



PREPARED FOR BY THE MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY CIVIC INSTITUTE ON BEHALF OF
THE ERIE COUNTY POLICY & PLANNING COUNCIL'S RESOURCE & PLANNING
SUBCOMMITTEE

Community Action Plan

Erie County

June 2012
Amended February 2014

The Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families (PPC) is a county wide collaborative where members share information and work together to promote a flourishing, asset rich community. The PPC supports sound decision making and research-based programs providing opportunities for youth and families to grow and thrive.

Community Action Plan
Outline

I. Executive Summary

II. Introduction

- A. Purpose and Use of the Plan
- B. Prevention Science Overview
- C. Community Involvement
- D. The Community Planning
- E. How Information was Collected and Drafted
- F. How to Use the Plan

III. The Community Action Plan

- A. Data Collection efforts
- B. Prioritization process
- C. Existing Resources, Gaps, Issues and Barriers
- D. Recommendations

IV. Community Planning Results

- A. Community Level Outcomes
- B. Risk Factor: Community Disorganization
 - i. Selected Strategies
 - ii. Program Level Outcomes
 - iii. Preliminary Implementation Plans
 - iv. Selected programs, policies & practices
- C. Risk Factor: Family Conflict
 - i. Selected Strategies
 - ii. Program Level Outcomes
 - iii. Preliminary Implementation Plans
 - iv. Selected programs, policies & practices
- D. Risk Factor: Parental Attitudes Favorable Towards Problem Behaviors
 - i. Selected Strategies
 - ii. Program Level Outcomes
 - iii. Preliminary Implementation Plans

V. Next Steps

VI. Appendices

- A. Community Disorganization- Rebuilding the Community Template

Executive Summary

This plan describes the ways to address the priority risk factors identified in Erie County's *Communities That Care* effort. The *Communities That Care* system is a way for members of a community to work together to promote positive youth development. The system was developed by Dr. J. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard F. Catalano. Their research has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life.

Erie County developed its outcome-based plan after the Erie County Policy and Planning Council Data and Assessment Committee identified three risk factors as priorities for community planning:

- i. *Community disorganization*
- ii. *Family conflict*
- iii. *Parental attitudes favorable towards problem behavior.*

After the Data and Assessment Committee completed their work, the Resource and Planning Committee of the Erie County Policy and Planning Council was charged with identifying gaps, barriers, and other issues relative to programs addressing the prioritized risk factors within the Erie County. With training assistance from the Penn State EPIS Center, the committee conducted an agency survey in December 2011-January 2012, to assess existing services. Their findings were compiled into a report that offered the following recommendations:

- Increase efforts to address community disorganization.
- Enhance the collaboration and communication between existing programs, especially those that target our priority risk & protective factors.
- Where possible, assist existing programs in finding opportunities to obtain technical assistance and to evaluate their effectiveness.
- Examine the target population and fidelity of existing evidenced-based programs within the community to assure programs are aligned to provide the most effective services to the most appropriate populations.
- Review utilization of existing evidenced-based resources to address barriers that may be hindering referrals to existing services.
- Consider implementation and expansion of prevention strategies as opposed to intervention services as opportunities to address the prioritized risk factors.
- Review access and awareness issues pertaining to existing services from both referral sources and the community at large.
- Increase accountability of services to the community.
- Promote family engagement components to services.

- Increase staff and program development of family engagement strategies and outreach.
- Examine family focused childhood programming (ages 3-9) options.
- Although not included in the community resource assessment, recommendations regarding planning needs to incorporate building upon priority protective factors including:
 - Community Rewards for Pro-social Involvement
 - Community Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement
 - Religiosity

The drafting of this document (the Erie County Community Action Plan) was the next step in the *Communities That Care* process. Over the course of a series of meetings during April 2012, the Resource and Planning Committee members debated and discussed policies, practices, and programs relative to the identified risk factors and based upon the recommendations made by the resource assessment recommendations.

The following are the strategies identified by the Resource and Planning Committee selected to address the prioritized risk factors:

- Integrate the Neighborhood Watch concept to a Neighborhood Association network concept promoting a more holistic approach to neighborhood building beyond crime watch
- Create, support and expand a new entity that can provide effective technical assistance and support to all neighborhood groups.
- Provide a model for developing and operating neighborhood groups and the new support entity(based off of successful groups such as Snoops, Little Italy, and BEST)
- Utilize the National Night Out of the United Way as a kick off to promote the network of neighborhood groups and the new support entity
- Promote community opportunities for prosocial involvement and community rewards for prosocial involvement among youth within the communities through the neighborhood groups and the new support entity
- Seek consensus on reduction of family conflict as a healthy community goal
- Develop a best practice protocol for programs/services on how to engage parents/families in services/programs to reduce family conflict.
- Encourage existing programs to develop and utilize service delivery strategies to engage parents/families to reduce family conflict.
- Increase supports and services that are family focused for elementary aged youth through the implementation of the Parent Child Interactive Therapy model to reach kids and families of kids between ages 3 -9
- Invest in the promotion of current community assets by increasing awareness and expanding utilization of effective services that engage families in family conflict reduction
- Support and promote programs that are working with parents
- Provide and create opportunities to recognize not only good kids but also good parents
- Educate parents that their attitudes and behaviors directly influence the behaviors of their youth

Introduction

Purpose and Use of the Plan

Erie County presents its 2012-2017 Community Action Plan. This plan describes the results of the work completed thus far in Erie County County's *Communities That Care* effort. It will describe the changes we want for our community, the programs, policies and practices that will be implemented to address the community's identified priority risk factors, and the outcomes that will measure the progress toward our community's vision.

Erie County implemented the *Communities That Care* process to help achieve the community's vision that all young people in Erie County County grow up supported and nurtured by their families, schools and community, and become healthy adults who contribute positively to society.

Prevention Science Overview

The *Communities That Care* system helps community members work together to efficiently and effectively promote positive youth development. The system was developed by Dr. J. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard F. Catalano of the Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington, Seattle. It is based on their research, which has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life.

Community Involvement

The Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families is comprised of community members from public and private institutions including local government, education, health, law enforcement, local business and private social services.

Key leaders who have been involved in the creation of the community action plan include:

Jay Badams, City of Erie School District
Parris Baker, Gannon University & African American Concerned Clergy
Bob Blakely, Erie County Juvenile Probation
Charlotte Berringer, Erie County Department of Health
Dave Deter, City of Erie (co-chair)
John DiMattio, Erie County Office of Drug & Alcohol Abuse
Amy Eisert, Mercyhurst University Civic Institute
Samella Hudson-Brewton, John F. Kennedy Center
Mike Jaruszewicz, United Way of Erie
William Jeffress, Booker T. Washington Center
Ross Jarvis, Stairways Behavioral Health
Dave Jeannerat, Erie County Office of Mental Health & Mental Retardation
Danny Jones, Erie City School District
James Sherrod, Martin Luther King Center
Joe Markiewicz, PennState CORE
Tracey McCaslin, Erie County Office of Children and Youth

Jerry Misfud, Erie County
Jeff Natalie, Stairways Behavioral Health
John Petulla, Harborcreek Youth Services
Marshall Piccinini, Assistant United States Attorney
Mark Rosenthal, Erie County District Attorney's Office
Hope Ruedy, Erie Homes for Children & Adults (co-chair)
Nick Scott, Jr. Scott Enterprises
Ann Scott, Erie Insurance
Dana Steward, Pennsylvania State Police

Additional community members that have been instrumental in creation of the community action plan include:

Jerri Allen, Erie Neighborhood Watch Council
Jennifer Bach, Erie Together
Jeremey Bloesser, Bayfront East Side Taskforce (BEST)
Wally Brown, Little Italy Neighborhood Watch
Tom Maggio, Erie Neighborhood Watch Council
Heidi Miles, Erie Neighborhood Watch Council
Shay Mizner, formerly of Erie Gains- Gannon University
Joe Ropelewski, Harborcreek Youth Services
Stephanie Scharnweber, Snoops Neighborhood Association
Susan Wansor, Erie Neighborhood Watch Council

The Community Planning

A key goal of the *Communities That Care* process is to develop a Community Action Plan that builds on the data-based assessment of a community's priorities, strengths and resources. This plan focuses on the priority risk factors and draws on community resources and strengths. It also addresses resource gaps, issues and barriers by recommending new, tested, effective programs or systems-change strategies.

The Erie County plan accomplishes this goal by identifying specific desired outcomes for each selected program, policy or practice; for the priority risk and protective factors on which the plan is focused; and for adolescent problem behaviors. It describes how each selected program, policy and practice will work to bring about desired changes in Erie County County's youth and presents preliminary recommendations for how these strategies will be implemented in the community.

How the Information was Collected and Drafted

Erie County developed its community prevention plan based upon the prioritized risk factors that were identified through the work conducted by the Data and Assessment Committee of the Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families. Their assessment identified three risk factors as priorities for community planning: community disorganization, family conflict, and parental attitudes favorable towards problem behaviors.

Erie County first drafted community-level outcomes, which consist of behavior and risk- and protective-factor outcomes. Community Board members drafted these outcomes at the

Community Planning Training. Strategy identification took place during the month of April with the Resource and Planning Committee reviewing gaps, barriers, and other issues with existing services in addition to reviewing other programming options that address the identified priority risk and protective factors.

How to use the plan

The Community Action Plan is intended to help guide the Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families to develop implementation, evaluation and budgeting plans for the selected programs, policies and practices. Participants developing these plans should use this plan to develop:

- funding strategies by tying funding plans to outcomes and reevaluating funding priorities as outcomes are monitored;
- implementation plans for the strategies identified in the plan; and
- evaluation plans for strategies identified.

The Community Plan Development

Data collection efforts

The Data and Assessment Committee collected and analyzed data on Erie County including data from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey and additional archival community data (births to teens, arrests, child abuse rates, juvenile placement rates, etc). With input from the committee members, they identified priority risk factors to address, as well as community strengths to build on. The Community Assessment Report details the results of this work.

Prioritization process

Based on the analysis of the data and input from the community, the following risk factors were identified as priorities for community attention:

- *Community disorganization*
- *Family conflict*
- *Parental attitudes favorable toward problem behaviors*

These risk factors were selected as priorities for prevention action primarily because data indicated that they are elevated throughout Erie County.

Existing resources, gaps, issues and barriers

The Resource and Planning Subcommittee developed a community survey based upon the three prioritized risk factors to identify existing resources, gaps, issues, and barriers that exist within the community relative to those risk factors. Surveys were sent to 133 programs/services and 93 responded. Based on the assessment information derived from that survey, the Resource and Planning Committee's resource assessment concluded that:

- There are limited resources, programs, and services that are addressing community disorganization throughout Erie County.
- There are several resources, programs, and organizations in Erie County that address family conflict and parental attitudes favorable toward the problem behavior; however the effectiveness of many of the identified resources is unclear.
- There is a lack of accountability to the community among services.
- Erie County is resource rich with evidenced-based programs; however the utilization, fidelity and target populations being served by those programs warrant further examination.
- Access and awareness regarding effective programs and services in the community by both referral sources and potential clients that address the priority risk factors also warrants further examination.
- Programs and services lack technical assistance.
- Family engagement components of programs and services are lacking.
- A number of prior prevention programs are now utilized as intervention strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the community assessment, the Resource and Planning Committee recommended the following:

- Increase efforts to address community disorganization.
- Enhance the collaboration and communication between existing programs, especially those that target our priority risk & protective factors.
- Where possible, assist existing programs in finding opportunities to obtain technical assistance and to evaluate their effectiveness.
- Examine the target population and fidelity of existing evidenced-based programs within the community to assure programs are aligned to provide the most effective services to the most appropriate populations.
- Review utilization of existing evidenced-based resources to address barriers that may be hindering referrals to existing services.
- Consider implementation and expansion of prevention strategies as opposed to intervention services as opportunities to address the prioritized risk factors.
- Review access and awareness issues pertaining to existing services from both referral sources and the community at large.
- Increase accountability of services to the community.
- Promote family engagement components to services.
- Increase staff and program development of family engagement strategies and outreach.
- Examine family focused childhood programming (ages 3-9) options.
- Although not included in the community resource assessment, recommendations regarding planning need to incorporate building upon priority protective factors including:
 - Community Rewards for Pro-social Involvement
 - Community Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement
 - Religiosity

Community Planning Results

Community Level Outcomes

Erie County developed outcomes for the following identified risk factors:

- *Community disorganization*
 - Description: Where there is little attachment to the community, where the rates of vandalism are high and where there is low surveillance of public areas, more problem behaviors occur.
 - Objective: To decrease community disorganization as measured by the overall composite score on the Pennsylvania Youth Survey from 70 to at or below a score of 65 by 2015.
- *Family conflict*
 - Description: Persistent, serious conflict between caregivers or between caregivers and children appears to increase risks for children raised in these families.
 - Objective: To decrease family conflict as measured by the overall composite score on the Pennsylvania Youth Survey from 53 to at or below the normative score of 50 by 2015.
- *Parental attitudes favorable towards problem behaviors*
 - Description: If parents are involved in one of the problem behaviors or are tolerant of the children's involvement in such behaviors, children are much more likely to become involved in those problem behaviors.
 - Objective: To decrease parental attitudes favorable towards the problem behaviors as measured by the overall composite score on the Pennsylvania Youth Survey from 57 to at or below the normative score of 50 by 2015.

Risk factor: Community Disorganization

Selected Strategies

- Integrate the neighborhood watch concept to a neighborhood association network concept promoting a more holistic approach to neighborhood building beyond crime watch to include partnering every neighborhood watch with a corporate, church, school, neighborhood center, social service agency, law enforcement and youth partner (See Appendix A)
- Support and expand a new entity provide the following to countywide neighborhood groups but on a larger scale with maximum efficiency:
 - Training and technical assistance to local watches
 - Pass through opportunities for communities who are not 501c3 to seek grant funds
 - Best practice information

- A means to communicate with other neighborhood groups and the broader community
- Education to communities on other resources available to community members
- Connect existing neighborhood groups with key community partners (business, education, services, religion, parents, youth)
- Provide a model for developing and operating neighborhood groups to operate at their maximum efficiency and effectiveness (based off of successful groups such as Snoops, Little Italy, and BEST , among others)
- Utilize the National Night Out of the United Way as a kick off to promote neighborhood groups.
- Promote community opportunities for pro-social involvement and community rewards for pro-social involvement among youth within the communities through the new entity.
- Include Healthy Youth Development training opportunities through the new entity to neighborhood groups.

Program Level Outcomes

- Whether the new entity has been created and expanded to effectively assist the existing neighborhood groups.
 - Whether funding has been secured to support the required staffing to the new entity.
- Whether a model program for developing and operating a network of neighborhood watches has been identified or created.
- Whether the existing neighborhood groups have been provided adequate support from the new entity to have established partnerships with the key community partners for their community.
 - Number of neighborhood groups that have networked with each key community partner sector within their community.
- Whether opportunities for youth increased through neighborhood groups.
 - Number of opportunities for youth through neighborhood groups.
- Whether reward recognition increased for youth through the neighborhood watches.
 - Number of rewards for youth through neighborhood groups.

Preliminary Implementation Plans

- Funding will be sought to secure staffing for the new resource entity through the Erie County Policy and Planning Council Funding Committee.
- Simultaneously with the seeking of funding, existing neighborhood groups will work together to identify or develop a model network of partners within each association and an operational model as a guide for other neighborhood groups.
- Once funding is secured and staff are hired, work towards enhancing the existing neighborhood groups and expanding the network of services and opportunities will begin.

Risk factor: Family Conflict

Selected Strategies

- Seek consensus on reduction of family conflict as a healthy community goal
- Develop a best practice protocol for programs/services on how to engage parents/families in services/programs.
- Encourage existing programs to develop and utilize the best practice protocol to engage parents/families.
 - Provide training opportunities for existing services on why and how they can engage families in services
 - Encourage providers to develop defined opportunities for parents/families to get involved in services/programs their youth attend
 - Encourage providers to make formal invitations to parents and families to get involved in services/programs their youth attend
- Encourage funders to include outreach and family engagement as a criteria in services they fund
- Build up the Building Bridges Parent/Provider Partnership so that the information provided by parents is relevant and more effective to service providers
- Increase supports and services that are family focused for elementary aged youth
 - Support the implementation of the Parent Child Interactive Therapy model to reach kids and families of kids between ages 3 -9
 - Seek funding to sponsor PCIT training and certification for counselors (Parent Child Interaction Therapy)
 - Market the PCIT therapy model and seek broad acceptance of its therapeutic benefits to reduce family conflict
- Invest in the promotion of current community assets by increasing awareness and expanding utilization of proven effective services that engage families in family conflict reduction
 - Partner with school districts and community centers to broaden referral sources and increase awareness
 - Expand utilization of school and community center facilities for provision of services
 - Utilize the neighborhood groups to inform the community on available family supports and expand program utilization

Program Level Outcomes

- Whether consensus has been reached among the county, county council, city council, and community collaborative partnerships (Erie Together, Erie County Criminal Justice Coalition, United Way, Success by Six...) that reduction of family conflict is as a healthy community goal.
- Whether a best practice protocol for parent/family engagement in services has been developed.
- Whether existing programs have been encouraged to engage parents/families in services.
 - The number of agencies and # of staff members attending the collaborative family engagement training

- The number of agencies that adopt the best practice protocol for engaging parent/families in services
- Whether funders have been encouraged to include outreach and family engagement as criteria for services/programs they fund.
 - Number of funders reporting having included outreach and family engagement in request for funding proposals
- Whether funding has been secured for a collaborative training on PCIT.
- Whether the PCIT therapy model has been accepted for its therapeutic benefits to reduce family conflict.
 - The number of service providers that adopt the PCIT model for working with children ages 2-9.
- Whether the utilization of existing evidenced-based programs (MST, MST-PSB, FFT) has increased.
 - Number of clients receiving services for existing evidenced-based programs as reported by the programs

Preliminary Implementation Plans

- The Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families will work to educate the community and key leaders on the importance of addressing family conflict as a means to improve overall community health.
- The Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families will establish a subcommittee to develop a best practice protocol for parent/family engagement in services, incorporating representation from those programs that have been identified as exceptional at family outreach and service delivery in addition to parent representation. Once a protocol has been developed, representatives will meet with each of the individual youth servicing agencies to encourage them to adopt the protocol and incorporate the recommendations into existing services.
- Existing training regarding parent/family engagement in services will be identified and/or developed if necessary (the Penn State EPIS Center has already indicated availability of technical assistance relative to this topic). The training will then be scheduled and all youth serving agencies in Erie County will be invited to send staff to the trainings. Funding for the training will be sought through the Erie County Policy and Planning Council Funding Committee.
- The countywide prevention plan, in addition to the supporting documentation of the community assessment and community resource assessment, will be shared with local funders so they are aware of the prioritized risk factors.
- Meetings will be held to gauge the interest of existing outpatient counselor providers regarding collaborative implementation of the PCIT model. Costs of PCIT training is yet to be determined.
- The funding committee of the Erie County Policy and Planning Council will be responsible for securing funds for this activity.

Risk factor: Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Problem Behaviors

Selected Strategies:

- Support and promote programs that are working with parents
- Provide and create opportunities to recognize not only good kids but also good parents
- Educate parents that their attitudes and behaviors directly influence the behaviors of their youth
 - Utilize the new entity and neighborhood groups to educate parents and provide opportunities for positive recognition
 - Engage churches, businesses, schools, parents, youth, non-profits, government in changing social norming that accepts and/or promotes problem behaviors (such as underage drinking, bullying, drug use, aggression, teen pregnancy)

Program Level Outcomes

- The number of opportunities created to recognize good parents
- The number of Neighborhood Council Networks that report providing educational opportunities in their community regarding parental attitudes and behaviors influence of youth behaviors.

Preliminary Implementation Plans

- The Erie County Policy and Planning Council will utilize community youth representation to develop an outreach strategy to educate parents on how parental attitudes influence youth behaviors.
- Materials will be made available to neighborhood groups promoting awareness of parental attitude influence on youth behaviors.
- Neighborhood groups as well as community agencies, churches, businesses, and schools will be encouraged to recognize good parents.

Next Steps

- The community plan will be shared with the public.
- The Erie County Policy and Planning Council will convene the key partners identified as instrumental in the implementation of the strategies set forth in the community plan. This may require the establishment of ad hoc subcommittees.
- The Erie County Policy and Planning Council will convene the Funding Committee to start seeking resources necessary for the implementation of the identified strategies.
- Baseline data and an evaluation process will be identified in order to begin tracking outcomes and progress towards achieving program level outcomes.
- The release of the 2011 Pennsylvania Youth Survey data will also result in reconvening of the Data and Assessment Committee to identify if any additional risk factors need to be addressed.

Community Disorganization

- Where there is little attachment to the community, where rates of vandalism are high and where there is low surveillance of public areas, more problem behaviors occur.

- Reduce the community disorganization risk factor from 70 to 50 by 2015



Community Action Plan

Amendment 1

Religiosity

Erie County

Added to the Community Action Plan in February 2014

The original Community Action Plan was published in June 2012. This amendment was added and approved in February 2014.

Community Action Plan – Amendment 1
Protective Factor: Religiosity

Summary

The Community Action Plan describes strategies to address the priority risk factors identified in Erie County's *Communities That Care (CTC)* effort.

Erie County developed its outcome-based plan after the Erie County Policy and Planning Council Data and Assessment Committee identified three risk factors as priorities for community planning in spring 2012. The committee also identified three **priority protective factors** that were not mentioned in the Community Action Plan.

The Priority Protective Factors for Erie County, PA are as follows:

- i. *Community Rewards for Prosocial Involvement*
- ii. *Community Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement*
- iii. *Religiosity*

The CTC research identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life. The original Erie County Community Action Plan published in June 2012 was focused on documenting specific strategies to address the priority *risk* factors, but did not detail any specific strategies for the priority *protective* factors.

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) subcommittee of the Erie County Policy and Planning Council (PPC) was initially tasked with spearheading efforts to address the protective factors. A Religiosity Summit was planned to bring together a variety of religious leaders from across Erie County and share the data regarding youth behaviors and religion, as well as explain the Community Action Plan.

The Religiosity Summit was held on June 4, 2013, and more than 65 people attended from a variety of religious institutions across Erie County. Facilitated break-out sessions were held as part of the event to collect suggestions for strategies to increase religiosity in Erie County. Evaluation forms collected at the end of the one-day event overwhelmingly indicated that attendees were invested in what they had heard and wanted to see follow-up events and activities held. Based on that feedback, the PPC created a standing subcommittee to address religiosity in July 2013.

The newly formed subcommittee, known as the Religiosity Team, reached out to invite additional representation from more religious leaders in the community, and throughout the fall of 2013 analyzed the list of potential strategies generated by the facilitated break-out sessions at the Summit. That compiled and analyzed information was used to create a priority list of potential strategies to increase religiosity in Erie County.

The Religiosity Team determined that the key to the success of the Community Action Plan was the written strategies that guided decisions, and therefore determined the first action needed before moving forward with any religiosity strategies was to draft a written plan. This amendment is the result of that effort.

The following strategies have been identified by the Religiosity Team to address the prioritized protective factor of Religiosity, and were authorized by the Executive Committee of the Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families.

Community Involvement

The Erie County Policy and Planning Council for Children and Families, Religiosity Team is comprised of community members from a variety of institutions and religious entities.

Individuals who have been involved in the creation of the religiosity amendment include:

Amy Eisert, Mercyhurst University Civic Institute
Andrea Bierer, Mercyhurst University Civic Institute
Andy Kerr, Erie City Mission
Ann Badach, Catholic Charities
Charles Mock, African American Concerned Clergy
Daryl Craig, Parade Street Community Center
Diane Edwards, Inter-Church Ministries
Dorothy Konyha, Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul
Joe Markiewicz, PennState CORE
Joel Natalie, McLane Church
Johnny Johnson, Cherry Street Church of God
Kara Gladney, Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul
Leigh Kostis, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie
Marshall J. Piccinini, Assistant United States Attorney
Mike Jaruszewicz, United Way of Erie
Parris Baker, Gannon University & African American Concerned Clergy
Paul Macosko, McLane Church
Rev. Bob Lewis, Lakewood United Methodist Church
Rev. Evan Clendenin, Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul
Rev. Robert C. Guldenschuh, Jr., Wayne Park Baptist Church
Robert Gaines, Parade Street Community Center
Sonny Concepcion, Iglesia Bautista El Calvario RG
Stephanie Lindenberger, Women's Care Center of Erie County
Steve Aschmann, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie

Protective factor: Religiosity

- *Religiosity- participating in organized religion one or more hours per week*
 - Description: Religious institutions can help students develop firm prosocial beliefs. Students who have preconceived ideas about certain activities are less vulnerable to becoming involved with antisocial behaviors because they have already adopted a social norm against those activities.
 - Objective: To increase religiosity as measured by the overall composite score on the Pennsylvania Youth Survey from 39 to at or above a score of 42 by 2015.

Selected Strategies

- Conduct a Youth Survey on Religiosity
 - Facilitate survey via online, paper, and in person interviews to gather input from youth on why they do or do not participate in religious activities, and what strategies would motivate them to participate
 - Compile, analyze, and share the information from the Summit with religious institutions in Erie
- Create a diverse religiosity toolkit
 - Create a downloadable series of appealing graphics and images for sharing religiosity data (Erie County specific)
 - Create talking points and ideas on how to present that data
 - Make it usable and customizable for religious institutions to share with audiences
- Positive messaging campaign
 - Create a positive messaging campaign targeting teens and adults in Erie County with the message that Religion Matters.
 - Seek funds for this campaign.
 - Carry out campaign.

Program Level Outcomes

- Whether a Youth Religiosity Summit is held before August 2015
 - Number of youth participants at Summit
- Whether the compiled & analyzed data from Youth Religiosity Summit is shared with religious institutions
 - Number of religious institutions that implement some of the strategies as a result
- Whether the toolkit is created
 - Number of downloads recorded
- Whether resources have been secured for the positive messaging campaign
 - Number of people exposed to the campaign

Preliminary Implementation Plans

- Increase the representation on the Religiosity Team from a variety of religious backgrounds in Erie County
 - Continue to invite additional members to the subcommittee