

February 2006/March 2006

## 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.

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## Executive director to retire

Bill Taft, executive director, Healthy Adams County (HAC), recently announced his retirement, effective April 15, 2006. Bill has spent the last 18 years with Gettysburg Hospital/WellSpan and has been in his current position with HAC since 1996.

Under Bill's leadership and collaborative partnership with the community, HAC has grown to more than 650 volunteer members working to address such diverse issues as oral health access, tobacco prevention, teen pregnancy, and the needs of a growing Latino population in Adams County.

"Bill was instrumental in bringing the vision of a community health improvement coalition to Adams County," says Steve Niebler, president of the HAC board of directors.

"His sensitivity to the needs and challenges of community building and strong working relationship with local agencies and organizations helped to build a solid foundation for a successful community coalition."

Several board members echo Niebler's sentiments on Bill's contributions.

Louise Main's early recollections of Bill's work with the partnership include his quiet



wisdom and innate ability to involve others and find innovative solutions.

"In 1997, I remember several of us gathered at The Orchard in Chambersburg to listen to Tyler Norris speak on 'Inviting In Your Community through Your Leadership'," recalls Mains.

"It was the first step toward a community partnership and under Bill's tutelage, our local effort has grown and flourished."

Kathy Gaskin, vice president of the board, also notes Bill's support in the formation of the Domestic Violence Task Force. In appreciation for his efforts, he was presented with a special gift from the task force, a silk-screened tee shirt featuring several Star Wars characters, including Bill as Hans Solo. The tee shirt read "May the task force be with you."

"I don't understand why Bill still declines to model the tee shirt for us," jokes Gaskin.

Quiet wisdom, keen sense of humor, profound compassion for his community, a man who has made a difference – this is Bill Taft, a leader who will be deeply missed.

## Grief support offered

To heal in mind, body, and spirit after the death of a loved one requires grief work. For those who have recently lost a loved one, are beyond the initial shock of the loss, and would like to have support during this time of healing, several grief support group opportunities are being offered for the local community.

Project Mend-A-Heart, a six-week grief support group for children, will meet Monday evenings from 6:30-8 p.m. at St. James Lutheran Church from February 20 until April 3.

The Behavioral Health Task Force, an affiliate of Healthy Adams County, is offering two, six-

week grief support groups that will meet in the Pastoral Care Office (T201) at the Gettysburg Hospital. One group, facilitated by Barbara Schmitthenner, Diaconal Minister at St. James Lutheran Church, will meet Tuesday evenings from 7-8:30 p.m. beginning March 7. Another group, facilitated by Sister Marion Stillwell of St. Francis Xavier Church, will meet Thursday afternoons from 2-3:30 beginning March 9.

For more information and to register for the support groups, contact Schmitthenner at 334-2012 or through her e-mail address at [bschmitthenner@stjamesgettysburg.org](mailto:bschmitthenner@stjamesgettysburg.org).

## Message from the executive director

By this time it probably comes as no surprise that this edition of our **Healthy Communities Newsletter** provides my last opportunity to share a few thoughts with you. I will be retiring before the next edition, and therefore wish to take this time to thank everyone who has helped build and sustain **Healthy Adams County** through continuing volunteer efforts which are unbelievable in today's busy and increasingly stressful environment.

Thank you for demonstrating that local people still care enough about our community to rally around issues which keep some of us from pursuing hopes and dreams that should be within our reach. I will always be amazed at the power of collaboration, where people representing the whole spectrum of skills and abilities, but who share the notion - and the passion - that shared efforts toward improving the lives and health of others is a worthy pursuit.

Our partnership has provided many forums for this process to occur, by identifying actual community needs and bringing interested stakeholders together to address them through advocacy, awareness, education, and, most importantly - improved access.

I have enjoyed serving with you, and have learned many life lessons in this process. I especially would like to thank those "pioneers" from the former **Adams County Council of Community Services**, and the leadership of **Gettysburg Hospital/WellSpan** for having the foresight to join together in establishing a truly collaborative community partnership, originally called **The Adams County Partnership for Community Health**.

Thank you for helping to build a strong foundation for future community work. Continued success in your endeavors "to create a higher quality of life throughout our community by improving physical, mental, and social well-being".

**Bill Taft**

## Healthy Adams County welcomes Community Re-entry Coalition

The Community Re-entry Coalition (CRC) is a collaborative partnership of citizens and organizations dedicated to developing a coordinated, community-based system designed to prepare offenders to successfully re-enter society.

While investing the time and effort into those who have been incarcerated can be controversial, there are many compelling reasons that show it is an effort worth the investment.

There are many opinions when it comes to the penal system in America. The fact, however, is that the cost of incarceration is tremendous, approximately \$24,000 per year, per inmate in Adams County. That is a measurable cost of services and supplies needed to keep one inmate in prison.

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More importantly, perhaps, what are the costs in terms of families who have a member who goes to prison? What happens to those families, those marriages, those children and at what cost to society? The risk factor for children of inmates to become future offenders increases significantly. And most notably, what is the cost to our communities in the loss of the gifts, talents, abilities, and all that each individual brings to the table when that person goes to prison? Lastly, what is the overall cost when the recidivism rate (relapse into criminal behavior) is 75-85%?

That message inspired PA Prison Society, Adams County Chapter members Joyce Shutt, Nancy Forgang, and Bob Brandt to put words into action. Together, they sponsored initial community efforts regarding re-entry initiatives and soon established the framework for the Community Re-entry Coalition (CRC), which then affiliated with Healthy Adams County.

To the CRC, recidivism is clearly a message that offenders are not properly prepared to re-enter their communities with confidence. The CRC's vision statement recognizes that safety is a tangible issue for the public, when it says, "The Community Re-entry Coalition (CRC) seeks to improve public safety and reduce recidivism."

Many offenders themselves are fearful of leaving prison. Many do not have the tools to make the transition from incarceration. The CRC mission is to provide successful re-entry of offenders back into their communities, helping them with practical and realistic means to bring about confident integration with the necessary support services, family, friends, and caring individuals.

Such a tremendous feat cannot be accomplished alone. The CRC has partnered with over 20+ organizations, agencies, churches, and individuals who have aligned themselves to this effort by attending monthly meetings and volunteering to work on the six sub-committees of the CRC: Family Decision Making, Circles of Support, Community Education, Halfway House, Resource Assessment, and the Steering Committee.

Several initiatives are emerging from the hard work of the committees, i.e. empowering families (extended, friends, church family, etc.) to come together to address the concerns of the inmate; finding an effective long term mentoring program; and researching the viability of transitional housing for men leaving prison.

A successful re-entry can be a success for everyone. Restoration means restoring what has been damaged to a new and improved life. The Community Re-Entry Coalition believes a community working together can accomplish this goal - a successful re-entry is a success for the entire community.

For more information on CRC, contact Lou Ann Agosta at 334-1295 or email at lagosta@ltsg.edu.

## Join "SHAPE UP" PA and improve your health!

The 2006 Shape Up PA program began on February 8th. This is the third year for the Shape Up PA program in Adams and York Counties.

Shape Up PA is a five month team wellness program that is both competitive and enjoyable. To participate, teams are formed (up to ten people per team) from friends and family members in the worksite setting, faith community, schools, and the seniors only group.

Progress is charted by keeping a record of exercise minutes and/or pounds lost. Weekly e-mails or newsletters will be sent to each team captain to distribute among the team members. There will be a team captain handbook as well as numerous tips regarding physical activities, nutritional information and motivational pieces to keep the team inspired.

Awards are given at the completion of the program to the top three teams who record the most minutes of activity and most pounds lost. There is a \$10 per person registration fee (payable to the Keystone State Games) which includes a t-shirt, recording tools and other helpful information.

Increasing in popularity, over 12,000 Pennsylvanians from 38 counties participated in the 2005 Shape Up PA campaign. Shape Up PA proved to be successful for 513 residents of Adams County who formed 81 teams. Success was obvious, with a Gettysburg College team, "The Sore Losers," losing 130 lbs. and many teams recording over 200 hours of physical activity per team member for the five months!

The 2006 Shape Up PA program will run until June 28th. A team registration form may be obtained by logging onto the web at [www.shapeuppa.org](http://www.shapeuppa.org) or calling Gettysburg Hospital at 334-4646. This year there will be a special incentive for persons to join a Shape Up PA team. All participants in Adams and York Counties will be registered in a drawing to win one of five \$100 prize packages (IPOD, massages, Dicks Sporting Goods gift certificate and baskets of health goodies).

If you would like more information or a personal visit at your team meeting, call Holly Cookerly at 334-4646.

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## HAC President attends White House Aging Conference

Steve Niebler, president of the Healthy Adams County Board of Directors and director of The Adams County Office for Aging, was appointed by Congressman Todd Platts as a delegate to the recent White House Conference on Aging. The purpose of this conference was to develop a report containing recommendations to Congress to chart Federal policy on aging for the next ten years.

Niebler's primary areas of interest were housing and transportation for seniors. Resolutions developed on these topics included the following:

- \* Ensure that older Americans have transportation options
- \* Pursue innovative models for non-institutional long-term care
- \* Support livable communities that allow "aging in place"; pedestrian safety, etc.
- \* Improve access to healthcare for elders in rural areas
- \* Include elders in emergency response plans
- \* Provide support for elders raising grandchildren, e.g. allowed to stay in age-restricted housing, eligible to get an Access card without being employed
- \* Support older drivers (e.g., Florida limits driving to daylight hours, restricts use of interstate highways for drivers above a certain age/liability)
- \* Offer housing options in regard to availability, affordability; expand innovative housing design for seniors
- \* Change building codes and zoning ordinances, if needed, to allow greater density, height, etc., necessary for senior housing

A Conference Report will be available in February, 2006.

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## New committee to address youth suicide

According to the Centers for Disease Control, suicide is the third leading cause of death for persons aged 15-24. Suicide is preventable, but a community must be educated regarding the risk factors and possible signs of suicide in youth. To address these issues, the Adams County Suicide Prevention Committee has been formed as a sub-committee of the Behavioral Health Task Force.

The team is comprised of professionals from state and local organizations that work closely with youth issues.

The mission of this committee is to prevent the suicide of children and adolescents in Adams County by having a thorough understanding of the local and regional causes of suicide. In addition to implementing and evaluating interventions, the committee's goals include ongoing public awareness and education, resource assistance, reducing risk factors, and assuring access to treatment options.

Individuals who have an interest in these issues are invited to join the committee. The team meets on a bi-monthly basis at Gettysburg Hospital. For more information, contact co-chairs Linda Starry from Pennsylvania Counseling Services at 337-1075 or Joanna Myers from PA Department of Health at 534-2023.

# Upcoming Events and Observances

## March

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### **Smoking Cessation Support Group**

*First Thursday of the month, starting  
March 2, 6:30p.m.*

*Gettysburg Hospital*

*Tobacco Prevention Task Force*

*Call Jen at 338-3259.*

### **Grief Support Groups**

*Behavioral Health Task Force*

*See page 1 for details.*

### **Community Resource Center**

#### **Open House**

*March 10, 4-7p.m.*

*St. Francis Xavier Church*

*Latino Services Task Force*

*Informational center providing resources for*

*Latinos and the general community. Call*

*Amelia at 339-0570, x. 106 or Dawn at  
334-1518.*

## April

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### **Walking Parties**

*Kick-off during the week of April 3rd*

*Time and location TBD*

*Physical Fitness Task Force*

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

### **National Kick Butts Day**

*April 5, Time and location TBD*

*Tobacco Prevention Task Force*

*Call Jen at 338-3259.*

### **A Community that Cares: Learn Tools to Help Stop Sexual Violence**

*April 19, 12-1:15p.m.*

*Gettysburg Hospital*

*Domestic Violence Task Force*

*Call Kathy at 334-0589.*

### **Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault: What Every Parent and Teacher Needs to Know**

*April 19, 3:30-5:30p.m.*

*Gettysburg Hospital*

*Domestic Violence Task Force*

*Call Kathy at 334-0589.*

## May

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### **A Day with Deborah M. Roffman, M.S.**

*May 9, 8a.m.-4p.m., Location TBD*

*Cost: \$45*

*Adams Coalition to Prevent Teen Pregnancy*

*Day-long program for adults who work with  
youth & parents, facilitated by Deborah M.*

*Roffman, nationally certified Sexuality and*

*Family Life Educator. Email*

*acptp@juno.com.*

### **Freedom from Smoking**

*Tuesdays starting May 9, 6:30p.m.-8p.m.*

*Gettysburg Hospital*

*Tobacco Prevention Task Force*

*Free eight-session clinic designed to help peo-*

*ple quit smoking. Call Jen at 338-3259.*