

Berks County foundation distributes \$372,000 in grants from anti-drug fund

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From Berks County Community Foundation |

Berks County Community Foundation, based in Reading, has distributed grants totaling \$372,000 from the Berks County District Attorney's Anti-Drug Fund.

The grants fund programs that seek to prevent the onset of illegal drug use by members of a vulnerable population, such as people recently released from prison, and by young people with mental-health issues who are also at risk for substance abuse.

Berks Connections/Pretrial Services received **\$85,000** to continue and expand the former 222 Corridor Anti-Gang Initiative Re-entry program.

The program provides ongoing counseling for adult and youth offenders while they are in prison and after they are paroled. The counseling addresses antisocial and criminal behaviors and thinking, and the development of job, social and parenting skills.

The 222 Corridor Anti-Gang Initiative began in October 2006 under a Department of Justice grant directed by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Philadelphia and funded by the Berks County District Attorney and the Wyomissing Foundation.

The Council on Chemical Abuse received **\$40,000** to fund Project Toward No Drug Abuse (Project TND) in the Reading, Fleetwood, Kutztown, Brandywine Heights, Schuylkill Valley and Exeter school districts.

The program works with young people identified by the county's juvenile probation office and uses various approaches to reduce substance abuse and violence.

Community Prevention Partnership of Berks County received **\$45,000** to fund the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows) - CASASTART program in Reading and the Reading School District. The program provides counseling, social service referrals and educational assistance for seventh- and eighth-grade students at Northeast Middle School. The goal of the program is to help these young people grow into law-abiding citizens.

Olivet Boys and Girls Club of Reading and Berks County received **\$90,000** for the SMART (Skills Mastery and Resistance Training) Moves prevention program, aimed at helping young people resist tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. Olivet will partner with the Caron Foundation, Driven Ministries and Berks Pride to carry out this program, which teaches community members how to combat alcohol, tobacco and drug use through education, mentoring, and the mastery of resistance skills.

The Caron Foundation received **\$50,000** to fund an additional four hours per week of Student Assistance Program (SAP) services to Berks County schools. This funding replaces money from the Safe and Drug Free Schools program, which was eliminated from this academic school year. The SAP program provides support groups for students at risk for developing a drug or alcohol-related dependency, faculty and staff in-service training, and parent education and prevention programs.

The Boyertown Area School District received **\$14,000** to fund an additional hour per week from the Caron Foundation SAP program as well as a renewed contract with Creative Health Services that also provides SAP services.

The Gov. Mifflin School District received **\$18,000** to identify at-risk students through an intensive education process intended to help students, faculty, parents and community members identify problems and use the resources of the community to overcome them.

The program uses a "video blitz" to teach people about drug and alcohol issues. The video blitz is followed by a discussion led by police officers aimed at helping teachers and parents identify drug and alcohol problems in the classroom and at home.

[Berks Counseling Center](#) received \$30,000 to start an Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) in the Reading School District's 14 elementary schools.

In addition, the grant will assist the district in establishing a coordinated support system to intervene on behalf of students at high risk for substance abuse and/or mental health disorders and to provide group services for this same population that are not funded through current Student Assistance funds.

The Berks County District Attorney's Anti-Drug Fund was established at the Community Foundation in June 2007 using proceeds from a drug forfeiture case. The purpose of the fund is to support the enforcement of the provisions of drug laws.

To date, the fund has provided nearly \$1.1 million in grants to a variety of programs, including the reinstatement of Reading's K9 unit and its specially trained drug-detection dogs.

Berks County Community Foundation is a nonprofit corporation that serves as a civic leader for our region by developing, managing and distributing funds to meet existing and emerging community needs. More information is available at www.bccf.org.

More about Drugs

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- **ARTICLE:** Drug ring operating out of Reading is smashed
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