

# NEWS NOW

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*Highlights*

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## Specialty Courts Solve Problems

In an effort to combat substance abuse problems, Blair County officials believe that in carefully selected cases, the use of incarceration, which is expensive and frequently ineffective, can productively be diverted/reduced/enhanced.

Blair County is a strong supporter of Problem Solving Courts aka “Drug Courts”.

Four of the five county judges, including our president judge, have been trained through the Office of Justice Programs, National Drug Court Institute.

Currently there are 6 active Problem Solving Courts which require that the offender have a substance abuse disorder and be a resident of Blair County.

All Problem Solving Courts are fundamentally based on

the 10 Key Components of Drug Courts. Blair County Drug and Alcohol Partnerships is represented on all of the county problem solving courts.

Effective Drug Courts provide an access to a continuum of alcohol, drug and other related treatment and rehabilitation.

Staff from Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships serves as the treatment representative for all Blair County Treatment Courts. It is challenged to assure that clients are properly assessed and suitably matched to appropriate services.

All participants are required to apply for medical assistance so that if eligible, their physical health will also be supported.



Listed below are the courts and the judge which presides:

- Judge Kopriva- Diversion, Re-Entry and IP ( Intermediate Punishment) Drug Courts
- Judge Milliron- DUI Treatment Court
- Judge Sullivan-Family Court
- Judge Doyle-Juvenile Drug Court

## Alcohol Purchase Surveys

An environmental strategy to reduce underage drinking is to survey establishments that sell alcohol to see if they are checking IDs before making a sale.

BDAP’s committee to Reduce UAD and DUI has been doing this at least 2 times a year since 2006.

Youthful looking college

students who are 21 or older, volunteer to help with this process by attempting to buy alcohol (a 6-pack of beer) at various bars and taverns in the county.

If they are “carded” the establishment will be sent a letter noting the date and time and congratulating the performance of the em-

ployee for doing his/her job.

If they do not check the ID, then a letter is sent stating date and time informing the owner/manager of the failure to card. Training for the manager and staff is offered to improve their practices.

Compliance success has been about 95% each time.

## SADD Group Active and Involved



BDAP's  
**Straight Talk Show**  
Airs  
TUES at 7:00 pm  
WED at 10:00 am.

**Specialty Courts**  
will be the topic of  
the January show.

Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) is one of the premier groups at Altoona Area High School.

This diverse group of students does two big events each year, one in the fall and one in the spring.

During Red Ribbon Week in October, guest speakers, a school wide pep rally and give-a-ways helped to spread the word about the benefits of being drug free.

In the spring, SADD focuses on the "prom promise", which is encouraging students to pledge to be drug and alcohol free on prom night.

During this event a live action radio broadcast offers over \$300.00 in prizes and gift certificates from local businesses.

SADD also sponsors student dances and activities that provide a place to go and something to do on the weekend that is safe and supervised.

More recently the group assisted with "Lend-A-Hand." and donated over 6,000 items to 4 community programs. Items such as food and paper products had been collected from students and staff from the Altoona Area School District Elementary Schools.

The students of SADD take great pride in what they do as they strive to make the school and the students safe while encouraging good decision making.

## Pardon our Dust

*Renovation  
Project begins at  
Blair DAP*



Blair Drug & Alcohol Partnerships staff members have been settling into their new office space since August of 2013.

The move to Fairway Drive has doubled the space of the former office for the program that continues to grow in size and services.

The existing conference room is larger with more accommodations than the previous one.

With renovations just begun, another meeting/training room will be added that will have additional rest rooms and a small kitchen area.

The plan is for the work to be

done by spring and BDAP would like to encourage community groups to think of the new room as an option for future meetings.

This final phase of renovation will also create permanent office spaces for 3 staff members who are currently residing in temporary surroundings.

## HOPE for Families Coping with Addiction



For more than 13 years the HOPE group, for family members who have been adversely affected by a loved one's addiction, has been meeting for support and guidance.

The meetings, now held at Blair Drug & Alcohol Partnerships every Wednesday from 5:30-7:30 pm, are facilitated by experienced professionals.

Although the participants have changed over the years, the group size has ranged in number from 3 to 19 people.

Stories and experiences shared in a safe, comfortable environment result in constructive, positive feedback.

Participants gain hope as they learn how to set limits and

boundaries with family members, which helps them as they work through the complicated issues involved with addiction.

This group is open to any community member looking for help in dealing with those experiencing drug or alcohol addiction.

Call 814 381-0921

## MADD'S Power of Parents Can Make a Difference

MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) is promoting a short 25 minute presentation that could make the difference between life and death for teenagers.

The Power of Parents explains that parents do have the ability to influence the choices their teens make. The handbook that parents receive and the tips they get during the presentation help them to have effective discussions with their teen-aged children to deter underage drinking.

This program is based on the research of Dr. Robert Turrissi of Penn State University, who found that college freshman who had these talks with their families had a considerably lower rate of underage drinking than their peers in the control group.

The handbook helps parents to understand the changes in the brain that occur when it is alcohol affected. It also describes different parenting styles, how best to approach teens to discuss the consequences and gives insight to the way teens

think and the beliefs they hold.

All parents of teenagers will appreciate the helpful strategies to use to have these challenging yet necessary conversations.

This presentation is available to parent and community groups. Please contact Kathrine Muller for further information at [kmuller@blairdap.org](mailto:kmuller@blairdap.org)

A down-loadable handbook is also available on line at [www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)



## Blair County Youth League Bowls 'Em Over

The Blair County Youth League is open to children that receive services from Human Service Agencies. The activities are both free and safe, while offering endless benefits, which include safe environments, socializing with others in a positive way, and skill building.

During the school year indoor activities, such as volleyball and basketball are organized for the youth. Summer brings softball that is played a few mornings a week.

Some enjoyable field trips to the Pittsburgh Zoo and a Pirate baseball game were

highlights this past summer.

Special events over holiday breaks include bowling and roller skating. ...and yep... you guessed it.... PIZZA!

Food, fun and friendships formed during YL events help to shape positive futures.



## Trading Places A Simulation for Understanding Poverty

March 11, 2013

A few years ago the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office collaborated on a county needs assessment.

When economic issues surfaced as a major issue, a group was formed to identify strategies to assist individuals in moving from poverty to sustainability.

This group, now named the Bridges Network, based on the work of Dr. Ruby K. Payne, will be hosting a community event that will help participants understand the challenges of those living in poverty.

The intent of this exercise is to develop and expand community wide efforts to assist in upward mobility.

The event will be held at the Adler Athletic Complex at PSU Altoona on March 11th from 9:00 am till 1:00 pm.

There will be a \$10 charge that will include lunch. Contact Jessica Maxon to register.

[jmaxon@mtaloy.edu](mailto:jmaxon@mtaloy.edu)  
814 886 6546



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*Empowering Healthy Lifestyles*

### *About us:*

*On July 1, 2010 Blair County Drug & Alcohol Program, Inc. (BDAP) became a new non-profit corporation formed by joining drug and alcohol administrative services, drug and alcohol prevention, case management, DUI Services, and Underage Drinking Classes.*

*On August 19th, 2013 the corporation, which employs 18 staff members and is located on Fairway Drive in Altoona, adopted the name Blair Drug & Alcohol Partnerships to more accurately describe the collaborative work and services provided to the community.*

*BDAP offers a variety of services related to substance abuse prevention and treatment: Case Management Services, Court Reporting Network (CRN) Evaluations, Drug and Alcohol Assessments, Drug and Alcohol Education, Drug and Alcohol Prevention, Minors Diversionary Programs and Highway Safety Classes.*

## Tobacco Free Blair County Parks and Playgrounds



Since January of 2012 Blair County parks, playgrounds and recreation areas have been joining the progressive trend to eliminate tobacco use in areas where families and children gather for outdoor fun.

The newest member to join this outstanding list of healthy community advocates is Blair County Head Start.

Staff will be posting signs at all of the playgrounds at all Head Start locations in the county.

This effort keeps kids safe from second hand smoke,

keeps the areas free of tobacco debris, and prevents kids from seeing and “normalizing” smoking behaviors.

Blair DAP Prevention staff is hoping more recreation areas will come on board to promote this health initiative. Even locations that are already tobacco free with existing policies can get the signs that serve as extra reminders to families using the facilities.

To become involved contact Kathrine Muller at [kmuller@blairdap.org](mailto:kmuller@blairdap.org)

*Blair Honor Role*  
*Garver Memorial YMCA*  
*Joshua House*  
*Community Center*  
*Central Blair*  
*Recreation Commission*  
*Valley View Park*  
*Northern Blair*  
*Recreation Commission*  
*Bellwood-Antis*  
*Parks Association*  
*Morrisons Cove*  
*Memorial Park*  
*Blair County Head Start*