

Directions

A newsletter for
those who
are inspired by
Compass Mark

www.compassmark.org | 717-299-2831 | info@compassmark.org

Spring 2018

Support and Resources are Available The Hidden Addiction

How Compass Mark Can Help with Problem Gambling

Often referred to as the “hidden addiction,” problem gambling is not at the forefront of most conversations about addiction. It is often hidden in plain sight, only discovered by loved ones after devastating damage has already been done. But problem gambling is a serious addiction just like any other, which is why Compass Mark strives to make help and treatment as easily available as possible for those who need it.

“The Last Call You Need to Make”

Anyone suffering from problem gambling — including loved ones — can contact Compass Mark’s Information and Referral Team for anonymous, confidential support and help with next steps for treatment. Our team members will work with your specific needs to get you the best possible help for your situation.

“Compass Mark is the last random call you need to make,” says Amy Sechrist, Certified Prevention Specialist and member of the Information and Referral Team. “We will sit with you for as long as you need and come up with a plan to get support or treatment.”

To contact the Information and Referral Team, call 717-299-2831 or email Amy Sechrist at asechrist@compassmark.org or Christine Weidner at cweidner@compassmark.org.

One Easy Stop for Resources

Figuring out exactly how to get help might sound daunting, but Compass Mark’s SafeStakes.org website makes it simple. The site can direct those in need to treatment providers, support groups, helpful online articles, suicide prevention lifelines and much more. If you think that you or someone you know may be at risk but don’t know what to do next, you can start by taking the quiz on our home page or visiting our FAQ section.

Preventing the Future of Problem Gambling

Looking toward the future, Compass Mark has created its own gambling prevention program to combat the risk factors of problem gambling in young people before they begin. The program, *We Know BETter*, is designed to educate children in Grades 4 – 9 on the issue of gambling and prevent a possible addiction later in life. The curriculum includes lessons on how addiction affects the brain as a disease, exercises to disprove the concept of “magical thinking” involved in gambling problems, and practicing decision-making and refusal skills. The program’s goal



is to lower as many risk factors as possible for children as they come of age.

With intensive research currently underway with Penn State University’s EPISCenter to evaluate *We Know BETter*, Compass Mark hopes to make an even greater impact through this program in the future.

Whether you suffer from problem gambling, have a loved one that may be addicted to gambling or simply think you might know someone at risk, it is never too early or too late to get help; and Compass Mark can help provide it.

“It doesn’t matter how far in you are or how advanced your addiction is, it is possible to recover,” says Amy. “We would love to be able to offer that glimmer of hope that’s necessary to get started.”

Prevention Convention

300 Kids and Families Learn and Have Fun

Donors Join Lead Sponsor Murray Securus to Support Addiction Prevention Event

On March 18, Compass Mark, in partnership with event sponsor Murray Securus, held the first-ever Prevention Convention at **Go 'N Bananas** in Lancaster. The unique educational event included an afternoon of activities designed to teach children and families about addiction prevention. More than 300 children and their families attended the event to enjoy pizza, games and more, while learning important lessons about leading healthy lives by avoiding drugs and alcohol.



Kevin Bradley (Janney Montgomery Scott), William Greiner (Merrill Lynch), Eric Kennel (Compass Mark), Robert Balasavage (Morgan Stanley), Robert Schroeder (Wells Fargo), Chip Hoke (RBC Wealth Management)

Local businesses and individuals rallied together to raise more than \$75,000 in sponsorships to support the event and provide additional resources for Compass Mark programs. This effort was led by event sponsor Murray Securus.

Other local businesses also joined forces to help. Kevin Bradley, Senior Vice President at Janney Montgomery Scott and Compass Mark Board Vice President, knew he'd make a commitment to the event through a business sponsorship, and wanted to find a way to leverage his professional connections to make a bigger impact. Bradley found a successful strategy in reaching out to other financial service firms in the area.

"I have a limited amount of resources that I can deploy in the community, but I knew that if I could get more people involved, it would really make a difference," Bradley says. "I was in a discussion with Chip Hoke from RBC Wealth Management, and I told him about the

event. He was in from the get-go. We decided to present it to our other competitors and set an example for the kind of collaboration that needs to happen if we are going to change the addiction problem in our community."

After Chip agreed to join him in sponsoring the event, Robert Balasavage from Morgan Stanley, Bill Greiner from Merrill Lynch and Davis P. Smith from Wells Fargo made commitments. Each firm donated \$2,500 for a combined total of \$12,500.

"We're so grateful for their tremendous support and are excited about the unique approach Kevin took to bring new partners to the table," says Compass Mark Executive Director Eric Kennel. "Our board is passionate about making a difference and finding creative ways to develop new resources to advance this important work."

Events like the Prevention Convention are part of the "long game" according to Bradley and Kennel. Intervention and treatment are focused around fixing immediate problems, while prevention and recovery services come alongside families and communities to help repair generational issues, develop individual skills and resiliency, and proactively educate the community.



All parts of the puzzle are critically important—prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery.

Bradley hopes that this event is the first of many opportunities for local business people to get involved and help address the addiction crisis. "I really enjoy being on the board at Compass Mark," he says. "My favorite part of my job is when I get to watch our staff present about their program. They have so much passion. They are on the front line, and they are just so joyful and charged up about the mission. It's been great to be part of what happens behind the scenes, working with some really amazing people to be impactful in solving the local addiction crisis."

Thank You Sponsors!

Event Sponsor



AmWINS

AmWINS Brokerage of
New England

Blakinger Thomas

BrickStreet Mutual
Insurance Company

Burnham Holdings

Chubb Insurance

Donegal Insurance
Group

Eastern Alliance
Insurance Group

Great American
Insurance Company

Janney Montgomery
Scott

Liberty Mutual Insurance

Merrill Lynch

Millers Mutual Group

Morgan Stanley

Pain Specialists of
Lancaster

Paul Davis

RBC Wealth
Management

RKL LLP

The Standard

Wells Fargo Advisors

Through the Prevention Convention, Compass Mark raised over \$75,000 that will be used to expand our prevention services for children, youth, and adults in the community. Thanks to everyone for your support!

Working to Stop Childhood Trauma

One Step, One Child at a Time

Two Programs are Helping Kids and Families

Childhood trauma can stem from many sources within our homes and in the community, and children can experience it in many forms, including physical or sexual abuse; neglect within the family; or scary events in the community such as school shootings, natural disasters or violence. When a child's developing brain is under constant stress, the stress response systems and sensory systems may deregulate, launching the body into constant survival mode, forever changing a child's natural response to danger.

Research has demonstrated a link between childhood trauma and high-risk behaviors such as smoking, drug and alcohol abuse and illegal activities. Childhood trauma has even been shown to be strongly linked to higher incidents of cancer and heart disease and, of course, mental health issues.

"Research has demonstrated a link between childhood trauma and high-risk behaviors such as smoking, drug and alcohol abuse and illegal activities."

Compass Mark is advocating for children who have experienced trauma in their young lives. By intervening as quickly as possible in partnership with a child's family and community, Compass Mark can address critical needs and help improve their overall resilience. Two initiatives, the Family Services Advocate program and the Lebanon County Hurricane Assistance program, focus on bringing hope to children in difficult situations.

Family Services Advocate Program

The Family Services Advocate Program works to identify, support and advocate for the unique needs and rights of children with incarcerated parents. The program helps families and caregiv-

ers connect to existing community support and maintain healthy parent-child relationships. It addresses not only their basic needs, but their fractured relationship with their parents, as well as the trauma caused by parental incarceration.

In 2017, Millersville University published a report that evaluated the outcome of the first two years of the Family Services Advocate Program. The report found that the children in the program showed significant improvement. In addition, families reported positive personal experiences from the impact of the program.

In one case, a new mother was able to have crucial, regular bonding time with her newborn son through special visits in prison. An advocate was able to arrange for the baby to be temporarily cared for by a family involved with Bethany Christian Services' Safe Families for Children program. This allowed the mother and child to receive the care and support they needed, and kept the baby out of the foster care system. Both mother and child were reunited, and continue to build a healthy relationship.

Lebanon County Hurricane Assistance Program

When Hurricane Maria ravaged Puerto Rico, the aftereffects were felt in Lebanon



County. Families affected by the hurricane relocated to Lebanon, flooding the community and schools with children reeling from environmental trauma. During a community gathering, with the school district, local government and community services brainstorming for solutions, Compass Mark's Bevan Allen offered a solution. Compass Mark will place a referral specialist at the Lebanon Middle School, to help evacuees locate resources in their new community and make sure students receive much-needed support upon arrival.

Prevention Specialist Josh Mountz is hopeful about the program. "I am expecting great things," he says. "The school and community could not be more accommodating. We are glad that we can help these families get a hand up."

The program will help with the food, clothing and housing new-to-the-area families need to get established. Children can get help connecting with school assistance so they can succeed. Students from HACC Lebanon will be on hand to translate for the Spanish-speaking parents, helping the evacuees settle in to their new lives.

Funding support for Compass Mark is provided in part by the Lancaster County Drug & Alcohol Commission and the Lebanon County Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse, along with many generous donors in our community. Thank you for your partnership!

Compass Mark Expands School-Based Programs

Compass Mark is expanding its Student Assistance Program and Leadership Institute, and this move couldn't come at a more critical time.

Both programs provide opportunities for students to build protective factors that will reduce their risk of developing violent behavior patterns and/or addiction. In the long run, Bevan Allen, Director of Operations at Compass Mark, says these programs will provide happier, healthier futures for students. Here's a closer look at how these programs are being enhanced to provide additional support in our local schools.

Leadership Institute Expanded to Eight Weeks

What started out as a three- to four-hour leadership training session has been transformed into a comprehensive eight-week session thanks to a grant from the Arconic Foundation. This year, Compass Mark launched a pilot program for the extended version of the Leadership Institute at Landis Run Intermediate School.

The goal is to help students develop the leadership skills to make positive choices, including saying no to drugs and alcohol.

"The program provides them with important

tools and skills that will enhance their resiliency," explains Matt Weaver, Prevention Program Coordinator. "The primary goal is to empower students to utilize their leadership potential and become positive leaders in their school and community. Leadership skills are protective factors in an individual's life and will empower them at the moment of choice — to use or not to use — to effectively refuse. This in turn will help prevent the risk of addiction in the future."

Lessons throughout the program are designed to foster important qualities of good leaders, such as:

- Listening skills
- The desire to serve others
- The ability to work as a team, make compromises and manage conflict

"The program is off to a great start," Matt says. "There have been some learning hurdles, but overall we are very pleased with the progress. We look forward to offering the program to other schools and districts in the near future."

A Greater Focus on the Student Assistance Program

Although the Student Assistance Program has been helping students succeed for over 30 years, Bevan says it's recently gained nationwide attention — following the recent Florida school shooting — as a program that can



identify and support students at risk.

"The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program is designed to assist in identifying issues that pose barriers to a student's success, which can include drug and alcohol use, mental health concerns, family transitions, death of a loved one, or a chronic disease, for example," says Bevan. "The primary goal is to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve, advance and remain in school."

Recognizing the growing importance of this program, Compass Mark recently welcomed Deborah McCoy to its team. She will directly support SAP teams in Lancaster and Lebanon County. With over 25 years of experience working as a consultant on issues facing students in public education, Deb is prepared to support teams with even their toughest situations.

"This is the best system we have in PA to find struggling kids who might be flying under the radar and to help position them for resiliency," says Bevan.

Stay tuned for future updates on these programs!

