

December 2006/January 2007

VISION STATEMENT:

Healthy Adams County seeks to create a higher quality of life throughout our community by improving physical, mental, and social well-being.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Healthy Adams County is a collaborative partnership of community members dedicated to continuing assessment, development and promotion of efforts toward improving physical, mental and social well-being.

Domestic violence survivor presented with annual community recognition award

Kareema S. Griest was presented with the Domestic Violence Task Force Community Recognition Award at its annual Domestic Violence Awareness Night on October 18. The annual event is sponsored by the Domestic Violence Task Force, an affiliate of Healthy Adams County, and Gettysburg College Women's Center.

A domestic violence survivor and member of the Survivors board of directors, Griest was recognized for her longstanding commitment and continued support of community education and awareness of domestic violence.



Shown above from left to right are Kathy Gaskin, executive director, Healthy Adams County; Ali Petti, co-director, Gettysburg College Women's Center; Lisa Nevada, co-chair, Domestic Violence Task Force; Kareema Griest, award recipient; Caroline Kocher, co-director, Gettysburg College Women's Center; and Jess Miller, co-chair, Domestic Violence Task Force.

January is National Mentoring Month

January is National Mentoring Month. The National Mentoring Partnership (Mentor.org) has found that nationally 15.1 million young people could use an adult mentor. Teens who are mentored are 46% less likely to get into drugs, 59% more likely to get better grades, and 73% more likely to raise their goals. Finding mentors for young people in Adams County is a tremendous challenge.

To highlight the importance of mentoring, the Youth Providers Resource Network Mentoring Committee, an affiliate of Healthy Adams County and provider network for Collaborating for Youth, has planned several activities to promote mentoring during January.

Currently there is a full-page mentoring ad featured on the last page of the Majestic Theater playbill, sponsored by Collaborating for Youth.

On December 20 the Adams County Commissioners will proclaim January as Mentoring Month in Adams County. During January, mentoring in Adams County will be featured through a series of articles in the Gettysburg Times; on WGET-1320AM Freddie's Breakfast Nook; and, a window display at the Bank of Hanover in downtown Gettysburg. Lastly, the Ragged Edge Coffee Shop will host a First Friday "Meet a Mentor" on January 5, 5-7 p.m.

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A message from the executive director

The holidays are right around the corner and with them bring many exciting events, holiday parties, shopping trips and spending time with family and friends. Unfortunately, the holidays also bring stressors such as not having enough income to buy gifts for loved ones, not having enough money to heat your house due to the cold weather, or grieving the loss of a loved one even more because of the time of year, and the list could go on for each one of us.

I have asked some of Healthy Adams County's task force leaders to share what things some of our community members will be going through that are especially tough this time of year. Hopefully we can help each other to have happier holidays by helping at least one person get through them less stressfully.

Wes Frisbie, Tobacco Prevention Task Force, writes "The holidays are difficult times for people who are struggling to quit smoking. When the inevitable flight delays, family tensions or burnt turkeys exceed our capacity to shrug them off, a dose of tobacco helps fill the deficit. You can help the ex-smokers in your life by being extra supportive as they struggle with the upcoming holidays."

Cynthia Romero, Safe Kids Coalition, would like "parents and guardians to take extra precautions as they start up wood stoves and furnaces that have not been used for several months so as to prevent accidental fires in the home." Keep kids safe during the holidays!

Nate Rivera, Behavioral Health Task Force, would like us to keep in mind that "people in our community may be suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder and that the holidays may be especially hard for them. Most people find they eat and sleep slightly more in winter and dislike the dark mornings and short days. For some, however, symptoms are severe enough to disrupt their lives and to cause considerable distress." Please direct anyone who may be experiencing this trouble during the winter months to someone who can help.

Holly Cookerly, Physical Fitness Task Force, reminds us "don't forget to get plenty of physical exercise to burn off the extra calories people usually consume with the abundance of holiday food." Physical exercise can also relieve some of the stress that people may be experiencing during the season.

The homeless shelter in Adams County served 218 people this past year but had to turn over 400 away. Unfortunately there are many who do not have a place to live during the holidays.

One in four women, one in three girls and one in six boys will be abused during the holiday season. If you see someone being hurt or they tell you they are being hurt, tell them it is not their fault and help them find the help they need.

Have a safe and happy holiday season and keep in mind those who will need some support to remain healthy and less stressed through the next few months.

Kathy Gaskin

Mentoring, continued from page 1

In Adams County there are four organizations that have mentoring programs looking for mentors. You can be a part of this terrific experience too. Just make a call to one of the organizations listed below and get involved in a young person's life.

Adams County Business Education Partnership for at-risk juniors and seniors in high school, ages 16 - 18 (717-338-0861); The Center / El Centro "Across the Ages" for youth ages 11 - 14 (717-337-9050); Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Adams County for youth ages 5 to 13 with single parents (717-337-3958); and, United Cerebral Palsy of South Central PA for children ages 4 - 15 with a parent in prison (717-624-2140).



Limited edition prints to benefit breast cancer coalition

Adams County Quilt Show, shown above, is the first in a series of four limited edition, signed and numbered prints by local artist bobbi becker created exclusively for the Adams County Breast Cancer Coalition, an affiliate of Healthy Adams County. The 17" wide x 14" high framed print is available for a \$98 donation. Only 200 of each print will be available for purchase and feature a red, blue or green frame. For more information on the bobbi becker prints, call Laura Reyka, 717-339-2018 or Stephani Maitland, 717-334-4777.

Affordable housing continues to be a county issue

In 2000, a household income needed to afford the median-price house in Adams County, at that time \$130,874, was \$38,400. By 2005, the median-price house was \$216,828, a whopping increase of 66%, and the household income needed was \$62,400.

However, the increase in the median household income was only 17%, so \$38,400 became \$41,869, leaving that potential homebuyer with an income shortage of \$20,531. If housing prices had gone up only 17%, the median-price house in 2005 would have cost \$146,571 instead of \$216,828, meaning the median sales price of a home in Adams County over the last five years exceeded inflation by \$70,257.

In the spring of this year, the peak buying season, there were approximately 370 single-family houses listed for sale in Adams County. Of this number, 73% were listed for more than \$200,000. Only 12% of the houses being sold were below \$150,000.

With the increased cost of homeownership, many families cannot afford to buy a home in Adams County, which drives up the demand for rentals. Over the last five years, the increase in rent for a two-bedroom apartment exceeded inflation by 15%.

In April, the Adams County Housing Authority adjusted its payment standard for a modest two-bedroom apartment to \$663 per month. To rent a newly constructed two-bedroom apartment today (\$800 - \$1,200 per month), you could have purchased a median-price home in Adams County five years ago. Instead, a household would need to earn \$12.75 per hour, or \$26,520 annually, just to afford an apartment at Fair Market Rent.

Another indication of the extent of the housing crisis: 45% of households in

Adams County are experiencing a housing cost burden, which means their income is less than 80% of the area median income, and they pay more than 30% of their income on housing. In fact, half of them have a severe housing cost burden, which means that pay more than 50% of their income on housing.

To better understand the scope of the need for workforce/affordable housing in Adams County, the Housing Task Force, an affiliate of Healthy Adams County, will conduct a study to determine the current status of affordable housing activities and project the resources necessary to increase the affordable housing stock beyond what may be currently in the planning stages. A qualified consultant in the area of affordable housing is being sought to assist in this study.

Specifically, the study will take an inventory of affordable housing units currently in the planning stages for creation over the next five years; identify the organizations involved in their development, the costs and resources required to complete those planned units, and the sources of revenue being utilized; quantify the public and private (for profit and not-for-profit) development in the area of affordable homes and rental properties in Adams County; analyze the feasibility and current capacity to expand workforce/affordable housing in Adams County from a financial and human resource perspective; suggest alternate financing plans and development solutions that are currently untapped or underutilized, and suggestions for how to maximize those opportunities; recommend ways to raise the number of housing units rehabilitated or built in the next five years, including suggestions of where to locate housing; and identify potential impediments to consider in an effort to meet future goals.

The study is expected to be completed by the end of April, 2007. The results of the final report will then be presented to the public.

A side effect of the housing crisis is the alarming increase in predatory lending. Predatory lending refers to secured loans which are made by a lender with the expectation that the borrower will not repay the loan, allowing the lender to seize the property and sell it for a profit. There was a 57% increase in the number of such incidents in south-central Pennsylvania just between 1997 and 2002.

The term predatory lending has been expanded to the practice of convincing borrowers to agree to unfair and abusive loan terms, a type of lending that falls between appropriate risk-based pricing and blatant fraud. This could be done through outright deception or through aggressive sales tactics. While many of these practices are legal, they take advantage of the borrower's lack of understanding of complicated transactions.

Predatory lending schemes include sub-prime home mortgages; payday, car title, and tax refund anticipation loans (with interest rates approaching 1,000%); and home repair scams. Although predators in general are more likely to target racial and ethnic minorities, women, and the elderly (particularly home repair scams), victims of predatory lending are represented in all segments of the population. All of these schemes frequently result in dire, long-term consequences.

To learn more about the Housing Task Force and its efforts toward affordable housing in Adams County, contact Mark Berg at 717-642-9404 or email at mark.d.berg@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events and Observances

January

Freedom From Smoking

Tuesdays, January 2 - February 20

6:30 – 8 p.m.

Gettysburg Hospital

Tobacco Prevention Task Force

Free eight-session course designed to help people quit smoking.

Call Jen at 717-338-3259.

Smoking Cessation Support Group

First Thursday of the month starting

January 4, 6:30 p.m.

Gettysburg Hospital

Tobacco Prevention Task Force

Call Jen at 717-338-3259.

Adams County School Nurse In-Service (Tentative)

January 15

Time & Location: TBD

Children's Health Task Force

Call Holly at 717-337-4264, #3.

10th Annual DAY ON

Community service project held in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 15, Time: TBD

YWCA of Gettysburg & Adams County

Help sort thousands of items donated to nonprofit agencies and the families they serve.

Call the Adams County Volunteer

Center at the United Way of Adams

County at 717-334-5809.

Task Force Leader Social (Tentative)

January 31, 5 p.m.

Location: TBD

Annual social for the task force leaders of Healthy Adams County.

Call Jen at 717-337-4137.

March

Exhibitor Opportunity

12th Annual Women's Conference

March 10, All Day Event

Gettysburg College

Contact Laura Reyka at 717-339-2018 if you are interested in being an exhibitor.