

Prevention mattersSM

Prevention | *first*

issue 4 volume 1
december 2007

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40 Years in the Making... Happy Anniversary Prevention First

Forty years ago, a charitable organization was created to fight alcoholism in Monmouth County. The Alcoholism Council (as Prevention First was originally called) opened its doors in March 1967.

The agency attempted to draw attention to the disease of alcoholism and its victims through advocacy and education. Its original mission solely addressed alcoholism. Prevention First has since expanded its focus to meet the changing needs of the community by including tobacco and other drug prevention programs as well as bullying and violence prevention and education.

By 1969, the agency had numerous volunteers and a great deal of support from the community, prompting the Monmouth County Freeholders to declare January as Alcohol Awareness Month for the first time. (Presently April has that designation.) Also in 1969, the agency turned the focus of its

activities to the growing problem of teenage alcohol abuse.

In an era when attention was geared toward illegal drugs, the Alcoholism Council of Monmouth County declared that alcohol was a powerful drug that needed to be dealt with. Through the efforts of the National Council on Alcoholism and local government

representatives, the debate about raising the drinking age began in 1979. Teenage reactions were harsh, proclaiming that they could fight and die for their country but that they could not go into a bar and have a drink. The battle did not end until January 1983, when the legal drinking age was raised from 18 to 21 years of age. Ironically, this very issue is being raised again in 2007.

Whether the organization is named the Alcoholism Council of Monmouth or

continued on page 2



This year’s anniversary – our 40th – has been a celebration of the positive differences that have been made in the lives of thousands of children and their families through our efforts. We are thankful to have had the opportunity to do so and are especially grateful for the generosity of all who have supported us. As we look forward to the New Year in these challenging and ever-changing times, there are two things of which we can be certain – our children and families will continue to need our support – and we will continue to need yours...

Our annual giving campaign is going on now. It is rightfully called Children first! That’s where our children should come – first. Please help us put them there! Help us reach our goal of \$40,000 by donating online at www.preventionfirst.net or by contacting Gianna Verdoni at 732.663.1800 ext. 219.



40th Anniversary ...continued from page 1

Prevention First, this organization has seen many accomplishments since 1967. During the years, its mission has been amended to reflect the changing needs of Monmouth County residents and the times, but the agency still strives to help those who battle the disease of alcoholism and drug addiction and their family members, while continuing to look at related topics such as bullying and violence.

Prevention First is committed to strengthening the foundations of Monmouth County's children and families by empowering them to successfully handle every day life situations as well as extraordinary challenges such as substance abuse and violence. A recognized advocate, Prevention First is an active participant in several planning bodies, task forces and committees throughout the county and the state. The agency operates a number of substance abuse, violence and bullying prevention programs for age groups ranging from pre-school children to senior citizens. The focus and overarching theme for all Prevention First programs is to strengthen children's foundations through life skills education. The agency provides research-based programs that furnish parents and teachers with tools that empower children to make healthy, responsible decisions. Utilizing a culturally and socially diverse approach to community outreach through collaboration, advocacy and education, Prevention First aims to improve the lives of children in order for them to grow to be responsible, strong individuals in any environment.

Prevention First is the pre-eminent source for information and referral, as well as a critical link to alcohol, tobacco and other drug and violence prevention and clinical services to other healthcare providers and serves as the primary resource for addiction and bullying and violence prevention in Monmouth County. Located in Ocean Township since May 1995, the agency offers extensive programs to educate people of all ages about the dangers of alcohol, drugs, violence and bullying. The facility is equipped with a state-of-the-art prevention education resource center which is open to the public and filled with free literature, books, posters

and a video library.

Prevention First is called upon by other county agencies for assistance in myriad situations. These connections give the organization the unique perspective on the services that are needed in Monmouth County and enhance the effectiveness of service implementation, interagency collaboration, coalition building and networking.

In 2007, Prevention First received funding from public dollars and private contributions. Its growing partnerships include school systems, coalitions, law enforcement, human service agencies, treatment programs and public policy makers. Annually, Prevention First serves an average of over 10,000 individuals, including 9,000 children and adolescents, while also targeting all of Monmouth County with numerous public awareness campaigns. Agency programs have been developed for all children but most importantly for those who are in jeopardy of becoming part of the cycle of addiction and violence. Prevention First works to break that cycle through the cost-effective programs it provides. According to the Federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, \$15 is saved in future societal costs for every \$1 spent on prevention. Prevention works – and it is effective!

Mary Pat Angelini has led Prevention First's professional staff since 1992 as executive director and CEO. The agency's Board of Trustees and Leadership Cabinet include a broad range of community members including volunteers from law, healthcare, small business, banking, insurance, investments, utilities and higher education, along with other dedicated citizens. Most recently, Prevention First created a Parent Advisory Council in order to bring relevant information to parents throughout Monmouth County.

As Prevention First continues to grow and provide quality prevention services, it continues to be committed to developing and executing programs and services to prevent and eliminate substance abuse in Monmouth County through advocacy, collaboration and education.

For more information about the agency's programs and services or if you are interested in learning how to become involved, please visit Prevention First on the web at www.preventionfirst.net or call Mary Pat Angelini at 732.663.1800 ext. 215.



15 Years of Phenomenal Leadership

Challenged by the agency's loss of focus in the late eighties, the agency, known then as The Alcoholism Council, was facing tough times and the Board of Trustees closed its doors temporarily in 1992 to examine the agency's purpose. With a re-commitment to the mission, the Board hired its present executive director and CEO, Mary Pat Angelini, who refocused the agency on primary prevention services, while keeping an eye on the original mission and vision of this important agency. Since then, the organization has flourished, as it has continued to set goals and meet them.

During the 15 years that Mary Pat Angelini has worked for Prevention First, she has been primarily responsible for building the agency budget from \$125,000 to its current figure of over \$1 million by diversifying funding sources and establishing income-producing programs. The agency has expanded to provide educational programs to over 10,000 children annually in Monmouth County. These programs address issues such as substance abuse, self-esteem, conflict resolution and family dynamics. The agency also provides training on these issues to thousands of parents, teachers, healthcare providers, community leaders and law enforcement officers.

Congratulations and thank you, Mary Pat, for fifteen years of service, dedication and leadership!



...strengthening your child's foundation through life skills education.SM



Prevention First Holds Eighth Annual ChessFest

with Special Guest Appearance by International Grandmaster Maurice Ashley!

Prevention First hosted a very successful 8th Annual ChessFest 2007 on Saturday, September 29, 2007 on Asbury Park's 5th Avenue Boardwalk. This fun-filled annual event for Monmouth County children, ages 5 to 18, is designed to spark interest about the game of chess.

This year, the event featured special guest, International Grandmaster Maurice Ashley. Ashley was named 2003 Grandmaster of the Year by the U.S. Chess Federation. He is the published author of *Chess for Success* and designer of an award-winning chess tutorial for CD-ROM, *Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess*. He also spends his time making appearances all over the country, speaking to young people and adults about chess and its benefits.

ChessFest 2007 also showcased other champion chess masters and experts from around the state who worked with all registered participants. Beginners learned the basics of chess, and those who were more knowledgeable about the game had their skills tested in friendly competition. Trophies were awarded to those who checkmate or drew the chess masters.

Onlookers were invited to join the festivities and watch the featured event, the "Human Chess Game." This unique and fun game features children and chess masters as actual playing figures on a life-sized chessboard.



Let the games begin!

they are struggling to outwit and outmaneuver those who do not have their best interests at heart." Chess encourages logical thinking, increases cognitive skills and teaches concentration. It also provides children with a forum in which to display aggressive behavior in a socially acceptable way while improving self-confidence.

A very special thank you goes out to our extremely supportive 2007 ChessFest sponsors who made this event tremendously successful - our presenting sponsor, The Verizon Foundation, and Amboy National Bank, Commerce Bank (Toms River), Kellogg Foundation, Meridian Health, Navesink No. 39, Red Bank Title Agency, Inc., Rotary Club of Asbury Park, Starbucks Coffee Co. and the Zobel Foundation.



The youngest of the day's participants are taught the basics of chess and encouraged to keep practicing until next year's event.



Board member Gary Tolchin with Grandmaster Maurice Ashley and Prevention First Executive Director and CEO Mary Pat Angelini, accept the sponsorship check from Verizon's John Szeliga and Prevention First board Vice President, Grace Hanlon.



Grandmaster Maurice Ashley gives participants a special lesson in playing the game.



Children dress up as chess pieces in the afternoon's exciting Human Chess Game.



Barbara Sprechman accepts the \$1,000 check in support of 8th Annual Chess Fest from Walmart Assistant Manager Kevin Forse. The funds were contributed by the Walmart Foundation.

2007 Golf Outing – The Most Successful Yet!

Prevention First held its tenth golf outing on a beautiful late October day this year and raised over \$50,000, making it the most successful outing to date! Proceeds from the fundraiser will aid our mission to strengthen children's foundations through life skills education.

This year's participants enjoyed the elegant accommodations of the newly renovated Eagle Oaks Golf Club in Farmingdale. After the foursomes completed play, they enjoyed the afternoon's awards banquet, complete with a live auction and successful raffle.

Special thanks go out to co-chairs Domenick M. Servodio and Eric J. Hinds and our dedicated golf committee members. Sponsors of the successful event included Builder's General, Commerce Bank (Toms River), HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Tinton Falls, Jersey Central Power and Light, Laufer, Knapp, Torzewski, Dalena and Sposaro, Medical Management Techniques Inc., Meridian Health, Merrill Lynch (Red Bank), Monmouth Medical Center, New Jersey Natural Gas, NJBIA, Red Bank Title Agency, Inc., Straub Motors and Weisleder Lincoln Mercury Mazda.



Golf Co-Chair Domenick Servodio with Paul Gluck Kevin Buckelew and Bruce Himelman



The foursome of Joe Giamanco, Jr. and Joe Roselle pause on the links to take a quick picture.



Pat Heeb, Bob Young, Edward Hinds and Co-Chair Eric J. Hinds



Cindy Barham, Mary Ann Nagy, Judi Dawkins, Susan Doctorian.

Looking Ahead to a Bright Future

Planning for the future is not always easy, and Prevention First is looking ahead and asking for your help. Please consider making a positive difference in the lives of Monmouth County's children and families by making a gift in the form of cash, securities, real estate, insurance and/or by naming Prevention First in your will. Your support could help build the Prevention First Endowment Fund – and ensure the future of much-needed community programs that reach out to our children.

If you would like to learn more about planned giving or to make a donation, please contact Mary Pat Angelini, executive director and CEO, at 732.663.1800, ext. 215.



SAMHSA Announces the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health – Reveals that Drug Use is Down Among U.S. Adolescents – but Officials Express Concern Over Rising Prescription Drug Abuse

The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently announced that current illicit drug use has declined among the nation's adolescents. The rate of adolescents ages, 12 to 17, acknowledging drug use in the past month dropped from 11.6 percent in 2002 to 9.8 percent in 2006.

This initial report from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) also indicates that use of cigarettes decreased from 2002 to 2006 for people ages 18 to 25. However, the level of underage drinking, ages 12 to 20, remained at 28.3 percent in 2006 – unchanged since 2002.

“The trends in general are very encouraging. Parents and communities are doing a great job helping more and more children make the right choice when it comes to illicit drug use,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt. SAMHSA is an agency of HHS. “We also need to do more to help people who are already addicted by providing access to a wide array of effective treatment and recovery support programs.”

“Drug use is a terrible drag on our society and our economy,” said the White House's National Drug Control Policy Director John P. Walters. “Outdated notions casting drug use as a ‘recreational’ or ‘lifestyle’ choice have resulted in generations of

persistent and ruinous drug use. But we know that this is a problem that can be made smaller. Fewer teens using drugs today means fewer Americans suffering destructive consequences tomorrow.”

One area of concern highlighted by the survey was the growing role of misuse of prescription drugs. For example, nonmedical use of prescription drugs among young adults increased from 5.4 percent in 2002 to 6.4 percent in 2006, due largely to an increase in the nonmedical use of pain relievers.

“The abuse of prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons is of increasing concern,” said SAMHSA Administrator Terry Cline, Ph.D. “These are potent drugs that can have serious and life-threatening consequences if misused. Parents in particular need to be aware of this problem and take steps to prevent these medications from falling into the wrong hands.”

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, held every March, recognizes the accomplishments of people in recovery, the contributions of treatment providers and advances in substance abuse treatment. This year's theme, “Saving Lives, Saving Dollars,” highlights the enormous benefits recovery offers to individuals, loved ones and society in general.

SOURCE: SAMHSA eNetwork

First Annual Amanda Faith Reo Health Walk *A Walk to Remember*



Family members and friends gather before the walk.

Prevention First is extremely pleased to announce that the first annual Amanda Faith Reo Memorial Health Walk was a tremendous success! This event was held in late October on the grounds of the beautiful Manasquan Reservoir. From the beginning, this race was special. From a first year attendance of over 125 to a quite impressive

\$7,000 in funds raised in Mandy's name, this event is certain to become one of Prevention First's major annual events.

The hard work that has gone into this event and the designation is very befitting of a walk that has such a just cause. Mandy, a 17-year-old resident of Farmingdale, was a beautiful, vibrant woman who loved all of what life had to offer. Mandy was a soulful young woman, with a kind spirit and great sense of humor and is greatly missed by family and friends. Mandy's memory lives on through this meaningful event, which will provide life skills education to local children and their families and support programs that will touch the lives of over 10,000 school children annually.

For information on how to participate in next year's event, please contact Gianna Verdoni, marketing and events specialist, at 732.663.1800 ext 219 or gverdoni@preventionfirst.net.



Attendees were up bright and early for event registration!



Mandy's uncle, Vern, and mother, Pam, embrace after the five-mile walk.



More than 125 attendees gathered to honor Mandy and walk in her memory.



Choosing a Healthy Life by Making Healthy Choices

In the past year, Prevention First introduced a nutrition program for pre-school children in the Long Branch School District. This unique partnership program between the Pediatric Council on Research Education-AAP/NJ, Long Branch School District, Monmouth Medical Center, Prevention First and Knowledge Learning Cooperative, aims to have children lead a life that is healthy, fit and happy.



Education Specialist Shannon Murphy goes over a lesson with one of her students.

important environmental changes that will support and sustain healthy decisions. The program builds upon the Pre-School Health Curriculum utilized in the Long Branch School District and was designed as an introduction and foundation of health-related concepts.

Through the Pre-School Health Curriculum, three-year olds are introduced to good nutrition skills. These are reviewed at the four-



Education Specialist Shannon Murphy conducts a group activity with her students.

The program promotes healthy eating and activity norms, as well as self-management and social skills needed to make healthy nutrition and exercise decisions.

When combined with an effective outreach to parents and guardians, this program will work toward making

important environmental changes that will support and sustain healthy decisions. The program builds upon the Pre-School Health Curriculum utilized in the Long Branch School District and was designed as an introduction and foundation of health-related concepts. Through the Pre-School Health Curriculum, three-year olds are introduced to good nutrition skills. These are reviewed at the four-year old level and reach mastery in kindergarten. In the three-year old classes, children learn about the variety of fruits and vegetables and are encouraged to try at least one new fruit or vegetable. They also learn about healthy breakfast meals. At the

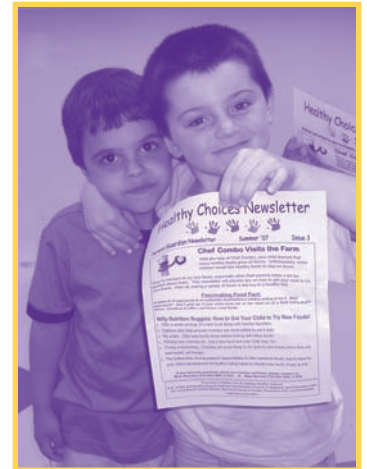


Education Specialist Beverly Burns sits with the Making Healthy Choices class.

four-year old level, children learn about eating right and exercising as ways to stay in good health.

Through interactive, hands-on activities and role plays, this program improves healthy attitudes and behaviors. It will help children develop skills in the areas of communication, assertiveness, decision-making and refusal skills to make healthy choices based on the knowledge they have gained about healthy eating and the importance of physical activity. Children learn short and long term consequences for their behaviors and practice goal-setting as a way to commit to a healthy lifestyle.

Support for this program was provided by a grant from the New Jersey Health Initiatives Program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



Two students show off their newsletter, Making Healthy Choices.

JSPRAA Awards Prevention First as One of Communication's Best

The Jersey Shore Public Relations and Advertising Association recently recognized New Jersey's outstanding communications professionals at its 33rd Annual JASPER Awards and Membership Dinner.

Jeff Buccellato and Grace Hanlon, who produced Prevention First's agency video in late 2006, received the first place Gold Award for a promotional video or animation.

This year, JSPRAA accepted more than 392 entries in 90 categories that included advertising, print materials, direct mail, radio

and television, audio/visual, excellence in writing, media relations, public relations, special events and interactive communications. Judged by a panel of experts from the tri-state area, the entries that received the highest score in their category were given either a Gold or Silver Award.

"The caliber and depth of entries was astounding this year," says Marge Guglielmo, president of JSPRAA. "New Jersey has some spectacular talent in communications."



Gianna Verdoni, Prevention First Marking and Events Specialist, with producers Jeff Buccellato and Grace Hanlon at the awards ceremony.

Prevention First Hosts Statewide Summit on Bullying

*featuring Dr. Dennis Embry,
President of the PAXIS Institute, Tucson, AZ.*

Prevention First hosted Bullying: More Than Meets the Eye, a bullying summit featuring Dr. Dennis Embry, on October 10, 2007 at the Sheraton Eatontown Hotel. Prevention First was proud to sponsor the much anticipated appearance of this nationally known expert for the second year in a row. Dr. Embry's work has spanned the Pentagon to Sesame Street, from state-level plans in the frontier of Wyoming and street-level plans in barrios of southern Arizona to a national presence on the Today Show or People



Speakers Dr. Dennis Embry and Detective Robert Angelini.



Prevention First Board President Greg Aikins, Dr. Linda Jeffrey and Melissa Salso of Prevention First.

Magazine. Dr. Embry's numerous published works focus on practical strategies and an eye for sustainable prevention practice.

Along with Dr. Embry, the conference included local experts on bullying prevention including Melissa Salso of Prevention First and Detective Robert Angelini of the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office. The day focused on bullying in today's society and its impact on all of our children. Dr. Linda Jeffrey, Professor Emeritus of Rowan University, also presented at the conference.



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EMERITUS

Mary Ann Martin

Gone Camping!!!

Project Vision gives youngsters the opportunity to experience the great outdoors.

Twenty Asbury Park students got a much needed break from home this summer. Students were invited by Prevention First to spend the weekend at Camp Ockanickon in Medford, New Jersey. The trip included activities such as outdoor education, leadership, teambuilding and recreation. Most importantly, the teens got to spend time with one another, building friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.



The group poses for a picture their first night staying in the cabin.

Project Vision is an after-school program created by New Jersey Attorney General Peter C. Harvey and ran locally by Prevention First to provide safe havens for local children and teens. The mission of Project Vision is to prevent gang violence by surrounding the youth with supportive and compassionate adults who spend time mentoring the students. The goals of the program are to have students learn to make decisions, respect themselves and others and understand the law. The youth learn to come together and share their thoughts in a safe place, all the while enjoying the time they share together.



The group poses for a picture their first night staying in the cabin.



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Our Strength is in Our Vision

Prevention First is committed to improving the lives of Monmouth County's children so they can thrive and grow to be strong, responsible individuals in any environment.

Our Strength is in Our Mission

Prevention First is a non-profit agency dedicated to strengthening the foundations of children and families by empowering them to successfully handle difficult, everyday life situations and extraordinary challenges such as violence and substance abuse.