



Connections Summer Day Camp

Summer 2015

Guidance Matters: Children of Incarcerated Parents

It's a bad day, the day a parent gets arrested. Over 3,000 children in Lancaster County are affected by parental incarceration at any given time—either because their parents committed new offenses or had simple parole violations. In April, more help arrived as three organizations joined forces to help alleviate some of the hurt in these children's lives.

Through a newly created Family Services Advocate position, Jennifer Strassenburgh of Compass Mark will bring help and hope to these children—enough of them to fill five elementary schools. The project was conceived by Robert Cooper of Ambassadors for Hope and is being researched by Dr. Mary Glazier of Millersville University. Approved by the Lancaster County Commissioners, funding for the two-year pilot is provided through Lancaster County Prison commissary revenues. Essentially, the inmates are helping to support their children every time they make a purchase at the prison store, although the children's parent need not be located in this prison—the child

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Cannabis Concentrates

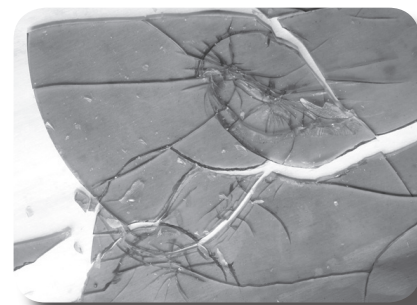
As state cannabis laws change, cannabis concentrates are getting new press. We're used to hearing that marijuana is stronger than it was in the 1960's; the phrase is almost meaningless. If we don't define our terms, our prevention message is easily dismissed or labeled as a scare tactic.

What's "stronger" in cannabis is the level of THC: tetrahydrocannabinol. This is the psychoactive ingredient, and here are how levels have changed:

- THC in 60's cannabis- 6%
- THC in today's cannabis- 12-15%

We see that levels have doubled; only mildly compelling information. Be aware, however, as you form your opinion on whether Pennsylvania should legalize medical cannabis, legalize recreational cannabis, or decriminalize the substance, that popular products falling under the category of "hash oils" are much more potent. These products use butane gas to extract the THC-laden oil from the plant.

"Shatter" is one form that, according to the Lancaster County Drug Task Force, has been seen locally and which gets attention in the national media. Shatter is a



"Shatter" has been found in Lancaster County

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Contact Amy to receive your newsletter via
email at asechrist@compassmark.org



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Carmen Cruz	Desiree Weber
Jean Gerdes	... and many part-time
Erin Long	facilitators and volunteers



Jennifer Strassenburgh,
Family Services Advocate
for Compass Mark

merely needs to live in Lancaster County.

Separation due to a parent's incarceration is a childhood trauma complicated by stigma, uncertainty and lack of social support. When an arrest occurs, caregivers - often grandparents or the other parent- are unprepared for the emotional impact on a child. Suddenly they need to house children in crowded or unsafe conditions. Focus shifts to

dealing with the criminal charges and away from the child's care. Health and academic success quickly suffer and continue a downward spiral of harms that had often already begun out of family chaos.

Jennifer, formerly a children's case manager at Lancaster County Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, sees her role as helping children begin to find their way in the midst of that family chaos—to embrace their lives and learn skills to advocate for themselves. She says, "Part of the hurt for these kids is having a parent *some of the time*. There are good times with their

parents, too, and every child has a right to love their parent. Where do kids reach out for guidance when it's not coming from the traditional sources?"

Jennifer will meet with the child and caregivers within a week of the parent's incarceration to identify and implement the supportive services that will raise levels of successful outcomes for the child, parent and other caregivers. Most children," she says, "already have medical assistance and food stamps. I usually start with referrals to food and clothing banks, counseling, summer camps and low-cost internet service." Her goal is to establish long-term relationships with even families who turn down her help. Non-judgmental phone calls from time to time let parents and caretakers know that Compass Mark's offer of help is not one-time.

Research shows that children incur trauma from a parent's incarceration, but focusing on this event alone ignores the family disorganization that existed prior. "I'm looking at families holistically" says Jennifer. "The point is not just to prevent harm from parental incarceration- the point is to reduce childhood trauma, which has probably occurred many times to various individuals in these families."

"We have no right to punish children who have done no wrong," said Carol Kuntz, CEO of Compass Mark. "What (project creator) Bob Cooper has begun is beyond noble and right. It's what we should have been doing all along as a community that cares for the least among us."

Burrowes Elementary: Full Service Community School

Since 2011, Compass Mark has provided staff for School District of Lancaster community schools, which, in addition to academics, address challenges such as poverty, disengaged students and overburdened, under-resourced schools. Community schools do this by integrating academics, youth development, family support, health and social services within the school walls, making the school the hub of the neighborhood.

Erin Long is our new community school director working in Burrowes Elementary School. Erin is a recent Lancaster transplant who attended SUNY Binghamton, majoring in human development. She worked as a core staffer at Boys and Girls Club and a case worker for individuals with mental health diagnoses. She is also currently serving on the board of directors for the Arch Street Center. Erin is excited to have the opportunity to establish community partnerships that will help lead to Burrowes students' educational success.

One of Erin's duties is to oversee the school's Future Generations Youth Leadership program, which offers

extra, after-school opportunities for at-risk 5th-graders chosen by their teachers for having leadership potential.

She has received help from Burnham Holdings, Inc. of Manheim Township, which is providing funding and staffing for a pilot program offering STEAM-related (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) content.

Burnham is contributing paid work time for five employees to meet once per week for six weeks with the Future Generations kids.

The children and volunteers started out with an electricity unit, learning about electromagnetics and motors, followed by a forensics unit in the spirit of the CSI television show. A ratio of one Burnham employee to four children ensures that meaningful learning will take place. The employees have been trained in the use of the learning kits, and do not necessarily have science backgrounds.

Compass Mark is looking to partner with other



Erin Long, Community
School Director at
Burrowes Elementary



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Burrowes Elementary 5th graders learn about electricity

businesses in order to raise students' interests in STEAM-related careers. Burnham Holdings employee and Compass Mark Board of Directors member Barbe Henrichs hopes that more businesses will be moved to

inspire young minds. Douglass S. Brossman, President and CEO at Burnham, is also a long-time Compass Mark board member and has made the initiative possible.

Community gardening is the last project of the year for the after-school students. Lancaster General Health donated four raised beds and Future Generations has been tasked with creating the herb garden. Erin devises lessons in math, science and art around the sprouting of the seeds and the care of the tiny plants. True to the spirit of a community school, neighbors will tend the beds over the summer—everyone is invested in the hub that is Burrowes Elementary.

volunteer time and resources in their communities to

Riddle Quest Wrap-Up



Sunny skies? Check. Enthusiastic crowds? Check! Saturday, May 2nd marked Compass Mark's 4th annual Riddle Quest scavenger hunt, a fund and friend raiser in downtown Lancaster. Teams of four solved family-friendly Explorer or challenging Brain Twister riddles which led them to city eateries, shops and galleries.

Teams earned stamps in their "passports" for riddles solved, and could earn extra stamps at Binn's Park on Queen Street, which hosted businesses from outside of Riddle Quest's downtown boundaries. Extra riddles were also for sale, and some teams opted to compete for the top prizes, all donated by local businesses and the agency's board of directors.

72 participating teams turned in 102 evaluations which showed strong support for the event, grossing \$32,700 for Compass Mark programs.

- 100% of respondents enjoyed the experience.
- 53% were familiar with Compass Mark's youth programs; afterwards, 96% were familiar.
- 96% discovered new places downtown.
- 100% believe Riddle Quest raised the good image of downtown Lancaster.
- 96% want to do it again in 2016!



A Riddle Quest Team solves family-friendly Explorer level riddles

Compass Mark sincerely thanks our Riddle Quest sponsors, teams, Riddle Stops, steering committee, volunteers, board members, staff and especially event coordinator Marisa Seubert, Millersville University student intern Melissa Nespoli, and 4-time event chairperson Kate Brossman!



Lancaster Barnstormers | Lancaster Marriott | ConnectedSign

**We're grateful for the financial and technical support provided by:
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translucent, amber-colored solid that has been highly refined to produce THC levels of around 80%. The yellow-gold crystals are heated and the vapor is inhaled.

"Ear wax," "budder" and "gold" are all terms for pasty, semi-solid forms of cannabis with slightly lower THC levels; coming in around 70%, while the levels in liquid hash oil range from 80% to 90%.

Since butane is used in production, meth lab-style explosions have occurred around the country. "How-to" websites use headlines such as, "Using solvents to make (hash) oil can be a killer experience!" This is tongue-in-cheek, but reports of burns and fires are common, to the point that cannabis aficionados worry online that such events will sour public opinion toward the growing marijuana marketplace.

We at Compass Mark feel this information is important to consider, as Pennsylvanians will be faced with voting decisions at some point. The word "marijuana" still conjures up, for many, images of relaxation and mildness, and may not include the reality of these extremely mind-altering derivatives. So do your homework, consider the facts, and support addiction prevention, intervention, treatment and aftercare. Luckily, an opportunity is before us. Ask your senator and representative to support the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) at www.naadac.org/CARA, to fund addiction the way we fund other medical diseases.

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