg-Kimmel School District. With this officer in the school, the crime has dropped at the school, but also helps build the relationship between children and the police.

Greenfield Township Police has seen an increase in drug activity in the area. Meth has grown in our area and numerous arrests have been made concerning the possession and use of this drug and others.

This department put in a computer server to help the officers stay on the road more. The officers can do some reports right from the laptop computers in the police vehicles.

In the near future, this department will be using E-File for our traffic citations with modern technology and this will help with enforcing the traffic laws.

Our department has handed treats to children during Trick or Treat on Halloween and also worked and helped with traffic for the Homecoming Parade and Christmas Parade, as well as the Halloween Parade.

Our department is in the process of bringing the policies up to date and working on training the officers to specialize in certain

fields of law enforcement.

As for the Officers of Greenfield Township, we would like to thank the community and Operation Our Town for the support and cooperation in making our community a great community. We are looking forward to working with all of the organizations and people in 2020.

Have a great year in 2020.

Hollidaysburg Police Department – 2019 Highlights Chief Rodney B. Estep, Jr.

Hollidaysburg Police Department is comprised of eight full-time officers, four clerks, and a secretary to the Chief of Police employed to protect the community twenty-four/seven.

The makeup of Hollidaysburg Police Department allows for a dynamic department able to implement change and receiving optimum training for the betterment of the community. Below you will find statistics from 2019:

- 4,120 Calls for Service
- 161 Criminal Arrest Defendants
- 15 Juvenile Arrests
- 1,012 Traffic Citations, 1,218 Vehicle Stops
- 46 DUI Arrests
- 64 Non-traffic Citations

Between the daily activities of law enforcement, the department invested significantly on training officers on a wide variety of tasks. The training included supervisor level incident command system, pursuit policy updates and training, and school threat assessment (in conjunction with various other drills with Hollidaysburg School District).

In 2020, Hollidaysburg Police Department is excited to continue the service to the community as the department plans on adding a 9th full-time officer and a detective to our ranks.

Should you have any questions regarding the Hollidaysburg Police Department, please do not hesitate to call.

Logan Township Police Department – 2019 Highlights Chief David Reese



Pictured: Logan Township Police

Patrolmen Dunio and Vazquez were both awarded Letters of Commendation by Chief Reese for their apprehension of a burglary suspect on 12/02/19 at a residence along Erin Road, Logan Township. The perpetrator had forcibly entered the residence and was detected by the homeowner, who immediately fled and contacted 911. Both officers quickly responded to the residence and arrived as the

perpetrator was still inside the home. They confronted him and he immediately fled the residence, resisted arrest, and assaulted K-9 Freddy before being taken into custody and restoring safety to the community.

LTPD applied for and was awarded a Reduce Underage Drinking and Dangerous Drinking (RUDD) grant through the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) which provided monies promoting advertising of community awareness and enforcement to reduce underage and dangerous drinking in and around off campus student housing at Penn State Altoona.

LTPD applied for and was awarded a JAG grant through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) focused on obtaining important equipment for additional non-lethal force options. Each LTPD vehicle will be equipped with a pepper ball launching delivery system, allowing officers additional options for use of force incidents. Each LTPD vehicle will also be equipped with spike strips to manage police pursuits. The grant has also enabled LTPD to update their aging electronic control devices (tasers) by adding 10 new tasers to their department.

LTPD is proud to announce that they will be supporting the Blair County Opioid Prevention Task Force in providing referrals to assist in the reduction of drug dependency throughout Blair County.

LTPD is proud to announce that 2 additional officers, Patrolman Nicole Gripp and Patrolman Shea Stayer, recently became certified as Child Safety Seat Technicians. LTPD now has 3 certified technicians to provide car seat checks for the community.

LTPD K-9 Officers Vazquez and Swander continue to provide excellent service to Blair County law enforcement. During 2019, both "Freddy" and "Ciro" assisted Blair County law enforcement partners in 43 separate K-9 related incidents. LTPD K-9's have also supported our local schools by providing 3 searches of schools in Blair County during 2019.

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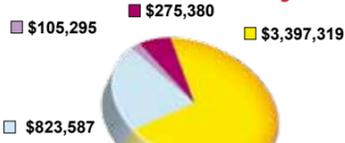
LTPD is proud to announce that they will be supporting the Blair County Opioid Prevention Task Force in providing referrals to assist in the reduction of drug dependency throughout Blair County.

LTPD is proud to announce that 2 additional officers, Patrolman Nicole Gripp and Patrolman Shea Stayer, recently became certified as Child Safety Seat Technicians. LTPD now has 3 certified technicians to provide car seat checks for the community.

LTPD K-9 Officers Vazquez and Swander continue to provide excellent service to Blair County law enforcement. During 2019, both "Freddy" and "Ciro" assisted Blair County law enforcement partners in 43 separate K-9 related incidents. LTPD K-9's have also supported our local schools by providing 3 searches of schools in Blair County during 2019.

COMMUNITY

2007 - 2019 OOT Money Raised



■ Individuals ■ Organizations ■ Businesses □ Federal Grants

2007 - 2019 OOT Grants Awarded



■ Prevention ■ Law Enforcement

2019 Results



□ Grants Awarded ■ Funds Raised

Booker T. Washington Revitalization Corporation

By David Cunningham, President

“Why would you ever build a park there? It’s just going to be ruined. The people over there don’t care enough to take care of anything. It’ll be a waste of money.”

We at the Booker T. Washington Revitalization Corporation have unfortunately heard this refrain too often. People see blight or evidence of crime around the city and choose to believe that things will never change. Worse still, some believe that the citizens living here are unwilling to help make that change. In our experience though, the truth is quite the opposite.

In 2008, our group was formed with the intent of making things better. A gathering of neighbors decided that the basketball court at the corner of 19th Street and 13th Avenue could use an upgrade. At the time, the court itself was run down, but it also sat opposite a building under

opportunity to push back and to rebuild. Through the years, Operation Our Town has recognized the importance of making these investments and we’ve been thankful for the opportunity to partner with them to “take back our neighborhoods” through the creation of recreational space. Since 2008, we’ve been fortunate enough to complete nearly \$1.2 million worth of park projects across Altoona, all of it respected and protected by the community.

In 2019, we were able to complete our expansion of Prospect Park along 15th Street to include new accessible play equipment, a project that we completed alongside Smiles for Miles. That project included a Sway Fun Glider and sensory panels that can be used by children of all abilities. We were also able to make improvements to Iuzzolino Park on Maple Avenue in anticipation of adding more play equipment in the future.



Pictured: Sway Fun Glider at Prospect Park

collapse and a lot filled with dumped garbage. It was not a pretty site and certainly not the kind of place you would prefer to spend time with your family and friends. Fast forward two years - momentum for change had built and that group of volunteers had gathered grants and donations to construct a beautiful new playground, an exercise park, and yes, a renewed basketball court. Even then, there were those who spouted the “Why bother?”s. However, it has now been close to a decade since that investment was made in the city, and we are so proud to say that the park remains a great recreation destination and a gathering place for neighbors. Those who live nearby are actively using the area – for play, for family gatherings, for fun and relaxation – and in doing so, they continue that momentum of improvement. They are, again, able to take ownership in that public space. Positive change is in everyone’s hands.

When investments like this are made in areas that have fallen by the wayside or even where crime has started to take root, it gives the people who call that area home an

Now, as we move forward through 2020, an exciting new opportunity to better the city is available to us. The Central Blair Recreation Commission is in the midst of completing a Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan. The intent of this plan is to gather together citizens and stakeholders who create and benefit from recreational resources in the City of Altoona and Logan Township. The input from those involved will be used to craft a roadmap for park investment in the next decade and beyond. The planning process will include public meetings and a survey to gather your opinions on where groups like ours and your elected officials can best serve our neighborhoods. The work is underway now and will continue for most of this year. To keep up on the latest, you may visit cbrcparks.org or our page at [facebook.com/BTWRP](https://www.facebook.com/BTWRP). We hope that you’ll take part in this process and let your voice be heard. Don’t be one of the naysayers who believes that change isn’t possible or that it’s not worth the trouble. Be a part of the good things happening here at home!

KIDS DEALING WITH DRUGS

Continued from A1

from 2015 to 2017). Another drop that you may be surprised to hear was vaping. From 2015 to 2017, every grade dropped in reporting past 30-day use of vapes and e-cigarettes, except 10th grade, which remained the exact same at 22.4%. Overall, our numbers are looking better. However, we know we still have work to do.

Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships (BDAP), along with Operation Our Town and other partners in Blair County, are hard at work to stay on top of this issue. As mentioned before, prevention is key. Getting to the kids before they even start to use is where we will find the most impact. There are numerous risk factors that influence the initiation of use by youth, but prevention strategies can have an impact. It takes a multi-strategic approach that enhances the protective factors’ four domain areas: individual/peers, families, schools, and community. Prevention is more than educating youth on the danger of drugs. Prevention looks at these domain areas that need to be targeted to support protective factors. Protective factors are skills, strengths, resources, and environmental conditions that assist in addressing the issue.

One example of a protective factor is that research shows that parents and other peer relationships can have the most influence regarding youth

attitudes toward substance use. As parents and adults that are in our youths’ lives, we need to recognize that our attitudes around alcohol and other drugs can have an impact, positively and negatively. A protective factor that prevention would work towards is creating a family/community environment that has clear boundaries regarding initiation of use and consequences for use to support our kids and their future decisions. For example, as adults, we need to realize the importance of the examples we set. Have conversations with your kids on your expectations around alcohol/drug use, don’t be afraid to make your rules clear at home and follow through on consequences. Have achievable expectations and try to involve your kids in pro-social activities that support building life skills.

Even with protective factors, we need to recognize our environment is often negative with the numerous alcohol billboards and promotion efforts, not to mention the ease of accessibility to drugs. The family and community message to our youth needs to be louder than the commercial industries’ (tobacco/alcohol/marijuana/gambling) messages that try to influence our youth. These industries often glamorize the negative route; our youth need positive role models and messaging to steer

them in the right direction. This is just one example of how strategies can be provided to support healthy communities, families, and individuals.

If you are a family that finds themselves faced with a youth initiating use, please, do not minimize the issue. The progression of this disease is very quick in a young developing brain. Blair County has many resources. Families have access to Student Assistance Programs in every school building in the county, just call the guidance office, or if you prefer to use a community support, contact Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships. BDAP and the Student Assistance Program help to facilitate referrals to care if you have concerns on your child’s change in behaviors, school performance, or peers. We have drug and alcohol case management and treatment services in every secondary school building. The best strategy for parents is to become educated on this issue. Participate in school or community held events that provide information on the current drug trends and substance use disorders. For additional parenting strategies, please see the following resources: www.drugfree.org, www.samhsa.gov, or www.nida.gov.

Please, do not be afraid to reach out. For more information locally on this issue, you can go to BDAP’s website at www.blairdap.org or call (814) 381-0921. A case manager is available 24/7.

DEPT. UPDATES | Continued from A4

Blair County Sheriff’s Office – 2019 Highlights Sheriff James E. Ott

Our office is proud to provide the following statistics processed in 2019:

- Civil and Criminal Process Received/Served: 1,546
- Personal Property Eviction-Writs of Execution: 218
- Real Estate Executions: 363
- Processed-Issued License to Carry Firearms: 3,312
- Warrants Served/Processed/Closed: 1,789
- License to Sell Firearms: 14
- License to Sell Precious Metals Issued: 8

Our office provides additional safety steps by providing screening and security at the main entrance of the courthouse campus, here are the results of those actions:

- Number of Citizens Screened at Entrance: 12,585
- Number of Items X-rayed: 109,602
- Number of Prohibited Items Declared: 214
- Number of Items Intercepted by our Deputies: 989
- Number of Firearms Declared: 7

In addition to our daily services, the Blair County Sheriff’s Office is proud to be able to partner with many community events by organizing or participating, as we believe positive community interaction is a priority, here are a few examples:

- Annual Kids, Cops, and Cones at Meadows Family Center
- Blair County Friends of the NRA
- DEA, National Drug Take Back Days
- Countywide National Night Out Against Crime
- Educational events with many of the Senior Centers
- Provide threat assessment and training for various business and church groups, including First Aid, CPR, & Stop the Bleed Training

Our office was recognized by AAA for traffic enforcement and safety efforts in the attempt to provide safe passage to the motoring public.

Spring of 2019 brought the very exciting and humbling announcements for our K-9 program, we were able to put a new fully equipped 2019 Ford Police Interceptor Utility Vehicle into service. This accomplishment was made possible by receiving

generous donations from the community (personal/family/business), as our K-9 program is solely funded by donations.

As we move into 2020, we look forward to continuing our efforts for safety at the courthouse. We are in the process of some security upgrades, which will allow our office to provide better protection to the employees and citizens who conduct business on campus. We are also looking into options for License to Carry (LTC-“gun permits”) that will allow our office to better serve its citizens.



Pictured: Chick-Fil-A Kids Event



Pictured: Chick-Fil-A 2019

2019 OOT GOLF TOURNAMENT RESULTS

By Randy Feathers, Golf Tournament Chairperson



Operation Our Town held its 7th Annual Golf Tournament on September 17, 2019 at Park Hills Golf Club. The golf tournament yielded a net profit of over \$101,000 thanks to our 44 teams and 138 sponsors! Many thanks, once again, goes out to the OOT Golf Committee, Park Hills Golf Club, and all volunteers who helped to make the event a success.

The Inaugural Operation Our Town Mini-Golf Tournament was held on Monday, September 16th at Lakemont Park's new Keystone Falls 18-Hole Mini-Golf Course. Participants received gifts and were invited to the US Foods Neighborhood BBQ afterwards for great food and networking. The mini-golf tournament is a great team-building event for businesses and their employees, and a great alternative for those who are not regular golfers.

US Foods sponsored the Neighborhood BBQ on Monday evening in conjunction with the golf tournament. The dinner was provided by US Foods and their chefs, and Travis Seymore of Alto Markets cooked several different flavors of wings provided by Imler's Poultry. Beverages were provided by Furrer Beverage and a wine tasting was provided by DellaVino Imports. Dana Thompson and

Thompson Pharmacy provided the Italian theme décor for the event. Golfers, sponsors, and OOT grant recipients enjoyed networking on the outdoor patio.

The Neighborhood BBQ included honoring Betsy Hurst, who passed away a week before the golf tournament. Betsy had been involved with Operation Our Town since its inception and served on the Steering Committee and Golf Committee. Betsy was instrumental in the success of the OOT Golf Tournament and will be greatly missed at our future golf tournaments. We also recognized Altoona First Savings Bank with a 10-year donor plaque. The evening ended with a fun glow in the dark golf ball throw contest to win golf packages and prizes.

The golf tournament was held on Tuesday and golfers had the opportunity to choose from an 8:00am or 1:00pm tee time. Sheetz was the main food sponsor on Tuesday and provided a delicious breakfast, lunch, and snacks on the golf course. The golf tournament included the "Golden Ticket" contest in which ten golfers in the morning session and ten golfers in the afternoon session had 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 winning golf teams were: 1st Place: Darryl Owens, Matt Neumeyer, Harry Benjamin, John Ventura. 2nd Place: Todd Homan, Danny Green, Richard Fiore Jr, Doug Meyers. 3rd Place: Jim Burke Sr, Jim Burke Jr, Dave McKelvey, Matt Mielnik. The overall Closest to the Pin winner was Ted Fiess. The winning teams all received special golf gifts.

Save-the-Date for Operation Our Town's 8th Annual Golf Tournament that will be held on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at Park Hills Golf Club. Golfers will still have the choice of an 8:00am or 1:00pm tee time. Sheetz will also be providing a delicious breakfast and lunch for morning and afternoon golfers to enjoy before they tee off, so come hungry! We will also be doing another exciting \$5,000 putting contest for golfers!

Please consider supporting Operation Our Town through our annual golf tournament, as it 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!

STATE CONTINUES EFFORT TO COMBAT OPIOID ADDICTION CRISIS

By Senator Judy Ward (R-30)

Addiction impacts all of us, not just the individual with the addiction. The legislature's policies to prevent drug abuse and educate the public about the dangers of opioids are vital to curbing this epidemic.

It was recently announced that the rate of opioid prescriptions in Pennsylvania is now below the federal average and 2017-2018 data shows a decline of overdose deaths by 18 percent. While this is certainly encouraging, the State continues to operate under an emergency declaration and enact policies to aid in restricting access to opioids and assist in treatment.

The Governor recently signed the eighth renewal of the Opioid Disaster Declaration, which was first approved in January 2018. Through the collaborative efforts of various state agencies, organizations, and stakeholders, Pennsylvania has implemented more than 45 treatment centers which have provided a level-of-care assessment for substance use disorder to more than 18,500 individuals; secured more than \$114 million in federal dollars for our opioid response efforts since 2017; distributed nearly

6,800 doses of naloxone free to members of the public; and answered about 30,000 calls to the Get Help Now Hotline regarding treatment or general assistance, to name just a few things.

SB 572 was recently signed into law, now Act 112, which



will help identify individuals in need of treatment and prevent prescription drug diversion by requiring new patients who need a prescribed opioid regimen to enter into treatment agreements with a prescriber.

The General Assembly is also continuing its efforts to address this problem with consideration of new initiatives that have been proposed during the 2019-20 legislative session. In June, the Senate approved

a package of bills currently awaiting action in the House. The package includes Senate Bill 93 which cracks down on drug dealers by creating a new statute establishing a second degree felony for the delivery or distribution of an illicit drug that results in "serious bodily injury" to the user. Also, Senate Bill 112 would limit the prescription for a controlled substance containing an opioid to seven days, unless there is a medical emergency. Additionally, Senate Bill 118 creates a Recovery-to-Work pilot program to connect individuals in recovery with occupations. Lastly, Senate Bill 432 and 675 improve prescription drug monitoring and help prevent the abuse of the addiction treatment drug buprenorphine by requiring certification of office-based prescribers and limiting its use.

So far, our experience in Pennsylvania demonstrates that progress can be made when state government effectively partners with health care professionals and others to implement sound policies to address the opioid and heroin epidemic. I believe we have made positive steps in this battle, but we need to continue our efforts.

REP. JOYCE

Continued from A1

identify further opportunities to fix this crisis. During 2019, I introduced two bills to prevent drug abuse, and I will continue to lead on this issue.

To end this crisis, we must stop the flow of illicit drugs into Pennsylvania. In 2019, I traveled to the southern border where I witnessed U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel intercepting illicit drugs. Though the border is nearly 2,000 miles away from Blair County, the heroin, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and other drugs flowing across the border are coming into

central Pennsylvania – killing our neighbors and harming our community. As your Congressman, I continue to advocate for strong border security to protect central Pennsylvania from the dangerous drugs, cartels, and violence on the border.

As a nation, we have made considerable progress in the fight against drug abuse and addiction. Over the past year, we have raised awareness, promoted solutions, and achieved lifesaving results, and I look forward to continuing this fight together in 2020.

Drug Prosecutor

Continued from A3

crimes as well. These crimes include criminal homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, gun crimes, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and theft cases. Additionally, the District Attorney's Office continues to work closely with police and the coroner's office to aggressively investigate, charge, and prosecute drug delivery resulting in death cases. Law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office have been successful in investigating the chain of command for several of

those drug organizations, such that the suppliers were also arrested and charged with drug delivery resulting in death. Although many of the drug delivery resulting in death cases are still pending and awaiting trial, in 2019, the District Attorney's Office obtained a conviction by guilty plea in one of these cases that resulted in a significant period of incarceration in a State Correctional Facility of an individual who was involved in multiple drug deliveries.

2019 GRANT RECIPIENTS

By Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

Operation Our Town holds a grant cycle once a year to support programs aimed at the education and prevention of drug use in Blair County. All nonprofit organizations, schools, and government agencies are eligible for grant consideration.

The 2020 Grant Cycle will open on May 1, 2020 with a deadline for grant applications on June 5, 2020. Applicants have the option of using the "\$2,999 & Under" or "\$3,000 & Above" grant applications to apply for funding. Please note that both grant applications have been revised and updated, so the updated versions must be used to apply for funding. To access the updated grant applications, please visit www.operationourtown.org and click on the Grants tab on the homepage.

A total of over \$44,000 in grants were awarded by Operation Our Town during the 2019 Grant Cycle to the following programs:

- AASD Adult Education Program: HSE Unlocks Doors
- Altoona Area School District ELECT Program: ELECT Program Workshops & Expectant Fathers
- Arts Altoona: After School Arts Program (ASAP)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Blair County: School-based SMART Mentoring Program
- Blair County Juvenile Probation Office: Recognize, Reinforce &

Restore: Roads to Positive Behavioral Change

- Blair County Library System: Family Place Workshops for Blair County Libraries
- Blair Regional YMCA: Family Y-Nite
- Central Blair Recreation & Park Commission: Community Special Events Series
- Child Advocates of Blair County: CHOICES Summer Program
- Family Services, Inc.: Blair County Human Trafficking Taskforce Initiative
- Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation: After School Program
- Refuge Youth Network: Student Led Programming (SLP)
- The Nehemiah Project: The Wright Place for Kids' Students Participating to Encourage Life & Learning (SPELL)
- The ROCK: Reaching Out to Community Kids
- Tyrone Elementary School: Summer Reading Bookmobile
- United Way of Blair County's Family Resource Center: Parents as Teachers Program and Make Parenting a Pleasure Parenting Class
- Young Life of Central Pennsylvania: Young Life Camp



Healthy Blair County Coalition

By Coleen Heim, Director

The overall goal of the Healthy Blair County Coalition is to promote healthy living through community interventions that result in the improvement of social, economic, and environmental factors. The Steering Committee collaborates with a broader group of community stakeholders on whom the community decisions would have an impact, who had an interest in the effort, who represented diverse sectors of the community, and who were likely to be involved in developing and implementing strategies and activities. Currently, there are 141 community partners who represent individuals and organizations such as social services, government, planning, public health, education, hospitals, community foundations, healthcare providers/behavioral health, businesses, economic development, criminal justice, libraries, drug and alcohol, health insurance/managed care, media, recreation, etc. These community partners have contributed by participating in the needs assessment, attending meetings, joining work groups and committees, funding and sponsorships, promotion of HBCC, and/or participating/sponsoring programs and activities that support the strategies

identified in the community health needs assessment. In 2019, we conducted our fourth community needs assessment. This report, Blair County Profile 4: Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan, which is available on our website, includes community and household challenges that focused on: economics, education, environment, health, housing, leisure activity, safety, social, transportation and other. The report also highlights the outcomes, accomplishments, and future strategies that will be implemented over the next three years. A random sample of 3,000 households was drawn from the 51,638 households in Blair County so that each zip code was represented according to its percentage of total households in the county. In addition, surveys were sent to key leaders, service providers, and faith-based organizations, while interviews were conducted with healthcare providers. The results in this survey indicate that 75% of respondents felt that people in their neighborhood help each other out when they have a problem. Residents felt that the best things about living in Blair County are related to being close to grocery stores/shopping (73%), close

to physicians and medical facilities (66%), and close to parks, recreation, and sports (64%). The worst things about living in Blair County were drug use/abuse (67%), roads and alleys in need of repair (58%), and youth with nothing to do (47%).

The following chart lists the top challenges as identified by residents in the last four needs assessments:

2007	2012	2015	2018
Crime	Lack of jobs	Obesity	Alcohol and other Drugs
Alcohol and other drugs	Alcohol and other drugs	Alcohol and other drugs	Obesity
Unemployment or underemployment	Unemployment or underemployment	Lack of jobs	Overuse/addiction to cell phone, social media, internet, etc*
Lack of jobs	Obesity	Poverty/lack of adequate income	Impaired/distracted driving*
Lack of affordable medical care	Poverty	Unemployment or underemployment	Poverty/lack of adequate income
Poverty	Crime	Smoking and tobacco	Smoking, tobacco, and e-cigarettes*
		Access to Dental Care	

39.6% of respondents identified having anxiety, stress, or depression as the top challenge within their household, followed by obesity at 37.5. Ninety-three percent (93.2%) of key leaders agreed that the community is one where leaders from various sectors come together and work productively to address critical community issues. For community challenges, they identified poverty/lack of adequate income (89.8%),

alcohol/drug abuse (86.5%), obesity (83%), and adults with mental health issues (83%) as the highest ranked among community issues. Healthcare providers ranked drug and alcohol addiction education and treatment (64.7%) as the top community health need followed by obesity education (41.2%), mental health needs (41.2%), and various issues related to access to primary care physicians (29.4%). Service providers were

asked what they believe are the highest ranking community challenges. Poverty/lack of adequate income, alcohol and/or drug abuse, and smoking, tobacco, and the use of e-cigarettes tied for first place at 100%. These were followed by mental health or emotional issues (97.8%) and family violence (93.3%). Members of the faith-based community that responded to the survey reported that poverty/lack of jobs, alcohol and other drugs, obesity,

and impaired/distracted driving are our number one community challenges (100%). There was consistency among all groups when asked “What are the greatest needs in health education and prevention services in Blair County?” Mental health/depression/suicide, alcohol and other drugs, and obesity prevention received the highest percentages. Data were obtained from a variety of federal, state, and local sources to track changes and trends over time, as well as to answer whether research supports or does not support the perceptions of stakeholders and the general public as reflected in survey results. This community health needs assessment confirmed that Blair County has many assets, including community leaders, businesses, service providers, community organizations, and individuals. Those individuals who took time to complete the household survey and those who dedicated many hours as members of the Healthy Blair County Coalition are some of what makes Blair County a great place to live. But it is apparent that there are significant challenges, many of which are impacting the quality of life and health of our local community and the nation.

Continued on A14

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BLAIR COUNTY DRUG HOTLINE & CHIDLIN STREAMLINED

By Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

The Blair County District Attorney's Office, Operation Our Town, and PS Solutions have worked together to streamline the process of distributing calls and reports to Blair County Law Enforcement jurisdictions relating to drug and child abuse tips and cases. PS Solutions, a local Altoona business, designed and upgraded the District Attorney's Office to a new system that will allow them to better disseminate hotline calls and keep a record of all of the calls. Joseph Merilli, Owner/Managing Partner of PS Solutions, said, "PS Solutions is very happy to work with the DA's Office to help improve the recording, distribution, and accuracy of both drug and child abuse cases. Through this new system, it will speed up the time it takes to record and send cases to jurisdictions throughout Blair County. It was a pleasure working with Randy Feathers and the team within the DA's Office and Operation Our Town." First Assistant District Attorney Peter Weeks added, "The District Attorney's Office is grateful for the support of PS Solutions and Operation Our Town. The new system will allow the District Attorney's Office to immediately refer citizen complaints to the correct

law enforcement agency and track any related investigations." The ChildLine Hotline is a mandated statewide child protective services program designed to accept child abuse referrals and general child well-being concerns, and transmit the information quickly to the appropriate investigating agency. ChildLine is responsible for receiving verbal and electronic referrals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The ChildLine toll-free hotline is 1-800-932-0313. Push Out the Pusher is a drug hotline that Blair County residents can report tips and information to anonymously regarding suspected drug activity. Callers have the option of leaving a voicemail message or speaking with a live operator at the Blair County 911 Center. Tips are transmitted to the appropriate law enforcement jurisdiction for investigation. The Push Out the Pusher drug hotline is 814-693-3020.



Families United for Change

By Leslie Turner & Marianne Sinisi

Families United for Change was launched by Marianne Sinisi when she experienced the loss of her son, Shawn, after years of trying to help him combat addiction through the drug and alcohol system. She discovered that the process to find help with recovery, for family members of a loved one struggling with addiction, was overwhelming and exhausting. She decided to start an advocate group to demand change. Marianne's son passed away a year ago after repeated attempts to find the best care. As a parent, one will do whatever they can to save their child from suffering or death. Often, however, parents and loved ones are refrained from involvement in determining care, treatment type, and facilities. What other disease isolates parents and caregivers from helping determine the best possible care for their children? Marianne's journey of trying to help her son included repeated battles with the drug and alcohol system, the judicial system, the mental health system, and the medical system. Constant calls to professionals seeking care that would best meet all of her son's needs. Struggles to

be kept involved in aftercare plans and terminations. Marianne sought facilities that could provide both drug and alcohol treatment and mental health treatment to address addiction and PTSD related issues with her son, as well as her family, through the struggles, fears, and complications of the vicious disease. Marianne eventually lost her son to the disease of addiction. Through the loss of her son, Marianne became determined to make changes in the system that is losing thousands to death and addiction daily. She started Families United for Change



to allow loved ones of those struggling with addiction to have a voice. Families United for Change consists of family members affected by addiction. The goal of this group is to create a safe space for people that have been touched by addiction. The group works to increase awareness, educate, and help to make change in the public perception and treatment of substance use disorder. This

group is united in advocacy to change the stigma associated with dependency. Families United for Change is a grass roots effort focused on bringing about change to a system in need of repair. Marianne hopes to work collaboratively with treatment providers and systems working with individuals battling addiction to improve overall care and family involvement with the treatment of this disease. Loved ones who want to be involved and can help should never be isolated from treatments, alternative treatments, or resources available. Families United for Change also hopes to increase awareness into alternative treatment options and strategies for those suffering with addiction. The group is open to anyone wanting to be a part of this grass roots effort to promote change, include family and loved ones of addicts, and gather alternative treatment strategies being used across the nation and the world. We welcome ideas, creativity, and anyone with a desire to best help those in search of recovery and improved health. For more information, contact (814) 934-8067 or familiesunitedforchange01@gmail.com.



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BUSINESS

OOT Pharmacy Roundtable

By Greg Drew, R.Ph., President, Value Drug Company; Chairman, Pharmacy Roundtable; Chairman, Healthcare Distribution Alliance

I'm very excited to relate the Pharmacy Roundtable's accomplishments during 2019. I would like to start by thanking the Operation Our Town Board of Directors for their unconditional support of our work and thank the Pharmacy Roundtable members that faithfully arrive at our 7:15 AM meetings every month. Most importantly, I would like to thank Shawna Hoover, Operation Our Town Executive Coordinator, for keeping us moving and fastidiously tracking our progress.

The Roundtable exists to perpetuate pharmacy's role in the opioid crisis, bringing the strength in numbers of community pharmacists in controlling diversion of opioid drugs which otherwise would be available for illicit use and provide opportunities for addiction. Our Roundtable is comprised of pharmacists, medical prescribers,

nurses, law enforcement professionals, addiction treatment professionals, and legislators dedicated to our principles, working collaboratively to help reduce the improper distribution of opioids and addiction.

The Drug Enforcement Administration reported in September 2019 that Blair County Drug-Related Overdose Deaths per 100,000 people in Blair County reduced from 39 to 24, or a decrease of nearly 40%. I would like to think that the efforts of Operation Our Town, including the Pharmacy Roundtable, was a contributor to this reduction in unnecessary deaths.

Many of these lives were saved due to the increased distribution of Naloxone, an overdose rescue drug to those with addiction, and those family and friends that can assist someone experiencing

an overdose. Pharmacists play a key role in arming patients and caregivers with the overdose rescue drug Naloxone through a program developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, whereas Physician General Rachel Levine has issued a standing order allowing pharmacists to dispense Naloxone under a protocol developed for this purpose. We also believe that efforts by the pharmaceutical supply chain of manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacies have reduced the supply of prescription opioids available for diversion to abuse.

Work continued in the pharmacies this past year through Project Lifeline, an effort established by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, administered by the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, and supported by a group of community pharmacies and Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships. This program is piloting protocols which enable pharmacists to screen and counsel opioid patients, and when appropriate, refer them for counseling and

treatment. I was pleased to be in attendance this past month in New York City when Dr. Jan Pringle, Director of the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy Program Evaluation and Research Unit, and Blair County's Judy Rosser, Executive Director of Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships, were awarded the Excellence in Patient Care Award by the NACDS Foundation at the Annual Foundation Dinner, for their work in opioid abuse prevention work. We are very proud indeed of our partners in Project Lifeline. Judy's tireless efforts in Blair County are one of the primary reasons for the success we have achieved.

The Pharmacy Roundtable continued its mission of pharmacist awareness communications through our quarterly newsletter for community pharmacists on timely issues relating to opioid abuse and diversion prevention. Our efforts will continue in 2020 educating pharmacists, prescribers, patients, and the media on the risks of prescription opioid medications, as well

as community awareness of the issues facing us. A focus for the upcoming year will be an awareness and educational effort to better prepare pharmacists for discussion with their patients using prescription opioid medications for short-term pain relief such as dental procedures, bone fractures, bad sprains, and other short-term therapies. The medication for these conditions are often prescribed with drug quantities in excess of the amount needed for the short-term treatment, and counseling patients on the danger of addiction, even with short-term use, and how to dispose of unused medications to eliminate diversion of these prescription medications is critical to our efforts.

Thanks, once again, to our tireless committee members, arriving monthly at 7:15 AM on a Friday, to make our community a better place to live. And a big shout out to our Blair County pharmacists, champions for our patients as we fight the opioid crisis our country faces.

Central PA Landlord Association Report

By Bill Kitt, President

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 full-day landlord educational workshop was held on November 1, 2019. There were over 90 people in attendance. The workshop was a joint effort between Operation Our Town, Altoona Housing Authority, and the Central PA Landlord Association. The topics included:

- Magisterial District Judge FAQ
- Rental Inspection Checklists
- Veteran's Housing & Homelessness Regulations
- Fair Housing Regulations
- Signs of Illegal Drug Activity
- Prepared Renters Program
- Eviction Process
- Mold Identification
- Blair County Community Action Agency Programs
- Pest Infestation/Bed Bugs
- Relationship with Blair Co. Adult Probation & Parole Office
- Keeping Domestic Violence Victims Safe/ New Homeless Shelter Update
- Lead Remediation

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 workshop in the fall of 2020. 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
- Notice of Fair Housing
- Drug Activity-Rental Properties

HELPING TO KEEP YOU SAFE

Value Drug helps pharmacists fight the prevalence of opioid abuse within our own community and also provides independent pharmacies with the tools and resources they need to combat opioid abuse in their communities.



VALUE
DRUG COMPANY

DUNCANSVILLE | PENNSYLVANIA
WWW.VALUEDRUGCO.COM

- Section 8 Housing
- Student Housing
- Disability Resources
- Veterans
- Central PA Landlord Association
- PA 211 information
- Blair County 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
- Online business directory
- Extensive online document library
- Membership to

- Johnstown Credit Bureau
- Credit checks
- Background checks
- Collection services
- Issues addressed with local government
- Educational workshops
- Membership to PROA
- Legislative updates
- Monthly meetings
- Address current issues
- Informative and educational speakers
- 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:
www.centralpalandlords.com
William Kitt, President
814-695-2138

REPORT DRUG ACTIVITY

PUSH OUT
THE PUSHER

OperationOurTown.org

693-3020

LOCAL

2019 Blair County Police Dept. Drug Collection Boxes Data

LOCATION	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	TOTAL
ALTOONA POLICE DEPT.	151.25 lbs.	148.5 lbs.	149.8 lbs.	167.75 lbs.	617.3 lbs.
HOLLIDAYSBURG POLICE DEPT.	83 lbs.	175 lbs.	63 lbs.	69 lbs.	390 lbs.
LOGAN TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPT.	11.5 lbs.	28.5 lbs.	17.5 lbs.	21.5 lbs.	79 lbs.
TYRONE POLICE DEPT.	47.18 lbs.	84.5 lbs.	42.12 lbs.	94.06 lbs.	267.86 lbs.
TOTAL	292.93 lbs.	436.5 lbs.	272.42 lbs.	352.31 lbs.	1354.16 lbs.

2019 Tee Off Against Drugs Student Golf Tournament

By Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

In addition to the main golf tournament, Operation Our Town held its Annual Tee Off Against Drugs Student Golf Tournament on September 16, 2019 at Park Hills Golf Club for high school golf teams from Blair and surrounding counties. A total of 156 students from 27 school districts participated, which is the most students that have participated in the event!

To start off the event, Sheetz provided a delicious lunch for all student golfers and coaches, ice cream was provided by Ritchey's Dairy, and Operation Our Town provided gifts for the student golfers. Dinner was held after golf, which included wings cooked by Travis Seymore of Alto Markets, and an Italian dinner provided by US Foods.

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 team's school district

the education and prevention of drug use. The winning boys team was Philipsburg-Osceola Senior High School and the winning girls team was State College Area High School.

Tournament will be held on Monday, September 14, 2020 at Park Hills Golf Club. This year's tournament will include the return of the \$2,500 grant to the winning boys and girls

school program that is aimed at the education and prevention of drug use. Businesses also have the opportunity to sponsor a school district of their choice for \$500, which will include signage displayed at the event on September 14th.

We look forward to continuing the Tee Off Against Drugs Student Golf Tournament to educate 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!



to be used for a current or new school program that is aimed at

The 2020 Tee Off Against Drugs Student Golf

team's school district to be used for a current or new

on how you can support this year's tournament!

CONTINUING THE FIGHT ON BLIGHT

By Mayor Matt Pacifico, City of Altoona

Blight takes a toll on communities in a number of ways. Statistics show that blighted, abandoned property can be a danger to the public and can lead to an increase in crime. Not only does blight create a negative effect in our neighborhoods, it also impacts both adjacent property owners and the community as a whole with the resulting loss in real estate tax revenue. The City dedicates significant resources on enforcement actions against the owners of these properties.

The City has made excellent progress this year in its efforts to fight blight, and I'm pleased to report that the City has been successful in implementing many of the tools outlined by the City's Blight Task Force. In March of 2018, the Task Force prioritized strategies for future efforts, including the establishment of a land bank, expanding the City's Home Repair and Rental Rehabilitation Assistance programs, expanding implementation of Act 90 of 2010 which allows the City to revoke permits and lien personal and real estate assets of property owners who have walked away from their properties, and engagement

with the County's Tax Claim Bureau relative to the sale of properties at tax sale.

I introduced legislation in September 2018 to designate the City of Altoona Redevelopment Authority to act as a land bank, and the legislation was adopted by City Council on October 10, 2018. The City became the first municipality in the

Commonwealth to designate its redevelopment authority to act as its land bank. During

2019, with the assistance of the City's blight consultant, Winnie Branton of Branton Strategies, the Authority has adopted policies and procedures for the land bank's operation.

The use of Act 90 of 2010 is now utilized as an effective

City began revoking permits and licenses of owners with repeated property maintenance and rental violations, and the County is then notified of property owners with revocations prior to the tax sale. Additionally, the City now aggressively

information to be provided.

Finally, I am proud to report on the success of the second annual Altoona Community Clean Up Day, held on September 21, 2019. My office spearheaded a partnership with Operation Our Town, Blair Companies, United Way of Blair County, and Altoona-Blair County Development Corporation to organize over 150 volunteers from the community to assist homeowners with basic maintenance and upkeep of the exterior of their homes. Volunteers trimmed hedges, weeded sidewalks, and collected litter and debris. The outpouring of support from businesses that donated, the churches that assembled large groups of volunteers, and all of the other organizations and individuals who volunteered was amazing to see! Without everyone's commitment, the event would not have been possible and for that, I am truly appreciative.

We all should be proud of our community and I remain committed to working with you to continue to move the City forward!



**Blair County
CRIME SOLVERS**
814-695-7555

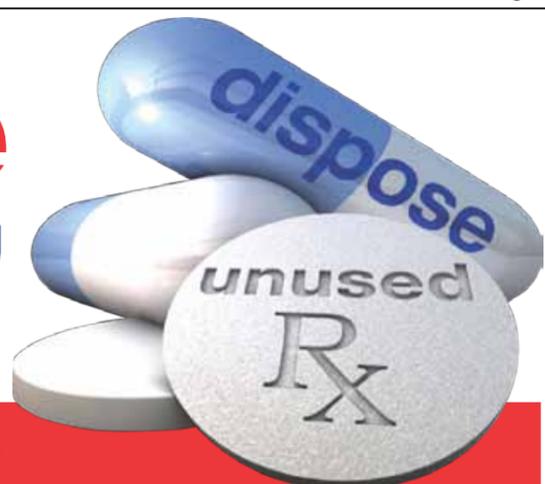


Pictured: Altoona Community Clean Up Day, 2019

enforcement tool, specifically with blighted and abandoned properties. In early 2019, the

identifies vacant and foreclosed properties, and has established a registry requiring local contact

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
- **Hollidaysburg Police Dept.**
401 Blair Street Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 695-3711
Monday – Friday, 7:00am – 11:00pm
- **Logan Township Police Department**
100 Chief Logan Circle Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 949-3364
Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 4:00pm
- **Tyrone Borough Police Dept.**
1100 Logan Avenue Tyrone, PA 16686
(814) 684-1364
Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm
- **Walgreens Pharmacy**
508 E Plank Rd. Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 944-3236
Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 9:00pm
Saturday, 9:00am – 6:00pm
Sunday, 10:00am – 6:00pm
- **State Police-Troop G - Hollidaysburg**
1510 N Juniata St. Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 696-6100
24 hours per day / 7 days per week
- **Giant Eagle Pharmacy - Altoona**
181 Sophira Ln. Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 946-4267
Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat 9am-8pm,
Sun 10am-5pm



Project Supported by:



Grant-Funded Program Administered by:



VAPING | *Continued from A1*

The patients report using over 152 different product brands, most containing THC.

In Pennsylvania, our 2017 PAYS (Pennsylvania Youth Survey) data shows the past 30-day use for Blair County vaping as follows: 10.9% of 8th graders report vaping, when asked what they are vaping, 7.1% said marijuana. As for 10th grade, 22.4% report vaping and 6.2% report vaping marijuana. 28.1% of our seniors reported vaping and 11.2% of those reported vaping marijuana.

Although we are seeing progress in the investigation and response, we must remain vigilant.

pods with e-liquids of their choosing are still permitted to offer flavors. But, by May 12, 2020, e-cig manufacturers and vape shops that mix their own e-liquids to sell to the public are required to submit to the FDA a premarket tobacco product application (PMTA). This PMTA will demonstrate that their product “is appropriate for the protection of the public health.” So far, only two tobacco giants, Phillip Morris International and British American Tobacco, have been able to afford the extensive and complex process of submitting a PMTA.

Pennsylvania Governor



National data show that certain groups of EVALI patients released from the hospital are more likely to be re-hospitalized or die.

The only full-proof, safe route is to refrain from the use of all e-cigarette or vaping products.

The President did recently support the FDA in deciding to ban e-cig flavors for a period of time.

But there are two exceptions: Menthol and tobacco flavors will still be permitted and the ban only affects “closed systems” in which the e-liquid pods are sealed at the manufacturer. “Open systems” in which users can refill the

Tom Wolf signed a smoking-related bill that will expand the definition of “tobacco products” to include e-cigarettes and vaping products and prohibit the use of tobacco products in school buildings, on school buses, and on school district property. This will officially go into effect on July 1, 2020.

These steps made by the FDA, President, and our Governor, along with the recent decision to raise the federal minimum age to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21, will hopefully be the foundation of tackling this epidemic.

Criminal Justice Advisory Board Report

Continued from A3

The court appreciates the efforts that have been made in this regard. It was noted that Blair County Prison Warden Abbie Tate has been a valued partner with BDAP. She has worked to coordinate BDAP to get people who are incarcerated connected with services. BDAP began with 10 staff in 2010 and now has 45. This has helped them to expand case management and provide more services to the community. The court commends Warden Tate and Ms. Rosser for working together. The efforts of BDAP help to alleviate the strains that substance abuse puts on the criminal justice system.

In September, Ashley Owens again addressed the board to mark the CAC's two year anniversary of its establishment. The center received a grant from Operation Our Town to provide training on human trafficking. This training gives law enforcement the ability to spot the red flags which help identify cases involving human trafficking. The CAC also planned to hire a full-time mental health case manager. Chief Public Defender Russ Montgomery informed the board that a state grant may be available to pay for expert fees in capital cases. Attorney Montgomery expressed interest in applying for the grant in order to defray costs at the county level. Warden Tate presented the board with statistics and information regarding the

prison population. There was a site visit for the Stepping Up Initiative in September by state representatives. The hope is that Blair County can pair with other counties to implement these initiatives that will maintain services for those whose mental health issues have caused them to intersect with the criminal justice system.

In November, the board listened to a presentation by Regina Klevan from the Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN). EARN is a welfare to work funded program through the Department of Human Services. EARN provides unpaid and paid work experience to those with barriers to employment, including mental health issues and criminal histories. Their goal is to help overcome these barriers in order to help their clients work and be retained by their employers. The program meets the work requirements of typically single mothers receiving temporary cash assistance. EARN assists with obtaining driver's licenses, obtaining a GED, and child care.

The court values all of the input from everyone who participates and contributes to CJAB. As the year closes, we should all look back on our accomplishments in the past twelve months while remaining focused on collaborating to serve justice in our community in 2020.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from A2

medical professionals, to name a few. These partnerships are combining agencies at the federal, state, and local levels, and crossing municipal, county, and state lines. Pennsylvania is taking an active role in building these partnerships to develop new and innovative strategies to combat this epidemic.

With additional funding from Operation Our Town in 2019, local law enforcement was able to execute 44 drug related search warrants and buy busts. These search warrants resulted in the seizure of various controlled substances, firearms, and other contraband. Local law enforcement conducted a number of saturation patrols and made a total of 139 arrests of subjects who possessed, possessed with the intent to deliver, or delivered a controlled substance.

In 2020, federal, state, and local law enforcement will continue to actively investigate drug trafficking in Blair County, they will conduct these investigations with new partnerships with other law enforcement agencies on all levels.

Law enforcement will also actively participate in partnerships with education, treatment, and medical professionals with new and innovative ways to combat this epidemic to make Blair County a better, safer place to live.

What Could I Possibly Do?

By Lisa Hann, Executive Director, Family Services, Inc.

Micah 6:8: And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Frequently, I find moments where I've asked myself "what could I possibly do?" Some situations seem so much bigger than the resources I have and the impact I could make. I'm only one person and the situation in front of me is overwhelming.

Thank goodness there are others who sit around the table with me on the third Thursday of the month at 2pm and share their hearts on the topic of addiction and the needs of those dealing with addiction in Blair County. The Operation Our Town Faith Based Roundtable is made up of pastors, laity, agency staff, and concerned citizens seeking to solve a big problem. Addiction is like a cancer that is eating away at our young people, the family structure, and our way of life. The addict is consumed by the need for drugs above all else and that leaves in its wake a generation of grandparents raising grandchildren when they expected to be retiring. It also leaves families mourning the loss of their loved one and young people with legal

histories that close doors for them.

The lunch and learn hosted by the Faith Based Roundtable in 2019 touched on resources available to grandparents and foster parents who have stepped up to raise the next generation. Blair County is blessed to have many social service agencies who work together to provide support to the secondary victims of addiction, but there is still a shortage of families to foster these children.

The Faith Based Roundtable meets regularly to talk and pray about the urgent and immediate needs of those in recovery and their families. Resources such as parenting classes, support groups, and clothing giveaways are all shared so that every need that comes to light can be addressed. No one person at the table has all the answers, but as a group, we can solve the problems that have been brought to us.

What could you possibly do? If you have asked yourself this question or if God has put this upon your heart, consider joining us at the next Roundtable meeting. Contact Lisa Hann at lhann@familyservicesinc.net

2019 Early Childhood Education Roundtable Report

By Rodney Green, OOT Early Childhood Roundtable Chair

During 2019, the OOT Early Childhood Education Roundtable continued its mission by:

- Advocating for the expansion of high-quality early learning programs;
- Serving as a mentor to emerging childcare advocacy groups;
- Working with valued partners such as the United Way of Blair County, the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission, and the Blair County Chamber BASICS Committee;
- Learning more about how to address the emerging crisis of "affordable" high-quality early learning programs.

One notable accomplishment was in the area of advocacy. Individuals from the Early Childhood Education Roundtable worked closely with local legislative and business leaders to advocate for increased funding for childcare services in the annual Pennsylvania State Budget. We were pleased to see the 2019-20 state budget included funding to expand home visiting services, to

increase the number of slots in high-quality and affordable childcare programs, and to provide additional funding for childcare subsidies. All of these increases greatly benefited our region. As a result, we have seen more slots available for Pre-K Counts programs and have also witnessed a decrease in the waiting lists for some childcare services.

Nevertheless, even with increased state funding, the Early Childhood Education Roundtable is well aware of the need to address the "affordability" issue of childcare services. Blair County is already dealing with many issues related to poverty and low income and there is no doubt that "affordable childcare" is a significant life issue. For many families, the cost of childcare impacts can be economically unmanageable. One national survey estimates that it costs an average of \$213 to pay for a week at a childcare center. The same survey noted that over 70% of families spent over 10% of their income on childcare. Faced with tough economic choices, high quality childcare is not a viable choice

for parents who are working additional jobs and long hours.

One approach we have taken to deal with this issue is to better educate our business and political leaders about this issue. During 2019, representatives from our Early Childhood Education Roundtable made presentations to business management groups. We also took the time to learn more about ways that businesses can offer tax-friendly employee benefits that can be used to defray the cost of childcare services.

The Early Childhood Education Roundtable also continued to work closely with the Blair Chamber BASICS Committee to support their campaign to create an Early Learning Impact Fund. The proceeds from the fund will be used to creatively support the expansion of affordable high-quality early learning programs.

For 2020, there is no doubt that our priorities will continue to focus on improving the childcare programs and supports for all families in Blair County.

Operation Our Town K - 12 Education Roundtable Report

By Robert Gildea, Superintendent of Schools, Hollidaysburg Area School District

The Operation Our Town K-12 Education Roundtable, consisting of superintendents from the seven Blair County School Districts, continued our dual focus during the 2019 calendar year of drug and alcohol education and addressing the factors that contribute to the likelihood of future drug use and abuse.

In a continuing effort to ensure school safety and student wellness needs are being met, all Blair County Schools actively implemented the Safe2Say hotline in January of 2019. Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program run by the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General. The program teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to "say something." This anonymous 24-hour

hotline enables anyone to call in a concern regarding school safety or the personal safety of a student who may be considering self-harm. Depending on the severity of the concern, the report is forwarded to a school representative, local law enforcement, or both. Some Blair County districts have initiated additional resources to monitor student activity on school issued devices in an effort to identify activity that may cause a risk to students.

Numerous initiatives have been implemented in all Blair County Schools to address the wellness needs of our students. The most recent Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) identified an alarming increase in the number of students who have feelings of depression, disconnectedness, and low self-worth, all of which can be factors that contribute to future substance abuse. Mental health counselors, screeners, and

trauma-informed education to better enable adults to identify students at risk, as well as other intervention measures, have been implemented with the goal of meeting student wellness needs before poor decisions are considered.

Though drug use by teens has gradually seen a decline in our area, the PAYS Survey, administered to 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students across the Commonwealth, also indicated the use of vaping devices, both regionally and state-wide, are nearly twice the national average. A number of districts across Blair County have been working with Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships to educate parents and students on the trend and the harmful effects of vaping.

Work continues with the Blair County Truancy Task Force. Throughout 2019, district representatives continued to work collaboratively with Children, Youth, and Families,

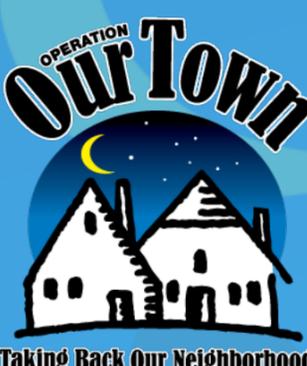
as well as Blair County judges and district magistrates, to further develop a unified plan to reduce chronic absenteeism. Blair County school districts have joined with the Healthy Blair County Coalition, the Blair County United Way, and the Blair County Attendance Task Force to focus on making improved attendance a top priority this school year through the BE THERE! Attendance Campaign. The Campaign emphasizes positive messaging and incentives that can encourage all students to attend school regularly. Communicating and working with parents is also a priority of the campaign and its partners.

Through the initiative, districts are working harder at letting families know about the critical role they play in getting children to school on time every day. Parents want the best for their children, including success in school. But many misunderstand how

missing just two days a month can put a child academically at risk. Schools across the country are dealing with chronic absenteeism, a hidden crisis that is undermining student achievement as early as kindergarten. Chronic absenteeism is especially dire for students who live in low economic circumstances, as they are most likely to face challenges such as poor health, unreliable transportation (not just to get to school, but to stay after for academic support) and family circumstances that obligate them to stay home, such as lack of child care. The BE THERE Campaign is aimed at working with families to develop good attendance habits, which are central to student achievement and to our broader efforts to help students reach the finish line with skills ready for work or post-secondary schooling.

Pick up your new

window clings,
magnets,
& yard signs



SEE SOMETHING?

SAY SOMETHING!



693-3020

Available at
Located at **the OOT Office**
5508 6th Ave, Rear - Altoona, PA 16602

SUBOXONE: COMBATting ABUSE OF WELL-INTENTIONED MEDICATION

By Representative Jim Gregory, 80th District

As we recognize and memorialize the three-year anniversary this month of the 2016 tragic shooting death of Pennsylvania State Trooper Landon Weaver of Martinsburg, we realize the need for a regulation conversation of Suboxone prescriptions in Blair County, as well as the Commonwealth.

Trooper Weaver's death was reportedly the result of the use of a gun that was purchased with proceeds from an illegal Suboxone deal in Huntingdon County (Huntingdon Daily News, 1/3/17).

In Harrisburg, the Human Services Committee of which I'm a member and Secretary, is debating the proper use of buprenorphine/suboxone, a medication developed to help those addicted to opioids as they strive for recovery. We need to be careful with this.

Some office-based prescribers take cash payments for large quantities of the drug without providing individualized assessments or treatment for the illness. Suboxone can also be abused or diverted to people who do not have prescriptions and is sold on the streets or smuggled into our county jails.

For example, very recently in Blair County, an inmate is facing contraband charges (Altoona Mirror 12/13/19). "Suboxone is found in more than 40% of all illegal drug seizures in Pennsylvania's prisons. Suboxone plays a prominent role in prison's

'underground economy'" suboxone/buprenorphine Inquirer, company for engaging in an "illicit nationwide scheme" 11/27/19).

Newspapers have also to increase inappropriate reported numerous arrests of prescriptions of suboxone.

and illegal sales of the product is widespread across the state and must be shut down.

There are additional concerns. Many people with addictions to opiates also use other drugs and alcohol on top of the suboxone - a dangerous combination that can be fatal. The FDA now reports close to 20,000 deaths where suboxone/buprenorphine was the lead drug.

Connection to addiction counseling is critical. We must prevent diversion and misuse of suboxone as well as ensure that it is prescribed properly by FDA-licensed practitioners to a carefully assessed group of people. In this regard, Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford/Erie/Mercer/Warren) introduced Senate Bill 675 to provide such guidelines for office-based prescribers of suboxone and ensure connection

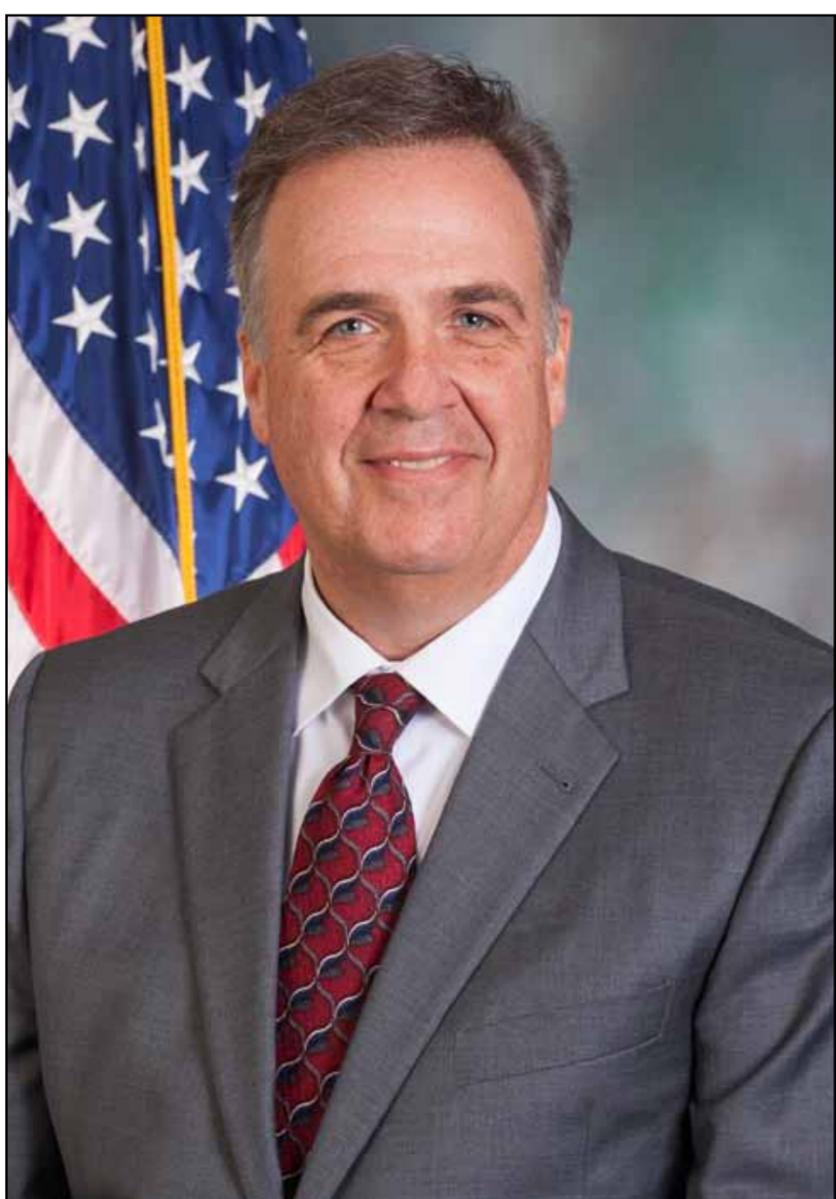
to addiction counseling.

The bill passed the Senate in June and is currently awaiting consideration by the House Human Services Committee. I support this legislation because the state needs to join the federal government in providing oversight for those prescribing suboxone and to prevent diversion and fraud. We must do what we can to curb abuse of this well-intentioned medication and to ensure that it is used appropriately to support recovery.

The bill, as it is currently written, has met opposition by some practitioners and treatment programs. I welcome their feedback as we work on this law intended to curb abuse.

Representative Gene DiGirolamo (R-Bucks), chairman of the House Human Services Committee, has introduced related legislation. His bill (HB1662) requires tracking of deaths and near-death incidents involving any FDA-approved medication prescribed for opioid use disorder and expands the reach of the current Methadone Death Review Team to include other medications (like suboxone) often prescribed to assist with the treatment of addiction.

I thank the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, my colleagues in the Legislature, particularly those in the HOPE Caucus, and other partners in recognizing the seriousness of this issue and working toward solutions.



"pill mill" doctors across the state while the U.S. Department of Justice has indicted a major

Although suboxone can be used appropriately with some patients, the diversion

and ensure connection



Eleventh Street Tower

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



Green Avenue Tower

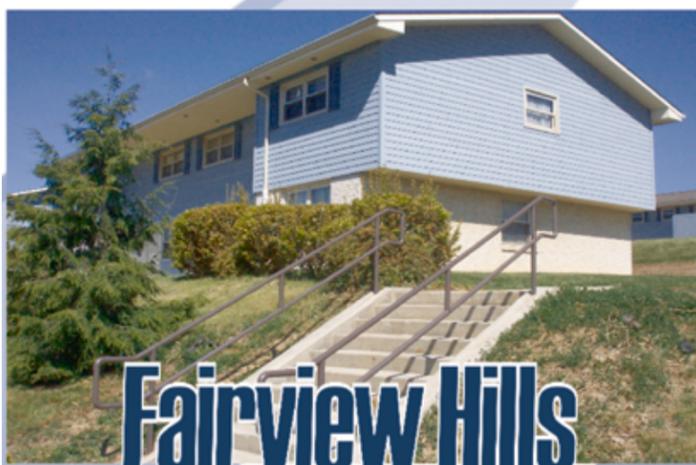
911 Green Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 949-2009



Altoona Housing Authority

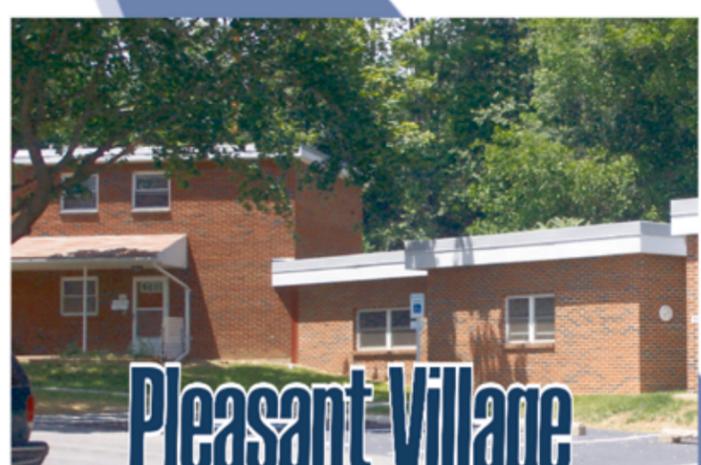
Providing safe and affordable housing for the City of Altoona, Pennsylvania
Welcoming you to move towards a brighter future with the AHA

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 COALITION

Continued from A7

We will continue to utilize the "collective impact" concept as we move forward, in which a highly structured collaborative effort can achieve a substantial impact on large scale social problems. As a community, it's important that we work together to improve the physical, social, economic, and emotional health of Blair County. The results of the 2019 County Health Ranking Report indicated that we are ranked 51 out of 67 counties in Pennsylvania for being unhealthy.

The following work groups or committees meet regularly to address the challenges and issues that were identified in the needs assessment: **The Let's Move Blair County Committee** is implementing programs/activities to address obesity,



encourage physical activity, and impact the incidence of diabetes. One of their goals is to encourage the integration of health and wellness into every aspect of community life by coordinating and collaborating with all other agencies currently working on this effort. The committee is planning two upcoming events: Let's Move Blair County Day at Lakemont Park and the Active Living Steps Challenge. In collaboration with the South Hills School of Business & Technology, an interactive Active Living Brochure/Map was developed and copies are available for your school,

business, or organization. It includes resources and activities in Blair County.

In collaboration with the Healthy Blair County Coalition, the Blair County Chamber of Commerce created a **Workplace Wellness Committee**. The purpose is to encourage businesses to become part of the wellness movement and share resources to develop or enhance current workplace wellness programs. A Workplace Wellness Toolkit was developed and is available to download from the Chamber's website.

The purpose of the **Substance Use & Physical Health Coalition** is to enhance communication and coordination between drug/alcohol and healthcare and medical providers. Their work began with the implementation of SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) which includes substance abuse as an area screened during routine healthcare. As part of the project, physicians, pharmacists, and other healthcare workers are trained to intervene and follow a protocol for referral to drug and alcohol services.

The Bridges Network was formed to develop a better understanding of poverty in Blair County and the extent to which agencies and programs provide resources and/or address poverty-related issues. Their mission includes increasing awareness of the impact of poverty on children and families. The committee continues to conduct poverty simulations and host Bridges Out of Poverty trainings.

To date, the work group organized and sponsored ten Poverty Simulation events with over 1,019 participants and volunteers. Their focus for the coming year will be to address food insecurity and explore assets to foster a healthier food environment.

The Youth Connection Initiative began when Blair County was one of twelve counties from across the country to be chosen by the National Association of Counties (NACo) in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Programs to receive community coaching on efforts to reduce childhood poverty with an emphasis on youth connections. **The Youth Connection Task Force** has accepted the challenge to find resources and implement our community's youth. Priority strategies include

YOUTH CONNECTION
It's our community's future.

AN INITIATIVE OF HEALTHY BLAIR COUNTY COALITION

school attendance, workforce development, mentoring, and pro-social activities and community engagement. In cooperation with the United Way of Blair County and the School Attendance Task Force, we are implementing the Be There School Attendance Challenge and Be There Buddy Mentoring Program.

The Mental Health Work Group is addressing unmet needs and working toward establishing or enhancing

programs and strategies to more effectively serve children and families. This includes creating an awareness of mental health and mental illness needs within the community, including the development of a suicide risk assessment app. Members of the work group are hosting Community Conversations about Mental Health. These conversations provide an opportunity for people to learn about mental health issues, including breaking down misperceptions and promoting recovery, and healthy communities. In addition, the work group developed a training based on the Columbia-Suicide Assessment Tool.

The Alliance for Nicotine-Free Communities is supporting programs to implement or strengthen policies to create a nicotine-free environment (e.g. smoke-free workplaces, clean air ordinances, smoking cessation programs, etc.). Another mission is to educate individuals on the impact of tobacco and the use of e-cigarettes, as well as provide resources to those individuals interested in quitting. In collaboration

with the Lung Disease Center of Central Pennsylvania, smoking cessation classes are being conducted in local hospitals, businesses, and other organizations. If you are interested in hosting smoking cessation classes, please contact their organization.

The Dental Care Work Group is forming partnerships to enhance resources and access to dental care services for adults and children in Blair County. This includes

not only screenings, but the establishment of a dental home for children and youth to have access to continued dental care. Another goal is to educate partners who can share oral health messages with those individuals/organizations working with young children.

Lastly, we are using a variety of methods to provide awareness of the Healthy Blair County Coalition and increase collaboration and partnerships among all aspects of the community by providing an opportunity to participate in the Coalition. Information is shared through the Healthy Blair County Coalition's website, Facebook page, Active Living/Let's Move Facebook page, podcasts, brochures, posters, meetings and conferences, newspaper, television, and radio.

For more information on the Healthy Blair County Coalition and the activities of our work groups/committees, visit www.healthyblaircountycoalition.org. Individuals and organizations can get involved in the following ways:

- Join the HBCC and attend coalition meetings.
- Sign-up and serve on work groups/committees.
- Collaborate and promote HBCC initiatives such as Let's Move Blair County, the Active Living Steps Challenge, the Youth Connection Initiative, etc.
- Use the Let's Move Blair County on your website, newsletters, etc. (based on usage guidelines).
- Provide funding or sponsorships.
- Include HBCC in local community efforts.
- Download and utilize the Community Health Needs Assessment report.
- Eat healthy and be active.

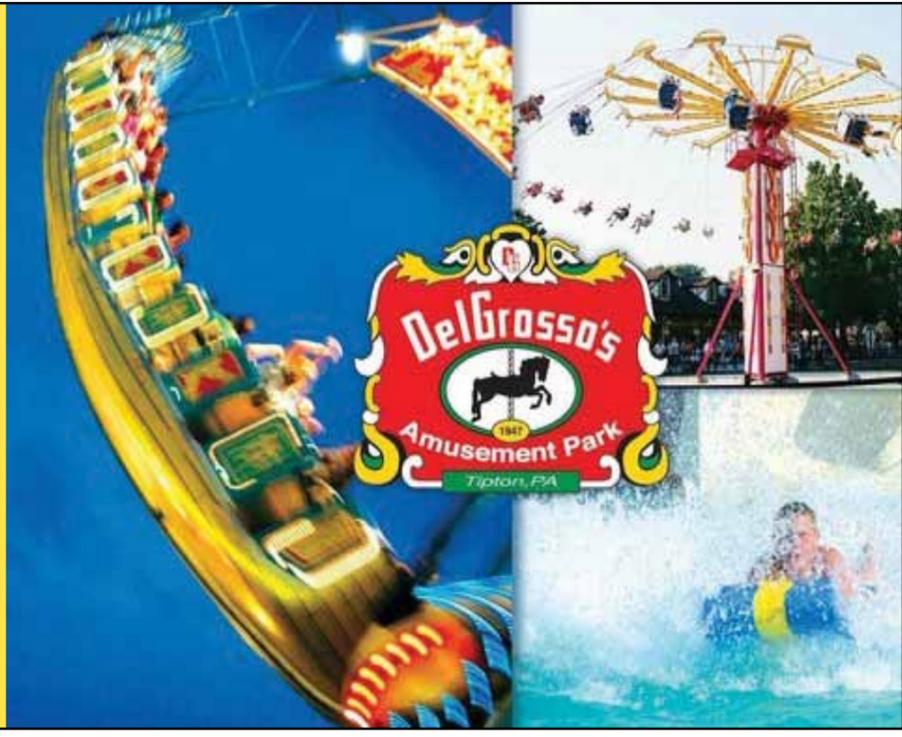
Operation Our Town Day at DelGrosso's Park & Laguna Splash

August 6, 2020
\$20 All-Day Fun Pass Coupon

For each coupon redeemed, \$3 will be donated back to Operation Our Town!



Go to DelGrosso's website "Events" for special coupon:
www.mydelgrossopark.com



ALTOONA HOUSING AUTHORITY

By 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 532 public housing units, 933 Section 8 voucher units, and 126 non-subsidized units at Pleasant Village, with a staff of 32 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 Landlord's Association, the Authority hosts an annual Landlord Education Workshop to educate agencies

and landlords on the importance of lease enforcement, the proper process for evictions, knowing the warning signs for illegal activity in rental units, fair housing regulations, mold, bed bugs, etc. The workshop helps agencies and landlords implement strategies to tackle those issues and is the perfect setting for those in attendance to ask questions and gain knowledge. Last year's workshop was held on November 1, 2019 with over 90 in attendance.

The Operation Our Town Housing Roundtable has been meeting since 2007, it was created to bridge a gap between housing and drug activity. Throughout the years, the Roundtable progressed to serve an educational purpose. The Roundtable began having Landlord Educational Workshops in 2010 and meeting more regularly to discuss common issues that landlords face from beginning to end. Since education has become the main priority, the

OOT Housing Roundtable started to have local business people and human service organizations attend to discuss current issues that face housing in our city.

Our city takes pride in taking a "pro-active" approach in housing. This means that landlords need to inspect their properties, fix deficiencies to meet regulations, and enforce their lease. The goal of the OOT Housing Roundtable is to find these issues that landlords need to know more about. We must find workable solutions to each one of these issues and the best way to do that. That is why we are continuously trying to educate landlords so that they can be a great landlord and have responsible tenants.

If you are interested in serving on the OOT Housing Roundtable, please contact Mrs. Cheryl A. Johns, Executive Director of the Altoona Housing Authority, at (814) 949-2000, or Brad Kanuch, Administrative Office, at (814) 949-2016.

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CENTRAL PA LANDLORD'S ASSOCIATION

**625 HAWTHORNE DRIVE
HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA 16648
WILLIAM KITT, PRESIDENT
814-695-2138**

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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LOCAL STUDENT WINS ESSAY CONTEST

By Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

Congratulations to Camryn MacAlarney, an 8th grader at Altoona Area Junior High School, whose essay was chosen out of 190 entries as the winner of the Altoona Mirror and Operation Our Town Essay Contest! Camryn received \$250 in gift cards to The Meadows Original Frozen Custard in Hollidaysburg. Co-sponsors of the Essay Contest were the Altoona Mirror, Imler's Poultry, and The Meadows Original Frozen Custard in Hollidaysburg. Below is Camryn's essay on how drug use would affect your education and career:

When something new is introduced to you, have you ever thought, "Well, I'll just try it?"

While trying things can be a fun experience and you might discover something you love from it, such as a new food or sport, sometimes it's not good for you. In the case of drugs and alcohol, it would be much better for you to not "just try it." Drugs and alcohol contain addictive chemicals that can severely affect you, your life, those around you, your education, and your career.

To begin, abuse of drugs and alcohol can cause many physical and mental health issues over time. For example, those who smoke tend to be more depressed than non-smokers, and are more likely to contract diseases such as lung cancer. Often times, drugs are offered at social gatherings, and a desire to fit in may cause people to try the drugs in order to "fit in." This is



Pictured from left to right: Barb Harpster (Media Consultant, Altoona Mirror), Joe Meadows (Partner, The Meadows Original Frozen Custard of Hollidaysburg) Camryn MacAlarney (Essay Contest Winner), Fred Imler Sr. (President, Imler's Poultry)

how drug addictions can start. Using drugs can cause your brain's hormones to change and recognize the drugs as a necessary part of life, like food or water. The substance acquires the same significance or becomes more significant to the user compared with friends, family, a career or job, and good self-esteem.

Alcohol abuse can cause long-term effects such as cardiovascular and liver diseases, cancer, respiratory infections, nerve and brain damage, and ulcers. Heavy drinking may also cause risky behaviors and make drinkers more prone to accidents, injuries, and violence. Alcohol related incidents make up about 40% of fatal motor

accidents, and roughly half of fatal burn injuries, homicides, and drowning. Just one bout of binge drinking could cause a destroyed balance of neurotransmitters in the brain, which brings about depression, anxiety, agitation, memory loss, and seizures. This can even cause death for some people.

In continuation, the use of drugs and alcohol can severely affect your education and career. Drugs and alcohol can cause sleep deprivation, which can make a person useless in a school or work environment. If a person's boss or a teacher figures out a person is a drug or alcohol addict, they will be forced into rehab and unable to continue their job or school

work while in rehab. In addition, if a person shows up at school or their job visibly high or intoxicated, they will likely be fired or suspended. Because of the behavioral issues drugs and alcohol can cause, a person may have issues in a school or work environment that have to do with anger or violence towards others.

Use of drugs and alcohol may also cause a person to not show up to their job or school at all. They may feel as though doing drugs or drinking is more important than going to their job or school, so they may find ways to skip or get out of their school or work early. Some may even drop out. By doing drugs or alcohol

during school years, a person will be unable to receive a proper education due to their addiction. Without a proper education, there is little hope for a successful future.

To conclude, the effects of drugs and alcohol can severely affect a person, their life, those around them, their education, and their career. Use of these substances can lead to addiction, and that addiction could ruin, or possibly even end a life. If you or someone you know is having trouble with an addiction to drugs or alcohol, reach out to a local helpline. Do yourself, and those you are close with a favor, and reach out for help today.

OOT ON THE AIR

By Silke Morrison, OOT Marketing Roundtable Member

Greetings all! My name is Silke Morrison and I've been fortunate enough to be the spokesperson for the Operation Our Town Marketing Roundtable on the Forever Broadcasting local radio stations for over two years.

In the past, we were given air time each quarter on the morning "radio circuit" on each of the local radio stations via a live interview. In 2019, Forever Broadcasting began using a new format, which allowed me to record an interview that was aired periodically on Sunday mornings throughout the year.

The spot is called Forever Media Sunday Morning Community Spotlight. We are certainly grateful to have this opportunity to get the message out to the community regarding all the good things Operation Our Town and its supporters accomplish together!

We will still be providing information on Operation Our Town and the valuable services it provides to the community by helping residents fight the never ending drug issues in our area. Some of the 2020 highlights will include the Operation Our Town Grant Cycle, Operation Our

Town Day at DelGrosso's Amusement Park, and the 8th Annual Operation Our Town Golf Tournament.

Operation Our Town is thankful for its partnership with Forever Broadcasting, which has provided us

with an excellent resource to get information to the communities in our area for nine years!

NEW GOLF MEMBER SPECIAL

\$600 INDIVIDUAL

\$1200 FAMILY

PARK HILLS GOLF CLUB

219 Highland Terrace
Altoona, PA 16602
814-944-3313



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

Altoona Area School District PD - 814-941-6137
Contact Person: William Pfeffer

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

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

Duncansville Police - 814-695-1930
Contact Person: Chief Jeff Ketner

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

Greenfield Township Police - 814-239-5313
Contact Person: Chief Ronald Sharkey, Sr.

Hollidaysburg Borough Police - 814-695-3711
Contact Person: Chief Rodney Estep

Hollidaysburg Area School District - 814-695-4416
Contact Person: Resource Officer Wayne Bush

Logan Township Police - 814-949-3364
Contact Person: Chief David Reese

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

N. Woodbury Township Police - 814-793-4897
Contact Person: Chief David Rosamilia

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 Police - 814-832-2022
Contact Person: Chief Rowdy Kagarise

UPMC Police - 814-889-2453
Contact Person: Chief Greg Servello

Pa State Police - 814-696-6100
Contact Person: Sergeant Jesse Moyer

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

Penn State Altoona Police - 814-949-5222
Contact Person: Lt. Jason Salem

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

PA Game Commission - 814-643-1831
Contact Person: WCO Pfister, WCO Zaffuto,
and WCO College

Blair County Sheriff - 814-693-3100
Contact Person: Sheriff James Ott

Spring Cove School District PD - 814-224-5124
Contact Person: Chief Rich Brozenich

Blair County Prison - 814-693-3155
Contact Person: Warden Abby Tate

Blair County DA's Office - 814-693-3010
Contact Person: First Asst Pete Weeks

Blair County Coroner Office - 814-940-5938
Contact Person: Coroner Patricia Ross



Operation Our Town Roundtable Descriptions

Community Revitalization Roundtable:

A community partnership to develop and implement strategies to improve neighborhoods.

Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB):

To provide 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.

Early Childhood Education Roundtable:

To prevent involvement in drug abuse and criminal activities by providing pre-k age children with enriched early childhood learning experiences.

Faith-based Roundtable:

From a faith perspective, respond to and contribute to the work of the Operation Our Town partnerships. Promote, facilitate, and encourage faith-based community partnerships in using God's gracious gifts to bring about positive change, hope, and spiritual health in the community.

Gang Roundtable:

To gather, coordinate and disseminate gang related activities for the purpose of communicating information directly to the steering committee in order to assist in the development of strategic plans to deal with gang, drug, and crime prevention as a result of gang related activities.

Housing Roundtable:

Identify solutions to address the problems created by transient tenants. To discuss and implement educational techniques for renting properties to responsible tenants.

K-12 Education Roundtable:

Elimination of drug abuse in K-12 students in Blair County through education, programming, and awareness of the dangers of drug abuse.

Law Enforcement Roundtable:

To facilitate partnerships between the community and business to fight both drug abuse and crime through proven law enforcement techniques.

Marketing Roundtable:

To communicate and promote the objectives of the organization to effectively engage the citizenry of our community to become involved in taking back our neighborhoods.

Northern Blair Roundtable:

To facilitate partnerships between community and business in Northern Blair County to fight drug abuse and crime through proven law enforcement, treatment, and prevention techniques.

Pharmacy Roundtable:

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.

IT PAYS TO PASS



Voluntary Student Drug Testing Program Excels

Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

The Operation Our Town Marketing Roundtable created the It Pays to Pass Program four years ago to encourage students in 7th through 12th grade to develop good habits and reward them for continuing to make the right choices. The It Pays to Pass Program rewards students that participate in the Hollidaysburg Area School District's voluntary student drug testing program. The purpose of the program is to help students remain drug-free and to give students an excuse to not give in to peer pressure if they are asked to try drugs or alcohol.

Each year, the Hollidaysburg School District provides a packet to all Junior and Senior High students and families to sign up for the district's voluntary drug & alcohol testing program. Students and parents must complete the consent packet. Upon turning in the consent packet, the students are given a "Choose Life, Not Drugs" wristband provided by Operation Our Town. Student names are put in a lottery system and each week students

are randomly picked from the lottery to be tested. If a student passes the 5 panel drug screen or the alcohol mouth swab test, they are given a \$25 Sheetz gift card provided by Operation Our Town through the sponsorship of local businesses. Parents are notified of the test and the results. If a student does not pass the test, a non-punitive system is used. They are not punished at school, however, they must sign up for drug counseling or a rehab program. They are also referred to the school SAP (Student Assistance Program) team.

In the Junior High, 44 students have chosen to participate in the program in the 2019-2020 school year. They are continuing to promote the program on Tiger TV, in the school newsletter and school messenger email to parents, having copies available at various locations throughout the school which students can easily access, as well as promoting the program during evening presentations for parents. The guidance department has also had Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships come in and speak with parents

regarding current drug trends and vaping. The Junior High randomly tests one student each week. Wendy Lieb, Hollidaysburg Junior High School Nurse who administers the drug testing for the Junior High said, "The program is a great way to promote healthy lifestyle choices, especially at the Junior High age where our young adults are very impressionable. The program gives the students a way "out" of experimenting with drugs or alcohol when with their peers."

In the Senior High, 53 students have chosen to participate in the program in the 2019-2020 school year. The Senior High randomly tests three students each week. Julie Bowser, Hollidaysburg Senior High School Nurse who administers the drug testing for the Senior High said, "The program has been a positive healthy behavior promotion aspect for the school environment. The students are enthusiastic about being called for testing and are thrilled with the Sheetz gift cards! Most of our students drive, so many of them say they will use the gift card for gas."

We are truly grateful for the support of the following local businesses and organizations that have contributed monetary donations to sponsor the purchase of the Sheetz gift cards for the 2019-2020 school year: Allegheny Township Police Association, Ansley RV, Stiffler McGraw, and Ventura Construction Services. In addition to sponsors, proceeds raised from Martin's Bags 4 My Cause Program, OOT's dunk tank at the Duncansville Community Days, and OOT Day at DelGrosso's Amusement Park were also used to sponsor the purchase of gift cards. We also offer a huge thank you to Sheetz for partnering with us again to support this very important program!

CHOOSE LIFE! NOT DRUGS.



SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING!

REPORT DRUG ACTIVITY
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THE PUSHER™**
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NORTHERN BLAIR ROUNDTABLE MAKING STRIDES

By Sue Griep, Chairperson, Northern Blair Roundtable

The Northern Blair Roundtable is a strong conglomerate of business, media, legal, education, social, church, and civic organizations who come together on a monthly basis in an effort to better the community. The group, since being chaired by Sue Griep, has been working on learning about the community, the programs and services available, and the priority needs of the community. In the last year of a 3-year plan, the group will compile the information learned and set in motion a plan to best serve the needs of the area.

Meetings have been held at various locations throughout the community to better acquaint the committee with locations, services, and facilities. If it's not possible for the group to visit the location, a speaker will present at the Bull Pen Restaurant during lunch. Speakers this past year have included Assistant District Attorney Nicole Smith, Magisterial District Judge Fred Miller, Josh Baker of Amtran, Eric Palmer of the Altoona VoTech, Jennifer Neely of Grier School, Bikers Against Child Abuse, and Officer Traci Winters and K9 Officer Getro.

In 2019, the group continued to build on its knowledge, which will be

completed with the final presentation in May. While the committee is currently addressing some of the issues, a precise plan of action will not be devised until the strategic planning session in 2020. Right now, the committee has identified homelessness, poverty, transportation, and educational/unemployment as top priorities which need attention. A resource guide is near completion, which will be available to those who need services and to volunteers and professionals who may need this information to better serve clients in the community.

For the past three years, the Roundtable has hosted a spring workshop at the Bull Pen Restaurant, offering a morning session for professionals and an evening session for the community. Past topics have included Bullying/Suicide Prevention, Landlord Tenant Issues, and Active Shooter/Stop the Bleed. This spring, the committee is partnering with Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships and Mental Health offices to offer a Mental Health and Co-occurring issues training. The committee is also working toward restarting the Greenhouse project at Epworth Manor to help provide fresh fruits and vegetables to the Tyrone Food Bank. The Roundtable

remains helpful in providing leadership to a number of projects and endeavors that have a positive influence on the community. The Tyrone/Bellwood Backpack program, with the help of the Roundtable, continues to operate successfully. The committee also provides leadership to the annual Tyrone Spring Cleanup Day, partnering with the local churches, which continues to boast 100 plus volunteers from various clubs, organizations, agencies, and churches.

The Roundtable plans to become more visible in the community in 2020 with attendance at various community events, and participation in various parades and gatherings. "We have a heart for our community, and want to make it a healthy and safe place for all of us," Sue Griep, Chairperson said. "For us at Operation Our Town, it's all about working as a team and partnering with others to be the best we can be and offer the most we can to ensure the quality of life here in our community."

For more information or to become involved in the Northern Blair Roundtable, contact Shawna Hoover at shawna@operationourtown.org.

OPERATION OUR TOWN DAY AT DELGROSSO'S AMUSEMENT PARK

By Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

The fourth Operation Our Town Day at DelGrosso's Amusement Park and Laguna Splash was held on August 15, 2019. For each coupon that was redeemed that day, \$3.00 was donated to Operation Our Town Day at the park



Town. A total of 278 coupons were used that day, resulting in a donation of \$834.00 to Operation Our Town!

Operation Our Town had a booth at the main entrance to the park and distributed "Choose Life, Not Drugs" wristbands, drug prevention



information, and provided a drug-free pledge banner to sign to get a free OOT t-shirt. Child fingerprinting was also provided by PA State Police Trooper Chris Fox. Officer Alex Vazquez and his K9 Freddy from the Logan Township Police Department conducted two drug sniffing demonstrations outside the main entrance



Pictured left to right: Anthony Kovaleski, Central PA Sales Representative, Miele Manufacturing
Shawna Hoover, OOT Executive Coordinator

PENNSYLVANIA SKILL GRANT

Operation Our Town received a \$5,000 Grant from Pennsylvania Skill last year to continue to fight drugs and crime in Blair County.

Pennsylvania Skill is committed to supporting causes that improve communities and quality of life for the residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

By Michael A. Fiore, Co-Founder/President, Operation Our Town

Operation Our Town is now going into its 14th year of operation, and we're proud of the accomplishments that we've seen thus far. We've been able to touch thousands of people because of the generosity and support the Blair County community has shown us over the years. We appreciate the continued support of our founding members and new donors, and all businesses and organizations that support our golf tournament each year. 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. This rings true for the continuing opioid crisis that our county is still facing, combined with an emerging trend of methamphetamine use. This is

a war, not a battle, and we strive to manage it the best we can with our three main focuses on law enforcement, prevention, and treatment.

The Law Enforcement Roundtable is continuing to work on different ways to attack the supply of drugs, including opioids and methamphetamine, through ongoing special operations which include conducting search warrants, buy-busts, and saturation patrols. The Pharmacy Roundtable is continuing to educate pharmacists on how to interact with patients using short-term opioid therapy on proper disposal and addiction risk to control the diversion of prescription opioids.

The remainder of our roundtables all work together in different ways to reduce the demand for those drugs in our community. The Early Childhood Education

Roundtable is educating business leaders on the importance of affordable high-quality early childhood education and how it benefits the current and future workforce. The K-12 Education Roundtable is ensuring student wellness needs are identified through promoting the statewide Safe2Say hotline, and working on truancy issues through the Be There School Attendance Challenge. The Marketing Roundtable is communicating and promoting OOT activities and projects to educate the community on the drug problem and how they can become involved. The Community Revitalization Roundtable is working to decrease blight in Altoona through a newly developed land bank and annual Community Clean-up Days. The Criminal Justice Advisory Board is supporting the Stepping Up Initiative, which

is a mental health initiative for the prison population to reduce recidivism. The Faith-based Roundtable is bridging the gap between the church and addiction community, their annual educational workshop is focused on Poverty and the Impact on Blair County. The Housing Roundtable is educating landlords and identifying housing solutions through their annual Landlord Workshop. The Northern Blair Roundtable is addressing needs in the Northern Blair community, their annual educational workshop is focused on Mental Health and Co-occurring Issues.

Through our prevention grants, we are supporting many community and neighborhood-based programs that are doing important community outreach to the youth and families that need it the most. Our prevention grant recipients are the most

important asset we have, because they realize that the key to gaining control of drug abuse begins with working with youth and their families, which is the core of where positive change can begin.

Our grants also continue to support law enforcement by giving them the resources and equipment that they need to stay on top of the drug problem, and to do their jobs safely so that they can come home to their families every night. We appreciate all Blair County law enforcement that risk their lives every day and continue to "Honor the Badge" to show our gratitude.

As a community, we will continue to face new challenges in the future, but we can make a difference if we work together. Thank you for your ongoing support. Your efforts have helped to make Blair County a great place to live.

The Best ME Is Drug FREE!



Save The Date!

September 14 & 15, 2020

PARK HILLS GOLF CLUB, ALTOONA

Schedule of Activities:

Monday, September 14th:

12:00pm – Tee Off Against Drugs Student Golf Tournament

3:00pm – Mini-Golf Tournament at Lakemont Park

5:00pm – US Foods Neighborhood BBQ

Tuesday, September 15th:

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

12:30pm – AM Putting contest for \$5,000

1:00pm – PM Shotgun start

6:00pm – PM Putting contest for \$5,000

Dinner following afternoon golf

\$5,000 PUTTING CONTEST:

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

Golf Sponsorship Levels:

Gold - \$6,000

- 2 groups in tournament

- Company banner displayed, sign on driveway

- Company name listed in Event Guide

- Specialty Gold & commemorative gifts for each golfer

Silver - \$3,000

- 1 group in tournament

- Company banner displayed, sign on driveway

- Company name listed in Event Guide

- Specialty Silver & commemorative gifts for each golfer

Bronze - \$2,000

- 1 group in tournament

- Company banner displayed, sign on driveway

- Company name listed in Event Guide

- Specialty Bronze & commemorative gifts for each golfer

Individual Golfer - \$400

- Individual entry in tournament

- Commemorative gifts for one golfer

Sponsorship Levels:

Beverage sponsor - \$1,000

- Company banner displayed during event

- Company name listed in Event Guide

Closest to the Pin sponsor - \$1,000

- Signage at the sponsored pin

- 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 sponsor - \$1,000

- Signage at the sponsored Par 3

- Company name listed in Event Guide

Refreshment Tent sponsor - \$1,000

- Signage on one of the 4 Refreshment Tents or provide your company's tent

- Company name listed in Event Guide

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 14th

- School District of the winning boys and girls team 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.

Greens sponsor - \$250

- Signage at the sponsored green

- Company name listed in Event Guide

Tee sponsor - \$150

- Signage at the sponsored tee

OPERATION OUR TOWN DONORS

Operation Our Town was founded in 2006 with the support of many local businesses. The following businesses with an asterisk (*) are our founding members that initially committed at least \$10,000 per year for three years or more 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 continuing to financially support local programs proven to reduce drug use and crime. The donations listed in the donor categories below are cumulative.

- \$10,000 and up:**
 AIA Alera Group
 Alan Gehringer, Rhythm Systems
 Altoona Area School District Foundation
 Altoona Curve – Lozinak Professional Baseball, LLC
 Altoona First Savings Bank
 Altoona Pipe & Steel Supply Company
 American Eagle Paper Mills
 Amtran
 Anonymous donor
 APR Supply Co.
 Arch Insurance Group
 Blair Candy Company, Inc.*
 Blair Companies*
 Bolger Brothers, Inc.
 Catalano, Case, Catalano & Clark-Radzieta
 Central PA Landlord Association
 Chester E. Grannas Family Foundation
 Courtesy Motors
 D.C. Goodman & Sons, Inc.*
 Dean Patterson Chevrolet
 Delta Health Technologies, LLC*
 E.B. Endres, Inc.
 Fine Line Cabinets, Inc.
 Fiore Buick GMC*
 Fiore Toyota*
 First Energy Foundation
 First National Bank
 Fox 8 TV – Peak Media of Pennsylvania, LLC
 Grainger Foundation, Inc.
 Grappone Law Office*
 Graystone Court
 Harry K. Sickler Associates*
 Holiday Inn Express*
 Hoss's – Willard E. Campbell Enterprises, Inc.
 Jones Day
 Kooman & Associates, LLC
 Lawruk Machine & Tool Company, Inc.
 Lawruk Realty*
 Lee Industries, Inc.*
 Leonard S. Fiore, Inc.*
 McLanahan Corporation*
 M&T Bank*
 New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co.*
 New Pig Corporation*
 Nic's Tobacco Outlet, Inc.
 Norfolk Southern Foundation
 North American Communications
 NPC, Inc.*
 Park Hills Golf Club
 Patt Organization
 PNC Foundation
 Reilly Creppage & Co.
 Reliance Bank*
 Rotary Club of Altoona
 Say-Core, Inc.
 Seltzer Financial Strategies
 Sheetz, Inc.*
 Small Tube Products
 S&T Bank
 Stuckey Automotive
 The Hite Company Division of Mayer Electric*
 Thompson Pharmacy
 United Way of Blair County*
 UPMC Altoona*
 US Foods
 Value Drug Company
 Ward Trucking, LLC*
 Wolf Furniture*
 YTI Career Institute - Altoona
- Blair County District Attorney's Office
 Business Planning Service, LLC
 City Beverage of Altoona, Inc.
 Concordia Society
 DeGol Organization
 DelGrosso Foods, Inc.
 Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Altoona
 First Commonwealth Bank
 Galliker Dairy Company
 Groff Tractor & Equipment
 H.F. Lenz Company
 Inco Beverage, Inc.
 Infinity Insurance Management Service
 Irwin Financial, Inc.
 John & Doug Wolf
 Kunzler & Company
 Lezzer Lumber
 Mountain Research, LLC
 Newborn Enterprises, Inc.
 Northwestern Mutual
 Northwest Savings Bank
 Pennsylvania Skill
 Pepsi Bottling Group, LLC
 Pyramid Healthcare, Inc.
 Silk Mill Properties, Inc.
 Stiffler, McGraw & Associates, Inc.
 Top to Bottom Office Interiors
 Xanitos, Inc.
 Young, Oakes, Brown & Co.
- \$1,000 - \$4,999:**
 2nd Avenue United Methodist Church
 Allegheny Club of Hollidaysburg
 All Things Automotive, Inc.
 Altoona Center for Nursing Care
 Altoona Housing Authority
 Altoona Mirror
 Ansley RV
 Atlantic Broadband
 Babst, Calland, Clements & Zomnir, PC
 Blair County Chamber of Commerce
 Blair County Golf & Driving Range – Madye Corp, Inc.
 Blair County Police Departments
 Blair Drug & Alcohol Partnerships
 Blair Medical Associates
 Blue Knob Valley Chainsaw Carving Competition
 Buccinese Society
 Bun Air Corporation
 Burgmeier's Hauling, Inc.
 CBT Bank a Division of Riverview Bank
 Centre Concrete Company
 Cesare Battisti Mutual Benefit Association
 Cleveland Brothers Equipment Co., Inc.
 Cohen & Grigsby, P.C.
 Coldwell Banker Town & Country Real Estate
 Construction Applicators
 Craig Fencing
 DelGrosso Family of Companies
 DelGrosso's Amusement Park
 DiAndrea Media
 Discovery House
 Doing Better Business, Inc.
 Edward Jones Investments – Richard Logan
 Empire Communication Systems, Inc.
 Empower Business Solutions, Inc.
 Fenner Consulting
 Fiore Brothers Management, LLC
 Fiore Furniture
 Fraternal Order of Police Bald Eagle Lodge #51
 Freedom Basketball Club, Inc.
 Fringe Benefit Group
 Golden Living Center – Hillview
 Good Advertising
 Helsel, Fiore, Sheeler Wealth Management Team
 Hollidaysburg Rotary Club
 Housing & Redevelopment Insurance Exchange
 Keller Engineers, Inc.
 Koehle Maintenance
 Lakemont Lions Club, Inc.
 Low Life Rider Chapter, Inc.
- Loyal Order of Moose, Altoona Family Center #74
 Mama Randazzo's, Inc.
 Mariska Eash Realtor, Stultz Real Estate
 Martin's Food Market – Ahold Financial Services
 McAleer's Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning
 McQuaide Blasko, Inc.
 Mock Creations
 Mountain City Law Dogs of Altoona
 Nason Hospital
 Olive Garden - GMRI, Inc.
 Omega Bank
 ORX
 Park Security Systems
 Penn State Altoona
 Pennsylvania Prison Warden's Association
 PennTerra Engineering
 P. Joseph Lehman, Inc. Consulting Engineers
 Priority Management & Associates
 Providence Presbyterian Church
 Ravine, Inc.
 Roaring Spring Blank Book/Roaring Spring Water
 Saint Francis University
 Sam's Club #6460
 Season-Aire, Inc.
 Senior Life Altoona
 Sheehan & Associates
 Shirley's Cookie Company, Inc.
 Smith Transport, Inc.
 Solarshield Remodelers, Inc.
 South Hills School of Business & Technology
 Swiss Club of Altoona
 The Meadows Frozen Custard of Greenwood
 The Meadows Original Frozen Custard of Hollidaysburg
 ThyssenKrupp – AIN Plastics
 United Way of the Capital Region
 UPMC Health Plan
 Warren A. Gingrich Agency, Inc.
 Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC
- Under \$1,000:**
 1st Summit Bank
 A-1 Paving
 AFSCME Local 906 – Hollidaysburg
 Veterans Home
 AFSCME Local 2188 – Altoona City Employees
 Allegheny Mountains Convention & Visitors Bureau
 Allegheny Orthotics & Prosthetics
 Allegheny Township Police Association
 Al's Tavern
 Alto Markets, LLC
 Altoona Auto Auction
 Altoona Catholic Nurses
 Altoona Center for Clinical Research, PC
 Altoona Honda
 Altoona Jewish Community School
 Altoona Police Narcotics Division
 Altoona Soft Water
 Appalachia IU8
 ARC Federal Credit Union
 Arrow Land Solutions, LLC
 Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc.
 A. Thomas Farrell Law Offices
 Back in Action Physical Therapy & Fitness Center
 Backyard Burgers
 Baechle & Associates Architects
 Baltimore Life Insurance
 Golden Living Center – Hillview
 Good Advertising
 Bellwood-Antis School District Foundation
 Bellwood Fraternal Order of Eagles
 Bill Wertz & Sons
 Blair/Bedford Builders Association
 Blair Business Technologies
 Blair County Anesthesia, P.C.
 Blair County Beverage
 Blair County Children, Youth & Families
 Blair County Crime Solvers
 Blair County Health & Welfare Council
- Blair County NAACP
 Blair Gastroenterology Associates
 Blair Orthopedics
 Blair Roofing, Inc.
 Blue Knob Golf Club
 Bob's Storage
 Carmike Cinemas
 Carnegie Equipment, Inc.
 Central Blair Recreation Commission
 Central PA Cardiology, LLC
 Central PA Digital Learning Foundation
 Ciocca Benton & Okonak, P.C.
 Clear Creek Environmental
 Clip Art Salon
 Combined Insurance
 Credit Control Collections
 Cresson Lions Park Association
 Cumming Motors, Inc.
 Daversa Pest Control
 Days Inn & Suites, Altoona
 Delozier Construction
 Despoy & Robertson Law Firm
 D. Fremont, Inc.
 DiAndrea Promos
 Dick's Pharmacy, Inc.
 Domino's
 Douglas V. Stoehr, Attorney At Law
 Drayer Physical Therapy Institute
 Edward Jones Investments – Michael Harris
 Eldorado Kiwanis Club
 Epworth Manor
 Excalibur Insurance Management Services
 Fairfield Inn & Suites–TownePlace Suites by Marriott Altoona
 Fairview United Methodist Church
 Family Pizza & Pub
 Family Services, Inc.
 Fiore True Value Hardware
 First Presbyterian Church
 First Stop Shop, Inc.
 Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #8
 Frederick Lock & Key, Inc.
 Freedom Excursions by Scully, LLC
 Freedom RV Rentals, LLC
 Furrer Beverage Co., Inc.
 G.B. Wineland & Son, Inc.
 Geisinger Health Plan
 Gerard Ziegler, CPA
 G&G Auto Sales
 Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc.
 Global Impact
 Gold Wing Road Riders Association
 Chapter PAS
 Greendown Acres Mobile Home Park
 Greenwood Pools & Spas
 G&R Excavating
 Griffith & Petz Co.
 Gwin, Dobson & Foreman
 Haberstroh, Sullivan & George, LLP
 Heidelberg Country Club
 Holland Bros. Meats
 Hollidaysburg Area Junior High School
 Student Body
 Home Health Resource
 Home Nursing Agency
 Homewood Retirement Centers
 Housing Authority of Northumberland County
 Imler's Poultry
 Investment Savings Bank
 Iron Masters Country Club
 Jack & George's
 Jaffa Temple Altoona Shrine Club
 Jim Bryan's Tree Trimming & Removal
 J. Kirk Kling Law Office
 JMH Medical, LLC
 Johnny's U Pull It
 Jones Funeral Home
 Keystone Custom Homes
 Keystone Dermatology & Center for Skin Surgery
 Keystone Real Estate Group, LP
 Kids First Blair County/Lily Pond
 Kiwanis Club of Altoona
 Kiwanis Club of Tyrone
 Klesius & Sheedy, Inc.
 Knights of Columbus Council 551
- Kopp Drug
 Kranich's, Inc.
 Ladies of Virtue Foundation, Inc.
 Lake Raystown Resort
 Law Office of Stephen D. Wicks
 Law Office of Thomas M. Dickey
 Llyswen United Methodist Church
 Logan Lodge #490 F&AM
 Longstreth Brothers, Inc.
 Lumax Lighting
 Lung Disease Center of Central PA
 Mainline Medical Associates
 Manpower
 Marianna's Fundraisers, Inc.
 Martin Oil Company
 Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc.
 McCloskey Builders, Inc.
 Mike's Court
 Mike Servello Garage, Inc.
 M&M Roofing & Contracting, Inc.
 Moore Power Sales
 Moses & Associates, P.C.
 Mountain Lodge #281 – Free & Accepted Masons
 Mount Aloysius College – Physical Therapy Club
 Mueller's Auto Recycling
 Musical Society Unter Uns
 Nimitz, Inc.
 Nittany Building Specialties, Inc.
 Old Canal Inn
 Overhead Door Company of Blair County
 Passarello Law Office
 PennCrest Bank
 Pennsylvania Highlands Community College
 Photo Flare
 Preferred Benefit Specialists
 Presbytery of Huntingdon
 PSECU
 Radiology Business Solutions, LLC
 Re/Max Results Realty Group
 R.H. Marcon, Inc.
 Riley, Inc.
 Ritchey's Dairy, Inc.
 Rockhill Realty, LLC
 Rotary Club of Roaring Spring
 Roundhouse Harley-Davidson
 Russell Tire
 Sacred Heart Church
 Saleme Insurance Services, Inc.
 Scotch Valley Country Club
 Secure-Tec, Inc.
 Chapter PAS
 Shields Trophy, LLC
 Sigel's School of Dance
 Sinking Valley Country Club
 Spherion
 Splish Splash Auto Bath
 Stanley J. Krish Funeral Home, Inc.
 St. Joseph Institute
 Sub Zero Ice Cream & Yogurt
 Summit Country Club
 Sylvan Hills Golf Club
 Talixa Software & Service, LLC
 Teeter Group
 Thaler Family Dentistry, PLLC
 The Crossroad
 The EADS Group
 The Knickerbocker
 The Lytle Group
 The Medicine Shoppe
 The Village at Morrisons Cove
 The Winds at Mattern Orchard
 Tom & Joe's Restaurant, LLC
 Traficante Family Chiropractic
 Travelling Tator Trucks, LLC
 Tri-Star Ford of Tyrone
 Tyrone Area Community Organization
 Tyrone Area Education Association
 Tyrone Hospital
 United Veterans Association of Blair County
 University Orthopedics Center
 Ventura Construction Services, Inc.
 Wachovia Securities
 WJAC-TV

Individuals: Over 220 individual citizens.

OOT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Professional and OOT Titles

- BOARD MEMBERS**
- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Michael A. Fiore
President & CEO, Leonard S. Fiore, Inc.
OOT President | Joseph Sheetz
CEO, Sheetz, Inc.
OOT Treasurer | Philip Devorris
President & CEO, Blair Companies
OOT Secretary |
| Randy Feathers
Retired, PA Office of Attorney General
OOT Board Member | Ron McConnell
OOT Board Member | Shawna Hoover
Executive Coordinator |

STEERING COMMITTEE

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Dr. Lori J. Bechtel-Wherry
Chancellor, Penn State Altoona
OOT Higher Education Representative | Richard Consiglio, Esq.
Blair County District Attorney
OOT Law Enforcement Roundtable | JR DiAndrea
President, DiAndrea Media, Inc.
Chairperson, OOT Marketing Roundtable | Honorable Elizabeth Doyle
Blair County President Judge
Chairperson, OOT Criminal/Judicial Roundtable |
| Greg Drew, R.Ph
President, Value Drug Company
Chairperson, OOT Pharmacy Roundtable | Brian Durbin
President, Durbin Companies
Co-chairperson, OOT Housing Roundtable | Zane Gates, MD
Empower3 Center for Health
OOT Health Representative | Dr. Robert Gildea
Superintendent, Hollidaysburg Area School District
Chairperson, OOT K-12 Education Roundtable |
| Donna Gority
Former Blair County Commissioner
OOT Government Representative | Joseph Grappone, Esq.
Grappone Law Office
Solicitor | Rodney Green
Leadership & Special Education Consultant
Chairperson, OOT Early Childhood Education Roundtable | Sue Griep
Former Blair County Victim/Witness Program Coordinator
Chairperson, OOT Northern Blair Roundtable |
| Lisa Hann
Executive Director, Family Services, Inc.
Chairperson, OOT Faith-based Roundtable | Judy Rosser
Executive Director, Blair Drug & Alcohol Partnerships
OOT Human Services Representative | Cheryl Johns
Executive Director, Altoona Housing Authority
Co-Chairperson, OOT Housing Roundtable | Tom Brandt
Supervisory Narcotics Agent, PA Office of Attorney General,
Bureau of Narcotics Investigations & Drug Control
Chairperson, OOT Law Enforcement Roundtable |
| Matt Pacifico
Mayor, City of Altoona
Chairperson, OOT Community Revitalization Roundtable | Dr. Todd Negola
Clinical Psychologist, James E. Van Zandt
VA Medical Center
OOT Gang Representative | Bill Kitt
President, Central PA Landlord Association
Co-Chairperson, OOT Housing Roundtable | |