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

ARTICLE 3 – MARCH 31, 2008 – FAMILY BONDING

Dawn Taylor is the Community Mobilizer for Care Partnership: Centre County *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.

At some point, you have probably expressed or heard another parent make a comment such as, "My kids are so busy with school, sports, and friends that it's hard to find time to do things as a family!" or "With my husband and myself both working, it's hard to keep our family connected when everyone seems to be going in different directions!" Understandably, families everywhere face common problems when it comes to carving out a few minutes in their hectic days for quality family time. Yet, by creating a few minutes for family time, parents and children nurture and strengthen family bonds.

Strong family relationships foster respect and admiration and help children learn to value family. Studies show that strong parent-child relationships can guide kids toward school success and away from problem behaviors. Although family members may be busy with their own activities, there are many ways to keep the family bond strong. Try these simple and fun suggestions to strengthen relationships with your children. Include extended family members as possible.

- Eat meals together
- Read together
- Help your child with homework
- Have a family night – go on an outing or simply stay home and play games together
- Attend your child's sports events or activities
- Listen to your children
- Schedule regular family meetings
- Do chores together
- Volunteer together
- Share hobbies
- Exercise together
- Watch TV or a movie together
- Go on a family road trip, day trip, or vacation
- Tell your child you love them every day
- Talk about your family values
- Show love by writing a note, sharing a hug, or saying a compliment

Because the welfare of children is often tied to the strength of their families, Care Partnership and Centre County *Communities That Care*® are committed to helping families build strong bonds. In April, the Strengthening Families Program and Guiding Good Choices will be offered to families with children in fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. Both are nationally recognized and proven prevention programs specifically designed to provide parents with the knowledge and skills needed to guide their children through adolescence. The programs are free, and childcare and dinner are provided.

The prevention programs selected through the local *Communities That Care*® process are grounded in research on problem behaviors and positive youth outcomes and chosen to address identified risk and protective factors. Research shows that prevention efforts have the highest impact among youth 10 to 14 years of age just before widespread experimentation with a variety of risky behaviors often begins.

While young people report that the number one reason they choose not to use drugs is not wanting to disappoint their parents, nearly half of 13-year-olds also report that their parents have never seriously talked with them about the dangers of substance abuse. The programs will aid parents in discussing their expectations regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and also promote factors that can make a difference in whether or not a child makes healthy choices, including setting clear guidelines, communicating effectively, and encouraging the expression of positive feelings and love among family members.

Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care®*
Serving State College Area School District
Dawn Taylor, Community Mobilizer
814-861-7424
Dtaylor105@gmail.com
Web address: carecentreregion.org

Centre County *Communities That Care®*
Serving the School Districts of Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and Philipsburg -Osceola
Kimberly Cassidy, Community Mobilizer
814-404-9511
centrecountyctc@yahoo.com
Web address: centrecountyctc.org