



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



February 2009 – Focus on Strong Families
NOTE: SHOULD APPEAR IN ADVANCE OF 2/28 EVENT

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.

On February 28, the 23rd Annual Focus on Strong Families conference will help Centre County families find their strengths, build on those strengths, and learn skills to create stronger families. What makes families strong? Researchers agree that strong healthy families have these traits in common (Krysan, Moore, & Zill, 1990).

- **Caring and appreciation:** People in strong families deeply care for one another and regularly let each other know.
- **Time together:** In a study, U.S. schoolchildren said that a happy family is one that does things together and genuinely enjoys the time it shares.
- **Commitment:** Members of strong families invest time and energy in family activities.
- **Communication:** Successful families spend time talking with and listening to one another. Mealtime can be ideal for this activity.
- **Clear roles:** Family members are aware of their responsibilities in and to the family. In the face of crises and problems, members know their roles.
- **Coping ability:** Strong families possess the ability to manage both daily problems and crises. They learn how to prevent trouble before it happens.
- **Spirituality:** Strong families promote a value system that encourages sharing, love and compassion.
- **Community and family ties:** Successful families are socially connected. Consequently, they have more resources available to them for coping with both crises and the problems of daily living.
- **Encouragement:** Strong families nurture the development of individual strengths and interests.

Clearly, strong families are not trouble-free. What they do have is a solid foundation of love along with a toolbox of skills that help them manage both daily stressors and difficult life crises creatively and effectively. This year's conference will help families expand their skills by inviting participants to explore topics such as communication, loss, financial issues, grief, anger management, nutrition, sleep, adoption, the spirited child, what to expect in kindergarten, and surviving the teenage years. Dennis Guzy of the Pennsylvania Attorney

General's Office will present a keynote address on online safety for children and teens along with a workshop on preventing drug and alcohol use.

Strong families recognize that they don't have to do it all on their own. They draw on the support of extended family members and friends as well as the strength of their community. As a part of the conference, Communities That Care will facilitate a community resource display to help families learn about the many supports available to them, ranging from Big Brothers Big Sisters to the Learning Disabilities Association to the Centre County Prevention Coalition.

Whether you are a parent, grandparent, child care provide, or professional from an agency that provides services to families you will not want to miss this year's Focus on Strong Families conference. The event will take place Saturday, February 28 at the Mount Nittany Middle School in State College. For more information, call 231-1062.

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