

## *Is Community Development a Prevention Strategy?*

This issue of *Prevention News* was written and designed by Catherine Gander. Catherine is soon to complete her MSW at George Mason University. She has served as an intern with Fairfax County this semester.

Thanks Catherine!

The resounding answer to the question is: *Yes!* Community Developers Tilly Blanding, Telly Whitfield, and Jenifer Henry shared their thoughts during a recent brown bag lunch meeting with Denise Raybon and Catherine Gander.

They noted that the work of community development focuses on building relationships, strengthening communities, and leveraging community assets. Risk factors are reduced and protective factors are strengthened. Any time this happens, an end result is a stronger and healthier community.

Urgent situations arise in neighborhoods, and community developers step in to prevent a crisis such as homelessness. They act to facilitate capacity and resilience building among residents, and they look for educational opportunities. When things are going well in a community, community developers examine what strengths and protective factors enabled residents to accomplish this state of well being. Community developers also focus on what needs to happen to maintain stability in a neighborhood.

Community developers also address disparities by:

- Improving access to service
- Increasing resource awareness
- Giving voice to marginalized members of a community

Community development can be a process that incorporates a prevention focus. Addressing needs before they become crises and identifying root causes of issues such as economics, physical environment, and marginalization support this focus. A prevention approach builds strengths and assets in communities that support the well being of all.

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*The Prevention Institute issued a comprehensive report on preventing health disparities. For more information, you can view The Imperative of Preventing Health Disparities Through Intervention at: [www.prevention.org/documents/DRA\\_ReducingHDthruPRX.pdf](http://www.prevention.org/documents/DRA_ReducingHDthruPRX.pdf)*

*Page 2* is a new, regular feature that will present a more in-depth look at prevention-related concepts

### **The 7 Attributes of Highly Effective Programs**

Lisbeth Schorr, in her book *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1997), discusses what works in improving outcomes specifically for children and families. She identifies "Seven Attributes of Highly Effective Programs":

- 1. Successful programs are comprehensive, flexible, responsive, and persevering.** They address many aspects of an issue rather than a single one. They can, and do, change according to the needs of the participants and the community. They continue for as long as it takes to accomplish their purpose.
- 2. Successful programs see children in the context of families.** They take the view that children do not exist in a vacuum, and that you have to understand their families in order to understand them and their issues. You also have to aim interventions at the whole family, not just the child.
- 3. Successful programs deal with families as parts of neighborhoods and communities.** An intervention hoping to have an effect on families needs to consider their communities as well. Such interventions respond to community needs, staff themselves with people from the same groups as those who live in the community, and try to build leadership and other capacities in local people.
- 4. Successful programs have a long-term preventive orientation, a clear mission, and continue to evolve over time.** Successful programs target the underlying causes of problems, rather than just providing band-aid treatment for the symptoms, and realize that getting at those causes may take years. They know what they are trying to do, and that does not change. However, they *do* change the ways they do things as they discover better ways, or as the needs and responses of participants and the community change. By being dynamic, these programs continually strive to do better and to respond to their target populations.
- 5. Successful programs are managed by competent and committed individuals with clearly identifiable skills.** Schorr identifies some of those skills as willingness to experiment and take risks, to tolerate ambiguity, to seek evidence of results, to be collaborative, and to allow staff discretion.
- 6. Staffs of successful programs are trained and supported to provide high quality, responsive service.** Just as target populations have to be considered in context, so do staff members of organizations. They need an organizational climate that supports their work and puts a premium on ongoing education and training for everyone in order to function at their peak.
- 7. Successful programs operate in settings that encourage practitioners to build strong relationships based on mutual trust and respect.** This means that instead of fostering the patronizing staff/client structure characteristic of so many health and human service agencies, good programs recognize that there are no human differences between staff and participants. When a current or potential participant walks through the door, she is greeted as a friend and equal, and is treated similarly by everyone in the program. A successful program is welcoming, and has no class distinctions.

## Resources

### *Understanding and Guiding Children as They Grow and Develop*

This guide was produced by a team of parents, educators, social workers and other child development professionals led by the **Fairfax County Department of Family Services Blue Ribbon Campaign**. It was written as a prevention tool to help parents and others caring for children better understand the various developmental stages as children move from infancy through adolescence. This positive guidance brochure focuses on the importance of building relationships with children, understanding developmental stages, what parents (and other adults) can do to support and guide children's development, as well as the available resources from infancy through adolescence. It is available at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs) and then click on the Blue Ribbon, along with other Blue Ribbon materials.

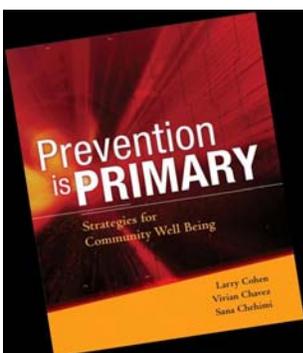
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### **DiversityData.org**

URL: <http://diversitydata.sph.harvard.edu/>

A project of the Harvard School of Public Health and the Center for the Advancement of Health, DiversityData is an online tool for exploring quality-of-life data across a wide range of U.S. metropolitan areas for different racial and ethnic population groups. The database uses eight indicators — crime, demographics, education, economic opportunity, health, housing, neighborhoods, and physical environment — to provide a scorecard that researchers, policy makers, and community leaders can use for comparison and to support advocacy for policy action and social change. Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, research and data analysis for the project are ongoing.

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### **New Prevention Textbook is Published!**

The Prevention Institute notes that this publication aims to move practitioners from the margins of prevention to its core by defining elements of quality prevention efforts, identifying best practices, and illustrating the application of prevention principles in a multitude of settings. Preview the text at [www.preventioninstitute.org](http://www.preventioninstitute.org)

**Bridging the Gap: Emergent Adulthood-Third Annual Conference on Suicide Prevention and Mental Wellness**

**Keynote Speaker: Pete Earley, author of “*Crazy: A Father’s Search Through America’s Mental Health Madness*”**

**Tuesday, May 8, 8:00 am to 3:30 pm, at St. Matthews United Methodist Church, 7617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale VA 22003**

Register by April 30 at [www.fairfaxyouth.org](http://www.fairfaxyouth.org)

For more information, contact Susan Lydick at 703-324-5292.

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**The Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN) 12<sup>th</sup> Annual National Awareness and Training Event**

**July 18-21, Doubletree Washington, D.C.**

**For more information about the event, including online registration, go to [www.spanusa.org/spate](http://www.spanusa.org/spate)**

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**Health for Success in Virginia  
Longwood University  
July 16-19, 2007**

Sponsored by:

Virginia Dept. of Education (HIV Prevention Education)

Virginia Department of Health (Division of Injury and Violence Prevention and Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control)

Virginia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

The annual Health for Success In Virginia Training Sessions target anyone interested in improving the health and well-being of youth. To ensure maximum information sharing, it is suggested that school divisions pre-register participants by broad-based school and community teams.

Registration and programmatic questions should be addressed to Caroline Fuller at 804-225-2431 or [Caroline.fuller@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Caroline.fuller@doe.virginia.gov) Registration deadline is June 1.

### **Ms. Foundation for Women Safety Grants**

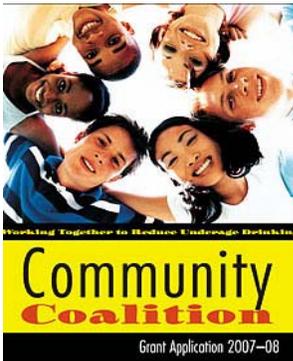
The Ms. Foundation for Women announces a call for proposals in the area of gender violence prevention. We are seeking proposals from grassroots groups with an organizing approach to gender violence prevention. Areas of particular interest include community-driven strategies that challenge gender violence on a systemic level, child sexual abuse/incest prevention, and prevention strategies that transform gender roles. Organizations seeking grant awards must utilize community-centered strategies driven by a race, class, gender analysis. Copies of guidelines may be downloaded from:

<http://www.ms.foundation.org/wmspage.cfm?parm1=47>

Proposals must be received by May 24, 2007 (no emails or faxes will be accepted). After this date, please do not use these guidelines, as they may not be applicable to future grant cycles.

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### **Community Coalition: Working Together to Reduce Underage Drinking**



The Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control is offering grants worth up to \$7,000 to support collaboration between local businesses, community organizations, and state agencies as they strive to promote zero tolerance for underage alcohol consumption. Grant applications are due by June 8, 2007. For more information, contact ABC Education at (804) 213-4688 or e-mail: [education@abc.virginia.gov](mailto:education@abc.virginia.gov)

## Welcome to our Prevention Newsletter

We hope you find the information in this newsletter useful. Feel free to forward to others who may also make use of the information included. As always, you may forward information that you would like to see included in this publication to Denise Raybon

at (703)324-7124 or

[denise.raybon@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:denise.raybon@fairfaxcounty.gov).



To request this information in an alternate format, call Denise Raybon at (703) 324-7124 or TTY 711



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