

## COMPASS MARK: COMING TO A COMMUNITY NEAR YOU

**G**ray and burgundy. Grape green and blue. One-by-one, rooms are painted fresh colors as Compass Mark staff members move into the offices vacated by our former neighbors, Big Brothers Big Sisters. Once scattered throughout the building, we're now all in one hallway, which fosters communication and a feeling of unity. Compass Mark has also welcomed new employees on board: some of these share the halls here at our long-time Janet Avenue home, and some are based out in the neighborhoods of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties.

Here in the Future Generations (FG) office we've welcomed Angie Kline as coordinator of our long-running after-school program for middle school students. With recent activities like a tour of the Fulton Theater and attending classes at Yoga on Orange, kids and staff alike are enjoying the sense of creativity, safety and endless possibility that Angie brings to Future Generations.

Assisting Angie in the FG office is Richie Rush, who we met at Kids Kamp this past year. As FG Prevention Specialist, in addition to after-school activities, he works intensively with graduates of FG ages 15-18, providing leadership training to be Kids Kamp counselors next summer, as well as focusing on community service projects (they will be painting a mural and writing a children's book) and goal-setting with this dynamic bunch.

### Compass Mark in Lancaster City

A new grant has brought new people to Compass Mark. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant, intended to provide academic enrichment for children during non-school hours, has enabled us to

partner with the School District of Lancaster (SDoL) to provide staffing at four locations to be designated as community schools.

Compass Mark employees have offices at Burrowes and Lafayette Elementary Schools and Wheatland and Lincoln Middle Schools, implementing extended day programming and holding office hours for visits by both students and their caregivers, making the schools more accessible to everyone.

Lincoln Middle School community school director Janice Thomas has been joined by student family liaison Vanessa Maldonado, who runs after-school activities and serves as a link between school, students, and their families. Among the exciting things happening at Lincoln are a full range of extended day clubs options, from Graphic Novels to Mad Dragons Marital Arts. Guest speakers after school on Fun Fridays have included the Lancaster City Police Department, complete with police dogs and horses. Another series of speakers are addressing caregivers, focusing this school year on educational issues their children may be facing.

Jesenia Nieves, formerly of Big Brothers Big Sisters, has come on board as community school director for Wheatland Middle School. She develops enrichment programming for students and looks for ways to make the school a resource for the entire community. So far this school year, students have learned about the proper care and training of pit bulls from the Humane League of Lancaster County, and entered a gingerbread house competition to benefit a local family in need over the holidays.

Kimberly Robinson-Hodges and Paulette Tyler are student family liaisons at Burrowes Elementary and

*(continued on page 2)*



(continued from page 1)

Lafayette Elementary Schools, respectively, and although they are new to Compass Mark, they aren't new to the school district. Kimberly has been working under the community school model with Burrowes students and their families since 2005, and now has 140 students enrolled in extended day activities. This free program begins with a snack and continues with daily tutoring and enrichment activities such as the Service & Music Club, which recently performed for residents of Red Rose Manor.

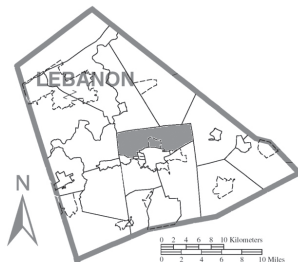


Kimberly Robinson-Hodges represents Compass Mark at Burrowes Elementary.

Paulette, previously an extended day specialist at Lincoln Middle School, also starts her after-school programming with academic support. Clubs she oversees at Lafayette include Grub Club (cooking), Primetime Tumbling, and Sports of All Sorts.

### Compass Mark in Lebanon County

Reaching further out into central Pennsylvania, Compass Mark has been awarded three different contracts to do prevention work in Lebanon County. The first is with the Lebanon County Commission on Drug & Alcohol Abuse (LCCDAA) to be the primary substance abuse prevention provider in that county. Jessie Boddy, our Lebanon County coordinator, is responsible for scheduling Compass Mark's programs in public schools and overseeing the facilitators who will implement these groups with students in grades K-12. Compass Mark also has a contract to do tobacco use prevention and cessation programming in Lebanon County through the American Lung Association, and welcomes Dawn Dauenbaugh, our new Lebanon County tobacco coordinator.



Finally, Compass Mark has contracted with the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Bureau of Drug & Alcohol Programs (BDAP) to do a problem gambling needs assessment for Lebanon. BDAP has worked to develop a comprehensive problem gambling program for the state since required by law in 2004. Each county in the Commonwealth must profile the population's needs and available resources when it comes to compulsive gambling, and identify any gaps in services. Nancy Jo Anderson provided temporary help interviewing key people and compiling findings for BDAP, which, by law, must report progress back to the Governor and General Assembly each year.

Whether we go to work each day at 630 Janet Avenue, at a school or agency in Lancaster or Lebanon counties, or travel back and forth between the two, Compass Mark staff members are united by a commitment to empower both youth and adults. We're ready for 2011 and look forward to the positive changes we'll continue to see in our communities.



Stay tuned for details about our upcoming conference: **From Challenges to Choices: Creating Positive Change** **Fall 2011!**

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... As well as many dedicated, part-time facilitators and volunteers

When you finish reading your newsletter, please share it with a friend!

## DRUGS OF ABUSE COME AND GO

It's difficult to keep up with the popular substances of abuse that people are using to artificially change their moods. There are two products that have been on our radars here at Compass Mark lately: caffeinated alcoholic beverages (CABs), commonly referred to as alcoholic energy drinks, and so-called 'synthetic marijuana' sold under brand names like Spice and K2. Teens and young adults in particular have been catching on to these items, and we've been adapting our curricula to include them.

Apparently, we aren't the only ones taking notice; in the past months our government has banned both substances.

Spice, K2, Genie, and Bayou Blaster, among other brands, contain lab-made chemicals similar in structure



to THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. One of five different versions of the chemical is sprayed onto plant material and marketed as incense labeled "not for human consumption", but is smoked in much the same ways as marijuana.

The substance, available in Europe since 2001, has been legal and sold in head shops and convenience stores in the Commonwealth for the past year or two. It has become popular with marijuana aficionados and others seeking a quick, legal high that won't result in a failed drug test. Reports from users describe a sedative effect, followed by a high comparable to pot with enhanced hallucinations.

Unlike traditional marijuana users, "Spice" smokers have been ending up in emergency departments all over

*(continued on page 4)*

## WHO SAYS HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT IS INEVITABLE?

Who says we can't tackle the most daunting issues facing Lancaster City and come out on top? This question was posed by Compass Mark's Future Generations (FG) students back in 2008. Led by staff, our 5th-8th grade after-school students interviewed local leaders, looking for the top impediments faced by city youth.

They found that high school drop-out rates topped the list, and began to investigate contributing factors. What did they find? That students' attendance *beginning in first grade* predicted whether they would graduate from high school.

The *Who Says We Can't?* attendance incentive program was born, piloted at Burrowes Elementary school in the spring of 2009. During the 2009-10 school year, the program kept track of daily attendance in three 1st grade classrooms and provided incentives for the students who attended every day. Weekly trophies were awarded to the class with the highest percentage of attendance; these were distributed by the 5th grade students who had been paired with younger children for mentoring and encouragement.

Burrowes and Compass Mark held monthly assemblies where students won awards for regular attendance. Although the prizes were small, the

children responded to this chance to excel with enthusiasm! During awards ceremonies and throughout the year, they could be heard complimenting each other on efforts to make it to school. Offering encouragement to those who missed days naturally occurred; in fact, impromptu cheering would take place when a sick student was finally able to return to school.

Data from 2009 to the present confirms students' change in attitude towards attendance. This year's 2nd graders, who started the program last year, have a 25% perfect attendance rate, and this year's 3rd graders more than doubled their previous year's perfect attendance rate from 18% to 39%.

More than anything, we strive to remind the young people in our programs that they can be leaders. Our expectation is that, with our help, they will develop the skills to change their environments in profound ways. The project at Burrowes combines some of our favorite prevention methods: across-ages mentoring, and focusing our resources with a concrete goal in mind. In time, today's 1st graders will proudly become tomorrow's 5th grade mentors. We can't wait to see who graduates next!



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We're grateful for the financial and technical support provided by the  
Lancaster County Drug & Alcohol Commission.

*(Drugs of Abuse, continued from page 3)*

the U.S. due to agitation, anxiety, hypertension, low body temperature, vomiting, and in some cases, severe paranoia and hallucinations. The DEA announced on November 24 an emergency ban on these synthetic ingredients for a minimum of one year in order to determine whether a permanent designation as a Schedule 1 drug (joining heroin, LSD, marijuana, and others) is warranted. The ban will go into effect as soon as a final order is published in their federal register, which has not yet happened as of February, 2011.

Almost simultaneously, makers of CABs such as Four Loko and Joose were notified on November 17 by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) that adding caffeine as an ingredient to alcohol has not been approved. Retailers began pulling the beverages from shelves even as people began stockpiling cases of their favorite brands.

The concern is that caffeine masks some of the body's

normal cues that drinkers rely on to determine their level of intoxication. Four Loko, for instance, packaged in a 23-ounce can, was 12% alcohol, the equivalent of at least four beers, and the addition of caffeine made extended drinking possible. An April, 2010 study by the University of Florida found that 800 randomly selected bar patrons were three times more likely to leave a bar highly intoxicated and four times more likely to intend to drive upon leaving, after consuming alcohol mixed with caffeine.

CABs have been taken off store shelves and are being recycled into ethanol fuel; 'synthetic marijuana' should also become legally unavailable this spring. Since we assume that people will still be tempted to take shortcuts to feeling good, however, we will continue to teach them healthier ways to elevate their mood, and to also be able to cope when that's not possible.

***"I've been practicing emergency medicine for 13 years in Lancaster and I have yet to see one alcoholic beverage that has caused so much intoxication in such a short amount of time."*** – Dr. Michael Reihart, about Four Loko, as reported to Lancaster Newspapers 10/07/2010

