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Operation Our Town Reporter

a monthly newsletter *by our volunteers to our volunteers about*
our fight against drugs and crime in Central PA

Volume 14, Issue 3 - March 2022



OperationOurTown.org

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**Founding Members & Committed
Businesses:**

Blair Candy Company
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Stuckey Automotive
The Hite Company
Thompson Pharmacy
UPMC Altoona
Value Drug Company
Ward Trucking



BLAIR COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Breakfast Club

A Year in Review

THE MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS
OF OPERATION OUR TOWN

WITH
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
PETER WEEKS
& JIM WALSTROM

2022 Community
Partnership Award
Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation

2022 Law
Enforcement Awards

March **10**
7:45-9 a.m.

-Sponsored by -



\$20 • members

\$30 • non-members

For Reservations: call 943-8151
online at www.blairchamber.com

Mission

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



Month of March - Meetings

3/1	Northern Blair Roundtable meeting	12:00pm	Bull Pen Restaurant
3/3	Early Childhood Education Roundtable meeting	10:00am	Blair County Chamber & Zoom
3/7	Booker T. Washington meeting	4:00pm	Central Blair Rec & Park Commission
3/16	Marketing Roundtable meeting	4:00pm	OOT office
3/17	Criminal Justice Advisory Board Roundtable meeting	12:00pm	Blair County Courthouse
3/17	Faith-based Roundtable meeting	2:00pm	Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships & Zoom
3/24	Housing Roundtable meeting	12:00pm	Al's Tavern

REPORT DRUG ACTIVITY
PUSH OUT THE PUSHER
814-693-3020

2-1-1

Pennsylvania
Get Connected. Get Help.™

PA 2-1-1 is a comprehensive database that includes information about health & human services.

PA 2-1-1 can be accessed by phone 24/7 or the web at:

www.pa211.org

Understanding Addiction, Mental Health & Co-occurring Disorders

Thursday, May 5, 2022

**Session 1: 9:00am - 12:00pm OR
Session 2: 5:00pm - 8:00pm**

**at The Bull Pen Restaurant
(207 Jefferson Ave Tyrone, PA 16686)**

Free to attend

Reserve your spot by contacting:

(814) 296-8730 or oot@operationourtown.org

Reservations preferred, but walk-ins accepted

****Please Register by Friday, April 29****

Sponsored by:



814-381-0921

Grant Recipient Highlight: Home Nursing Agency Foundation Healing Patch Children's Grief Program

By: Nick Gordon, PMSC AmeriCorps Member
with Operation Our Town



Blair Healing Patch volunteers wearing blue in support of Children's Grief Awareness Day, which occurs annually on the 3rd Thursday in November.

The Healing Patch Children's Grief Program is a peer support program designed for children and their families who have suffered the death of a loved one. The program serves children of all ages (preschool through 18 years) who can benefit from and contribute to a peer support group facilitated by specially trained staff and volunteers.

With two centers available (Altoona and Ebensburg), the program meets twice monthly at each location from 6-8 pm from September to May. Every evening begins with a meal for the entire family. Children are then divided between age-specific groups where they engage in various activities and group discussions. The use of art, drama, storytelling, and play are just some of the ways children may choose to express their feelings and share with peers who can understand and empathize with those feelings. While the children are engaged, parents or guardians meet separately to discuss the impact of their loved one's death on the family and learn how to help their children cope.

In addition to peer support groups, the Healing Patch offers in-school services, such as Grief Education in the Classroom for middle school students, which is a presentation that introduces the topics of grief, mourning, finding positive ways to cope, and how to support grieving friends.

Another service the Healing Patch offers is peer support groups within the schools for children who may have difficulty attending a Healing Patch center. Healing Patch staff co-facilitate with at least one school staff member during a six-week group.

The program staff also offer speakers on topics related to loss, grief, death, and dying to organizations, businesses, and churches in the community.

Additionally, the Healing Patch offers a Lending Library of more than 400 grief-related resources that are available to anyone in the community to borrow.

Since the Healing Patch has only two full-time staff members, they are grateful for the support of volunteers, needed in several capacities: Group Facilitators plan and facilitate group activities and discussions on group nights, Greeters welcome families and help with the sign-in process, Food Servers serve dinner to the families, and Sewing Volunteers create memory bears/pillows and sew together pillowcases that each family creates at the end of the program year in memory of their loved one. Potential volunteers can contact Shalen Steinbugl, Volunteer Coordinator/Grief Specialist at 814-947-7140 or steinbuglsm@upmc.edu to learn more.

If your child is grieving the loss of a loved one, the Healing Patch accepts families on a rolling basis, as a self-referral program. Families interested in enrolling in the Healing Patch can call 1-800-445-6262. After providing information about the loss and family dynamics during the initial intake call, families then attend an orientation at the Healing Patch center to tour the facility and meet the staff. After an orientation is complete, families can attend the next scheduled Healing Patch session.



Dream catchers made by students at Westmont Elementary during an in-school peer support group. Students discussed worries, fears, and how to manage these thoughts and feelings.

20 Sheraton Drive, Altoona, PA 16601
118 Ebony Road, Ebensburg, PA 15931
Website: www.homenursingagency.com/services/childrens-services/healing-patch
Contact: Melody Ray, Healing Patch Coordinator
Phone: 1-800-445-6262
Email: Raymr@upmc.edu
Monday-Friday 8:00am – 3:30pm

HEALING PATCH
A Children's Grief Program