

Penn State Altoona HUDCOPC

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Dear Friends,

Penn State Altoona and the Altoona Housing Authority have been working together since June 15, 2005. It has been a wonderful experience building a partnership that is beneficial to all involved. We are making some great working relationships along the way and the future looks bright.

Coordinator Hired

On September 19, 2005 the Academic Affairs Office hired **Susanna M. Tomlinson** as the Academic Partnership Coordinator for this COPC Grant. Susanna works in a local human services agency and brings years of networking experience and organizational skills to our efforts. She is doing a great job building the working relationships needed between Altoona Housing Authority staff, Blair Senior Services, law enforcement, healthcare providers, Penn State Altoona faculty and students.

Resident Council Meetings

Resident Council meetings are held once a month at both the Green Avenue Tower and the Eleventh Street Tower. Each tower has about 180 residents with 40 to 50 attending the meetings. These groups are active and autonomous; they have raised their own budgets through local events and they program social functions as well as communicate issues to the Altoona Housing Authority professional staff. We have actively participated in the formal business agenda at the monthly meetings of the two senior residence Councils. We are getting a good sense of residents' priorities and the knowledge of our program is spreading. We also attend the regular meetings of the newly formed Fairview Hills Resident Council.

Internships

Two seniors from Penn State Altoona were selected for full-time internships with Altoona Housing Authority projects:

- **Amanda Ritchey** (Human Development and Family Studies) completed her internship during the fall 2005 semester. Amanda worked with and was supervised by Child Advocates of Blair County (Head Start). She worked primarily with residents of the Altoona Housing Authority's Fairview Hills facility.
- **Angela Bendahan's** (Human Development and Family Studies) internship has been arranged for the spring 2006 semester. She will be working with and supervised by Blair Senior Services. She will be working primarily with residents of the Green Avenue and Eleventh Street Towers.

We are planning ahead for seniors to fill two internship positions each semester.

Computer Labs

We have purchased and installed six IBM Think Centre Machine computers and three printers at the three Altoona Housing Authority buildings. These computers are intended to increase resident skills in using computers and access to the Internet. We are happy to be partnering with PC Works Plus, the information technology service provider for the Altoona Housing Authority.



Class Projects

Nine courses have taken advantage of the educational benefits of the COPC project.

Lauren Jacobson taught HDFS 433 "*Transitions to Adulthood*" in which nine students organized three Friday evening social activities for adolescents residing at Fairview Hills. The activities were Movie Night, Pool Party, and Holiday social with 14-16 adolescents attending each event.

Lauren Jacobson also taught HDFS 311 "*Introduction to Interventions*". Twenty-seven of her students worked with first through eighth graders in small age-appropriate groups over a five-week period. The students created a series of activities involving nutrition and exercise information and implemented these activities during an after school program held at the Fairview Hills Community Center.

Dan Lago taught HDFS 414 "*Resolving Human Development and Family Problems*". Two groups in his class worked with at-risk children. One group of five students volunteered two days a week to provide one-on-one tutoring and socialization activities with children at the Fairview Hills After School Program. They also collaborated with HDFS 311 students to hold a large Halloween party and cooked a complete Thanksgiving dinner for parents and other family members. The second group had four students who organized a series of three programs for children in a home-based behavioral health unit of the Altoona Regional Health System, twenty-five children and ten parents attended.

Dan Lago also taught HDFS 445 and PSYCH 445 "*Adult Development and Aging*". Twenty-five students worked with Dan Lago and Elizabeth Seymour on cultural perspective and interview skills. The students then conducted interviews with seniors from Green Avenue and Eleventh Street Towers focusing on personal history, transition to public housing, current social support, and current needs. As a result of this class Lago and Seymour have began an autobiography-writing group among tower residents. Seven tower residents have signed up and have completed four of the ten sessions.

Kevin Galbraith taught HDFS 495 C "*Internship*" supervising Amanda Ritchey, and completed planning with the Family Resource Center for an independent study course and Fairview Hills programs on "Mommy and Me" and on parenting skills.

Nedra Farcus taught Nursing 418, "*Application of Family and Community Health Concepts*". Two groups developed and will hold thirty-minute educational programs. One group of five students developed 'Let the Pyramid Be Your Guide' which will be held at the Eleventh Street Towers on February 1st, 2006. Another group of three students developed 'Sit, Stretch, and Strengthen' which will be held March 1st, 2006 at the Eleventh Street Towers.

Michael Arter taught CJ 210 "*Law Enforcement Function*" in which his students developed an array of brochures on personal security and neighborhood concerns. These brochures will be distributed in spring and fall. Ten of his students also conducted a workshop on personal safety with 26 seniors visiting on campus, December 3, 2005.

Suzanne Kuhn taught NURS 496 "*Independent Studies*" in which twelve students developed flyers and a January calendar of scheduled Healthy for Life Activities. The information will be distributed to the residents of the Green Avenue and Eleventh Street Towers.

Barbara Weins-Tuers taught Econ. 351 "*Money and Banking*." Her students created pamphlets on the safety of banks, information on local banking institutions, benefits of homeownership, and information about buying a home for adult audiences. They also created a presentation for the teenage residents on credit management, saving, and college.

Administrative Systems

We have established the necessary administrative aspects of the project. Working with all parties involved we have set up communication networks, record keeping systems, and process for developing reports. We have regular meetings and daily communication through e-mail with the faculty and staff of Penn State, Altoona Housing Authority staff, and the Resident Services Coordinator. We also have an Angel site that is a secure internal server; it has all project materials and minutes of meetings available to approved faculty at all times.

We are looking forward to reporting more progress over the next six months. If you have any questions or suggestions please contact the Project Coordinator Susanna Tomlinson at smt133@psu.edu or (cell) 327-2052, or Project Director Dan Lago at djl@psu or 814-949-5524.