

# The Second Mile Programs and Services



## *Whom Do We Serve?*

We serve kids! Kids with very difficult home environments. Kids who face personal challenges. Kids who simply need the opportunity – and tools – to enact change in themselves and their future.

## *How Do We Serve?*

Typically, children and families are referred to The Second Mile by school counselors and other youth service professionals. By partnering together, we provide children with resources and additional support they need to become productive members of society.

## EARLY INTERVENTION

- ❖ *The Challenge Program*  
This residential program with year-round follow-up teaches youth how to set and achieve goals. The opportunity to earn a return trip each summer for meeting goals provides the incentive for achievement.
- ❖ *The Friend Program*  
Elementary school students benefit from educational activities with caring, collegiate mentors. (Blair, Centre, Clinton, Chester, Montgomery, Delaware, Lehigh, Northampton and Lancaster Counties)
- ❖ *The Friend Fitness Program*  
Adolescents build inner and outer strength with the support of their adult mentors. (Centre and Chester Counties)

## PREVENTION

- ❖ *Nittany Lion Tips*  
School counselors use these sports trading cards and facilitators' guides to promote educational messages with elementary school students.
- ❖ *PEAK*  
Used in PA classrooms, the play kit and live action videos teach youth how to deal with bullying, low self esteem, and peer pressure.
- ❖ *Leadership Institute*  
This conference for high school students promotes student leadership and service in school community.

## COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

- ❖ *Foster Family Support*  
This program provides educational and recreational activities and support for foster children and their families
- ❖ *Children's Scholarship Fund*  
This fund provides grants for needs of children unmet by other agencies and scholarship monies for Second Mile program graduates.
- ❖ *Counseling and Referral*

## *Our Mission*

*The Second Mile challenges young people to achieve their potential as individuals and community members by providing opportunities for them to develop positive life skills and self esteem as well as by providing education and support for parents and professionals addressing the needs of youth.*

# The Second Mile Outcomes Summary

The Second Mile conducts outcomes assessment for each program using an outside evaluator. Here is a brief summary of findings, details of which are available through The Second Mile.

## **Nittany Lion TIPS**

Based on counselor surveys, each set of cards is distributed to an average of 115 students (but to as many as 500 students), 60% of whom are male. Counselors rated Tips highly effective in assisting students in meeting established goals, rewarding positive behavior, and recognizing significant achievements. Tips are also widely used as a discussion starter with regard to sensitive issues and as a token of support during a difficult time.

## **PEAK**

The first two videos have been received very well – *Choice of Champions* was rated as “very effective” in helping students understand peer pressure and how to deal with it effectively, while *Flow – The River Within* was rated “excellent” or “very good” by 78% of respondents in assisting students with self-esteem issues. Data from counselors completing pre- and post-testing and interviews in urban, suburban, and rural school district settings found students are using appropriate strategies to deal with bullying, lowering the number of and severity of bullying incidents, and increasing the percentage of incidents reported to adults after completing the *No Bullying Allowed* module. In a broader counselor survey, 90% of respondents rated the program “very” or “highly” effective in assisting students in identifying and utilizing anti-bullying strategies.

## **Leadership Institute**

After a two year follow-up study with both students and mentors, data showed not only positive outcomes for the students in regards to leadership skills and attitudes towards their schools, but significantly, positive impact on the faculty mentors who are a crucial part of the leadership teams. Even more important, since its inception, the Institute has been the catalyst for hundreds of student-led service projects, impacting thousands of students and communities members.

## **Challenge Program**

Data from the ALEXSA (Assessment of Liability and Exposure to Substance Abuse and Antisocial Behavior) indicated that participants are achieving better academically, experiencing lower levels of depression, committing more strongly to school, engaging in more effective problem solving skills, and resorting to maladaptive coping behaviors less often following participation in the program. Additionally, based on the heightened risk factors for Challenge participants, it would be expected that clients of The Second Mile would have greater prevalence of substance use compared to their same-aged peers. However, when compared with the results of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national survey of American youth, rates of lifetime tobacco and alcohol use are lower in clients of The Second Mile.

## **Friend**

Outcomes from College Friend evaluations indicated growth of Young Friends in the areas of pro-social development, attitude, and communication skills. Evaluations from Young Friends matched these findings.

## **Friend Fitness**

In a review of school data from one year to the next, participants had a 65% increase in school attendance or maintained perfect attendance. There was a 75% reduction in unexcused absences, and there was an 88% improvement of all grades. Seventy percent (70%) of participants improved their grades in core courses such as English, Math, and Science.

## **Foster Family Support**

A survey of foster parents showed that the Foster Family Support Program benefits foster children and parents in the following areas: increased opportunities for educational and recreational activities; gains in feelings of mutual support; increased opportunities for structured visits with birth siblings, if living separately in foster care; and improvements in feelings about the level of community support.

## **Children’s Scholarship Fund**

All students who have received scholarships have or are currently obtaining post-secondary degrees and are achieving their academic goals.

## **Counseling and Referral Services**

The data on progress for counseling sessions is confidential between the counselor and clients.