

Operation Our Town Reporter

A monthly newsletter *by* our volunteers *to* our volunteers
about our fight against drugs and violent crime in Central PA.

Volume 1, Issue 2

February 2009

PUSH OUT THE PUSHER 693-3020



www.OperationOurTown.org

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Phil Devorris | Ron McConnell

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Lynne Mondock, Volunteer

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Pastor Betty Landis
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Judy Rosser
Dr. G. Brian Toth

Founding Members:

Altoona Regional Health System
Blair Candy Company
Blair Companies
DC Goodman
Delta Health Technologies
Fiore Buick/Toyota
Grappone Law Offices
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Lawruk Realty
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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

Steering Committee Notes from January 19

The Steering Committee meets every other month to share reports from each Roundtable

Volunteer Roundtable:

- Projects include site visits to other grant recipients; a volunteer meeting in February or March; a clean-up day at the Nehemiah Project.

Faith-Based Roundtable:

- Projects include the Myth Busters Drug Forum in Bellwood in April and attending a training program to help families of substance abusers.
- New member: Arrow Ministries, providing foster care and counseling.
- Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is offering a 12-step program for people struggling with depression, drugs, alcohol, etc.

Marketing Roundtable:

- Monthly meetings will be held at 4:15 pm on the 4th Thursday of every month. JR DiAndrea of DiAndrea Media, Inc. is Chair.
- Projects include a plan to enhance the OOT identity; bi-weekly stats & positive community stories in the Altoona Mirror; creating a monthly OOT newsletter and a new look for the Push Out the Pusher signs.

Judicial Roundtable:

- CJAB would like to start data collection strategies to report statistics.
- A Breaking Barriers graduate (funded by OOT) will be teaching a class.

K-12 Education Roundtable (Based on the agenda for Jan. 20 meeting):

- Emergency plans & lessons learned; 3 CDs- Emergency Management, Drugs & Teens, and Emergency Guidelines; gang training at BASD on April 9th; after-school grants; BAHS to produce Keepin' It Real drug resistance video with PSU; electronic and explosive sniffer; and Quarterbacks for Life.

Law Enforcement Roundtable:

- Projects include starting drug-free blocks where police officers would canvass an area, knocking on resident's doors and being very visible.
- Altoona officers will receive Valor Awards at the Chamber breakfast.
- Press conference in March will announce the law enforcement grants.
- There was a successful drug raid in Dec. with numerous drug busts.

Pharmacy Roundtable:

- The 1st Roundtable met in December. Bill Earnest from Kopp Drug is Chair. Meetings will be at 7:15 am.
- Concerns are the next abuse wave will be prescription drug abuse.
- Law Enforcement would like to put undercover officers in the pharmacies and create better protocols in the event of a robbery.

(For more Pharmacy Roundtable details, see last month's "Reporter")

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 for a complete list of volunteer opportunities with Operation Our Town and our partner organizations](#)



To join a Roundtable, contact Shawna Hoover by [email](#) or call 296-8730.

Upcoming Operation Our Town & Partner Meetings and Events

03/02	Booker T. Washington Meeting	4:00PM	Community Action Agency
03/05	*OOT Faith-based Roundtable	1:30PM	Pleasant Val. Church/Christ
03/07	Family Health & Safety Fair	10:00AM	Bellwood-Antis Public Library
03/16	*Steering Committee Meeting	6:00PM	OOT office
03/19	CJAB Meeting	11:45AM	Blair County Courthouse
03/19	Neighborhood Watch Mtg (City)	6:00PM	Blair Senior Services Building
03/26	*OOT Marketing Roundtable	4:15PM	OOT office
03/27	Health & Welfare Council Mtg	8:00AM	Becky Sheetz Rec. Building
03/31	*OOT K-12 Educ. Roundtable	9:30AM	Bellwood-Antis District Off.
04/02	*OOT Pharmacy Roundtable	7:15AM	OOT office
04/02	*OOT Faith-based Roundtable	1:30PM	Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist
04/04	Kids' Fair	10:00AM	Logan Valley Mall

*OOT Meetings: For more information about Operation Our Town meetings, contact Shawna Hoover [by email](#) or call 814-296-8730.

Message From A Recovering Addict, Part 1

Hardworking, outgoing, articulate, committed. Not words often used to describe someone that allowed drugs to take over their life. But if you have the opportunity to meet Tim D., you'll understand how these words help describe a man hoping to make a difference.

Tim's problems with addiction started around age 12—alcohol being his drug of choice. And the drinking didn't stop when he started to drive, resulting in DUI offenses and other problems. In hindsight, he admits the alcohol use made it easier—almost logical—for him to experiment first with marijuana, and then with prescription pills, heroin and crack cocaine. Ultimately, Tim was using a cocktail of all of these drugs together at one time to get high.

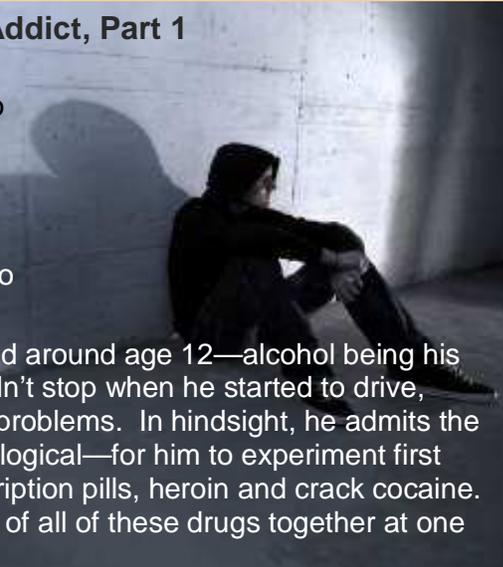
This escalation is not unusual, says Judy Rosser, Blair County Drug & Alcohol Program Administrator. "Research shows a person who begins drinking as a young teen is four-times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than someone who waits until adulthood to use alcohol. Early initiation also puts the person at higher risk of experimentation with other drugs. This is one reason why Operation Our Town helps fund drug and alcohol prevention programs," she continued.

It is important to know that Tim's upbringing was typical, with the normal pressures experienced by any kid growing up in the Blair County area. Peer pressure most definitely played a role. "It felt good to fit in," Tim admits. Now ask yourself what teenager doesn't want to fit in, and you'll begin to see why experimentation is so prevalent in the K-12 years.

It's also one area Tim feels he can make a difference. "I was there. I was that kid experimenting with alcohol and drugs and it took me years to get my life back on track. If my story can change the direction of just one kid's life, it's worth the effort," explains Tim, drug-free since October 2000.

He makes a difference by volunteering his time presenting "lessons learned" to at-risk youths and young adults, as well as to those individuals struggling with drug addiction. Contact Tim by [email](#) to arrange for a presentation to your group or organization.

Unfortunately, Tim's struggle didn't end with these school-age challenges. His experiences with the penal system and the road to recovery will be covered in the next issue of *Our Town Reporter*.



Upcoming Events Upcoming Events Upcoming Events

Bellwood-Antis

Public Library



3rd Annual

Family Health & Safety Fair

To provide families an opportunity to access resources on healthy and safe living practices that may not be readily available to them in any other venue.

Saturday, March 7, 2009

10 am—1 pm

Bellwood-Antis Public Library

526 Main Street

Bellwood, PA 16617

Call 742-8234 for more information

LOGAN VALLEY
MALL



Kids' Fair

A day of fun, interactive activities for kids including crafts, child fingerprinting, mini dance lessons, plus a meet & greet with everyone's favorite monkey, Curious George!

Saturday, April 4, 2009

10 am—4 pm

Logan Valley Mall

Call 944-6127 for more information



Week of the Young Child Annual Celebration

A celebration to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families.

Saturday, April 25, 2009

10:00 am—2 pm

Penn State Altoona

For more information, email@Autumn at the United Way of Blair County



Pageant Queens volunteer at the Altoona Curve's Hot Stove Dinner to benefit Operation Our Town



Operation Our Town Year In Review

At The Chamber's breakfast club meeting on February 12th, Operation Our Town presented awards for valor to three Altoona Police Department patrolmen. The patrolmen were targets of gunfire by a city man after a November traffic stop. OOT also presented our 2008 Accomplishments.

- \$200,000 in grants awarded to law enforcement for:

- Warrant & interdiction squads
- 12 saturation patrols
- 29 special operation search warrants
- Push Out The Pusher hotline improvements
- 7 drug raids & stakeout details

- Drugs seized:

- Marijuana: 525 grams
- Heroin: 22 grams
- Other Narcotics: 105 dosage units
- Cocaine: 19.2 grams
- Crack Cocaine: 216 grams
- Designer Drugs: 496 dosage units

- Value of drugs seized:

- 2007 -- \$62,621
- 2008 -- \$146,205 (133% increase)

- Drug Arrests:

- 2007 -- 386
- 2008 -- 543 (29% increase)

- Part 1 Offenses: (violent incidents such as homicide, robbery and assaults)

- 2007 -- decreased approximately 14%
- 2008 -- decreased an additional 3%

- Push Out the Pusher Calls:

- 2007 -- 1,184 or 3.2 calls/24 hr period
- 2008 -- 1,419 or 5.0 calls/24 hr period (20% increase in total calls)

- Criminal prosecutions by drug prosecutor, Attorney Peter Weeks:

- 500+ cases assigned with over 250 separate defendants
- 8 Jury trials (100% convictions with all receiving State sentences)
- Forfeitures -
 - Petitions filed for over \$125,000 with orders issued for over \$58,000
 - 3 houses and 5 automobiles
- 14 Bail revocations filed

- Prevention & Treatment

- \$200,000 awarded in 2008 for proven prevention & treatment programs
- Spring 2009 grant applications will be accepted 3/2/2009—4/15/2009 for proven prevention and treatment programs. A total of \$100,000 will be awarded. All nonprofit organizations, schools and government agencies are eligible to apply.



Pictured Left to Right: Patrolmen Eichenlaub, Kuhn and Merrill with Michael A. Fiore and Randy Feathers

Contact Info

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

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