

# Penn State Altoona HUDCOPC

[www.altoona.psu.edu/hudcopc](http://www.altoona.psu.edu/hudcopc)

Penn State Altoona and the Altoona Housing Authority (AHA) continue to work together to promote community based learning for Penn State students while improving the quality of life for Altoona Housing residents at Green Avenue and Eleventh Street Towers, and at Fairview Hills.

## The 'Value' of a College Education

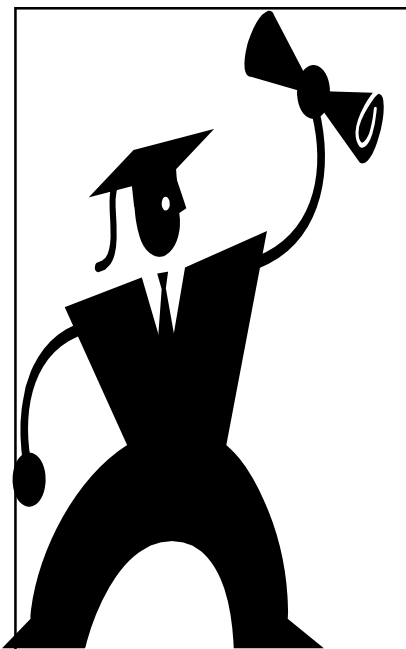
Deawna Wydant is 24 years old, has a 1-year-old daughter and is currently attending her second full-time semester at Penn State Altoona. When I first met Deawna and started talking to her about college all she could say is "I can't believe this is happening to me." She was a single mother-working full time and still had to depend on welfare to make ends meet. She like many other Fairview Hills residents felt that college is not an option for her at all. Many residents are not aware of available financial aid and lack role models who have gone through the process. Deawna

like many others thought she was going to have to work a labor intensive, low paying job for the rest of her life. Deawna now has a GPA of 3.8 and is enjoying what college has to offer.

"Mentoring for Post Secondary Education (MESPE) has helped me with many aspects of my life. Not only did the program help me continue my education but it gave me more self confidence," said

Wydant. "I now know that I can not only handle college but I can excel in college. Thanks to MEPSE, I now feel that I am on the right track in my life. I hope that MEPSE is

around for a long time to help many other people reach their educational goals."



## Education Achievement

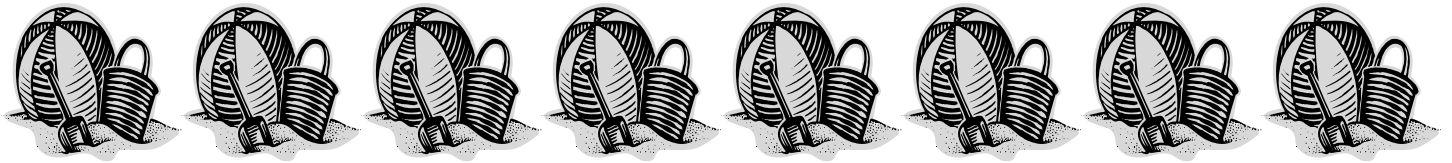
Last Spring we inaugurated the MEPSE project, "Mentoring for Post Secondary Education" (MEPSE), due to the creativity and desire of our Work Study student, Shannon Beaver. Over summer 2006, Shannon worked with interested residents and administrators in our Admissions and Financial Aid Offices. One student was admitted and has successfully completed her first semester at Penn State Altoona. We have several others who are "in the pipeline" and have participated in our programs through Fall Semester. We held two initial orientation meetings with college administrators and staff from the Guidance and Adult Education programs in the Altoona Area School District. As an example, adults who are out of high school are invited to the Community Education Center of the AASD to complete their GED, or simply to study in adult skill classes to prepare for their college admission Scholastic Aptitude tests (SATs) at no cost to them.



Criminal Justice students work with Tower residents

Various criminal justice classes recently completed analyzing interviews with the seniors at the Green Avenue Tower on the subject of crime prevention and personal safety. Results showed that females were more inclined to discuss personal matters and experiences, while the males tended to discuss local and national issues of concern. The women's responses were of greater length while the men provided short but

assertive responses. As time has passed, the residents and students have become a lot more comfortable speaking with each other which is promising start to what could be many more projects and discussions.



Biology Professor Mary Kananen gives the children a short anatomy lesson

## Summer Involvement

We have had a very good summer and fall for press releases and public information on Altoona COPC projects. Marty Jo Irvin Stellabotte of the Penn State Altoona University Relations Office has been assigned as our liaison and we have produced a number of news stories, news photographs, and stories in university print media. Penn State Altoona interns, Mike Bacher and Sara Ciaverella, spent the summer taking Fairview Hills children on trips to various parks, presentations, activities, and events. The children very much enjoyed the experience and the association they had with the college students. One of the activities involved Biology Professor Mary Kananen, who wowed the children with experiments and an assortment of different specimens to view under microscopes.



Joe Piotti, Penn State Altoona baseball coach, hosted approximately 20 Fairview Hills children in a training session and pick-up game on campus on October 9, 2006. It was a great afternoon. The youth were paired with a college player and tutored in baseball fielding, throwing, and hitting. They formed teams with college

and youth mixed. Only the youth batted and strikes and outs were not counted. Each child batted twice in each inning and then they switched. The college players modeled good sportsmanship, complimenting and cheering youth on either team for hits or fielding plays. The children and players both had a great time.

On February 16, 2007, the Fairview Hills children

were invited to the Men's and Women's Penn State Altoona Basketball finale in the Adler gymnasium. The baseball and basketball teams collaborated in the festivities, providing pizza and refreshments as well as Penn State Altoona T-Shirts to wear during the game.

The Athletic department looks forward to inviting the children to many more events in the future!



## Healthy Living

During the fall semester, Penn State Altoona's nursing program faculty met with representatives from Gateway sponsor of the Healthy for Life Program at the Eleventh Street and Green Avenue Towers from December 2005

through April 2006. The faculty also met with the Home Nursing Agency (HNA) to establish a collaborative working relationship for the weight management program. Regular blood pressure, weight management screening were done

monthly at the Eleventh Street Towers and Green Avenue Towers. Nursing students also assisted various programs such as 'My Pyramid' and 'Sit, Stretch, and Strengthen'.

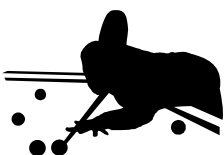


## After School Program

During the fall 2006 semester, seven students from the HDFFS participated in an after-school program to benefit the children at Fairview Hills. Students provided one-on-one tutoring, as well as opportunities to inter-

act with college students in a mentoring and guidance capacity. These student assistants were very helpful in allowing the program supervisor, Joe Campbell, to more effectively conduct the program. They provided him

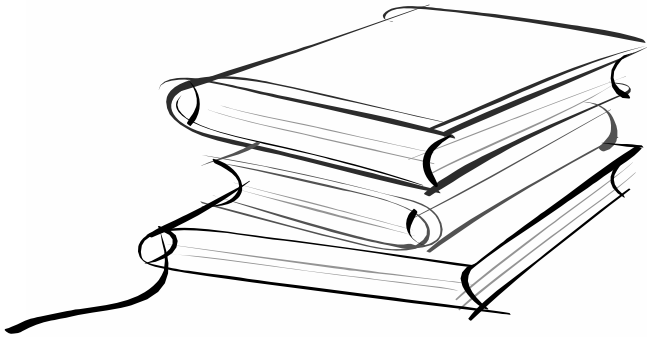
with time to work more closely with children requiring greater attention and direction. Some activities such as bowling, game nights, and various parties were held for the children.



Penn State Altoona and the Altoona Housing Authority are working together for better education for our students and improved quality of life for Housing residents

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## English Department Involvement

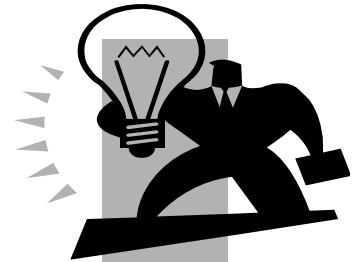


Dr. Laura Rotunno, Assistant Professor of English has joined our HUD COPC group with some of her students in the Literature Club (a non-credit co-curricular group). Her involvement is significant as we increase our faculty group, and work outside the credit course domain. The students in this club interacted with the residents of the Towers in a series of workshops related to literature on the holidays. The goal of these workshops was to encourage the older adults to react to short stories and perhaps write stories about their past experiences. Results could be loaded onto the Altoona Housing Authority's Community server. The group plans on making additional visits

## COPC Progress

Our COPC group has made substantial progress on every area identified in our proposal. We are starting to generate positive public information and press. We are especially pleased that our first year efforts have been supplemented by increasing community involvement, and especially by increased faculty participation and interest by top campus administrators.

We have several future initiatives in development and our faculty are working in close interdisciplinary groups. The addition of the community server website is also a significant part of the project. Various projects and pictures related to the COPC project are being loaded onto the website. AHA Community Server will allow people to easily



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If you have questions or suggestions please contact the Project Coordinator, Susanna Tomlinson, at [smt133@psu.edu](mailto:smt133@psu.edu) or 814-949-5367, or Project Director, Dan Lago, at [djl@psu.edu](mailto:djl@psu.edu) or 814-949-5524.