

**Testimony for House Children and Youth Committee**  
**Jeanne Miller**  
**Director of Carbon and Schuylkill County Educational Services**  
**& SHINE After-School Program**  
**Lehigh Carbon Community College**  
**August 5, 2008**

It is an honor to speak to you Chairwoman Bishop, Chairwoman Rubley, and members of the House Children and Youth Committee. My name is Jeanne Miller and I am the director for two satellite campuses for Lehigh Carbon Community College and the SHINE After-School Program which serves children and families in Carbon County and Schuylkill County.

Today I would like to tell you a community success story. A story of how a community's grassroots prevention efforts, through quality after-school and early childhood programs, are preventing child abuse, increasing educational attainment and having a life long impact on our community and the families it serves.

In 2002, Carbon County Partners for Progress, Carbon County's visioning board, created the Carbon County Child and Family Collaborative. The Collaborative, composed of 35 community partners, representing all facets of the community, is a forum for reform. The Collaborative also assists in coordination of services to effectively bring together all the resources of the community to nurture the positive and combat the negative trends affecting children and families in Carbon County. The Collaborative prevention strategy was developed through a well defined process of community assessment, prioritizing needs and implementation of prevention programs.

In 2001, the “Carbon County State of the Child and Family”, a comprehensive statistical portrait of community risks and resources (updated annually) indicated:

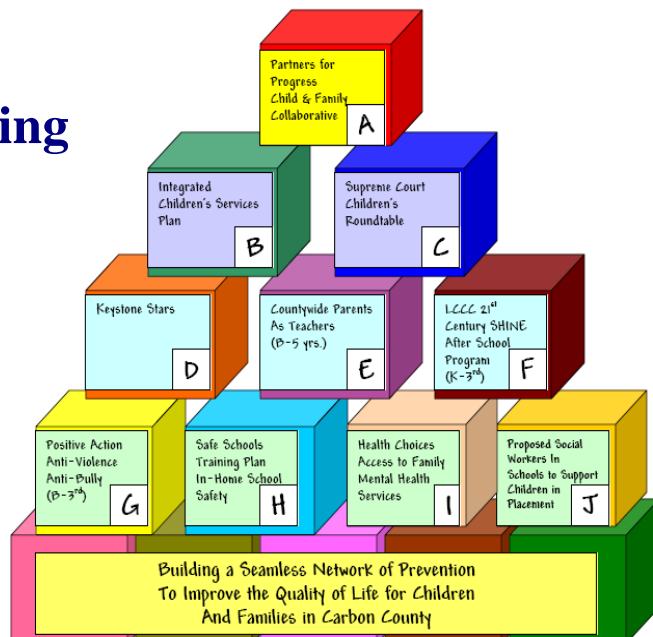
- Family income was below the state average
- Carbon County ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 67 counties in substantiated child abuse cases
- Over 1100 children qualified for early and regular Head Start and only 175 could be enrolled.
- The infant-toddler death rate was higher than the state average
- A high percentage of students were not proficient in reading and math
- The county was spending almost \$4,000,000 in the Children and Youth System
- Carbon County Mental Health Services reported that the need for mental health services for children and adults increased dramatically
- There were no early childhood, parent education or after-school programs for at-risk youth.

That first statistical report was a wake-up call for the collaborative members and the entire community.

**The Collaborative prioritized the following needs: early childhood programs that prevent child abuse, after-school programs for at-risk children and the need for school based mental health services.**

**The result has been the development of “*The Carbon County Building Blocks for Success,*” the integration of local and statewide initiatives, co-location of programs and creatively leveraging funds.**

## **Carbon County Building Blocks for Success**



This was the beginning of our journey to “Nurture the positive and combat the negative trends affecting children and families in Carbon County.” It will also demonstrate how quality after-school programs and early childhood programs are a crucial component in “Building a Seamless Network of Prevention to Improve the Quality of Life for Children and Families.”

### **Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE After-School Program**

In 2004, Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) was awarded a three year 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center grant on behalf of the Collaborative, to open the SHINE (Schools and Homes in Education) After-School Centers in three Carbon County School Districts. The SHINE office was co-located in the Jim Thorpe Area School District administrative building with the Right from the Start Program which utilizes the Parents as Teachers home-visiting program for pregnant women and families with children up to the age of 5. This allowed for better coordination, cross-training and sharing of resources.

The after-school program operates in three Carbon County School Districts. In 2006, the college received funding to model the SHINE Program in two Schuylkill County School Districts. Children in neighboring parochial schools are also enrolled. The program runs two and one-half (2 ½) hours a day Monday through Thursday, from September through May. To be enrolled, children must be referred by teachers, principals and guidance counselors, Instructional Support Teams, Head Start or RFTS Parents as Teachers home-visitors. **75% percent of the children in SHINE are low-income and approximately 35% are in the Children and Youth System / Foster Care.** The after-school program provides academic enrichment activities to help at-risk children in pre-

kindergarten to 4<sup>th</sup> grade to succeed in school and exhibit appropriate behavior. SHINE has served 466 children and over 550 family members over the past four years.

Academic instruction in reading, writing and mathematics, based on Gardner's multiple intelligences, as well as homework tutoring, service learning opportunities, cultural appreciation and enrichment activities are the cornerstone of the centers activities for children. Children are provided a full meal and transportation home. The ratio of children to teachers is 7 to 1.

In the fall of 2007, Lehigh Carbon Community College received funding from the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency to integrate the program, Positive Action, into SHINE and the Right from the Start Program. Positive Action is an anti-bullying, anti-violence, SAMHSA approved, Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug prevention program. After-School teachers, parents and regular day teachers are already witnessing a reduction in negative behaviors.

Instruction continues throughout the summer through home visits. Certified teachers provide a 1 to 1 ½ hour weekly visit to students, providing creative instructional activities to the students and parents. *SHINE after-school teachers receive an average of 40 hours of professional development.* The needs of Kindergarten and Pre-school children are addressed through a home visitor/teacher who provides bi-weekly year round visits. Families and children can seamlessly go from the Parents as Teachers Program into the SHINE kindergarten home-visiting piece and remain in the after-school program until 4<sup>th</sup> grade, thus creating a ***comprehensive safety net.***

SHINE provides parent education classes and family activities throughout the year. Parents can access the community college's literacy classes (GED, ELL), enroll in

the community college or a non-credit class through SHINE. Last year, 41 family members enrolled in a college course, non-credit class, literacy course, or participated in Career Awareness activities.

### **SHINE 2006-2007 outcomes**

*(SHINE Utilizes 18 Sources of Data for its Evaluation)*

- 73% of the children demonstrated improvement in academics
- 90% of the parents/guardians participated in family activities
- 100% of the SHINE families created Family Educational Plans
- 28% of the parents/guardians enrolled in a literacy class, non-credit class, the community college or participated in career awareness activities
- 94% of the students who regularly participated in the SHINE program and who demonstrated behavior and/or attendance problems showed improvement in behavior
- 37% improved attendance
- 100% of the parents would recommend the program to other parents

We know that each child we keep out of special education services saves \$4,000 to \$8,000. In Carbon County, 50% of the children who are in the Juvenile Justice System were in the Children and Youth System. We estimate that if we can keep 50% of the children in SHINE after-school program who are in the Children and Youth / Foster Care System out of the Juvenile Justice System, we can save approximate \$1,500,000.

### **What Makes the SHINE After-School Program so Successful?**

- Home-Visiting Key Component – Builds bridge between home and school, trust between teacher and family, changing two generations of negativity toward education
- Student Focused - Data Driven

- Access to the Community College to families
- Children and families can move seamlessly from the Carbon County Right from the Start which utilizes the Parents as Teachers home-visiting for families with children up to age 5 to the SHINE After-School Program, creating a comprehensive safety net.
- Since the implementation of SHINE and the Right from the Start Program early childhood we have observed a decrease in substantiated child abuse in 2004 - 2006.
- 7 to 1 ratio children to teacher

Many policy makers in the state are looking at the SHINE After-School Program and its collaborative efforts as a model for quality after-school programs. SHINE has been modeled in two school districts in Schuylkill County. In June 2008 SHINE II, administered by the State Higher Education System, began home-visits in inner city Philadelphia and this fall the center will open at Prince Edward Elementary School. We are excited that SHINE is being modeled in other parts of Pennsylvania but our concern is how to keep the original model funded? SHINE has creatively leveraged funds from multiple sources to insure that we continue all the components that are necessary for a quality after-school program. Currently, SHINE Centers in Carbon County are funded through the PDE 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center Grant, PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency and Carbon County Mental Health Services. At this point in time we have only one full year of funding remaining!

In conclusion, quality after-school and early childhood programs that are nurtured by collaborative efforts help to develop healthy families and healthy families are the foundation for economic development. Our community, like many in the commonwealth, needs your support to keep our success story alive!

