

Praeventus

Program for the
Development of Human
Potential

Prevention Newsletter
Volume I, Issue I
January 2019

Executive Director's Message

Dear PDHP Community,

For more than four decades, the Program for the Development of Human Potential (PDHP) has provided assessments, short-term counseling and preventive services to students who attend Catholic elementary and high schools in Brooklyn and Queens.

During this time the demand for and scope of PDHP services expanded to include preventive services in the following areas of need: anti-bullying, crisis response, meditation/mindfulness, referral, gambling and suicide.

Today, PDHP is comprised of thirty-four full-time and four part-time employees, who are assigned to twenty-three schools located in Brooklyn and twenty-five schools located in Queens.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the staff members who contributed to the newsletter, as well as our prevention colleagues at New York State

Office of Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) for their unyielding support to ensure that our program is regulation compliant and fiscally sound.

As I stated during our staff meeting, we must highlight and/or showcase the preventive work performed daily inside the schools where we serve. Finally, thank you principal Kevin Coyne for writing a letter which we aptly titled, "a voice from the field" that described the service of PDHP counselor Shannon Pearce. Thank you for recognizing the difference that PDHP has made in your school community.

Thank you PDHP staff for an adventurous and educational five months into my tenure.

Your partner in prevention,

Norwood Keaton, M.S.Ed, SAS, CASAC 2,
CARC, CRPA, SAP

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Queens Consortium on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse

Sal Violo, LCSW

On October 2, 2018 PDHP participated in the 10th annual conference that the Queens Consortium on alcoholism and Substance Abuse (QCASA) sponsor. This year PDHP was a "blue sponsor" which allowed the program to have a table with information on Bullying (October is Bullying Prevention month).

The attendees were interested

in the hand-outs provided and asked many questions about how best to intervene in a bullying situation in school and in the work place.

The theme of this year's conference was "My Client, Myself: Dealing with Trauma in a time of Crisis". The keynote presenter was NYS Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. The

preliminary opening remarks were the following: Beth Covelli, Chairperson, Queens Consortium, Shelly Weizman, and Assistant Secretary for Mental Hygiene, Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez, Commissioner, NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, John Coppola, Executive Director, NYS Association of Substance Abuse Providers, and Gail

PDHP Organization

- 34 full-time employees who are certified, credentialed, licensed clinicians and/or counselors
- 1 part-time therapist
- 1 part-time fee for service therapist
- 3 part-time evening employees

Q C A S A

QCASA (continued)

Goldstein, Director, Strategic Planning and Program Implementation, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

One of the afternoon presentations was given by Dr. Holly Shaw, Adelphi University Adjunct Professor. Dr. Shaw's topic was "Preventing Burnout and Supporting Each Other in the Workplace". This presentation resonated with the audience due to multiple factors facing drug prevention and treatment program staff.

PDHP is one of 34 Queens County providers that has a presence at monthly meetings which are scheduled for the third Wednesday of every month and meets inside Queens Borough Hall.



Red Ribbon Week- Brooklyn Elena Lupo, LMSW

Each October, America celebrates Red Ribbon week. Red Ribbon week is a time dedicated to education, raising awareness and celebrating a healthy, safe and drug free lifestyle. This year Red Ribbon week was celebrated on October 23rd through the 31st. This year's theme was "Life is Your Journey, Travel Drug Free."

Children in kindergarten through 8th grades participated in Red Ribbon Week throughout the Diocese. Students in grades Kindergarten through 5th grades learned about safe ways to properly receive over the counter and prescription medications. Students in grades 5th through 8th learned about the risks and harmful effects associated with substance abuse. The counselors also spoke to the children about ways to stay healthy, safe and

drug free. The children helped create red ribbons, which symbolized their commitment to stay drug free. These ribbons were then cut out and hung outside counselor's offices and hung outside classroom doors. The children also participated in reading the drug free pledge; they created posters, enter contests, and some schools also created murals with anti-drug slogans, to show their commitment to living a healthy, safe and drug free life.

The children within the schools really enjoyed learning about this topic and it is always so interesting to see how involved the students get with all of the different activities they partake in. You can see their faces light up as they are so eager to share their reasons to stay committed to being drug free.



Red Ribbon Week - Queens Vanessa Sposato, M.S. Ed

Red Ribbon Week is a national campaign that our agency participates in. This week is utilized to spread drug awareness to our students. Since its beginning in 1985, the Red Ribbon Campaign has touched the lives of millions of people around the world. In response to the murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena, who was brutally murdered by drug traffickers, parents and youth in communities across the country began wearing Red Ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to raise awareness of the killing and destruction cause by drugs in America.

Every year the staff of PDHP selects specific groups of students to work with to spread the message of living drug free and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This year's Theme for Red Ribbon Week was "Life is a Journey, Travel Drug Free."

Red Ribbon Week - Queens (continued)

At St. Nicholas Of Tolentine, I discussed the history of Red Ribbon Week and facilitated a discussion about refusal strategies for students in the seventh and eighth grade. We discussed how drugs can affect our lives and future plans. Students also participated in a drug free art activity and signing a pledge to be drug free. At St. Joan Of Arc, I discussed the history of Red Ribbon week with third and fourth grade students and I facilitated a discussion on ways to care for your body, remain healthy and healthy use of medications. The students also completed an art activity and pledged to be drug free.

As an educator, I believe it is very important to educate children about topics that they demonstrate an interest. The more information they know the less likely they are to experiment.

CROM

Katie Riggs- Poy, LMSW

As October is National Bullying Prevention Month, staff of PDHP felt it was important to have this message relayed to students. PDHP has been able to host eight Anti-Bullying school assemblies in the Brooklyn region. PDHP partnered with Mr. Chris Romulo, who is a former Muay Thai champion, author, motivational speaker, coach and owner of CROM wellness center located in the Rockaways. His focus was on digging deep to find the champion within oneself and ultimately win at life. He encouraged students to build their self-esteem, self-worth and to evaluate their role in standing up against bullying,

especially when using social media.

Chris spoke to students in 5th through 8th grades about the importance of having heart and taking responsibility for their actions.

His presentations were interactive. Students participated in the assemblies by reading, answering questions, and demonstrating their hoop skills. Watching the students demonstrate skills they usually don't show in school such as dancing and kickboxing was eye opening. Each school

brought their own personality to this event but all students were able to relate to Chris.

Students discussed the 7 dictators: Self-Doubt, Fear, Disappointment, Hardship, Confusion, Negative Self-Talk, and Ego – some areas that lead students into making poor choices. Students identified with these dictators and verbalized how they can make changes immediately in their own lives. They all recited the Champions Creed and chanted Champ Up.



Chris Romulo and the 6th graders of St. Ephrems

Parental Engagement

Cary-Anne Fitzgerald

The beginning of the school year seems so far away; do you remember it better for the excitement or the hectic pace it delivered? When I was a classroom teacher, I remember parents confiding that although they were relieved for the return of the routine of school, they also felt anxious as the busyness of a new year began. No wonder many of our schools have offered and have scheduled "A Mindful Student" parent workshop and "Mindfulness: Today Is for You" workshop for faculty. During each session, both teachers and parents learned about stress, shared different ways to manage theirs and realized how stress trickles down to our children and students. They recognized how small practices can make the biggest impact.

Each day has been a different kind of busy but always results in a gain. Whether it is meeting a new principal, seeing what is new as I drop in to visit with a school, watching a new Home School Academy achieve success, observing a small group of parents develop rapport, attending in-house trainings, identifying trends and resources when attending community-based committee meetings, finding ways to explain exactly what "Prevention" means to parents, colleagues and to our elected officials, or synthesizing our efforts with others to find more ways to succeed in our mission, there's always something to learn. Even better, there was still some time set aside for fun!

Celebrating National Recovery Month with the Brooklyn Alcoholism and Addictive Services Council at Brooklyn Borough Hall applauded the



Parental Engagement (continued)

the efforts of colleagues. Family Fun Nights created great memories for the families we serve at our schools and left everyone wondering who exactly had the most fun – the kids? Or the adults? (My guess is the latter).

While the beginning of the school year seems far way, I recall the excitement of it in reconnecting with others, the anticipation of newness and those little moments that can make the greatest impression.

Demystifying ACS

Jennifer Distefano, LMHC & CASAC

NYC Administration for Children's Services Demystifying ACS Workshop, provided participants the opportunity to increase knowledge and facilitate communication between schools under the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens and ACS staff.

The person who obtains reportable information firsthand is known as the "source". It was suggested that the school principals call ACS and report the information obtained by the source. The intake process, as well as the process of how a case is assigned to a particular investigative unit was discussed at full length. Presenters of the workshop discussed the myri-

ad of preventive services offered by ACS. All services offered are free, including, but not limited to, child care, assistance in furnishing a home, resting-related services for parents, and substance abuse treatment services.

Several resources were provided during the workshop. The Elmhurst Community Partnership was mentioned, which helps immigrant families, as well as the Office of Safety First, which is a hotline for mandated reporters to help maintain clear and direct lines of communication between the mandated reported and ACS staff.

For decades, the NYC Administration for Children's Services, ACS, has been stigmatized for dividing families, and automatically removing children from the home. In today's workshop, a tone of unity and connectedness, as well as resilience and hope was set. ACS emphasized how all efforts are made to have families remain with one another, though, the safety and wellness of the children will forever be prioritized.



An Overview of Current Trends in Street Drugs

Maryan Dumas, M.S. Ed

On December 11th, parents were welcomed to St. Mark Catholic Academy in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn to an education and prevention workshop titled An Overview of the Current Trends in Street Drugs. The guest presenter, Mary-K O'Sullivan, LMFT, LADC, LPC, informed the audience on the current changes in drug categories, the hazardous move from naturally produced narcotics to synthetic copies, or analogs, and various new designer drugs that are marketed to middle school and high school students.

PDHP was happy to bring this resource to the community. We thank Mrs. Carol Donnelly principal at St. Mark Catholic Academy for partnering with PDHP to host the event. We look forward to providing the schools and families with more of these prevention-based presentations.



Group Facilitation Skills Training (G.F.S.T) **Reginald Bien-Aime, J.D. & Nina Waithe, M.S. Ed**

Tuesday, October 2, 2018 marked the first day of the Group Facilitator Skills Training (GFST) in Brooklyn. PDHP Brooklyn's regional coordinators Reginald Bien-Aime and Nina Waithe, led a group of teachers and new PDHP staff through seven weeks of training on how to effectively run a facilitator led group. A PDHP GFST led group guides teachers through understanding what a group is, what are the goals of group, who are the group members and what is the role of the facilitator. The goals for members of this type of facilitator led group are: improved self-image through self-discovery, ability to identify and express feelings, improved communication and listening skills, values clarification, decision making skills, coping with peer pressures and learning to accept responsibility for our behavior and how it affects others.

Students are encouraged to act as positive role models to their peers and take leadership roles in their schools. These groups are made up of students that will benefit from the opportunity to experience group dynamics and learn communication skills. The members are all volunteers who have received consent from their guardians.

This fall's GFST trainees were guided through the stages of a group, utilizing role play and skill building activities to simulate the real stages of group and what it is like to facilitate a 10 session group. Trainees also learned how to recruit and retain group members, group dynamics, listening skills and helping students talk about what's important to them. This year's training produced two new group facilitators who will facilitate groups for interested students. These trainees have acquired lifelong skills that can be utilized with group and a classroom.

Teachers from all diocese schools, with at least 1 year of teaching experience are invited to embark on this opportunity to learn and implement group skills. All that's needed to begin is the following:

- Principal approval
- Completion of a 21 hour (7 week) training
- Facilitating a ten hour probationary group
- Monthly supervision
- Annual recertification trainings

Register now for our Spring 2019 GFST

Training Dates: January 7, 14, 28, February 4, 11, 25 and March, 4

Time: 3:30-6:30pm

Location: PDHP 112-06 86TH Avenue, Richmond Hill, NY 11418

For more information, please the Brooklyn Field Office at 718-871-7777 or Queens Field Office at 718-849-2200

Professional Development

Mendez Foundation – Too Good Series Curriculum **Betty Lotardo, M.S. Ed & Theresa Francois, M.A. Ed**

Program for the Development of Human Potential (PDHP) provides alcohol, substance abuse and gambling prevention services to the Catholic elementary and high schools in Brooklyn and Queens. It does so through the use of evidence-based curricula, in the form of educational presentations to students by school counselors and prevention educators. The counselors and educators use the Too Good Series, which include the Too Good for Drugs, and Too Good for Violence programs.

The Too Good series was developed by the Mendez Foundation, which was established in 1964 by Charles E. Mendez. It was established to serve underprivileged children. In 1975, Charles Mendez, Jr. became concerned about the rise of drug use and abuse among young people. He refocused the foundation's efforts and over the years developed the Too Good for Drugs and Too Good for Violence curriculum that is currently used by PDHP, as well as over 3,500 school districts in the US. PDHP believes that professional development maximizes the effectiveness of an individual's job performance.

Therefore, the staff is given the opportunity to attend professional development learnings each year. One of the goals, at PDHP, is to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to develop healthy behaviors and help them make positive choices.

In November, the PDHP staff attended a Too Good for Drugs and Violence Curriculum Training program. The training was facilitated by a staff member from the Mendez Foundation. During the training, the facilitator discussed the research behind the Too Good programs, demonstrated various lessons and gave instructions on how to properly utilize the activities, games, puppets, etc., that help reinforce the skills. The facilitator also allowed the participants to perform peer teachings and discussed the importance of fidelity of the program. The training was very interactive. The participants were given the opportunity to work together in groups to facilitate different lessons from the programs. In order to reassure that the lessons were presented correctly, the facilitator then evaluated the presentations and

Professional Development (continued)

offered suggestions on how to properly present the program with fidelity. The training was very effective. These evidence-based programs build skills and help make a positive impact on students' lives. As counselors and prevention educators, we believe that even if we can change just one student's life, then we have done our job.

Underage Gambling Posters

Jillian Kulka, LCAT, ATR-BC, CPS, RC

In October the seventh graders of St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Queens attended a presentation by Bernadette Mitarotonda on the problems of underage gambling and media literacy. They learned facts such as gambling can become an addiction and the younger a person participates in gambling the more likely they are to become addicted. They were asked to communicate what they learned to their parents, to a peer and a community leader.

In November students in the seventh and eighth grades from St. Joseph Catholic Academy were

invited to design a poster that reinforces the anti-underage gambling message. Two students Natalie Rumora in 8th grade and Mia Stavropoulos in the 7th grade created graphic designs that were chosen to be enlarged and produced as a public service announcement campaign throughout Brooklyn and Queens.

Congratulations to Natalie and Mia for your creative and thoughtful messages to help spread the word about the risks of underage gambling!

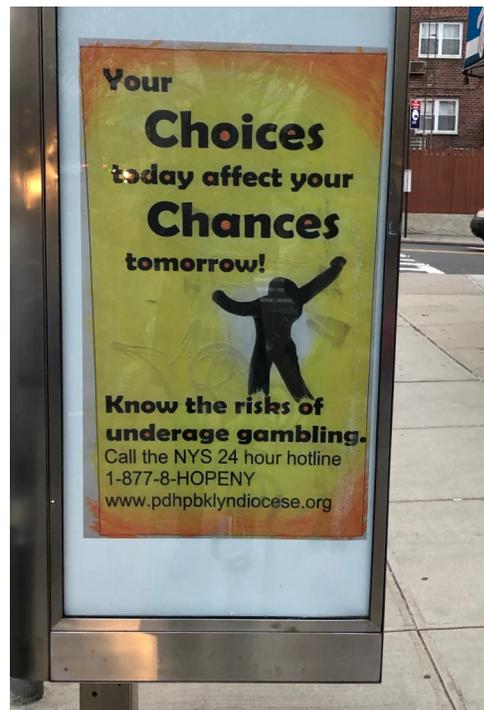
BROOKLYN/QUEENS TELEPHONE KIOSK ADVERTISING LOCATIONS – PDHP

102 De Kalb Avenue
507 52nd Street
513 Stanley Avenue
3101 Atlantic Avenue
Cross Bay Blvd. & Pitkin Avenue
Cross Bay Blvd. & Silver Road
82-29 63rd Avenue
106-19 71st Avenue
95-60 Queens Boulevard
66-28 Metropolitan Avenue

Fort Greene
Sunset Park
East New York
Cypress Hills
Howard Beach
Ozone Park
Middle Village**
Forest Hills
Rego Park
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www.olcacademy.net



December 10, 2018

The Program for the Development of Human Potential (PDHP) is an indispensable part of the school environment at Our Lady's Catholic Academy. First and foremost, it provides our outstanding guidance counselor, Ms. Shannon Pearce. She has been a valued member of our community for eight years, and has helped to enrich the spiritual and emotional well-being of our students and our staff members. In times of crisis, she is a foundation of strength. In times of turmoil, a source of compassion and comfort.

Her training from PDHP helps her serve the students entrusted to her care in classroom, group, and individual settings. Her strategies of dealing with anxiety, peer pressure, and conflict resolution have led to stronger instructional outcomes for the students that she works with. As principal, her wise counsel and her deep empathy have made her one of my most trusted colleagues.

But PDHP has an impact well beyond its distinguished counselor. Over the past ten years, a dozen faculty and staff members have been trained to facilitate Life Skills groups, which help students in a small group setting over the course of ten weekly sessions. Besides the obvious impact on the students in those groups, the training provided by PDHP has made participating staff members stronger in the classroom, and better at identifying potentially dangerous situations before it is too late to intervene.

The efforts of PDHP do not end when the school day is through. In addition to parent workshops that are held throughout the year, PDHP serves as a vital resource for outside counseling, assisting many OLCA families as they face their toughest challenges.

If we are true to our mission as Catholic educators, the emotional and spiritual well-being of our students must be as important as the core subjects taught in our classrooms. It has never been more difficult to be a child or a parent, and the difficulties seem to grow in complexity with every new year. Without PDHP as an ally and a resource, our ministry would be much less effective than it is today. At OLCA, we are grateful for PDHP each and every day.

Sincerely in Christ,

Kevin John Coyne
Principal

*As did Our Lady in whose name we are founded,
the mission of Our Lady's Catholic Academy is to
magnify, radiate, and educate
an inseparable love for God, each other, and learning
with our Christ-centered, diverse, urban community.*