

PRESS RELEASE  
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## Community Survey Designed to Target Daily Perils Faced by the Region's Youth

State College—A little research can go a long way toward helping local children avoid things such as drug use, violence, and poor school performance, leaders of a local community agency said Thursday.

The Centre Region Communities That Care project, a three-year-old offshoot of the local CARE Partnership, held an information session Thursday at the State College Elks Country Club to educate the several community members who are serving on the group's prevention board.

"This will be a process," said Coleen Heim of the Centre County Drug and Alcohol Program. "We're bringing everyone together in a collaborative way to reduce risk factors and enhance positive factors."

The CRCTC features several community leaders, including Borough Council President Janet Knauer; District Magistrate Carmine Prestia; State College Area YMCA CEO Dennis Ditmer, and State High School-based officer Robert Noel.

Recently, the CRCTC issued youth at-risk surveys to students in the State College Area School District, grades 6 through 12. The surveys were designed to identify risk factors that students face daily.

To gather supplemental data, the CRCTC will work with police and health departments and other agencies such as the Youth Services Bureau, said Claudia Hutchinson, the group's community mobilizer.



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"Now what we'll do is analyze that data and target two to five risk factors that really need to be addressed," she said. The CRCTC will look at local agencies and programs to see if more are needed.

"We'll look at other programs that have been successful in other communities and see about implementing them here," she said, adding that the group will apply for a \$50,000 grant in September.

State College Police Chief Tom King, a member of the planning board, called the CRCTC a "research-based" project. "The key is going to be to reduce risk factors and increase positive factors," he said, "and it requires a community to do that."

--Ryan Dougherty, Centre Daily Times