



# Challenges

## *PERRYfamilies Initiative expands with increased funding*

**T**resslerCare's PERRYfamilies Initiative will not only continue to bring its in-homes services to families in the western part of Perry County, but is also expanding outreach to include families in the eastern part of the county.

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The extension of the year-old program came with the news that the Carlisle Area Health and Wellness Foundation had generously renewed grant funding for the program's second year. As a result, Perry County agreed to match the funding, making it possible for the PerryFamilies Initiative to provide individual and

family counseling services to a greater number of county residents.

"The county found the services to be so good in the first year that they agreed to match the grant funding for the eastern part of the county," explains Joan Lotz, clinical director. "It really is because of the marvelous work of Suzanne Dell, family therapist, Colleen Wagner Elmer, family therapist, and Desiree Prinz, case manager, that we have been extended and expanded."

Lotz has hired Justin Carroll, case manager, and Dana Crall, family therapist, to handle the eastern part of the county now served by the program, which targets 13- to 18-year-old youths referred by the county's children and youth services and juvenile probation offices. Program participants are youths at risk for out-of-home placement, as well as their parents.

"They are usually very defiant and don't follow any kind of rules and guidelines at home and school," says

Lotz. "Drugs and alcohol are involved in about 70 percent of the cases."

In addition to providing weekly individual and family counseling sessions, program counselors keep in regular contact with schools to ensure the youths are doing well academically and behaviorally.

"It's amazing to see the decrease in truancy for kids involved in the program. Some have gone from 20 to 40 days truant to one or two in a school year," says Lotz, adding that

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## PERRYfamilies Initiative *Continued from Cover*

the families with whom the program works are primarily working and middle class.

The PERRYfamilies Initiative stresses skills building, specifically in areas such as anger management, drug and alcohol abuse, conflict resolution and assertiveness training. Families participating in the program are eligible for up to one year of service.

Although the program has helped many families in the rural county, Lotz believes many more could benefit from similar services.

"It would be nice to have an early-intervention program to catch the kids before they get to the level that we get them," she says,



*PERRYfamilies Initiative team from l to r: Desiree Prinz; Suzanne Dell; Dana Crall; Joan Lotz, Clinical Director; Colleen Elmer; Justin Carroll.*

acknowledging that there are limited funds available. "I've already begun the search for other funds to help out."

TresslerCare offers In-home services to Children & Youth and Probation

agencies in a number of counties throughout the state of PA.

*For availability or to discuss establishing services in your county, please call George Eckenrode at 717-795-0361 or email at [eckenrodeg@diakon.org](mailto:eckenrodeg@diakon.org)*

## Weekend Alternative Program

### WAP counselor *participates* in benefit ride

*In June, Eric Street saw the Capital Area Greenbelt from a new perspective.*

For nearly six years, the Weekend Alternative Program counselor has joined youths from WAP in a large community-service effort supporting the Capital Area Greenbelt Association in Dauphin County.

But instead of planting trees and spreading stone, this time Street was riding his bike on the 20-mile greenway that surrounds Harrisburg in the Association's Fourth Annual Tour d'Belt 2004 benefit ride.

"This was my first time [to participate in the Tour d'Belt]," explains

Street, whom the association recognized for raising \$200 in donations, the most collected by any individual fundraiser. "We spend a lot of time out there and have been for years. It's a great project."

Street says he has no doubt that he will participate in the ride again. Having watched the Greenbelt improve through the years, he understands its value.

"When I was riding the trail, I passed a lot of places where we've done work," he says. "It was cool to see it



*Eric "Lance" Street, WAP counselor*

all come together and know that the guys from WAP helped out."

*For more information or to make referrals to the Weekend Alternative Program, readers should contact Corey Carothers at (717) 258-3168 or via e-mail [carothersc@diakon.org](mailto:carothersc@diakon.org)*

# Wilderness Center *draws* groups together

These aren't part of a normal day for the approximately 70 members of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries' Financial Services office. But in late July, the staff left its Mechanicsburg office and headed for a team-building challenge at the TresslerCare Wilderness Center near Boiling Springs.

Diakon operates TresslerCare.

Called "Team Impact," the team-building program is designed to bring community and business groups closer together through carefully designed and enjoyable experiences.

"Dennis Kieffer's [Diakon's director of treasury operations] intent was to give the staff an opportunity to have a positive, fun experience in a setting outside of work that would give people an opportunity to know each other a little better," explains Brad Glenn, climbing specialist. "We were excited to share our resources with other people in our organization."

The team-building event was just one example of how more groups within Diakon are taking advantage of the experiences the Wilderness Center has to offer.

"I think it is catching on," Glenn says. "Other people within the organization are seeing the fun, value, and resources we have to offer. The participants always go away with some kind of skill, knowledge, or better understanding of themselves."

***A high- and low-ropes course. A climbing-wall. A 50-foot Alpine Tower.***



*Wilderness Center participants on the Alpine Tower.*

The financial staff members' experience began with several small group activities and discussions that helped everyone get to know one another. After lunch, the group was able to choose from experiences on the Alpine Tower, zip-line, giant swing on the high challenge course, or even a horticultural project in the greenhouse.

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***Called "Team Impact," the team-building program is designed to bring community and business groups closer together through carefully designed and enjoyable experiences.***

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No matter what the group size, the Wilderness Center staff runs an inclusive program, customized so everyone is able to participate and have positive input and learning experiences, Glenn says.

"Activities are challenge by choice. People are free to choose what level of participation is right for them," he says. "We train our staff to encourage folks to challenge themselves, but only to the limit that they feel comfortable. People are free to experience what they can without feeling fear for their safety or what we may think of them."

*Readers who would like more information on Team Impact should contact Glenn at (717) 258-3168, ext. 123, or via e-mail at [glennb@diakon.org](mailto:glennb@diakon.org). The program also has a Web site at [www.impactyourteam.org](http://www.impactyourteam.org).*

# *Specialized In-Home Treatment Program* New program manager *focuses* on communication

Communication is key to the Specialized In-Home Treatment Program's success, believes Amanda Shaffer, newly promoted program manager.

The program, designed to work with youths ages eight to 18 with sexual acting-out behaviors, provides weekly individual, group, and family counseling along with weekly case-management sessions.

"We also provide outpatient services for youths who do not require intensive in-home services, including the Growth and Responsibility Group for youths ages 13 to 18 and the STOP, or Stop Touching Other People, group for youths 12 and younger," explains Shaffer, adding that staff provide training and education to other programs and agencies as requested.

"We also complete comprehensive risk assessments to determine each youth's treatment needs and risk to the community."

The program staff's team approach to treatment has been a positive factor in her new role, says Shaffer. In addition to TresslerCare staff, the youth, the youth's family, and a representative from the referring agency are part of the treatment team.

"We all work together to provide risk assessment for these kids," she says. The treatment team meets on a regular basis to ensure that youths assume full responsibility for behaviors and to assess youths' progress and risk to re-offend.

***"Communication is key to making it work."***

Shaffer, who spent nearly a year as a casemanager for the program before her promotion, has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Shippensburg University. She also expects to complete her practicum by December to become a certified sex offender treatment specialist. Before joining the Specialized In-Home



*Amanda Shaffer, Specialized In-Home Treatment Program Director*

Treatment Program, she spent a year as a case manager with TresslerCare's Wilderness School residential program.

*For Information or referrals to the Specialized In-Home Treatment Program, readers should contact Jane Yeatter at (717) 795-0320 or via e-mail at [yeatterj@diakon.org](mailto:yeatterj@diakon.org)*

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***"We all work together to provide risk assessment for these kids. Communication is key to making it work."***

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# TRESSLERCARE *Regional News*

## TRESSLERCARE – WILDERNESS CENTER

- *Terry Smith*, former vocational instructor, recently accepted a promotion to weekend supervisor. Replacing Smith as vocational instructor is *Kendall Lehman*, a former maintenance technician II. *Brent Carbaugh* has joined the Wilderness Center, filling Lehman's role as maintenance technician II. Carbaugh formerly worked as a sheet metal foreman for Donald B. Smith Roofing.
- Also joining the staff is *Jill Fisher*. The new facilitator for the *Independent Living/BARJ Group*, Fisher has a degree in criminal justice and previously worked for York County Juvenile Probation after working as a Wilderness School case manager.
- *U.S. Rep. Todd Platts* (R-Pa.19th) recently visited the *Wilderness Center*. He was given a tour of the facility and met many staff and students during a visit meant to help him better understand the issues and concerns faced by youth-focused organizations. The congressman was particularly interested in how the center's programs use outdoors activities to help young people, voicing his support for organizations and programs that encourage stronger family ties.

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## TRESSLERCARE – SOUTHEAST REGION

- Currently, *June Humpton*, LPC, CAC, NBCC, director of clinical services, is providing all family therapy for *TresslerCare Southeast Region*. This arrangement provides good continuity with the work done by the case managers in the field.
- *TresslerCare Southeast Region* took six children from its programs to Dorney Park in July. The trip, popular with youths in past years, is given as a reward for good behavior to those who are turning their lives around.
- *The Bridge Program* has planned trips to both men's and women's prisons as a combined group with the *Aftercare and Prevention program*. This reality-based approach has helped many young people see prison life up-close, opening them to changes in their behavior to avoid prison.

## TRESSLERCARE – CAPITAL REGION

- *Justin Smith* was promoted to casemanager II in the *Specialized In-home Treatment Program*. Smith joined TresslerCare in January as a casemanager after previously working at Cornell Abraxas South Mountain facility.
- *TAPP* hired new casemanager *Katie Binder*, BSW. Binder joined TAPP following an internship at Cumberland County Children and Youth Services and graduation from Messiah College.
- Desiree Fasnacht, *TAPP* casemanager, is now *Desiree Prinz* following her marriage to Dave Prinz.
- *Justin Carroll*, BSW, joined the *PERRYfamilies Initiative*, as case manager for the newly expanded program. Carroll previously served as a TSS for Manito.
- *Dana Crall*, MS, also joined the *PERRYfamilies Initiative*. Crall, who has many years of experience in probation and family therapy, serves as the family therapist for the eastern portion of Perry County.
- *TresslerCare Foster Care* held an open house on June 29. Current and potential foster families mingled, listening to testimonials from foster parents and staff. Foster parents had the opportunity to reach out and provide support for one another and influence interested families. Six families exhibited interest in becoming foster families as a result of the event.
- With the sounds of karaoke rising from City Island, located in Harrisburg, *TresslerCare Foster Care* held its annual picnic on August 11. Approximately 200 foster families and staff members joined in the spirit of the Hawaiian luau theme, playing bingo, trying their hand at sponge-painting, and enjoying traditional picnic food.

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## TRESSLERCARE – LEHIGH VALLEY REGION

- *Michelle Koontz* recently joined *Diakon Foster Care Services—Topton* as a case manager. Michelle previously worked in foster care with the Children's Home of Reading.

# Horticultural program *takes bloom*

**I**n addition to the woodworking shop and campus lawn and grounds keeping, youths also participate in various gardening activities through the horticultural program. Although the program is still in its early developmental stage, youths successfully planted, grew, and marketed more than 400 geraniums in the spring and are actively involved in cultivating 1,000 chrysanthemums, which will bring a fall array of colors to the campus.

The youths also planted a vegetable garden, which for several months they tilled, weeded, and cared for before enjoying a harvest of tomatoes, squash, green beans and sweet corn.

“Working with delinquent and dependent youths in a residential setting is a difficult and challenging task. It requires tightly structured programming that provides learning interest and activity for the youth,” says Nina Poe, horticulture program manager.

“TresslerCare continues to seek innovative ways to ‘grow’ its horticultural program as a valuable therapeutic and practical activity for youths in the Wilderness Center programs..”



*Sunflowers, pumpkins and chrysanthemums are among the many plants being cultivated at the greenhouse on the Wilderness Center campus near Boiling Springs.*