



**CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION**  
*A SAMHSA Supported Drug-Free Community Coalition*  
*Led By Centre County Drug and Alcohol*



**ARTICLE 26 – September 10, 2008 – Day for Kids Honors Children**

Dawn Taylor is the Community Mobilizer for Care Partnership Centre Region *Communities That Care*. This weekly column, published on Wednesdays, is a collaboration of Centre County *Communities That Care* serving Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and Philipsburg-Osceola Area School Districts, and Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care*® serving the State College Area School District.

In Centre County and across the nation, America's Day for Kids is a day set aside each year to celebrate and honor children by spending meaningful time with them. Since 2001, this national campaign has drawn attention to the importance of establishing stronger relationships between adults and young people.

Research shows that spending quality family time together is a critical factor in helping kids develop a positive self-image and a sense of belonging, usefulness, and purpose. The Families and Work Institute's Ask the Children study found that "while children are happy with the amount of time their parents spend with them, they wish the time together was not rushed, but focused and rich in shared activities."

A strong family life creates a sense of belonging for kids and reminds them on a daily basis that they are loved and valued. Children who do not have a strong sense of belonging may look elsewhere to fill the void. Strong families are families who take the time to listen, talk, and share activities and interests. A strong family foundation helps young people who are faced with decisions about substance abuse and other risky behaviors.

The everyday demands of life can make spending meaningful time with children a challenge. Day for Kids is a special day designed to reinforce our commitment to children and remind them of just how important they are. Activities offer opportunities for adults to give children focused time, to promote togetherness, and to play and laugh together.

This year, the Downtown State College Improvement District and Care Partnership Communities That Care with help from over 30 other organizations are partnering to offer Day for Kids activities to Centre County children and families. From 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 13, the 200 block of Allen Street in State College will be transformed into a gigantic playground dedicated to celebrating children. Experience the enchantment of riding an old-fashioned carousel with the special children in your life. Shake hands with McGruff the Crime Dog. Smile for a family portrait taken by Youth Service Bureau JUMP volunteers. Get up close and personal with exotic animals. Cheer your kids on as they scale an inflatable rock wall. Volunteers will be on hand to do face painting, temporary tattoos, and hair beading. Enjoy all this plus crafts, food, a magician, jugglers, science exhibits, and more with the children who mean the most to you.

Most parenting experts agree that children spell love T-I-M-E. Spending meaningful time with the kids who are important to us-- whether our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, students, or young friends-- builds a strong emotional foundation for children.

It's time to make some lasting memories with a child who is special in your life. Plan to attend this free, fun-filled event. Take the Day for Kids Pledge and remember it throughout the year.

We pledge to spend meaningful time together, to talk, to listen, to learn and play, to share a moment, create a memory and make a kid's day.

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