A True Youth-Focused Community-University Collaboration

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Susan Hirt Hagen CORE, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College

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Penn State Erie The Behrend College
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Dr. Carl Kallgren

Co-Project Directors
Joe Markiewicz
Tammy Bartasavich

Associate Coordinators
Abbe Biebel
Union City
Carlos Ramirez
Erie, Strong Vincent H.S.

Research Technologist
Nate Magee
Susan Hirt Hagen, our benefactor and true friend, and Thomas Hagen
A very brief history of Susan Hirt Hagen CORE and Positive Youth Development of Erie County

- Susan Hirt Hagen CORE, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College
- Founded in 1998 through the generosity of Susan Hirt Hagen
- To provide a full-range of high quality research services
- We specialize in Prevention Research & Evaluation (CORE),
- with a focus on teen pregnancy prevention
- We created and adopted the CORE Model of Social Intervention ... See next slide!
The CORE Synergistic Model for community change through high quality research

- Improved Services
- Funding Assistance
- More Competitive Proposals
- More Proposals Funded
- Comm. Building
- Evaluation & Other Research Services
And then ...

Between 2000 and 2002 CORE shifted from being a research center dedicated to teen pregnancy prevention, to a research center dedicated to a holistic approach to teen pregnancy prevention. We considered the whole individual youth, and the many environmental influences on the youth.
At around the same time …

- During this time we also took on the mantel of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and more and more **responsibilities for infusing the community with PYD**. Our specific approach to promoting PYD embraced the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets.
Another recursive model
(at least this one is simple!)

We gradually came to realize that there was a valuable synergy in combining our research and evaluation efforts with outreach efforts. We can discuss this more at the end if you like. Here’s the model...
Who are we now?

So, CORE and PYD are:

1. A full-service research center providing high-quality research services with
2. the CORE Model of Social Intervention, and
2. an emphasis on teen pregnancy prevention
3. from a holistic and
4. positive, or asset-based approach.
5. We have come to fully embrace a simultaneous dual track model where all employees share research and outreach responsibilities.
The final missing critical ingredient is ...

Our work would never be possible if we did not have many community partnerships and collaborative efforts throughout our community.
Positive Youth Development Advisory Board

Adagio Health, Inc.
Erie County Juvenile Probation Dept.
Student Parenting Program, City of Erie School District
Crime Victim Center (CVC)
Girl Scouts of Western PA
Student Assistance Program, City of Erie School District
Early Connections/Success by Six
Erie County Department of Health

Women’s Care Center
PIIN NW (C.A.L.L.)
Achievement Center
Union City Area School District
Environment Erie
SafeNet
PA Attorney General’s Office
Private Citizens
United Way of Erie County
Additional Internal Collaborative Boards

Union City Advisory Board
Union City Truancy & Drop out Task Force
Strong Vincent High School Advisory Board
Task Forces
Susan Hirt Hagen CORE Advisory Board

City of Erie School District, Superintendent
City of Erie School District, Student Assistance Program (SAP), Director
Dept. of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Erie County, Director (Retired)
Northwest STEM Initiative, Executive
American Dream Institute, Founder and Director, Jeffersonian Society, Executive
Gynecologist (Retired)
Planned Parenthood, Board of Directors (Retired), Philanthropist
Erie County Department of Health, Director
Conflict Resolution Specialist, Philanthropist
Social Services CEO (Retired)
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Director
Community of Caring, CEO and past CEO (Retired)
SafeNet, CEO
Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Senior Dean
Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Psychology, Chair
Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Susan Hirt Hagen CORE
United Way Education Impact Council:

**Members from these community organizations**

Northwestern School District
JFK Neighborhood Center
Family Services NWPA
City of Erie School District
Girard school District
City of Erie
Early Connections
YMCA
Greater Erie Community Action Committee

Union City Area School District
Nonprofit Partnership
United Way of Erie County
Bayfront Maritime Center
Erie Community Foundation
ArtsErie
Erie Boy and Girls Club
Booker T. Washington Neighborhood Center
United Way Health Impact Council:  
*Members from these community organizations*

- NAMI of Erie County
- NW PA Area Heath Education Center
- Mental Health Association of NW PA
- UPMC Health Pan
- GE Transportation
- Erie County Dept. of Human Services
- Erie County Dept. of Health
- Safe Harbor Behavioral Health
- Catholic Charities
- Sight Center of NW PA
- Visiting Nurses association of NW PA
- St. Paul’s Free Clinic
- Multicultural Health Evaluation Delivery System
- Greater Erie Community Action Committee
- Adagio Health
- American Health Association
- Gannon University
- Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Shriners Hospital
- The Regional Cancer Center
- Healthcare Ventures Alliance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Services</th>
<th>Erie County Office of Mental Health &amp; Mental Retardation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union City Area School District</td>
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<td>Early Connections</td>
<td>GECAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys &amp; Girls Club</td>
<td>PA Attorney General's Office</td>
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<td>Mercyhurst University Civic Institute</td>
<td>Erie County Executive's</td>
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<td>Erie County Head Start</td>
<td>Erie County Court of Common Pleas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pyramid Healthcare Systems</td>
<td>City of Erie Mayor</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way of Erie</td>
<td>Erie Home for Children &amp; Adults</td>
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<td>Booker T. Washington Center</td>
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<td>Erie County Juvenile Probation</td>
<td>Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit</td>
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<td>Erie Family Center</td>
<td>Erie County Council</td>
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<td>Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services</td>
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<td>Erie City Department of Economic and Community Development</td>
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Penn State CORE
Harborcreek Youth Services
CEO Community Health Net
Neighborhood Watch
Erie Police Dept.
Gannon University, Criminal Justice Dept.
Safenet
Community Representative
US Attorney's Office
Erie County Office of Children and Youth
Olweus Bullying Program
Perseus House Charter School of Excellence
State Representative

Erie Tenant Council
Manufacturer's Association of Northwest PA
GECAC
Perseus House
Other collaboratives we work with on the state level

Pennsylvania Statewide Coalition of Prevention Initiatives (Episcenter)
Commonwealth Prevention Alliance (CPA)
Communities That Care (CTC)
Pennsylvania Adolescent Health
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD)
Why the 40 Developmental Assets?
“What are the 40 Assets?”

- Protective factors that buffer youth from risk
- Based on research studies
- Family members, friends, activities, sports, teachers, mentors, faith community members
40 Developmental Assets
Eight Categories

External Assets
1. Support
2. Empowerment
3. Boundaries and Expectations
4. Constructive Use of Time

Internal Assets
5. Commitment to Learning
6. Positive Values
7. Social Competence
8. Positive Identity

See handout of all 40 Assets.
http://www.Search-Institute.org
Assets Protect Youth from Alcohol Use

(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)
http://www.Search-Institute.org
Assets Protect Youth from Violence

(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)
http://www.Search-Institute.org
Assets Protect Youth from Sexual Activity

(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)

http://www.Search-Institute.org
Assets Boost Academic GPA

(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)
http://www.Search-Institute.org
Success in School
(Mostly A’s on Report Card)

(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)
http://www.Search-Institute.org
15 Characteristics of Asset-Building Communities and The Five Action Strategies for Positive Youth Development

Please see handouts.
Union City Sustained Positive Youth Development and Dropout/Truancy Prevention
Do not go further unless, you ...
...Dare to Dream the Impossible Dream!

And have the desire for total systemic change!

- The full support of:
  - The leadership (Superintendent, Principals)
  - Faculty & staff
- Long-term commitment to do whatever it takes
- Willingness to admit when it’s not working and adjust accordingly
Background

- Ten years ago we created the Union City Sustained Positive Youth Development Council

- Shortly thereafter, we adopted the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets

- Eight years ago, we received a grant from United Way of Erie County for $50,000 per year to begin...
The Union City Dropout/Truancy Prevention Project.

- Our initial proposal was to overhaul the high school with the idea that we work **one youth at a time**, and that **every youth matters**. Within the past three years, we have expanded to cover K – 12 grades.

- Our first step was to fully and honestly assess our current systems. What we found was ...
• Attendance policy was not enforced.
• No hearings for truancy or attendance.
• Students could miss 40+ days and still pass.
• No penalty in extra-curricular activities for tardiness.
• No extra support staff.
• No additional funding sources.
• A NUMBER OF STUDENTS WERE NOT CONNECTED TO THE SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY
How did we make it better?

Increased In-School Activities/Connections
After school tutoring/Clubs targeting ‘unconnected students’ – We asked them what they would like to do

- Community Mentoring (Senior Citizens)
- Staff and Peer Mentoring
- Peer Educator Group
- Chess Club/Tournament
- Gold Club Card
- 8th Grade Career Promotion Night
- Middle School Fun Night
- Second Mile Leadership

... to name a few of the 100-plus activities now offered
Increased School to Community Activities/Connections
Main Street Planting

Peer Educating
Locks of Love Donation
Increased Community to School Connections
L8O
Community Youth Group

Community Arts Program
Now to Specific Policy Changes Addressing Dropout and Truancy Prevention
New Attendance Policy

- For students who are of compulsory school age, five days of total absence or three (3) days of unlawful absences will necessitate a warning notice to be sent in accordance with Section 1333 of the School Code.

- All subsequent absences will result in the filing of a complaint for court action with the district magistrate.

- For purposes of this policy, **compulsory school age** shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents elect to have the child enter school, which shall be no later than the age of eight (8) years, until the age of seventeen (17) years. Administrative discretion will be used in all cases.
PROCEDURE CHANGES

Class attendance policy:

• Two criteria must be met in order to pass each class: coursework and attendance.

• A high school student shall not be granted credit for a course if absences from class total more than 7 absences a quarter.

• A student is considered absent if they miss the class, or if they miss 10 or more minutes of the class period unexcused.

• The individual teacher’s attendance will stand as the official attendance for that class. Because of lateness or early dismissals, attendance often varies from class to class.

• An appeals procedure exists for students who believe there are extenuating circumstances for their absences. Forms are available in the main office.
Additional Programming/Staff

1. Associate Coordinator for Positive Youth Development
2. Social Worker
3. Resource Officer
4. Truancy Task Force
5. Strict Five-Day Policy
6. Truancy
7. SAP & ESAP
8. District Justice Cooperation: Court Orders/Jail Terms/
Creative Sentencing-cell phones, pets
Effects

- Lowered dropout rate/truancy
- Increased student participation in extra-curricular activities
- Additional open relationships between students and staff
  - Mentoring relationships
- Additional open relationships between students and community members
  - Higher student attendance/participation at community events
- Increased cooperation from the School Board and Community
  - Higher attendance of School Board members and Community members at student functions
- Improved school spirit
Outcomes:
Chronic Truancy Reduction

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>'04-05</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-87.29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>'12-13</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
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Outcomes:
Extreme Truancy Reduction

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>'04-05</td>
<td>-120</td>
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Baseline year
Outcomes: Drop Out

Note – Drop Out Data not official until October
## District Justice/Truancy Hearings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Truancy Hearings</th>
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<td>2009-2010**</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 – 2011**</td>
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- Hearings for High School Students only
- **Hearings for District Wide (Kindergarten – 12th)

Baseline year 2004-2005
In eight years, we prevented 62 dropouts for a savings to society of Over $50 million!

United Way has provided $400,000, for a 125 times return on investment.
Additional Positive Outcome

Teen Births

(Three-Year Moving Average, except last two years)

Note: 2004-2007 & 2005-2008 are our baseline years.
Take Home Message

Our mantra remains:

Every Youth Matters

One Youth at a Time