

Operation Our Town Reporter

a monthly newsletter by our volunteers to our volunteers about our fight against drugs and crime in Central PA

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PUSH OUT THE PUSHER 693-3020



OperationOurTown.org

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McLanahan Corporation
New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co.
New Pig
NPC, Inc.
Reliance Bank
Sheetz, Inc.
United Way of Blair County
Ward Trucking
Wolf Furniture

Committed Businesses:

Grainger Industrial Supply
Norfolk-Southern Foundation
Small Tube Products

Grants Awarded for Spring 2009 Grant Cycle

Operation Our Town distributed over \$100,000 in grants to 13 local programs to reduce illegal drug use and related crime in Blair County:

- Altoona Area School District: Little All Stars
- Blair County Adult Parole & Probation: A Framework for Breaking Barriers
- Blair County Human Services Office/Communities That Care: Family Day
- Central Blair Recreation & Park Commission: Community Swimming Pool Season Pass Program
- Duncansville National Night Out Against Crime
- Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation: After-School Program at Evergreen Manors and Fairview Hills
- Home Nursing Agency Community Services: Nurse-Family Partnership
- NAACP: Booker T. Washington Community Revitalization Project
- Teen Link Connection/Child Advocates of Blair County: All Stars Booster
- The Door/Olivet Baptist Church: Faithful Fathers Park
- The Nehemiah Project: Lower Fairview Community Park
- The ROCK: After-School Program
- Williamsburg Borough: Summer Recreation Program at Riverside Park



Grants are awarded twice a year to support proven prevention and treatment programs. Additional grants are awarded annually for targeted law enforcement and prosecution to fight illegal drugs and crime in Blair County. In 2008, Operation Our Town awarded more than \$400,000 in grants for all programs combined.

Applications for the Fall 2009 grant cycle will be accepted 9/1—10/15. All non-profit organizations, schools and government agencies are eligible to apply. Grant applications may be downloaded at OperationOurTown.org.

The Operation Our Town Grant Committee includes five members: Donna Gority, Blair County Commissioner; Robin Beck, Executive Director of United Way of Blair County; Judy Rosser, Blair County Drug & Alcohol; Jolene Kopriva, president judge, Blair County Court of Common Pleas, and Michele Fiore, mental health counselor.

Mission

Facilitating partnerships between community and business to fight drug use and crime through proven law enforcement, treatment, and prevention techniques.

Our Partners & Friends

[Blair Countians for Drug Free Communities](#)

[Crime Solvers of Blair County](#)

[Pennsylvania Gang Investigators Association](#)

[United Way of Blair County](#)

Volunteer Update

Volunteers play an important role in Operation Our Town. Volunteers participate in community events to help us reach more people. Volunteers serve on Roundtables, the Steering Committee & the Board.

Volunteers provide valuable services such as artwork & design, software development, and more.

We thank all our Operation Our Town volunteers. It is only through the support of active community members like yourselves that we will be able to take back our neighborhoods from illegal drugs and crime.

[CLICK HERE to register as an Operation Our Town Volunteer](#)



To serve on an Operation Our Town Roundtable, to become a Committed Business or to make a tax-deductible donation, contact Shawna Hoover by [email](#) or call 814-296-8730.

Upcoming Operation Our Town & Partner Meetings and Events

Wed. HOPE Support Group Meeting (weekly meeting)	7:00pm Blair Co Courthouse Jury Room
8/19 Crime Solvers Meeting	8:00am Park Hills Country Club
8/20 CJAB Meeting	11:45am Blair County Courthouse
8/20 Neighborhood Watch: County-wide	6:00pm Blair Senior Services Building
8/26 Back to School Festival	4:00pm Fairview Hills
8/27 OOT Pharmacy Roundtable Meeting	7:15am OOT Office
8/27 OOT Marketing Roundtable Meeting	4:00pm OOT Office
9/06 Burgi's Low-Life Riders Charity Ride	9:00am Heritage Plaza
9/07 LABOR DAY	
9/10 Faith-based Roundtable Meeting	1:30pm Arrow Child & Family Ministries
9/14 Booker T Washington Meeting	4:00pm Community Action Agency
9/16 Crime Solvers Meeting	8:00am Park Hills Country Club
9/17 CJAB Meeting	11:45am Blair County Courthouse
9/17 Neighborhood Watch: City-wide	6:00pm Jaffa Mosque
*OOT Meetings: For more information about Operation Our Town meetings, contact Shawna Hoover at oot@lsfiore.com or call 296-8730.	

Blair County Drug Court *by Jolene Kopriva and Scott Schultz*

Some people believe if we give harsher sentences (i.e. more jail time) to drug offenders, somehow we will be safer. America imprisons five times more inmates than any other country in the world and Pennsylvania is incarcerating more people than ever before...do you feel safer?

A better way to build safe communities is to make sure drug users have no need to buy. In order to reduce the market for sales we must change the way people think and address the underlying issues that take people to drugs, e.g. poor decision making, low self-esteem, mental health issues, low level of education, lack of personal responsibility, etc.

The Blair County Drug Court is a different way of securing safety for the community. The program provides participants with tools, resources and support to overcome the obstacles to recovery. Statistics show that 88% of Blair County Drug Court participants re-enter our communities without a re-arrest. Compare this 12% recidivism rate with the national average of 70% and it's clear that this drug court works!

In addition, Blair County's Drug Court has provided taxpayers more than \$7.5 million in net savings as a result of drug-free births alone since it's inception—not to mention the indescribable benefits to countless lives and society as a whole. Blair County residents can be proud of this revolutionary Drug Court which helps to save lives, save families and save tax dollars in our communities.

Without treatment, inmates return to their former lives with a high probability of re-offending and continued drug use...nearly 70% of drug abusing offenders return to prison within three years of their release.

Evidence-Based Treatment Demonstrates Improved Recidivism Rates By Peter Paolantonio, Dawn Collinge, and Cindy Buraczynski. 04/13/09. See the complete article at:

www.corrections.com/news/article/21009

HISTORY OF PROGRAMS

	DIVERSION (4/6/05)	IP (8/8/2000)	RE-ENTRY (11/1/2001)	Total
Participants	54	155	114	323
Graduates	23	99	48	170
Revoked	12	59	40	111
Other (transfer, opt out)	2	4	2	8
Deceased		3		3
Re-Arrest (grad & rec)	3	14	16	33
% of no Re-Arrest	91%	91%	81%	88%
# of Drug Free Babies for all Programs	30			
Cost savings per baby	\$250,000			
Total Savings	\$7,500,000			

Diversion: These cases are taken from the Magisterial District Judges level. The Defendant is placed on bail conditions and they follow the bail conditions throughout Drug Court.

IP (Intermediate Punishment): The Defendant applies for this program, is sentenced into Drug Court and must follow drug court rules as a condition of parole.

Re-Entry: These are Defendants that have been sentenced to jail and are coming out into the community. Their chronic history of recidivism identifies them as a drug court candidate and they follow the drug court rules as a condition of their parole.

Upcoming Events

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Back to School Festival
Activities for kids and families.
Wed., August 26, 2009
4 pm—6 pm

Operation Our Town
VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!
Call 296-8730

Fairview Hills
1614 First St.
Altoona

Burgi's Low-Life Riders
6th Annual Charity Ride
Benefits Operation Our Town,
Savannah Rae Gortney and
Luke Murray.

Sun., September 6, 2009
Registration begins at 9 a.m.
at Heritage Plaza

- Riders leave at 11 a.m. and travel 100 miles, ending at Heritage Plaza.
- An after-party at the plaza is open to the public.
- Registration is \$20/rider
- Call 207-9455 or 937-5804

5th Annual Golf Tournament
Fraternal Order of Police—
Bald Eagle Lodge #51 &
Crime Solvers of Blair County
Fri., September 25, 2009
Tee Time: 10 am

Sinking Valley Golf Course

- Participation limited to first 36 foursomes.
- Entry fees \$300—\$350 per foursome. Hole and cart sponsorships available.
- Contact Chief Jim Ott at duncansvillepolice@yahoo.com

Pumpkin Festival
Community street festival for
families.

Sat., October 10, 2009
10 am—4 pm

Operation Our Town
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NEEDED!
Call 296-8730

Allegheny St.
on the Diamond
Hollidaysburg

Contact Info

Operation Our Town - PO Box 2486 - Altoona PA 16603 - 814.296.8730 - info@OperationOurTown.org - OperationOurTown.org

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

Summary of Spending on Substance Abuse and Addiction

Excerpts from "Shoveling Up II: The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State and Local Budgets", The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse a Columbia University (CASA), May 2009. Report based on 2005 fiscal year results due to the time required to produce in-depth reports at all government levels. [Click here to download full report.](#)

Key 2005 findings of the report are:

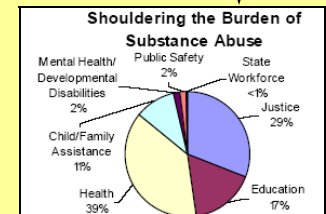
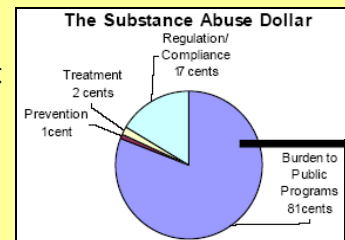
- Federal, state and local governments spent at least \$467.7 billion as a result of substance abuse and addiction in 2005 (\$238.2 billion, federal; \$135.8 billion, state; and \$93.8 billion, local); or approximately 10.7% of their entire \$4.4 trillion budgets.
- Of every dollar (\$) *federal and state governments* spent:
 - 95.6¢ went towards the burden of addiction (71.1% of this is spent in two areas: health care (58%) and justice system (13.1%) costs).
 - **Only 1.9¢ on prevention and treatment**
 - 2.5¢ on research, taxation or regulation and interdiction
- For every dollar (\$) *federal and state governments* spent to prevent and treat substance abuse and addiction, they spent \$59.83 in public programs to clean up the devastation.
- If substance abuse and addiction were its own *state* budget category, it would rank second just behind spending on elementary and secondary education.
- **PREVENTION WORKS!** 17 years of research have shown that a child who reaches age 21 without smoking, using illicit drugs or abusing alcohol is virtually certain never to do so.

Federal Outlays by Budget Function Including Spending on Substance Abuse and Addiction (in Billions)	
Budget Function*	2005
Social Security	\$523
National defense	494
Income security	348
Medicare	299
Other health	250
Substance abuse and addiction	238

* The top five budget categories also contain costs linked to substance abuse and addiction.

PA State Budget, 2005:

Total State Budget	\$33,389 M
• Elementary and Secondary Education	\$7,694 M
• Substance Abuse and Addiction	\$6,635 M
• Medicaid	\$7,518 M
• Higher Education	\$1,913 M
• Transportation	\$3,221 M
Population	12.4 M



Operation Our Town continues to fund proven prevention and treatment programs as an effective means to fight drug use and crime in Blair County. Your donations can help. Contact us at OperationOurTown.org.

Red Ribbon Week Is COMING!

Red Ribbon Week is a time for communities to unite and take a visible stand against substance abuse. Show your personal commitment to a drug-free lifestyle by supporting the Red Ribbon Campaign **October 23rd - 31st**.



The Red Ribbon Campaign was started when drug traffickers in Mexico City murdered DEA agent Kiki Camarena in 1985. This began the continuing tradition of displaying red ribbons as a symbol of intolerance towards the use of drugs, and presenting a unified and

visible commitment towards the creation of a DRUG-FREE AMERICA.

This year's theme is "Drug Free is the Key." For more information, go to: www.usdoj.gov/dea/ongoing/red_ribbon/redribbon_factsheet.html

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Operation Our Town is looking for a team of volunteers to work with local organizations & schools to enhance and promote current Red Ribbon programs.

To join or lead this committee, contact Lynne at oot2@lsfiore.com