

# Homework Assistance and Prime-Time Teen Alternatives

North Penn School District  
Lansdale, Pennsylvania

The North Penn School District shares a vision with the North Penn Valley Boys and Girls Club: To inspire each student to reach his or her highest potential and become a productive, responsible and caring citizen. To turn the vision into reality, the two groups formed a partnership to reach out to families and youngsters who need and want these services.

The organizations operate two after-school programs: The Homework Assistance Program for students in Grades K-6 and the Prime Time Teen Alternatives for middle-school students.

The Homework Assistance Program offers a structured learning experience with individual attention after school. Funded by public and private foundations, corporations and the United Way, the supervised program offers free tutoring and organized activities.

There is space for 130 students in five classrooms from 3:30 to 6 p.m. on Monday through Thursday. Students must complete their assignments to the best of their ability and have them checked for accuracy before they are allowed to leave the homework room. The club has learning centers and computer technology centers that are equipped with 10-12 computers, laser printers and Internet access.

On Fridays, students attend the same hours, but participate in Skills Mastery and Resistance Training (SMART) Moves, a drug and alcohol awareness and abuse prevention program.

Students participating in the program are expected to improve academically in their classes. When this happens, their self-esteem increases and their attitudes toward school improve. School attendance rates, behavior, and graduation rates are expected to improve, too.

Families also are involved. Each family signs a "contract" that lists expectations for

success for students and their parents or guardians. The staff maintains regular contact with families and with school teachers and principals. The educators, then, can monitor students' performance in the classrooms.

The district agreed to provide bus transportation to the club from all 13 elementary schools. This service allowed the club to expand its services to all families in the community.

Prime Time Teen Alternatives is a program for middle school students on early dismissal days. On these days, students may be unsupervised in the afternoon. Knowing that early dismissal days can be a challenge for parents and for the community, the Boys and Girls Club created this program.

It begins after dismissal and teens may stay until 8:45 p.m. The district provides transportation to the club and parents pick their children up at the end of their work day.

The program provides recreational activities, dance parties, and field trips to bowling alleys, movies and restaurants. The club also integrated the district's bullying prevention program so that students hear consistent messages from the school and after-school programs. In its first year, the Prime Time Teen Alternatives program was filled to its capacity of 50 students. The club hopes to expand the program as space and funds become available.

Both the Homework Assistance Program and the Prime Time Teen Alternatives Program are examples of partnerships aimed to enhance student achievement and development. The programs also expect positive effects for families and the community.

Linda Abram  
Parent and Community Involvement Specialist  
North Penn School District  
(215) 853-1091