

A Report From Senator Pat Browne

Allentown Advocate

October 2005



A Message from Senator Browne

Dear Neighbor,

In this edition of The Allentown Advocate, we look at some of the excellent programs in our community that benefit children and families. In particular, we will feature a coalition dedicated to improving the safety of children and we will look at one man's efforts to promote reading and literacy.

I'd also like to take a moment to review some of the efforts on the part of the Commonwealth to promote children's programs, especially programs funded by the state budget.

The largest single piece of our state budget is dedicated to education funding and that allocation received a significant boost for Fiscal Year 2005-06. The budget allocates an additional \$131.2 million (3 percent) for basic education for a total of \$4.49 billion. An additional \$24 million (2.5 percent) is allocated for special education for a total of \$953 million. Higher education also received a boost in funding.

Along with the increases in traditional education funding, the Education Assistance Program (tutoring) received a \$28 million, or nearly 75 percent, increase in funding over FY 2004-05 and Head Start funding was doubled with an increase of \$15 million for a total of \$30 million for the program.

We also spend millions each year for valuable health and welfare programs such as the CHIP program, which ensures that children have access to health care during their formative years.

While we already have a number of excellent programs available, the General Assembly is always looking for new ways to improve the quality of life for all of Pennsylvania's children, such as the "Ounce of Prevention" proposal detailed in House Bill 200.

Under this bill, which is currently before the Senate Aging and Youth Committee for review, new parents could receive counseling and guidance on a voluntary basis. Professionals could go into homes and help new mothers and fathers become better parents. They could provide guidance and counseling that is currently unavailable statewide.

There are a number of agencies – like Project Child and Visiting Nurse Association of St. Luke's Hospital in the Lehigh Valley - that provide excellent pre-natal and early childhood home visitation programs. Under the Ounce of Prevention Act, the state can build from those experiences and provide the service statewide.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Senate as well as state Representative Phyllis Mundy to move this important bill forward.

Sincerely,

Pat Browne

Group Works to Keep Kids Safe

The Allentown-Bethlehem Safe Kids Coalition's goal is to prevent childhood injuries. As part of the SAFE KIDS WORLDWIDE campaign (formerly the national SAFE KIDS campaign), this grassroots coalition is working with over 300 state and local coalitions across the nation to make Allentown's homes, schools and surrounding communities safer for kids. The coalition includes prevention specialists and advocates who develop injury prevention programs and activities.

Jim Carlisle, Manager of Injury Prevention Services for the Allentown Health Bureau and SAFE KIDS Coalition member, said, "Statistically, we know that motor vehicle crashes and drowning, respectively, are the leading causes of accidental death among children ages 14 and younger. The most frequent cause of accidental injuries to children is falls. Bicycles are associated with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product, except for cars."

SAFE KIDS Coalition meets that challenge by promoting activities such as playground safety checks, distributing bike helmets to needy children and conducting pedestrian safety programs within the local schools.



Lee dePaula, Senator Browne's Urban Affairs Liaison, and Jim Carlisle, Manager of Injury Prevention Services for the Allentown Health Bureau, discuss the role of the Safe Kids Coalition.

Senator Pat Browne believes that these kinds of actions not only raise awareness, but also instruct parents on how to develop behavioral and environmental changes. He is proud to serve as an honorary member of the Coalition and supports their efforts.

If you would like more information about the SAFE KIDS Coalition or other safety programs, see the contact information in the box below.

SAFE KIDS Coalition Partners

- **Allentown Health Bureau & SAFE KIDS Coalition:** Jim Carlisle, Injury Prevention Manager (610) 437-7598
- **AAA East Penn:** Dana Melendez, Coordinator of Public Affairs (610) 434-5141
- **Allentown Fire Department:** Daniel Sell, Assistant Chief (610) 437-7758
- **Allentown Health Bureau, Childhood Injury Prevention Program:** Ed Wilson (610) 437-7598
- **Allentown Health Bureau, Maternal and Child Health Program:** Michelle Maron, Clinical Services Manager (610) 437-7615
- **Allentown Optimist Club:** Richard Ludwig (610) 437-1429
- **Allentown Police Department:** Sergeant Henry Hamory (610) 437-5939
- **Allentown Post Office:** Anita Rutt-Guerriere, Customer Relations Representative (610) 266-5283
- **Allentown Sports Medicine and Human Performance Center:** Linda Cole, Athletic Trainer Certified (610) 439-1788
- **Allentown YMCA & YWCA:** Jennifer Butz (610) 434-9333
- **American Red Cross of the Greater Lehigh Valley:** Joy Zukauskas, Director of Health & Safety Services (610) 865-4400, Ext 246
- **Burn Prevention Foundation:** Kathy Ray, Prevention Education Director (610) 402-3930
- **Coalition for Appropriate Transportation:** Steve Schmitt, CAT Director (610) 954-5744
- **Childcare Care Information Services, Inc.:** Betsy Gilgoff (610) 419-4500
- **Community Services for Children, Inc.:** Raine Neal, CCRD Director (610) 437-6000
- **Crime Victims Council of Lehigh Valley:** Marcy Ronald, Assistant Outreach Supervisor (610) 437-6610, Ext 26
- **Girl Scouts - Great Valley Council, Inc.:** Meghan Holmgren, Membership Specialist (610) 791-2411
- **Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital.:** Steve McGovern, Practice Manager, Pediatrics (610) 778-9207
- **Head Start of the Lehigh Valley, Division of Community Services for Children, Inc.:** Ron Smith (610) 437-6000
- **KidsCare Pediatric Health Center at St. Luke's Hospital:** Cynthia Kalman, RN, BSN (610) 954-3060
- **Lehigh County Humane Society:** Trina Brady, Humane Educator (610) 797-1205
- **Lehigh County Medical Society:** Louis Eister, Executive Director (610) 437-2288
- **Lehigh/Carbon Highway Safety Program of the Allentown Police Department:** Susan Rutt, Program Manager (610) 437-7677
- **Lehigh Valley Child Care, Inc.:** Susan Williams, Executive Director (610) 820-5333
- **Minsi Trails Council, Boy Scouts of America:** Keith Mayer, District Executive (610) 264-8551
- **Pediatric/Adolescent Services, Sacred Heart Hospital:** Clinical Coordinator (610) 776-4767
- **Pediatric Department, Lehigh Valley Hospital:** Vanessa Gramm, CCLS (610) 402-6712
- **Pediatric Unit, St. Luke's Hospital:** Charlotte Becker (610) 954-4430
- **Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, Traffic Injury Prevention Project:** Angela Osterhuber, Ed.M. 1-800-CARBELT
- **Pennsylvania Department of Health, Health Center, Lehigh County:** Diane Maalouf, RN, BSN, CHN (610) 821-6770
- **PPL Corporation:** Larry Sparta (610) 774-6914
- **PENN State Cooperative Extension of Lehigh County:** Robert Leiby (610) 391-9840
- **Pennsylvania State Police:** Trooper Marc Allen (610) 861-2026
- **Poison Control Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia:** Peg Stancavage, RN, CSPI (215) 590-4848
- **Project Child, The Child Abuse Prevention Coalition of the Lehigh Valley:** Marcie Lightwood, Program Coordinator (610) 419-4500, Ext 229
- **The Special Kids Network:** Julie Falteich, Director of Community Systems Development 1-877-986-4550
- **Swim-in Zone:** Penny Pantano (610) 791-2000
- **Think First Neurosciences at Lehigh Valley:** Judith Schultz (610) 402-8464
- **Trauma Program Development Office, Lehigh Valley Hospital:** Donna Grather, RN, Pediatric Trauma Coordinator (610) 402-8464
- **Visiting Nurses Association of St. Luke's Hospital:** Carol Diehl, Supervisor of Special Pediatric Programs (610) 691-1100

Within the City Lines

By Lee dePaula

Lately, there has been a great deal of attention focused on protecting children from online predators, drugs and gangs. These are very real dangers, but we also must remember the other dangers that threaten the safety of our kids.



It's been years since I placed "Mr. Yuk" stickers on containers in my home. My daughter is now a young adult and the only stickers I use are post-it notes reminding her to do the dishes, walk the dog, etc. But when my five-year-old niece comes to visit, I have to quickly childproof my home.

I know how easy it is to overlook the dangers posed by something as simple as an unsecured toilet lid or an unlocked cupboard where household cleaning supplies are stored. However, these are very tempting areas for a young child. That's why I have a checklist of childproofing tips tacked on my refrigerator.

I encourage you to contact the SAFE KIDS Coalition or one of the other agencies listed in this newsletter for information about programs and services to help keep your child safe and give you peace of mind.

Please contact me at (610) 821-8468 with any ideas or suggestions you may have for future newsletters.

Personalized Books Making Reading More Fun

How cool would it be to read a book as a 6 year old where you were the main character? Could you picture yourself going to the circus or the zoo?

Terrence Kennedy, who runs Personalized Books Given To Children, Inc., makes that a reality and he does so to further children's interest in reading.

Kennedy's goal is to provide each Allentown School District first grader with a personalized story book, free of charge to the student and the school, to aid in the improvement of students' reading skills.

"These books will enhance the children's interest and enjoyment in reading," Kennedy said. "This project will provide each first grader with their own book that will be a keepsake that will last a lifetime. Also, the books will give teachers material to springboard other reading projects."

Kennedy has been providing personalized books to first graders for many years now and often includes local elected officials and his sponsors when he presents the children with their books.

"The cost of the project will be divided between [a] grant and up to 14 sponsors from the small business community," Kennedy said. "The books are printed and assembled one at a time, which will mean the book distribution will take place in groups of 200-to-300 books per month and spread out over five months."



Reading together is an important way for adults to help children learn.

When all is said and done, Kennedy, who works alone on the project, will provide books to 14 Allentown elementary schools and 1,303 first grade students.

"The books provide motivation for beginning readers," said the first grade teachers at Dodd Elementary School. "The students are excited to see their own name included in the story and are thrilled that they have a book to keep as their own. We appreciate the time and effort put into producing and funding these books for our students. We have had several positive comments from parents expressing their appreciation for the books as well."

More information about the program is available by writing Personalized Books Given to Children, Inc., 2334 S. Church St., Allentown, PA 18103-6715, or calling (610) 797-6443.

State Senator

Pat Browne

16th District



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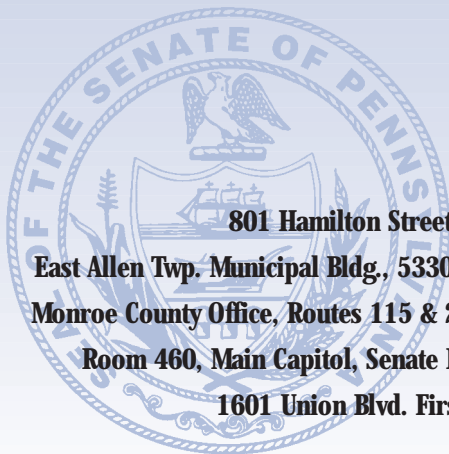
East Allen Twp. Municipal Bldg., 5330 Nor-Bath Boulevard, Northampton, PA 18067 • (610) 502-1567 • FAX (610) 502-1570

Monroe County Office, Routes 115 & 209, P.O. Box 16, Saylorsburg, PA 18353-0016 • (570) 402-1499 • FAX (570) 402-0746

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