

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



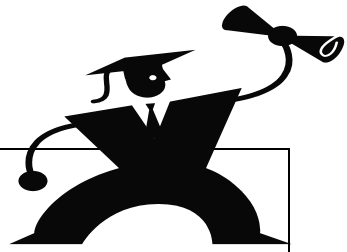
Community Outreach and Principles of Micro Economics

Faith-based partnership results in a Visual Survey of Fairview Hills neighborhood needs. The project involved having students in ECON 2 and HDFS carry-out a field research project in teams to assess the redevelopment status of "street blocks" in an areas adjacent to a newly established church outreach program - the Nehemiah. Communication with local faith-based organizations is an area of activity cited in our logic model and proposal. The Pleasant Valley Assembly of God (PVAG) has acquired an abandoned church and plan to use it as a site for an outreach ministry in a blighted local neighborhood adjacent to Fairview Hills area. Dan Lago and Barbara Wiens-Tuers worked with Jean Johnstone, Vice President for Ministry in the Altoona Regional Health System, and Larry Carter Director of the City of Altoona Planning Commission, as well as Pastor Jim Balzano, (PVAG) to develop an observational survey instrument and study procedure that included use of public property data on each parcel. The study was reviewed and approved by Penn State's Office for the Protection of Human Subjects and students were provided a PowerPoint visual training program and technical session in evaluating dwelling and property features. On April 14 the students converged on the neighborhood to do ratings. They were accompanied by church members and worked in groups for security in the neighborhood. Lunch was served to both groups of volunteers in the shell of the abandoned church in the midst of early rehabilitation - it was a very meaningful event for our students. Seventeen street blocks totaling approximately 270 properties were rated by approximately 50 participating students. Twenty percent of properties were independently rated twice to provide a reliability estimate. The data are currently being input into a statistical analysis program and a report ranking street blocks and ranking their current status will be completed by the end of summer. As part of this project a color photograph was taken of each property/dwelling to provide a baseline archive of property status in 2007 for comparison with future status. Christopher Gayer, an HDFS student assisted in preparing for this field study and in helping to administer the process of collecting and storing data.



Dave Miller, member of Pl. Valley Assembly of God

with Penn State Altoona Students Laura Trimmer and Monique Lee



Mentoring to Higher Education

Spring 2006, we inaugurated "Mentoring for Post Secondary Education" (MEPSE), due to creativity and desire of our Work Study student, Shannon Beaver. Ms. Beaver conducted an evaluation of MEPSE this spring as an HDFS independent study, interviewing administrators, student volunteers and Fairview Hills participants about the program. She presented the results of her work at two undergraduate research conferences - one at Penn State Altoona, and one at Behrend College in Erie. She was awarded second place in both competitions. More importantly, her work documented the impact of the program and identified needed refinements, which we are working on with her over the summer. Ms. Beaver's work showed that five Fairview Hills

residents have been admitted to college in the past year as a result of participating with a MEPSE volunteer A revised MEPSE manual is in process as well as arranging for a more structured program in the fall for both volunteers and residents. We have met with and are recruiting members of the Altoona Alumni Society to assist as volunteers as well. Given the potentially huge impact attending college can have on a young person's life trajectory, and the very positive reception to this program by residents and community leaders, we are actively trying to provide a firm, long-term foundation for this program in Altoona in partnership with the PSU Altoona College.



Humanities and Arts Initiative with Fairview Hills After School Program

Laura Rotunno, Assistant Professor of English, is collaborating with Lauren Jacobson of the HDFS program in a new initiative to focus on storytelling and promoting the development of self esteem and confidence among at-risk youth. Working with Ms. Jan Kinney, a nationally known story teller with wide experience with local schools, we have begun a program in which our faculty and students received training and support by Ms. Kinney in helping youth to tell stories. Faculty and students participated in a day-long workshop on February 10, 2007 with Ms. Kinney that focused on both conceptual frameworks and skills in youth story telling. Individual stories were selected, and then the youth refined and practiced their stories. During the April 26 Dinner Theater, these youth provided the entertainment, sharing their story using a microphone in front of the audience of approximately 75 community members. A total of nine children, eight boys and one girl, shared stories. In most cases a parent was present, and there were many more adults in the audience than our usual youth programs. The audience was receptive and supportive of the youth. The youth were clearly challenged by making a presentation, but afterward they were also extremely pleased with their accomplishment. It was perhaps the nicest of the events we have conducted at Fairview Hills.

Summer Arts Involvement

Our project's faculty resources have been largely based in the Division of Education Human Development and Social Sciences, with two professors representing a second Division - Business and Engineering. With Dr. Laura Rotunno joining our group, a third Division - Arts and Humanities is now represented. We have participation from three of the four academic Divisions of the College. There is also a large and vibrant Arts culture in the Altoona community. Based on the positive response to the story-

telling initiative, we have undertaken an effort to promote more faculty involvement in community-based projects with these organizations and with local children and their parents. Specifically, we have hired a summer project associate to work in Fairview Hills to promote and support arts and humanities summer programs in that Altoona Housing Authority community. Ms Jacqueline Condron, a recent Psychology graduate from Penn State Altoona, was hired after competitive interviews to work with the program. A work group of

faculty has been assembled and several faculty and staff resource persons have agreed to participate in a variety week-long sessions devoted to one or another aspect of the creative arts, dance, poetry, theater, painting, and photography. Three summer interns in HDFS will work with these students to promote exploration of these various media, and to link those experiences to self esteem and improved social interaction.

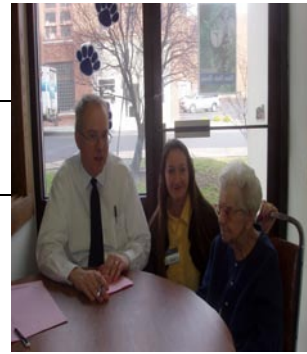


Youth from Fairview Hills visit Penn State Altoona Campus for photography project and Summer Penn State College programs.

Healthy Living in the Towers

Nursing students sponsored Med Management Day Friday April 13, 2007 at Towers. Lori Grove, graduate student, under nursing instructor Nedra Farcus, took the lead to coordinate the project. The event was well received the medication management program had 40 tower residents participate and nine were new to the program. Students continued blood pressure and weight screenings at Towers twice a

month. This year the program had 59 residents participate and nine were new to the programs. These are our most popular programs with senior residents. Students developed educational programs that are implemented at the Towers with the blood pressure screenings.



John Ebersole, Thompson's Pharmacy with Lori Grove, P.S. graduate student with Tower resident Betty Menchio

Nursing students continued to produce the monthly calendar for "Healthy for Life" that provides quick access to all health promotion activities in the towers.

Senior Towers Social Climate Project



This project represents a continuation of an effort begun fall 06(HDFS 445) to improve the interactions of residents with each other and to make the Towers a more socially supportive environment. Two students, Chris Gayer and Brittany Poorman were responsible for three activities in partnership with 15 residents serving as "Floor Reps" in the two senior towers: the first activity was the posting of messages and quotes promoting kind and considerate conduct on bulletin boards in each floor lobby. 25 different quotes were produced and provided to floor reps for posting and changing at their discretion. The

second activity was a series of posters showing color photos of residents and providing their statements of why they liked living in the towers were posted on bulletin boards. Residents clearly liked these personalized, positive messages. The third activity involved artwork done by children in local daycare centers (Begin with Us Daycare and Lilly Pond Daycare) donated by staff to the senior towers residents for hanging on floor bulletin boards, or for hanging in one's personal apartment. This program is very popular with a number of senior residents.

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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.

Leverage Community Resources

County-wide Needs Assessment effort are being prepared by the Blair County Office of Human Services, and the Blair County United Way. Professor Dan Lago, HUD-COPC grant director, has been appointed as a member of the planning group and a member of the household survey and data analysis subgroups. This work will provide quantitative support for future projects and strengthen working relationships between PSU Altoona and community partners.

In summer 2007, a multiple -agency group is working with Dan Lago to develop a Youthbuild proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor. This effort includes the Career and Technology Center, the Blair County Community Action Agency, the local Career Link, and an array of

partners including local banks.

The Altoona Housing Authority, Blair Community Action Agency and Family Services Inc. are working with the HUD COPC faculty to develop a proposal to HUD in the ROSS grant program to promote family home ownership focused on residents of Fairview Hills.

Working with the Altoona Public Library, we submitted and were funded for a small grant to develop an intergenerational library program ("Sprouting Together") in which grandparents work with grandchildren age 6-10 on art projects associated with shared personal experience. Our faculty effort is contributed, but a student who develops and administers the program before and during an internship.

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