

Healthy Sussex QUARTERLY

COMING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHY SUSSEX COUNTY

January 2019

LIFELONG LITERACY IS KEY!

In this fast-paced, ever changing world, having a strong literacy foundation and basic educational competencies is absolutely necessary to life-long success. Individuals who are lacking literacy skills will be held back at every stage of their life. Children unable to read will have difficulty in school, young adults who struggle may opt to drop out and may be locked out of the job market and unable to advance to sustainable jobs.

As these young people become parents, supporting their children's academic journey will be difficult at best, which perpetuates the cycle. Deficient literacy and learning become an intergenerational cycle and makes social and economic equity nearly impossible.

Children, youth, and ultimately adults with low literacy skills may not be able to: read a book or newspaper, understand road signs or price labels, make sense of a bus or train timetable, fill out a form, read instructions for prescription medicine or use the internet. This hinders all aspects of daily living. Low levels of literacy undermine local and national economic competitiveness, costing the taxpayer billions of dollars every year. Local businesses express dissatisfaction with the current literacy levels they are seeing in those entering the workforce. As a result, many are requesting post school remedial training for the young recruits who are seeking employment. Basic skills such as communication, social skills and increased literacy skills are found lacking and in need of remediation.

Most Sussex County school districts are struggling with their ELA test scores. As a county-wide coalition, we work with multiple partners to support our school districts, with a targeted focus on the Promise Communities and State Priority Zones.

Current test scores can be viewed at <http://php.delawareonline.com/news/2018/2018-school-test-scores/>



I would argue that literacy impacts all social determinants of health. Unfortunately, we do not collectively allocate targeted funds to address this critical need.

SCHC is already engaged in several key areas that impact literacy. We are working to ensure that parents are made aware of standard universal developmental milestones and that they understand the importance of regular validated screenings. Another key component to this initiative is synergy with early educators. It is imperative that families and educators alike are preparing children to enter school ready to learn. We actively foster and promote initiatives to assist children in school, both from a social and emotional perspective and with after school supports. We actively partner with the United Way of Delaware, who has taken up this charge. We will be supporting these initiatives while working towards creating parallel collaborations in Sussex County.

If you are interested in being a part of this work, please reach out to us at schcadmin@pmgconstulting.net.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy M. Geisler".

Peggy Geisler
Executive Director, Sussex County Health Coalition

SCHC MISSION

The Sussex County Health Coalition exists to engage the entire community in collaborative family-focused effort to improve the health of children, youth and families in Sussex County.



SCHC VISION

We envision a community in which our citizens and institutions (public, private, and not-for-profit) are actively engaged in community health promotion as a shared community good, and working together to create a cultural and physical environment which supports healthy lifestyles for our children and their families.

— UNIVERSITY OF DE — Hearing, Speech and Language Research

Do you know a child who can speak but can't quite communicate as well as his or her peers? Approximately 7% of all children have a **Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)**. That's two children in every classroom! DLD is a disorder in learning and using language. Although these children do not have autism, hearing impairment, or intellectual disability, language learning is hard for them. Children with DLD tend to be late to say their first words and to use two-word combinations. In preschool and kindergarten, they tend to use simpler vocabulary words, shorter sentences, and make more grammatical errors than their friends. Often they do not understand spoken and written directions. They may become frustrated and either become withdrawn or aggressive. In school, these difficulties can affect the child's ability to read and write, to participate in a classroom, to make friendships, and to follow conduct rules.

Surprisingly, DLD is often undiagnosed because people tend to assume the child is lazy, dreamy, inattentive, or aggressive and difficult to get along with. They worry about personality rather than referring for a language assessment. A language assessment can identify areas of strengths and weakness in the child and lead to suggestions for ways to make communication easier. Even if a child doesn't qualify for special education services, the assessment process may clarify areas where extra support can benefit kids in your care.

The **Treatment Efficacy and Language Learning Lab (TELL Lab)** at the University of Delaware is interested in studying children with DLD and other at-risk children to see if we can develop treatments that will improve language learning and use. Some of our studies focus on how children learn patterns in language. For instance, one study we are doing asks

children ages 7-9 to listen to one of 4 made up languages. These made up languages have different patterns and we would like to know which pattern children learn the best. For instance, is it better to hear the same thing over and over or is it better to mix it up and introduce variety? We use a made-up language so that we know for sure that the kids have never heard the words before. We also wonder if some of these patterns can be applied to more real-world learning situations. For instance, we are asking parents to read books to their preschool children 4 times/week. These books are written using English sentences, but just like the made-up language study we are doing with big kids, we are curious about whether they learn better when some words in the book are repeated frequently in the same context or when those same words are used in a variety of different contexts.

Our lab will be down in Sussex County to screen children for participation in these studies in early February. Families must consent to have their child participate in research in order for us to carry out testing. All study activities can be carried out in Southern Delaware and compensation is available for kids who qualify. If you think you know a child who has difficulty learning language and doesn't have other significant diagnoses, we would be glad to screen them for participation in our studies and we will make appropriate referrals to other agencies based on our testing. Please reach out to us with any questions you might have (tell-lab@udel.edu; (302) 831-7121, <http://udel.edu/tell-lab>). We would love to hear from you or the families you serve!



Treatment Efficacy &
Language Learning Lab

SCHOOL BASED MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATIVE UPDATE

Indian River School District, Woodbridge School District and Cape Henlopen School District are gearing up for upcoming trainings in the New Year.

- The **FIRST TRAINING** will be held on January 14 at 2 pm at the Indian River Education Complex, 31 Hosier Street, Selbyville. This will be a Group Discussion with treatment centers related to Transition Plans for students returning from in patient treatments. Multiple agencies will be represented. This would be a great opportunity to pose specific questions related to transition planning.
- The **SECOND TRAINING** will be held on January 17 at 8:15–10 am at the George W Carver Conference Room. Mickie Chapman (SOS Therapist, Psychologist, Grief Counselor) will be presenting on helping students and families through loss. Also, a college student will share their mental health journey. This training will be held at Indian River Education Complex, 31 Hosier Street, Selbyville, DE.

- The **THIRD TRAINING** will be held on February 1 from 8:15 am–3 pm at the Millsboro Middle School Auditorium. Training scheduled with Dr. Kathryn Seifert will focus on a Whole Team Approach to helping students.
- The **FOURTH TRAINING** will be held on February 21 at 2 pm at George W. Carver Conference Room. Dr. Deborah Miller (SOS Therapist, Lighthouse Counseling therapist) will present on Cyber Warfare, and how to help students and families deal with online bullying, predators, etc.
- The **FIFTH TRAINING** will be held on April 5 from 8:15 am–12 pm at Millsboro Middle School. Dr. Julius Mullen will present on the topic of Trauma Informed Care.

The Sussex County Health Coalition is thrilled to provide translation devices to all School Districts in our School Based Mental Health Collaborative based on the success of the pilot held at IRSD.

MEET THE FUNDER SERIES

March 5, 2019
1–2:30 pm

Sussex County Health Coalition
21133 Sterling Avenue, Suite #12
Georgetown, DE

Space is limited, please RSVP to Crystal Timmons at
ctunderwood@pmgconsulting.net

Only one representative per agency can be
registered.

Join the Sussex County Health Coalition for our “Meet the Funder” Series featuring Christopher Grunder, the President and CEO of the Welfare Foundation, Inc.

The Welfare Foundation is a private Delaware-based nonprofit organization that uses the income generated from its assets to make philanthropic grants that promote the social welfare of people and communities across the state of Delaware and in southern Chester County, PA.



WORKSITE WELLNESS EXPANSION

Over the last seven years the Sussex County Health Coalition's mission has been to assist local businesses in the promotion of health and wellness amongst their employees. Worksite Wellness programs cultivate healthy workforces and positively impact health care costs, absenteeism and workplace culture. With funding from the Division of Public Health we have been able to expand our program throughout Sussex County. We have worked to increase the number of new members and expand the number of classes from 6 to 16 per year.

Class sizes have grown from 15 to 40 as a result of partnering with larger employers like the Thurman Adams State Service Center and Seaford Library. These new partners allowed us to use their facilities to accommodate the increase in class size. This has also allowed us to grow our membership base by

offering the Worksite Wellness program to over 13 Business throughout Sussex County.

In addition, we partnered with Sussex Academy Aquatic Center, increasing aquatic services in two locations. In early 2019 we will expand our program to the Lewes area with a new partnership with Beebe Healthcare to provide a pilot program. This partnership will expand our reach to potential of 1,500 Beebe employees.

For a full list of Worksite Wellness Sites and for more information on how to become a member please contact Crystal Timmons at ctunderwood@pmgconsulting.net.

GET DELAWARE READING CAMPAIGN



Imagine not being able to read this sentence?

Unfortunately, this is the reality of more than 80% of third graders in Wilmington's public schools.



Children unable to read on grade level when entering fourth grade are likely to struggle in school, and many will drop out before completing high school.

Simply and sadly put, Delaware faces a literacy crisis.

Get Delaware Reading, Delaware's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, recently launched Get Delaware Reading-Wilmington, a campaign to ensure that 500 of today's Wilmington kindergartners are reading on grade-level by the end of third-grade. To help improve literacy in the city of Wilmington, Get Delaware Reading-Wilmington is targeting 125 four-year-olds in public schools and early child care centers, and will add a new cohort of 125 additional pre-kindergartners each year over the next four years. The goal is to "move the needle" from 18% grade-level fluency today to 30% by 2023, and from 30% to 50% by 2026.

The initiative includes a package of evidence-based materials from Nemours Bright Start! curriculum, and training and logistics support from Parents as Teachers, and the Delaware Association for The Education of Young Children (DAEYC). Participating children and their families will receive year-round academic and social supports, including literacy training materials, home visits from trained educators, tuition support for children to attend reading enrichment summer camps, and employment and financial management coaching for parents.

Get Delaware Reading is an initiative championed by United Way of Delaware, the Delaware State Board of Education and the Delaware Department of Education. The campaign is collaborating with partners across Delaware to focus on improving school readiness, summer learning, and school attendance, all of which are proven strategies to improve childhood literacy rates.

To learn more about the movement, contact Schlonn Hawkins at 302.573.3722 or shawkins@uwde.org.

Non-Profit Training by DANA START UP TO SUSTAINABILITY TRAINING

Friday, April 5, 12-2 pm

**The Sussex County Health Coalition
21133 Sterling Avenue, Suite #12
Georgetown, DE**

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Join Sheila Bravo and Wil Sherk from DANA, the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement for this two-hour session, as they offer practices nonprofit Boards and leaders can implement to help their organization navigate growth and change. This is an ideal topic for agencies that are just starting out, or are ready to transition into a new phase of expansion.

Participants will gain insights on financial health, board structure, leadership continuity, stakeholder relations and risk management which combined help keep the organization moving forward on its path to positively impact the community for future years.

This learning session is made possible through a partnership with Sussex County Health Coalition, and is offered at a discounted rate of \$25 per person. Registration will open on February 1.

Email us at schadmin@pmgconsulting.net for more information.

MINI-GRANTS AND THE EFFICACY OF GRASS ROOT EFFORTS

If community members want to address local social and economic needs and drive change that is meaningful and sustainable, then it must begin at the grass roots level. When people work together for the common good of their local communities, the desired change is successful and sustainable. The result is long term, locally motivated positive change.

The Sussex County Health Coalition believes in collaborative work and collective impact to drive change. Because of this, SCHC put aside funds from grants received to encourage and support local grassroots initiatives.

Take a look at just a few of what that these mini-grants supported:

- **Addiction Medical Facility**—hosted an open house for community members to learn about their facility, to share recovery information and to demonstrate local support for those battling addiction.
- **Milford High School**—Promoted addiction and prevention awareness by having their field hockey team wear purple socks at their game against Seaford High School.
- **Woodbridge High School Football team** wore purple socks and had a “purple” homecoming
- **Seaford Police Department** had purple wristbands made for Friday family events to support prevention messaging
- **The St. Vincent de Paul Society** ordered books to be distributed specifically to young children and adolescents who are coping with addiction within their families.
- **The ACE centers** (Georgetown and Seaford) ordered purple t-shirts for their entire staff to support awareness and to demonstrate community support at their open houses
- **Attack Addiction** used mini-grant funds to help fund their Reality Tour for young people and their families at the Ocean View Police Department
- **Westside Family Health Care** is hosting a baby shower for mothers and having addiction counseling on site for young, struggling mothers
- **Christmas Extravaganza!** (Read more about this →)
- **Pathways to Success** (Read more about this →)

A PURPLE CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA WITH SUPPORT FROM IMPACT LEADERSHIP

In December, Seaford High School hosted a very special Christmas outreach! Lead by Dr. Julius Mullin and the Impact Leadership cohort, the goal of this amazing outreach was to encourage families who may be experiencing difficulties and challenges during the holidays. Families were treated to a room full of toys from which to select gifts for their families for the upcoming holidays. Hundreds of brand-new toys were purchased from Wal-mart in Seaford with support and in partnership with Cletus and Arekah Reddick of Ridiqlus Musical Productions and Delaware’s IMPACT group. Local and national gospel singing talent provided hours of joyful, inspirational and uplifting song and messaging. Over 400 people were in attendance. Hundreds of faithful volunteers supported this initiative, including the Seaford Botvin Purple Ambassadors.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS GRASS ROOTS IMPACT

Pathways to Success serves students at risk of not graduating at Cape Henlopen High School, Milford High School, Seaford High School and Sussex Technical High School. In its 10-year history, 98% of the students have graduated from high school with 96% going on to college, the military or finding full time jobs.

Read what some Seaford High School Students did to support their community around the addiction epidemic with support from Pathways to Success:

- In October 2018, Seaford High School (SHS) students were able to raise awareness about the Opioid and drug crisis by distributing Seaford Goes Purple brochures and information.
- The culinary class at SHS baked cookies and cupcakes for the awareness event and were sold in front of the Peebles store in Seaford while students distributed information about the dangers of Opioid use.
- Through the Seaford Goes Purple mini-grant, Pathways to Success was also able to purchase purple tee shirts.
- The students will be assembling blessing bags for Seaford residents in recovery from the proceeds of the bake sale and additional funds from the mini-grant. The blessing bags will be distributed in January.

Christmas Extravaganza!



Left to right:
Sarah Gilmour,
Pathways to
Success Outreach
Coordinator,
Keda Dorisca,
Lara Jean Francois,
Ferdina Morinvil and
Kierra Brittingham

“A child’s life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark.” —Chinese Proverb

Child development is how a child grows, how they learn and how they progress over time from birth through adolescence. All though all children advance through childhood at their own rate, certain skills develop and follow a set order around the same time for most children. For example, at two months old, most babies will smile for the first time, will try to focus and look at their parent, they will begin to coo and will turn towards the sound of voices they recognize. These are developmental milestones typical to their age and are signs that the baby is developing appropriately. Developmental Screenings are used to ensure that a child’s development is meeting set milestones. If not, it can be an indicator that early intervention is needed. Acting and intervening early can make the difference of a lifetime for that child! The CDC advises, “Learn the Signs! Act Early!”

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screened for general development using standardized, validated tools at 9, 18, and 24 or 30 months and for autism at 18 and 24 months or whenever a parent or provider has a concern. Unfortunately, many children are not seen regularly by a pediatrician; consequently, their development is not being monitored.

Part of the federally funded COIIN grant is to ensure all children have access to regular, validated developmental screenings. SCHC, in partnership with Parents as Teachers and Read Aloud

Delaware, have added a Language and Literacy information session to already scheduled play group sessions, as well as the opportunity for parents to have their children screened. These play group sessions have met with great success and are a wonderful way to engage parents! As an incentive to continue to return to the play groups and to engage with other parents, families who attend three full sessions receive a brand new “Pete the Cat” book.

Additionally, SCHC has been partnering with the University of Delaware Center for Disability Studies to address Developmental Milestones during WIC visits. Parents will be given a Developmental Milestone check list at their WIC visit. If a certain number of indicators are identified, then parents will be invited to text “Help Me Grow” who will then follow up with a phone call and an invitation for their child to be formally screened. The goal is to encourage families to follow up with Help Me Grow as soon as possible to ensure a greater, more positive outcome for their child.

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults.”

—F. Douglas

MILESTONES MATTER!

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts and moves offers important clues about their development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Milestones help you understand how your child learns and grows.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD’S DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES?

Call 211 or 800-560-3372

OR

Text the code WIC DM to 231-1464

Press #2 to speak with a “Help Me Grow” specialist. Mention your local “WIC Office” referred you and get answers to questions, information and activities to strengthen your child’s developmental skills.

A “Help Me Grow” specialist will be in touch to get answers to questions, information and activities to strengthen your child’s developmental skills..

All calls and texts are free of charge.



We appreciate the support of our core funders:



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health
Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity Prevention Program



Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Sussex County Health Coalition, 21133 Sterling Avenue, Suite #12, Georgetown, DE 19947, 302-858-4764, HealthySussex.org