

E-UPDATE RESOURCES

PRIMARILY FREE RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

UPDATED: April 29, 2012

Helping to Bridge the Gap Between the Wealth of Available Resources
and the Poverty Associated With People Not Knowing About Them

**E-UPDATE, THIS E-UPDATE RESOURCES GUIDE AND THE
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
ALSO ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE THROUGH
www.arcofchestercounty.org/arconnections.html (bottom links)**

Information is believed correct at the time of insertion but are subject to change without notice.
Participants are encouraged
to use contact information to confirm information to avoid disappointment.

Information on submission of resources is provided on the last page of this Resource Guide.
Suggestions on how this effort might be improved are encouraged by e-mailing bps461@msn.com.

Information About Services For Individuals and Families

Categories of Information

E-Newsletters and Calendars
General Assistance Web Sites (Area)
General Assistance Web Sites (State)
General Assistance Web Sites (Federal)
Emergency Response
Health Issues
Food
Housing
Finance
Parenting
Education
Veterans
Senior Citizens
Legal Assistance
Special Programs
General Information
Employment Related Information

E-Newsletters and Calendars

E-Update and Calendar of Events. Free weekly e-newsletters published by Casey Jones, Transformation Initiative - Building Healthy Communities Through Healthy Families through transformational versus transactional results, shares information

about workshops, seminars, events and other activities affecting families.

E-Update is available weekly online at www.arcofchestercounty.org/pdf/e-update.pdf and the *Calendar of Events* is available at www.arcofchestercounty.org/pdf/calendar_of_events.pdf.

New information generally is posted by Tuesday noon of every week

ARConnections. A free monthly e-newsletter from Arc of Chester County, provides information about available education, services, including an extensive list of support groups, and advocacy for families, particularly those with disabilities. The publication, in its entirety and in sections, is available online at www.arcofchestercounty.org/arconnections.html.

General Assistance Web Sites (Area)

ReferWeb. An online database maintained by Chester County to aid in identifying health and human services providers for

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county residents is available at www.referweb.net/chesco.

Community Resource Guides

- **County-by-County Resource Guide**
published by the Juvenile Law Center:
www.jlc.org/guide/start.php.
- **Joseph's People Resource Guide for the Unemployed and Underemployed:**
<http://josephspeople.org/ResourceGuide2009.pdf>.
- **Chester County Community Resource Guide:**
www.chesco.org/human/lib/human/pdf/CommunityResourceGuide.pdf.
- **Chester County Road to Employment Resource Guide:**
http://dsf.chesco.org/wib/lib/wib/pdf/2011/road_to_employment/final2011toolkits_website.pdf.
- **Open Hearth Help Book III Services Resource Guide** in English and Spanish for the Greater Phoenixville, Spring City and Royersford areas, with many listings also serving other parts of Chester and Montgomery counties:
www.openhearthinc.org/index.php/helpbookii.
- **TriCounty Community Network (Northern Chester, Western Montgomery and Eastern Berks counties) Resource Guide:**
www.tcnetwork.org/ResourceGuide.php
- **Berks County Guide to Services:**
www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/HumanServ/Documents/crn_guide_to_services_2010%282%29%5B1%5D.pdf.
- **Delaware County Women's Resource Guide:**
www.co.delaware.pa.us/depts/WomensresourceguideWW1.pdf.
- **Montgomery County Resource Guide:**
www.abington.k12.pa.us/pupil/MontgomeryCountyResourceDirectory.pdf.

- **Montgomery County Parent and Infant Resource Guide:**
<http://webapp.montcopa.org/hhsapps/PIRGJuly08.pdf>.

Online Seniors Resource Guide. Kennett Area Senior Center has developed an online resources guide for seniors in Southern Chester County that includes information in three dozen categories, from groceries and meal sites to healthcare, housing, transportation, day and other services. The guide is available at www.kennettseiorcenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=log&id=32&Itemid=37. The Center also has compiled some national resources at www.kennettseiorcenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=log&id=33&Itemid=36.

Interactive Community Profiles Website

Chester County Planning Commission provides an interactive *Community Profiles* website for resource data on people, housing, open space and development, transportation, economic development, government, and community facilities for the county's 73 municipalities and 12 public school districts. Information is available by the entire county, a community which consists of one or more school districts, a school district, or a municipality, with data able to be displayed in tables, graphs, and maps.

Information is available at www.landscapes2.org/ccpc/profiles/communityprofiles.html.

Public Transportation Guide and Map

Chester County Planning Commission has published a full-color *Public Transportation Serving Chester County* map and guide.

An online version is available at www.chesco.org/planning/lib/planning/transportation/pubtran.pdf.

Chester County Launches Interactive Community Profiles Website.

Chester County Planning Commission has an interactive *Community Profiles* website to provide resource data on people, housing, open space and development, transportation,

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economic development, government, and community facilities for the county's 73 municipalities and 12 public school districts. Information is available by the entire county, a community which consists of one or more school districts, a school district, or a municipality, with data able to be displayed in tables, graphs, and maps.

The information is available at www.landscapes2.org/ccpc/profiles/communityprofiles.html.

Delaware Valley Population Projections Through 2040.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) provides population projects for the nine-county Delaware Valley region, including Philadelphia suburbs at www.dvrpc.org/OurRegion/pdf/DVRPC_2040_Population_Forecasts.pdf, with an interactive web map available for viewing at www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/PopForecast.

General Assistance Web Sites (State)

Here to Help, hosted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to assist residents in learning about programs available to aid in difficult economic times. Information is available on employment, family services, housing, seniors, economic development and education at www.heretohelp.pa.gov.

HelpinPA. The Pennsylvania Departments of Insurance, Health, Public Welfare and Aging highlights and shares information about health and human services programs, events and resources, including health insurance programs, services for children and adults with special health care needs, prenatal services, breastfeeding support, and services for older Pennsylvanians on Facebook. Information is available at www.facebook.com/HelpinPA.

Pennsylvania Health and Human

Services Resource Guide. Pennsylvania publishes a guide for health and human services programs and contact information through www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/document/775888/resource_guide_eng_rev_pdf.

Ask Here PA. A 24/7 live information resource, a service of Commonwealth Libraries of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, provides a 24-hour a day, every day of the year library reference service for questions from children and adults.

The service is accessible through an online chat system, with librarians using information from the Internet and online databases to help provide answers to questions. Following a session, questioners receive a transcript that includes links to Web pages and other resources used during the session. Privacy is the same as with other public library services.

Further information and access is available at www.askherepa.org.

Highway Safety Web Site. PennDOT has unveiled a new highway safety web site in time for the summer driving season covering topics from motorcycles to DUI. It is part of the agency's goal to save at least 100 lives on Pennsylvania highways each year.

Tips are offered on aggressive driving, bicycles/pedestrians, child passenger safety, heavy trucks, engineering infrastructure, impaired driving, mature drivers, motorcycle and school bus safety, seat belts, work zones and young drivers. Each area is highlighted as part of an interactive quiz that allows motorists to test their highway safety knowledge.

The web site, www.DriveSafePA.org, also contains educational resources, including videos, radio public service announcements and traffic safety brochures along with information on recently enacted traffic safety laws such as "Steer Clear" and wiper and headlights statutes.

Pennsylvania FIX-ROAD Telephone Line

PennDOT has opened its toll-free maintenance hotline and is urging motorists to report potholes and other problems on state roads, including missing highway signs, shoulder drop-offs, roadway washouts and other potential hazards.

Complaints can be reported at (800) FIX-ROAD (1-800-349-7623) or at the Department's Customer Care Center at www.dot.state.pa.us/penndot/districts/district6/d6ccc.nsf?opendatabase.

Motors also may obtain the latest road conditions, traffic and weather updates throughout the state at <http://511pa.com>.

General Assistance Web Sites (Federal) Official Federal Government Web Portals.

U.S. government maintains portal websites in English and Spanish to assist individuals in accessing government information.

www.USA.gov is the English version, with www.GobiernoUSA.gov being in Spanish. Gobierno is Spanish for “government”.

Directory of Federal Departments and Agencies.

The *A-Z Index of U.S. Government Departments and Agencies* provides cross references to department and agency websites, any local or regional offices, and additional information on more than 450 entities from the Access Board to the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (there are no departments or agencies listed for the letters K, Q or X through Z).

Additional features include information on the President and Congressional representatives, governors and state legislatures, state and territorial contacts, military personnel locator, assistance to Americans abroad during a crisis, e-mail queries and live online chat.

The guide is available at www.usa.gov/directory/federal/index.shtml. The service also advises that individuals can obtain information on any question about government at (800) FED INFO (333-4636).

Social Security and Health Benefits Websites in Spanish

The Social Security Administration and the federal Department of Health and Human Services have Spanish language websites for Social Security and healthcare information.

www.CuidadoDeSalud.gov provides consumers with both public and private health coverage options tailored specifically for their needs in a single tool. Similar to the English version www.HealthCare.gov, the website offers an insurance finder, explains the Affordable Care Act in step-by-step detail and offers information for families with children, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities and others.

The Social Security site, at www.segurosocial.gov or www.socialsecurity.gov/espanol, includes available applications for retirement, Medicare and Extra Help with prescription drug costs in Spanish.

National Traffic and Road Closure Website

The Federal Highway Administration provides an online resource guide for traffic and road closures information that can be used to help plan holiday travel.

Information is available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/index.htm#WEAT.

Federal Consumer Information. Federal Citizen Information Center provides free or low-cost reference material on a variety of subjects, including a free weekly e-mail digest of consumer related issues. Recent highlights, for example, include *12 Riskiest Places to Give Your Social Security Number*, *Top 10 Cyber Monday Tips for Staying Safe When Shopping Online*, *Fall into Winter Checklist*, *Five Tips for Staying Safe on the Roads Over the Holidays*, *Family Health History – Collect It, Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work*, and *Finding a Trustworthy Kennel to Board Your Pet*.

Signups for the Digest, along with other e-mail consumer publications, is available at www.pueblo.gsa.gov.

Database Assistance for Community Advocates

A federal government website for community advocates enables them to connect with programs and benefits for those they wish to assist, including families, youth, seniors, students, the unemployed, persons with disabilities, and veterans.

Features include searching a public database of more than 1,000 government benefits, personalizing the benefits search through a pre-screening tool, discovering little known benefits, creating, printing and e-mailing a customized list of benefits that address an individual’s specific needs, and helping persons in need to use the system.

The Benefits.gov portal is at www.benefits.gov/advocates/community-advocates.

Free Tips for Parents. Federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) has revamped its Parent Information website to gather information from across all of its websites to aid parents of newborns through teens with everything from children safety at home and within the community to immunization schedules and developmental milestones. Subjects range from various illnesses and development issues to bullying and teen driving.

Information, including online videos, is available at www.cdc.gov/parents.

Education Data and Resources for All Ages. The federal government has developed a central website for education data resources including high-value data sets, data visualization tools, resources for the classroom, applications created from open data and more. Datasets have been gathered from various agencies to provide detailed information on the state of education at all levels from cradle to career and beyond.

Information is available at www.data.gov/education.

Resources for the Disabled. A federal Disability.gov website helps connect individuals with disabilities and their families to resources and services. The Pennsylvania site, that includes links to other states, is available at www.disability.gov/state/pennsylvania?go.y=20&go.x=2.

U.S. Census Releases 1940 Census Records. The U.S. National Archives has released full access to individual 1940 census records, Census maps and descriptions that will aid in family history searches and other information gleaning.

The release, provided for by law 72 years after collection, along with guides to assist in finding information, is available at <http://1940census.archives.gov>.

Emergency Response Emergency Alerts to Your Cell Phone.

Emergency management agencies in Chester, Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery and

Philadelphia counties has activated a ReadyNotifyPA system that helps local officials in Southeastern Pennsylvania send emergency text alerts of severe weather, homeland security and other emergencies to an individual cell phone, pager, BlackBerry, PDA and/or e-mail accounts.

There is no charge to sign up for ReadyNotifyPA, with an individual being able to choose the type of alerts received. A wireless carrier may charge a fee to obtain messages on cell phones or wireless devices. Individuals can contact their carriers to determine how much such messages may cost.

An individual may activate and deactivate the service at any time. It is particularly helpful as an alerting device for persons in charge of groups of children or adults both within homes and facilities and involved in outside activities. Additional information and sign-up is available at www.readynotifypa.org.

Registry to Aid Persons With Special Needs in an Emergency.

Chester, Bucks and Montgomery counties have developed a secure, web-based Special Needs Registry to better identify to emergency responders persons of special needs who are most at risk during a disaster.

Chester County Emergency Services defines the special needs population as those "who cannot receive, understand or act upon emergency protective orders" including but not limited to those who are deaf, blind, bedridden, mentally impaired, without radio or television.

Persons within this population can be registered with County Emergency Services so emergency responders can better plan to serve them in a disaster or other emergencies. Further information and registration is available online at <http://dsf.chesco.org/des/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=637542>.

NOAA Weather Radio has more than 1,000 transmitters nation-wide, including Hibernia Park near Coatesville and nearby counties, that provide 24/7 *Public Alert™* notifications of emergency weather conditions, including severe weather, hurricanes and tornados. Radios can be purchased for \$20

to \$100 and, depending on features, may include both electric and battery-powered operation, emergency alerting, and motor vehicle adaptation. In addition to homes, weather radio alert systems often are used in schools, day-care centers, and other public facilities and businesses to warn of hazardous weather situations that may be developing in one's area. NOAA Weather radio information is available at www.weather.gov/nwr.

The National Weather Service and many area media also maintain websites, customizable for direct access to local areas, that include updated weather conditions and Doppler radar. The NOAA forecast site is at www.weather.gov.

Free Flood Notifications. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) can provide a Water-Alert via text or e-mail when waters are rising in rivers and streams near individual locations, along with updates about groundwater levels, water temperatures, rainfall, and water quality at sites where USGS collects real-time water information.

Further information and signup is available at <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=2919>.

Lifeline Cell Phone Service for Low-Income Persons. Low-income households may qualify for a free cell phone and up to 250 minutes of free airtime per month under a federal Assurance Wireless program with Virgin Mobile. Persons receiving federal public housing assistance/Section 8, food stamps, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), National School Lunch, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, or State Blind Pension may already qualify. Others may be accepted if total household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, for example \$14,702 annually for an individual and \$30,173 for a family of four. The number of minutes also can be doubled for a fee of \$5 per month. Further information and application is available at www.assurancewireless.com/Public/MorePrograms.aspx.

511PA is Pennsylvania's official travel information service, providing current traffic and weather information, including traffic web cams, road closures and weather information, as well as links to other transportation services. Information is available at www.511pa.com or (877) 511-7366

Similar systems also are available in some other nearby states by substituting the two letter abbreviation for the state in the website address, such as www.511nj.com, except for Delaware where such information is available at www.deldot.gov.

National Preparedness. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) makes available many publications to assist individuals, families including children, and businesses to prepare for potential disasters including severe thunderstorms, hurricanes, floods and tornados. Information is available at www.fema.gov.

Local Preparedness. The Regional Vulnerable Populations Project is offering free materials on a first-come, first-served basis to organizations seeking to promote preparedness for disasters and other emergencies in homes, workplaces and communities. Materials are offered in conjunction with a free training that provides emergency preparedness information to organization staff and clients. Further information is available from Robyn Slater, regional vulnerable populations coordinator, at rslater@chesco.org, (267) 746-0685 or (610) 344-5022.

Personal Flooding Response. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notes that "(d)uring a flood cleanup, the indoor air quality in your home or office may appear to be the least of your problems. However, failure to remove contaminated materials and to reduce moisture and humidity can present serious long-term health risks. Standing water and wet materials are a breeding ground for microorganisms, such as viruses, bacteria, and mold. They can cause disease, trigger allergic reactions, and continue to damage materials long after the flood." Further information is avail-

able at www.epa.gov and www.epa.gov/iaq/flood.

Emotional Supports. Hurricanes, floods, tornados, violence, health-related issues, death of a loved one, separation or divorce, unemployment and more, occurring individually or collectively in one's life, can leave lasting effects, not only on oneself personally but for family members, including children and the elderly, co-workers and friends. Information on disaster recovery, including emotional coping is available at:

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency:**
Coping with Disaster - www.fema.gov/rebuild/recover/cope.shtm
Immediately After a Disaster - www.fema.gov/rebuild/after.shtm
- **Federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention:**
Maintain a Healthy State of Mind for different populations and ages - <http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/mind>
Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event - <http://emergency.cdc.gov/mentalhealth>.
- **Red Cross:**
Taking Care of Your Emotional Health After a Disaster - www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/checklists/EmotionalHealth.pdf
- **The National Child Traumatic Stress Network** - www.nctsn.org

Disaster Distress Helpline. National Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH) provides free, confidential 24/7 assistance for individuals experiencing stress, anxiety and depression that are common reactions after all types of disasters.

The Helpline, staffed by crisis counselors, provides crisis intervention for those in emotional distress, educational information about identifying stress and its effects, tips for healthy coping, and disaster-specific local resources and referral information.

Further information about the Helpline and signs of stress is available at

www.distresshelpline.org. The Helpline may be contacted at (800) 985-5990 or (800) 846-8517 TTY for the deaf or hearing impaired, or text *TalkWithUs* to 66746.

Health Issues

Pennsylvania Health Plan for Uninsured with Pre-Existing Conditions. PA Fair Care for adults with pre-existing conditions who have been uninsured for the past six months now is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The temporary plan, with a monthly premium of \$283.20 plus co-pays and coinsurance, will be available until federal health insurance reform takes effect in 2014. Persons are enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis while funding remains, after which a waiting list will be created.

Further information, including a downloadable poster are available at http://dsf.chesco.org/ccdcd/lib/ccdcd/2010/pa_fair_care_fact_sheet_final_7_28_10.pdf, at www.PAFairCare.com or at (888) 767-7015.

Free Women's Health Care Chartbook.

The Kaiser Family Foundation has released a new *Women's Health Care Chartbook* that describes key findings from its Women's Health Survey. Among findings are that one in 10 women were caregivers to frail or ill family members, with one in five of these women spending more than 40 hours per week in this area, with consequential strains on family finances.

The survey of women ages 18 to 64 provides a look at experiences of women in the health care system and presents a wide range of data on health issues of women 18 to 64, including insurance coverage, affordability of and access to care, use of health care services, prevention, and family health.

The report is available at www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/8164.pdf.

Low-Income Community Healthcare Access in Lancaster County.

Project Access Lancaster County (PALCO) provides a health care bridge for individuals with income too low to afford health insurance, but not qualifying for public assistance or Medicare. Anyone meeting program re-

quirements may receive physician services by paying a copayment. When necessary, related health care expenses such as hospitalization, outpatient care, lab work, X-rays studies and rehabilitation medicine are provided at no cost.

The program is a coordinated volunteer effort from physicians, hospitals, pharmacies and other health care providers to prevent treatable conditions from becoming life-threatening, and to reduce the use of emergency rooms to treat non-emergent illness.

Further information as to eligibility and services, along with applications for assistance, is available at www.palcolancaster.org.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Detection

Program. Free breast and cervical cancer detection examinations, along with free treatment in event cancer is detected, are available to eligible women through the Pennsylvania HealthyWoman Program (HWP).

Services include clinical breast examination, mammogram, pelvic examination and Pap smear, education on breast self-examination, and follow-up diagnostic care for an abnormal result, including free treatment through the Department of Public Welfare's Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Program. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among women, with risk increasing with age.

Further information about the program and qualifying is available at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/serve_r.pt/community/healthy_women/14172/healthywoman_program_home/557855%20?utm_source=Listrak&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=http%3a%2f%2fwww.portal.state.pa.us%2fportal%2fserver.pt%2fcommunity%2fhealthy_women%2f14172%2fhealthywoman_program_home%2f557855+&utm_campaign=Legislative+roundup or (800) 215-7494.

Community Cancer Education Programs.

Two organizations are providing educational programs on risk factors associated with cancer and methods of prevention at work

sites, schools, and community and faith-based settings.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health estimates that more than 60 percent of cancer deaths could be prevented with early detection and modifying risk factors.

-- A program by the **Chester County Health Department** discusses cancers such as colorectal, a leading cancer killer among both men and women, ovarian that causes more deaths in women than any other gynecologic cancer because it usually is not diagnosed until late stages, and prostate, the second leading cause of cancer deaths among men, particularly African Americans who have a higher risk.

Additional information, including scheduling, is available from Danielle Borden, public health educator, at (610) 344-6243.

-- **Fox Chase Cancer Center** is presenting interactive English and Spanish cancer education programs, with topics including colorectal, prostate, ovarian and skin cancer, with a goal of reducing the number of persons diagnosed with late stage cancer, ultimately reducing the number of deaths.

Further information and requests for scheduling English version programs are available from Armenta Washington at Armenta.Washington@fcc.edu or (215) 214-3984 and for Spanish version programs from Rosa Ortiz at Rosa.Ortiz@fcc.edu or (215) 728-5592.

Cancer Insurance Co-Pay Assistance

The CancerCare Co-Payment Assistance Foundation helps address the needs of individuals who cannot afford their insurance co-payments to cover the cost of medications for treating cancer. It also is affiliated with CancerCare, a national not-for-profit organization that provides free professional support services including counseling, education, financial assistance and practical help to people with cancer and their loved ones.

Further information is available at www.cancercarecopay.org, information@cancercarecopay.org, or (866) 552-6729 toll-free.

Medicare Adds Heart Disease Prevention Services. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has added coverage for a number of preventive services in an effort to help reduce cardiovascular disease.

Under the coverage decision, CMS will cover one face-to-face visit each year to allow patients and their care providers to determine the best way to help prevent cardiovascular disease. The visit must be furnished by primary care practitioners, such as a beneficiary's family practice physician, internal medicine physician, or nurse practitioner, in settings such as physicians' offices. During these visits, providers may screen for hypertension and promote healthy diet as part of an overall initiative to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in the United States.

Further information in regard to the initiative is available at www.cms.gov/apps/media/press/release.aspx?Counter=4162&intNumPerPage=10&checkDate=&checkKey=&srchType=1&numDays=3500&sr.

Information Source for Latino Health Care. The federal Department of Health and Human Services has a Minority Health website, in both English and Spanish to help connect minorities with new information and resources to improve access to quality, affordable health coverage. It is located at <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov> and <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/espanol>.

Fitness Program for Adult Cancer Patients. Kennett Area YMCA is conducting a free 12-week small group program for adult cancer patients who have recently become de-conditioned or chronically fatigued from their treatment or disease.

Living Strong, Living Well takes place for one hour, twice a week, and is designed to strength the heart and muscles, improve flexibility and balance, and develop relaxation techniques. Further information and registration is available from Stacie Taylor, health and wellness director, at (610) 444-9622 x46.

Free Lyme Disease Prevention Education

The Chester County Health Department is providing free educational presentations appropriate for schools, work sites, and community groups about Lyme disease.

Chester County has one of the highest incidence rates in the state. Over 800 new confirmed cases were discovered in the county in 2009, with Pennsylvania having the eighth highest rate in the United States. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that children are more at risk because they spend more time playing outdoors and in high grass or leaves where ticks that spread Lyme disease are found.

Additional information on Lyme disease and scheduling a presentation available at (610) 344-6490.

Lead Poisoning Screenings, Check Kits and Education Programs. Chester County Health Department is seeking to overcome the county's status of having the second-lowest lead screening rate in Pennsylvania with free lead level screenings for young children and pregnant women, do-it-yourself lead check kits to test for lead in homes and other locations, and lead poison prevention education programs for individuals and organizations dealing with children.

A major risk factor for lead exposure is spending time in buildings constructed prior to 1978, with more than 60% of homes in the county being built before that date. Symptoms of lead poisoning, such as irritable moods, learning and behavioral difficulties, fatigue, appetite and weight loss, abdominal pain, vomiting and constipation, often mimic other conditions and don't show up until lead levels are dangerously high.

Parents, services providers and day care centers can check paint, toys, dishes, play areas and soil with the free kit. Programs to educate organizations and staff, along with other free services are available from Lindsay Himes at lhimes@chesco.org or at (610) 344-6778. Downloadable posters in English are available at <http://dsf.chesco.org/health/lib/health/lead/leadfreeeng.pdf> and in Spanish at <http://dsf.chesco.org/health/lib/health/lead/leadfreesp.pdf>.

Lancaster County Low-Income Community Healthcare Access. Project Access Lancaster County (PALCO) provides a health care bridge for individuals with income too low to afford health insurance, but not qualifying for public assistance or Medicare. Anyone meeting program requirements may receive physician services by paying a copayment. When necessary, related health care expenses such as hospitalization, outpatient care, lab work, X-rays studies and rehabilitation medicine are provided at no cost.

The program is a coordinated volunteer effort from physicians, hospitals, pharmacies and other health care providers to prevent treatable conditions from becoming life-threatening, and to reduce the use of emergency rooms to treat non-emergent illness.

Further information as to eligibility and services, along with applications for assistance, is available at www.palcolancaster.org.

Multi-Route Walking Program

Coatesville on the Move (COTM), a community collaborative designed to create a supportive environment to improve the physical, mental and spiritual health of residents, has expanded its walking program started last year to five weekly times and locations.

Interested persons can join any of the weekday walking groups, with one starting on West Lincoln Highway and three starting on East Lincoln Highway, all in Coatesville, and a fifth in Thorndale.

A downloadable brochure that lists the days, times and starting locations is available at www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=157945770937755&set=pu.157322914333374&type=1 &theater.

Additional groups also are being encouraged, with further information available from Kathryn Spurlock at (610) 380-7111 x16 or kathryn@coatesvillecenter.org.

Free YMCA Memberships for 7th Graders.

Three area YMCA associations are offering free memberships for 7th graders, with current 7th graders being eligible through

August 31, prior to entering the eighth grade.

The YMCA of the Brandywine Valley, with centers in Coatesville, Kennett Square, West Chester, Jennersville, Cochranville, and Elverson; Upper Main Line YMCA with centers at Berwyn, Lionville and Eagleview; and the YMCA of Philadelphia and Vicinity that includes centers in Media and Ardmore, are participating in the activity that is part of a national focus on healthy lifestyles for youth.

Further information is available at www.ymcabwv.org/7GI/index.html, www.umly.org, and www.philaymca.org/branches/rocky-run/youth-teens, or at the local YMCAs.

Ultrasound and Pregnancy Tests

Chester County Women's Services at 17 South Street, West Chester, and 1028 East Lincoln Highway, Coatesville, provides free limited ultrasound and pregnancy tests.

Further information and appointments are available at (610) 918-7088 for the West Chester office and (610) 383-0930 for the Coatesville office.

Breastfeeding Classes

The La Leche League holds monthly meetings during which a continuous series of four classes provide mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information and education about breastfeeding.

Chester County groups include evenings in Downingtown and Exton-Lionville and mornings in Glenmoore-Elverson, Kimber-ton and West Chester.

Classes include *The Advantages of Breastfeeding*, *Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby*, *The Art of Breastfeeding and Avoiding Difficulties*, and *Starting Solids, Weaning and Family Nutrition*.

Further information and schedules are available at <http://beanmom.com/laleche/#dtn>.

In 2009, Acting Surgeon General Steven Galson, in highlighting the 25th anniversary of the Surgeon General's Workshop on Breastfeeding and Lactation, said that "(b)reast milk is the best source of infant nutrition." The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also says it is "committed to increasing breastfeeding

rates throughout the United States and to promoting and supporting optimal breastfeeding practices toward the ultimate goal of improving the public's health".

As a result of the H1N1 pandemic, the CDC also has issued guidelines for nursing mothers that can be found at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/infantfeeding.htm.

Free Texting Information Service for Pregnant Women and New Moms.

National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition has developed a public-private partnership to provide pregnant women and new moms with information they need to take care of their own health and give babies the right start in life.

Text4baby is a free mobile education service to promote maternal and child health. Women who sign up for the free service will receive free health text messages each week, timed to their due date and for up to a year after the baby's birth. Enrollment is available by texting BABY (or BEBE for information in Spanish) to 511411. Further information is available at www.text4baby.org.

Helping Children with Emotional and Behavioral Problems. The Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania (MHAPA) has published a *PA Roadmap to Help for Families of Children and Youth With Emotional and Behavioral Problems* that describes resources to aid parents with children with special needs. It is available at http://pachildrensnews.org/PDFs/Resources_Roadmap_Help.pdf.

Developmental Programs Guide. A new guide, *Understanding the Office of Developmental Programs in Pennsylvania: Mental Retardation & Autism Services* has been published by Vision for Equality and is available at www.visionforequality.org/pdf/goldbook201007.pdf.

Autism Resources at Chester County Libraries

All Chester County libraries have a new variety of educational resources on autism as a result of a grant from West Pharmaceutical Services in Lionville.

Further information is available at the libraries or through the Find a Resource Catalog section at www.ccls.org.

Autism Webinars

The National Autism Resource and Information Center is hosting an extended series of webinars on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to introduce or expand individual knowledge on various autism-related subjects including early intervention, safety, social security disability insurance, and information pertinent to military families.

Currently-scheduled webinars, along with prior sessions, are available at www.autismnow.org/about-us/what-we-do/webinars.

Stop Smoking Kits

Pennsylvania Department of Health is offering four-week nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) kits and counseling support to individuals trying to quit use of tobacco while supplies last.

Further information is available at www.DeterminedToQuit.com and free kits and counseling support are available at (800) QUIT NOW (784-8669).

Teen Prescription Drug Prevention ToolKit

National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) has introduced a new online toolkit for *Maximizing Your Role as a Teen Influencer: What You Can Do to Help Prevent Teen Prescription Drug Abuse*.

This resource includes a complete workshop module, handouts and instructions, as well as real-life scenarios, information about warning signs and symptoms, common myths about teen prescription drug abuse, brochures and sample promotional materials.

Federal reports indicate that prescription drugs – easily accessed in a family medicine cabinet -- are now abused more than cocaine, heroin, ecstasy and methamphetamines combined, with one in five teens having abused prescription drugs, one in three saying there is "nothing wrong" in using them "every once and a while." and nearly 2,500 teens abusing them every day for the first time.

Prescription drugs used for improper purposes can increase blood pressure or heart rates, damage brain and other organs, result in overdose, poisonings, addictions, breathing disruptions, seizures and death. Additional risks occur when mixing multiple drugs or combining them with alcohol.

The downloadable toolkit is available at www.talkaboutrx.org/maximizing_role.jsp.

Literature in both English and Spanish also is available at www.talkaboutrx.org/not_worth_the_risk.jsp.

Online Handbook Available to Help Parent Talk with Teens About Alcohol

Mothers Against Drug Driving (MADD) has developed a new 48-page online guide to help parents start talking with their teenagers about underage drinking.

The handbook is available through http://support.madd.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pop_reg.

Alcohol Consumption Screening Tool

A free online screening tool to help individuals assess their own alcohol consumption patterns to determine if their drinking is likely to be harming their health or increasing their risk for future harm is available through Join Together, a project of the Boston University School of Public Health.

Through education and referral, the website urges those whose drinking is harmful or hazardous to take positive action, and informs all adults who consume alcohol about guidelines and caveats for lower-risk drinking.

The tool is available at www.alcoholscreening.org.

Assistance for Families Addressing Addiction Issues

Pennsylvania Recovery Organization—Achieving Community Together (PRO-ACT) is hosting monthly Family Program gatherings to assist individuals and families recognize and address addiction problems in a spouse, parent, child or other loved one.

The information and support programs, facilitated by trained volunteers who have been in the same situation, are held for two

hours on one evening a week for three consecutive weeks. Program locations are at:

- **Chester County** – 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the first three Wednesdays in Room 336 of the Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Road, West Chester.
- **Delaware County** – 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the first three Tuesdays at Holcomb Behavioral Health Services, 126 East Baltimore Pike, Media.
- **Montgomery County** – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the first three Wednesdays at Creative Health, 11 Robinson Street, Pottstown.

Sessions are confidential, using only first names. Further information and required registration are available at (800) 221-6333 or at info@proact.org.

National Drug Use and Health Report A new report, Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health National Findings, has been published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is available at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k8nsduh/2k8Results.cfm>.

Training Manual for Brain Injury Survivors and Families

The Acquired Brain Injury Network of Pennsylvania (ABIN-PA) has published a training manual, *Building a New Life After Brain Injury: Peer to Peer Training by Survivors and Families for Survivors, Families and Friends* to encourage brain injury survivors to identify their unique abilities, develop new interests, and create a confident new life.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that traumatic brain injury “are often missed or misdiagnosed in older adults”. ABIN-PA also reports that brain injuries often are misunderstood within the general population. It says a brain injury means a “brain function was damaged by an event that decreased oxygen or blood to the brain. All brain injury is acquired (ABI) but some injuries result from physical trauma (TBI). These events are so common that people take them for granted, never realizing problems accumulate. Eventually, damage may equal a disability.

Any brain injury requires attention. Use caution to prevent a 'second hit'.

Potential causes of brain injury, according to ABIN-PA, can include alcoholism, anesthesia, aneurysm, a beating or a punch, bicycle crash, blow to the head, brain infection, brain radiation, surgery or tumor, cardiac arrest or surgery, a drug reaction, electric shock, explosion, gunshot, falling, high fever, impact, lightning, motor vehicle crash, near drowning or suffocation, poisoning, shaking, skateboarding or skiing crash, a stroke or whiplash.

A downloadable copy of the manual is available at www.abin-pa.org/Presentations/Manual for S & F Final 2009.08.23.pdf. Additional information about acquired brain injury, including downloadable brochures to assist in identifying these situations, is available at www.abin-pa.org and at www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury/index.html.

Suicide Prevention Training

Certified members of the Chester County Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force offer group trainings to lay persons on suicide prevention techniques.

Hour-long QPR (Question...Persuade.... Refer) classes that teach a life-saving technique to apply when someone is feeling suicidal, are available to schools, businesses and other community groups.

Further information is available at www.ccysp.org and scheduling is available at (610) 363-6164 or (610) 334-5359.

Agencies Partner with Facebook to Prevent Suicides

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline have developed a collaborative with Facebook to assist those in crisis and help prevent suicides in both the United States and Canada.

The service enables Facebook users to report a suicidal comment they see posted by a friend to Facebook using either a Report Suicidal Content link or report links found throughout the site. The person who posted the suicidal comment will then immediately receive an e-mail from Facebook

encouraging them to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-TALK (8255) or to click on a link to begin a confidential chat session with a crisis worker.

The Lifeline is a toll-free suicide prevention hotline network comprised of 152 local crisis centers. It is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and administered by Link2Health Solutions, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC). The Lifeline provides free and confidential crisis counseling to anyone in need 24/7 and has answered over 3 million calls since its launch in 2005.

Further information on the service is available at <http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1112125820.aspx>.

Food

Buy Fresh Buy Local Guide Available.

A Buy Fresh Buy Local *Local Food Guide for Chester County* farm stands and stores, community supported agriculture, farmers markets, specialty products and retail outlets is available at <http://dsf.chesco.org/agdev/lib/agdev/pdf/locfoodguide.pdf>.

Backyard Vegetable Garden Assistance.

Community Gardens of Chester County is offering free vegetable gardens for low-income county residents by working with individuals, families, and neighborhoods to build, grow, and harvest fresh vegetables in their own gardens.

The organization helps design and build raised-bed gardens and provides seeds, plants, education, and a network of supportive gardening volunteers to help those facing food insecurity learn the joys of gardening and become more self-sufficient, self-confident, and engaged members of their communities.

Further information is available from Amanda Galloway at (484) 888-1669 or gardenscc@gmail.com, with an application form available at www.gardenscc.org/gardens.

Consumer Publications and Food Saving Tips on Healthy Eating

The federal government provides publications and information, including recipes and budget shopping tips, to assist with healthy eating.

- Recipe publications are available at <http://publications.usa.gov/USAPubs.php?NavCode=XB&Sub2ID=46&CatID=6>.
- Diet and physical activity tracking, differences in food groups, and nutrition tips are available at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.
- Healthy recipes with fruits and vegetables, developed by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are available at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnparecipe/recipe/recipe.asp>.
- Tips for stretching a fruits and vegetable budget also is available at www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/downloads/Stretch_FV_Budget.pdf.

Food and Meal Programs

The Chester County Food Bank has published brochures that highlight food and meal programs available in the county.

Chester County Food Cupboards and Discount Food Purchase Programs provides more than three dozen locations and *Hot Meal Programs in Chester County* details nearly 20 sites.

Downloadable copies for display and distribution of the Food Cupboard brochure is available at

<http://chestercountyfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/FoodCupboardBrochureFebruary2012.pdf>, a Spanish version is at

<http://chestercountyfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/FoodCupboardBrochureSpanish2012.pdf>, and a map of food and meal sites is available at

http://74.53.227.37/~chester/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Food_Bank_Map1.pdf.

Downloadable copies for display and distribution of the hot meals brochure is available at

<http://chestercountyfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/HotMealBrochure2012.pdf>.

Housing Services

Free Homeowner Assistance for Mortgage Relief.

Federal Departments of the Treasury and Housing and Urban Development have created a website to assist struggling homeowners obtain mortgage relief through a variety of programs that aid in mortgage modifications, interest rate reductions, refinancing, deferred payment or transitioning out of an existing home while avoiding foreclosure.

The Making Home Affordable site, which provides a variety of assists, is available at www.makinghomeaffordable.gov.

Homeless Emergency Housing

Assistance. Open Hearth and Gateway Housing Group of Spring City enlists local services providers interested in quick turn-around housing assistance subsidies for homeless persons engaging in drug and alcohol or mental health treatment. The program, previously available in the Greater Phoenixville area, has been extended to all of Chester County.

Two levels of housing subsidies are offered, including short-term emergency rent assistance for hotels, motels, boarding houses or transitional living programs, and zero interest/zero payment security deposit loans.

Agencies must be a collaborative associate before funds can be provided, with no direct requests being processed from consumers. Further information is available from Open Hearth at (610) 792-9282 x201.

Shared Housing Program for Women.

The HomeShare Alliance, a collaborative effort of Home of the Sparrow and the YWCA of Chester County, helps match low income women in shared housing environments that will provide affordable housing for women and extra income for persons who would like to share their homes for financial, security or safe companionship purposes. An application process includes references, a criminal background check, and a child abuse clearance, if applicable.

Additional information is available at www.homeofthesparrow.org/homeshare.html.

Renter's Toolkit

Residential Living Options of West Chester has produced an online Renter's Toolkit to assist the disabled and others in understanding laws and procedures involving rental leases.

The non-profit organization is dedicated to assisting people with disabilities and their families in the pursuit of self-determined housing by providing creative options, education, and community collaboration.

The Toolkit, which includes topics on *Before You Sign A Lease, After You Sign A Lease, Rental Glossary, Reasonable Accommodate Sample Letter* and *Reasonable Modification Sample Letter*, is available at www.residentiallivingoptions.org/RentersToolkit/tabid/73/Default.aspx.

Housing Locator Service for Searchers and Providers.

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) provides an online housing search tool and a telephone call center to aid persons in finding apartments best suited to particular housing needs. A small number of homes associated with affordable housing initiatives and foreclosure prevention programs also will be available using the locator service.

Over 62,000 housing units, representing nearly 600 landlords, have been listed at the site to date, with 1,200 units vacant and available. Additional listings are added daily.

Most of the listings on the site are for available apartments, with a small number of for-sale homes being included. Homes available for purchase are limited to those that are a part of an affordable housing initiative, a foreclosure prevention program, or other specific community development or stabilization efforts. General for-sale housing is not available on this website.

The locator is available at www.PAHousingSearch.com, with the telephone call center also being available from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays at (877) 438-8844 for those without Internet service.

Consumer Electric and Natural Gas Shopping Guide.

Pennsylvania Office of Consumer Advocate is providing comparative information for consumers to aid in determining the best electric supplier to meet their needs as a result of PECO Energy electric rate caps expiring December 31 that will result in energy cost increases. Shopping guides for both electric and natural gas are available at www.oca.state.pa.us.

Finance

Online Bilingual Budget and Credit Planning. Credit Union National Association has developed seven interactive online coaching segments to assist individuals in situations involving individual and family finances, including budgeting and credit planning.

Segments involving checking accounts, credit management, identification theft, new and used car buying, couples and money, and home buying are available in English and Spanish as part of its Anytime Advisor Coaches initiative at <http://anytime.cuna.org/24482>.

Finances Materials. The Federal Reserve publishes a variety of educational resources for individual and school classroom use on the economy and finances. These are available at www.federalreserveeducation.org.

IRS Dirty Dozen Tax Scams List. The Internal Revenue Service has issued its annual ranking of tax scams, reminding taxpayers to use caution during the filing season to protect themselves against a wide range of schemes ranging from identity theft to return preparer fraud.

Although resident scams, including senior citizen targets, occur throughout the year many schemes peak during filing season as people prepare their tax returns, according to the IRS.

The *Dirty Dozen* list is available at www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=255122,00.html?portlet=107.

Parenting

Parent Assistance Internet Portal

Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created a Parent

Portal to provide easy access to health care information for families at various stages of life.

The web site is designed to be a consolidated CDC source for information to help parents raise healthy kids and provide a safe home and community. It also serves as a resource for information about diseases and conditions, as well as information on developmental milestones and schedules. The web site is at www.cdc.gov/parents.

iPhone Child ID App

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has created a Child ID application for iPhones that enables parents to store pictures and physical identifiers about their children to make them readily available to police or security officers in event a child becomes missing.

The application, currently available only for iPhones, will be expanded to other mobile devices in the future, along with additional features being created, including the ability to upload other photos stored on mobile devices. The application is available for free download from the iTunes App Store.

Further information about the initiative is available at www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2011/august/child_080511.

Classes in English and Spanish.

Chester County Women's Services at 17 South Street, West Chester, and 1028 East Lincoln Highway, Coatesville, offer ongoing parenting classes in English and Spanish that provide parent coaching and interactive discussions designed to help break past struggles and move forward, building better relationships with children. Participants also earn free diapers, wipes, baby shampoo and clothing by participating in the classes.

Further information and appointments are available at (610) 918-7088 for the West Chester office and (610) 383-0930 for the Coatesville office.

Free Youth Alcohol Screening Guide

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, in collaboration with the

American Academy of Pediatrics, has developed an *Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention for Youth: A Practitioner's Guide* for health and mental health care professionals, educators, juvenile justice personnel and others who manage the well-being of children and adolescents.

Further information, along with a downloadable version in full or pocket form and a hard copy ordering form is available at www.niaaa.nih.gov/Publications/EducationTrainingMaterials/YouthGuide.

Parenting and Children's Programming.

Holcomb Behavioral Health System, through state and county funding, is offering several programs to schools and community organizations to help increase family cohesiveness, communication between parents and their children, and parenting skills to aid in overall family health and wellness. Several are available for Spanish-speaking children and families.

Parenting Wisely – Two, two-session programs are available for parents of children three to eight years of age and parents 10 to 18 years of age that teach effective parenting methods with multiple solutions to common problem behaviors.

Children in the Middle (CIM) – A skill-based program aids middle school youth and their parents minimize a child's negative reactions to divorce. CIM focuses on reducing parental conflict, loyalty pressures, and communication problems that place significant stress on children.

Active Parenting of Teens (English) and Paternidad Activa de Adolescentes (Spanish) - This program helps provide parents with confidence and courage to meet challenges of their children's teen years. Topics include technology and social networking, teen bullying, improved communication and discipline, and teen brain development.

Padres Activos de Hoy (Spanish) – An interactive video-discussion program helps Spanish-speaking parents learn to encourage cooperation, courage, and responsibility in their five to 12-year-old children.

Beginning Awareness Basic Education Studies (BABES) - This seven-lesson program on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs uses interactive dialogue among hand-pup-

pets. It is used in elementary schools and after-school/community programs for kindergarten through second grade youngsters.

Say It Straight (SIS) - This interactive, energetic 10-session evidence-based program for elementary, middle, and high school students focuses on empowering communication skills and behaviors.

Project ALERT - A nationally recognized seven-lesson substance abuse program gives middle school students insight, understanding, and actual skills for resisting substance abuse.

Children's Program - This four-session program is designed for middle and high school students who have been identified as having substance abuse issues in their families. Educational and reflective activities help children cope with the stresses of family problems and strengthen their potential for resilience.

Safe Dates - A six-session interactive, evidence-based program for middle and high school students is designed to stop or prevent initiation of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse between individuals in a dating relationship. Teens learn to recognize the differences between caring, supportive relationships and those that are controlling, manipulative or abusive.

These prevention and education programs are designed specifically to meet needs of youth from diverse backgrounds and unique family situations. Sessions may be implemented in schools or after-school programs, with youth/community groups, or in other community settings.

Further information about the programs is available at (484)444-0412.

Stop Bullying Prevention Information.

The federal Department of Health and Human Services has re-launched a web site providing information and assistance to encourage children, parents, educators, and communities to take steps to prevent and respond to bullying.

It is available at www.stopbullying.gov.

Education

Free Education Data and Resources for All Ages. The federal government has created a new central website for education

data resources including high-value data sets, data visualization tools, resources for the classroom, applications created from open data and more. Datasets have been gathered from various agencies to provide detailed information on the state of education at all levels from cradle to career and beyond.

Information is available at www.data.gov/education.

Selective Service Registration for Student College Aid Recipients. The federal government reminds that most men between the ages of 18 and 25 must register with Selective Service to be eligible for federal student aid and grants, including college work study.

One who fails to register, if prosecuted and convicted, can face a fine of up to \$250,000 and/or a prison term of up to five years. Late registrations are accepted up to age 26, although men not registering within the 60-day window technically are in violation of the law and should register as soon as possible.

One registering will not be inducted automatically into the military. In event of a crisis that requires a draft, men would be called in a sequence determined by random lottery number and year of birth and then examined before being exempted or inducted into military service.

Further information about requirements is available at www.sss.gov/default.htm.

NOOK Loan Programs. Patrons at 18 Chester County Library System sites now can check out an e-reader NOOK, preloaded with popular eBooks titles, for three weeks.

Each local library has seven different genre based NOOKs, with patrons being able to choose from mystery, romance, science fiction, thrillers, non-fiction or biography titles. One also may search the library catalog for titles available on each themed NOOK.

Each member library also received, as part of \$30,000 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Innovative Projects Grant from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, a Nook Simple Touch, Kindle and Sony e-reader for a "petting zoo" to enable one to become familiar with the devices.

Parent-Child Home Visiting Program.

Friendship House in Pottstown provides a Parent-Child Home Visiting Program with twice-weekly visits to at-risk families in the greater Pottstown area to enhance early literacy and school readiness skills in children. New books and toys are provided as part of the activity.

Families with a child between 16 months and 35 months by September 1, and potential home visitors may obtain further information from Stacy Dori at (610) 327-2200 or sdori@friendshiphousepa.org.

Pre-School Program for Three and Four-Year-Olds.

Registration for free full-time pre-kindergarten programs is available at five sites for income-eligible families of children who will be between the ages of three and five on September 1.

The space-available, prioritization system programs operate weekdays at three Warwick Child Care Centers in Pottstown and one each at Lionville and Frazer, with free tuition being available for families earning less than 300% of poverty (for example, \$67,050 for a family of four).

Further information is available from directors at each site through www.warwickchildcare.com/pdfnew/brochure.pdf.

Parent Learning Series. Two Pottstown area school districts host parent education series during the year to assist parents in helping their children to learn more.

Pottsgrove School District will host four different Parent Learning Series workshops at seven sessions during the school year to aid district parents in assisting their elementary-age children with their education. Evening sessions include Everyday Math Night, Vocabulary Development, Family Reading and Elementary Technology. A schedule of the entire menu and dates is available at www.pgsd.org/StudentsParents/ParentLearningSeries/tabid/716/Default.aspx.

Pottstown School District, in partnership with Step By Step Learning®, hosts a series of Parent Literacy Nights for parents of pre-kindergarten through first grade children during 2011 to help the adults de-

velop child skills in learning to read and promote literacy at home. Information and a schedule of the events, is available at [www.peakonline.org/pdf/2011Save_the_Date_PLN_flyer\[1\]\[1\].pdf](http://www.peakonline.org/pdf/2011Save_the_Date_PLN_flyer[1][1].pdf) or (610) 970-6603.

Online Latino Student Opportunities Directory

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) has published its 6th *National Directory of Scholarships, Internships, and Fellowships for Latino Students* to provide a comprehensive list of opportunities for students and young professionals.

The online guide, including information on various aspects of applying for opportunities and financial aid, is available at www.chci.org/doclib/20112141737204152-CHCIDirectory6thEdition.pdf?trail=2011102710819

Homeless School Student Toolkit

The Education Law Center of Pittsburgh, in partnership with the Homeless Children's Education Fund, has published a *School Success for Students Without Homes: A Toolkit for Parents and Providers* to assist children who are homeless.

The Toolkit offers a variety of resources to identify a student's educational needs, address needs of unaccompanied youth, help ensure immediate enrollment in school and school stability, and provide a dispute resolution process guide for parents, along with specific sections on accessing pre-school, special education, and Title I services.

The online guide is available at www.elcpa.org/pubs/pubs_homeless.html?utm_source=Education+Law+Center+Newsletter&utm_campaign=10ef41f0a1-April+Education+Index5+23+2011&utm_medium=email.

Families Advocacy Support Related to School Exclusionary Discipline Practices.

The Arc of Chester County, a nonprofit advocate for rights of individuals with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities, monitors the use of inappropriate exclusionary disciplinary practices, such as suspensions and expulsions, for school children of all ages and can serve in an ad-

vocacy capacity. Further information is available at (610) 696-8090.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, recently developed a training publication, *Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion*, that indicates use of school suspensions and expulsions are inequitably applied in some schools and may lead to lower academic achievement and greater delinquency. The report on alternatives is available at www.pattan.net/category/Resources/PaTTAN/Publications/Browse/Single/?id=4dd3ed26150ba04c55100000, with information on School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Systems available at www.PAPBS.org and www.pattan.net/category/EducationalInitiatives/Behavior.

Online Assistive Technologies, Infant and Children Hearing Loss, and Early Intervention Orientation Trainings.

Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, is offering three monthly online training programs for early intervention service coordinators, early childhood teachers and providers, and parents on *Assistive Technology for Access and Participation in Typical Early Childhood Settings*, *Orientation to Deafness and Hearing Loss in Infants and Young Children*, and *Early Intervention Orientation*. Further information, including Act 48 education credits, and registration are available at <http://pattan.net-website.s3.amazonaws.com/images/events/2011/05/19/AT4EI060111.pdf> for the assistive technology program, http://pattan.net-website.s3.amazonaws.com/images/course/2011/08/29/Hearing_Online_Course_082211.pdf for the hearing program, or <http://pattan.net-website.s3.amazonaws.com/images/course/2011/06/14/EI-online070110.pdf> for the early intervention orientation, or from Linda Rhine at lrhine@pattan.net.

Low-Cost Computers for Families.

TeamChildren, a non-profit organization, provides low-cost refurbished computers to families, school and organizations.

Located at 960 Rittenhouse Road, Audubon, the organization also requires two hours of volunteering on the day the computer is picked up.

Further information and application forms are available at www.teamchildren.com or at (610) 666-1795.

Discounted Internet Service and Computers for Low-Income Families.

Comcast, under a Federal Communications Commission order resulting from the merger of Comcast and NBC, is offering an Internet Essentials program that provides low-income families with an economy Internet service and a low-cost computer.

The program is available to families in Comcast service areas that have at least one child receiving free school lunches, have not subscribed to Comcast Internet service within the past 90 days and do not have an overdue Comcast bill or unreturned equipment. The service costs \$9.95 per month, plus tax, without activation or equipment rental fees, with participants also being able to access online, in print, and in-person digital literacy training. A netbook style computer that supports both wired and Wi-Fi access also will be available for purchase at \$149.99 plus tax. Signups will be available for at least three school years but the rate will continue after that for anyone who already is enrolled in the program and continues to qualify.

Further information on the service is available at www.internetessentials.com, with application forms available at (855) 846-8376.

Free Telecommunications Equipment for Persons with Disabilities

The Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, with support from the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the Public Utility Commission, operates the Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP) that provides free equipment to help persons with disabilities make phone calls.

Individuals with disabilities include the deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, blind, and those with visual problems or physical or intellectual disabilities. Income-

eligible persons with a Teletypewriter (TTY) or other equipment needed for telephone service, including broken equipment, can obtain equipment if they are six years of age or older, live in Pennsylvania, have a phone line in their home and are unable to use a regular telephone.

Further information and application forms are available at <http://disabilities.temple.edu/programs/assistive/tddp/equipment.shtml>, (800) 204-7428, (866) 268-0579 TTY, or TDDP@temple.edu.

Free Language Learning Program.

Chester County Library System has an online learning program for patrons that teaches conversation and cultural awareness for 35 of the world's most popular languages, including Spanish, French, Japanese, Brazilian, Portuguese, German, Mandarin Chinese, Greek, Italian and Russian. Mango Languages also includes English as a Second Language (ESL) for some of the more commonly spoken languages, along with a translation tool.

Library card holders can access the service at www.ccls.org.

Foundation Center.

The Phoenixville Public Library at 183 Second Avenue, Phoenixville, is the area's Cooperating Collection of the Foundation Center, providing free public access to print and online resources for fundraising, proposal writing, philanthropy, and nonprofit management, along with periodic workshops and webinars on similar subjects. Further information is available from Mark Pinto at mpinto@ccls.org or (610) 933-3013 x32.

Public Events Videos

3CTV, a Chester County community online television enterprise, posts online videos of various Chester County public events.

Recent postings include the nearly three-hour 10th anniversary commemoration of 9/11 in the Lukens National Historic District, home of the returned steel trees from the Twin Towers that were originally manufactured in Coatesville, and the three-hour Coatesville Historic Commission's remem-

brance and reconciliation of the 100th anniversary of the murder of Edgar Rice and the lynching of Zachariah Walker. Video is available at www.3ctvlive.com.

Veterans

Military & Family Support Initiative.

Phoenixville Community Health Foundation provides an online information website to assist members of the military, veterans and their families in obtaining services they may need, including health, education, housing and employment opportunities, along with various benefit application forms.

Information is available at www.militaryfamilyinfo.org.

Veterans Emergency Assistance. Up to three months of emergency assistance to veterans and their beneficiaries is available under the Pennsylvania Veteran's Emergency Assistance program. Recipients must have suffered a sudden and unexpected loss of income or other source of support such that results in a direct and immediate demonstrable financial need for assistance in order to provide themselves and their families with food, shelter, clothing, required medical care and other necessities of life.

Further information about the program, accessed through application to county veterans affairs officers, is available at www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/veterans_benefits/11386/hidden/veterans_emergency_assistance/568172.

Montgomery County Veterans Discount Program. Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds Nancy Becker is coordinating a merchants and services discount program for veterans.

The Recorder will issue veterans photo identification cards that can be used at participating retailers and services providers for percentage or fixed amount discounts and is encouraging businesses to become involved in the program.

Further information is available at <http://rod.montcopa.org/rod/cwp/view,a,1681,q,85303,rodNav,1.asp> or (610) 278-3294.

Veterans Transportation from Western Montgomery County to Coatesville VA Medical Center. Bucks County Veterans Affairs Department provides transportation from East Greenville and Pottstown in Western Montgomery County to the Coatesville Veterans Administration Medical Center.

The van will pick up veterans and spouses on Wednesday through Friday mornings as it passes through those areas.

Further information about the service and required reservations is available at <http://mcva.montcopa.org/mcva/site/default.asp> or (610) 278-3287.

Veterans Employment Website.

Federal Office of Personnel Management has unveiled a new main source website for veterans employment in the federal Civil Service and for hiring officials.

www.fedshirevets.gov, a collaboration of OPM, the Departments of Defense, Labor, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security, and other Federal agencies, is designed to provide consistent and accurate information, useful training and other resources for veterans, transitioning service members, their families, federal human relations professionals and hiring managers.

Resources to Aid Employers Desiring to Hire Veterans.

U.S. Department of Labor has released a new online Toolkit of available hiring resources, including tax incentives, to assist and educate employers who wish to include veterans and transitioning service members into their recruitment and hiring initiatives.

The America's Heroes at work website is at www.americasheroesatwork.gov.

Online Regional and National Veterans Career Fairs.

Milicruit, a virtual career fair for veterans, and the White House Joining Forces Initiative conducts national and regional online career fairs for veterans, active duty personnel and military spouses, with private sector and federal agency employers being on hand for participants to visit employer booths, talk with recruiters, view and apply for jobs, build a profile, upload a resume, and chat with peers in the network-

ing lounge. Further information and schedules are available at www.veteranscareerfair.com.

Senior Citizens

Services and Guides. Pennsylvania government makes many publications available online to assist with issues involving senior citizens. They are available in different languages through www.aging.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/brochures/17935.

Choosing a Good Nursing Home Guide.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality provides information and guides on *Choosing a Good Nursing Home* and other long-term care at <http://healthcare411.ahrq.gov/radiocastseg.aspx?id=1244&type=seg>.

Older Driver Insurance Savings

Trainings. Several workshops for older drivers at least 55 years of age that provide at least five percent savings on car insurance for three years are available in the Chester County area.

AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) holds eight hour classes over two days in Downingtown, Phoenixville, Pottstown and other locations, along with a four-hour refresher that must be taken every three years. No tests are required. A schedule of the fee-based classes, given throughout the year, is available at (888) 227-7669 or www.aarp.org/applications/VMISLocator/searchDspLocations.action.

Links to other Pennsylvania-approved programs also are available at www.dmv.state.pa.us/olderDriverCenter/improvement_courses.shtml.

Extra Help Prescription Program for Low-Income Medicare Recipients

Low-income Medicare recipients may be eligible for lower prescription co-pays and premiums, and coverage for the labeled Donut Hole gap in coverage under the Extra Help Program.

The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimates that over two million Medicare recipients may be eligible

for but not receiving this benefit to enables purchase of generic drugs at no more than \$2.50 and brand names at no more than \$6.30. Savings of up to \$3,900 may be available. Further information and qualifications are available at http://dsf.chesco.org/aging/lib/aging/pdf/apprise_extra_help.pdf or at (800) 866-1807.

Persons who may have been turned down in the past due to income or resource levels are being encouraged to reapply. Free online applications may be made in English or Spanish at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp.

Suicide Prevention Kit for Senior Living Communities

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has published a new *Promoting Emotional Health and Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for Senior Living Communities*, to aid in mitigating suicide among the highest susceptible population.

The kit includes guidelines for integrating suicide prevention into ongoing programs, hands-on tools and training manuals, activities and programs of benefit to the emotional well-being of residents, and procedures for appropriate responses to suicide deaths and attempts.

Older adults have the highest rate of suicide after the age of 65 and particularly among men, with the percentage of successful suicide attempts being much higher with seniors than among others who attempt to take their own lives.

Further information and ordering information is available at <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SMA10-4515>.

Ongoing Medical Conditions Health Workshop for Seniors

National Council on Aging has introduced a new evidence-based online workshop for mature adults with ongoing medical conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, chronic pain, anxiety and others to aid them in taking better control of their health and their lives.

Better Choices, Better Health™ is based on Stanford University's widely tested Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and is designed to help identify ways to deal with pain, fatigue and stress, discover better nutrition and exercise choices, make informed treatment decisions, learn about better ways to talk with a doctor and families about an individual's health, and obtain support that is needed.

Further information and registration information is available at www.selfmanage.org/signup.

Seniors and Disabled Property Tax/Rent Rebate.

Eligible applicants can claim credit for the Pennsylvania Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for persons or spouses 65 years of age or older, widows or widowers 50 years of age or older; and permanently disabled 18 years of age or older.

The income eligibility level also has been raised from \$15,000 a year to \$35,000 annually, excluding half of Social Security income, and the maximum rebate is increased from \$500 to \$650 for homeowners. Maximum income for renters is \$15,000.

Applications are due by December 31. Further information and downloadable forms are available through www.revenue.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/property_tax_rent_rebate_program/11410 or at offices of state legislators.

Older Driver Safety Awareness: Starting the Conversation With a Parent or Loved One

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), the American Automobile Association (AAA), the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and The Hartford Financial Services Group are seeking to raise awareness of ways to keep seniors safe while driving.

Noting that over 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 each day, a trend that is expected to continue for the next 19 years, they are encouraging families of older drivers to start conversations about important topics related to driving, including driver safety, when to stop driving and transportation options for seniors no longer able to drive safely.

Further information, including free guides to help understand the need and how to approach a conversation is available at www.aota.org/News/Consumer/monday.aspx.

Legal Assistance

Legal Services of Southeastern

Pennsylvania provides legal representation to low-income and vulnerable populations in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties, along with public legal education in housing, consumer, family, elder and public benefits law.

Further information is available at www.lasp.org or (877) 429-5994.

Pennsylvania Farmworker Project of Philadelphia Legal Assistance provides legal assistance to migrant and seasonal farm workers throughout Pennsylvania and is available to meet with new clients from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Mondays at the Kennett Area Senior Center, 427 South Walnut Street, Kennett Square. In addition, outreach activities include visiting labor camps, educating workers about their rights, and providing training to regional and local service providers.

Further information is available at <http://www.philalegal.org/html/farmworkproject.html> or (888) 541-1544.

Aid for Farm Workers, Immigrants and Unskilled Workers.

La Comunidad Hispana coordinates a free legal assistance program for Chester County farm workers, laborers and other unskilled workers and immigrants.

Attorney John Winicov will provide a half hour of legal consultation, advocacy, education and assistance bi-weekly for up to four clients, in a legal and social problems collaboration with social workers and medical professionals on topics such as immigration, civil and consumer issues, landlord-tenant problems, domestic relations, auto accident claims and moving violations, and labor and employment issues.

Further information and appointments are available at (610) 444-4545.

Special Programs

The Factory House Provides Holistic Community Assistance.

The Factory House, a community assistance network, has opened at its renovated building at 3098 Lincoln Highway East in Paradise.

The facility, associated with The Factory Ministries and The Factory Youth Center, will serve as a hub and network for organizations, churches and businesses to offer practical assistance to the Pequa Valley School District community, including life and job skills workshops for adults, after school tutoring for students, crisis intervention and assistance for individuals and families, programs for persons with special needs, professional counseling and spiritual guidance and assistance.

The facility is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and other hours by appointment.

Further information is available at www.thefactoryministries.com/Factory_House, info@thefactoryministries.com or at (717) 687-9594.

Lifeline Cell Phone Service for Low-Income Persons

Low-income households may qualify for a free cell phone and up to 250 minutes of free airtime per month under a federal Assurance Wireless program with Virgin Mobile.

Persons receiving federal public housing assistance/Section 8, food stamps, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), National School Lunch, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, or State Blind Pension may already qualify.

Others may be accepted if total household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, for example \$14,702 annually for an individual and \$30,173 for a family of four. The number of minutes also can be doubled for a fee of \$5 per month.

Further information and application is available at www.assurancewireless.com/Public/MorePrograms.aspx.

Toll-Free Legal Helpline for Low-Income Persons. Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania (LASP) operates a toll-free legal helpline for income-eligible Chester, Montgomery, Delaware and Bucks counties residents from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. weekdays at (877) 429-5994.

Further information is available at www.lasp.org.

Cakes for Kids.

Birthday cakes are provided by Sweet-Dreams.org through a volunteer effort at no cost to children who otherwise may not receive one. Referrals of children in need may be made by churches, teachers, community members, parents and others. The organization formerly was Free Cakes for Kids.

Volunteer bakers and donated supplies are welcome. No special talents are needed, only a love for baking and a passion of heart to help bring a little sunshine into a child's day.

Additional local information is available at www.sweetdreams.org.

Requests for cakes may be made to Emily Parker at eparker.37@gmail.com or (443) 350-6853.

Energy-Efficiency Program Assistance for Smaller Local Governments.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is offering circuit rider assistance to local governments serving less than 35,000 residents in Chester, Montgomery, Delaware and Bucks counties to aid in reducing energy costs in municipal buildings, outdoor lighting, water/sewage treatment facilities, and vehicle fleets.

The initiative will provide direct technical assistance, workshops and training for water and sewage treatment operators, along with a quarterly seminar series highlighting energy-efficiency topics. A LED Traffic Signal Conversion Program will enable municipalities to replace incandescent traffic signal lamps with energy-efficient LED lamps, lowering operating costs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Information on the water/wastewater training is available at www.dvrpc.org/EnergyClimate/WSTP; quarterly seminar information at

www.dvrpc.org/EnergyClimate/CircuitRider/seminar.htm and the traffic lighting program at

www.dvrpc.org/EnergyClimate/CircuitRider/LEDTrafficSignals.htm, or from Liz Compitello, research analyst, Office of Energy and Climate Change Initiatives, at ecompitello@dvrpc.org or (215) 238-2897.

General Information

Area Demographics Information Tools

Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) are providing free online tools to assist in finding demographics information for areas within their regions.

Map Your Community is a mapping interface developed by PolicyMap and provided by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia that allows users to easily create custom maps for user-defined locations. These maps provide a snapshot of current and historical economic and demographic conditions and can be used to conduct data analysis for community development activities. Information is available for many socioeconomic variables, including poverty and income levels, housing, and education levels, at

www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/map-your-community.

The Census Data Profile Webmap, developed by DVRPC, allows users to quickly access Census Data Profiles, including recently released municipal-level American Community Survey (ACS) profiles. Information is based on a sample collected over the most recent five years and is not based on the 2010 decennial Census.

The nationwide survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, provides information on age, race, ethnicity, veteran status, household social characteristics such as relationships, languages spoken at home, and marital, educational, and disability status, economics such as income, employment, occupation, and commute time to work, and housing characteristics such as occupancy, tenure, year built, and value and cost.

The Webmap is available at www.dvrpc.org/asp/CensusMap.

Chester County Sustainability Website. *Sustainability* promotes a positive balance of economic, environmental and lifestyle factors that can affect quality of life.

The website, providing information for residents and businesses on maintaining agricultural, rural, urban, suburban and natural landscapes within the county, is available at www.chescopagreen.org.

Women and Girls Issues Report. The Chester County Fund for Women and Girls has issued a *Blueprint Report 2010* on issues and needs of women and girls in the county. The report, an update of a document first developed in 2005, includes statistical data and identifies the critical economic, social and health needs within the female population.

A downloadable copy of the 340-page report, along with a summary version of key findings, is available at www.ccwomenandgirls.org/defaultpage.aspx?pgid=84&m=2.

County Public Transportation Guide. An online public transportation guide that provides information about taxi, bus, and SEPTA-ADA paratransit services, along with paratransit and medical-related travel in Chester County is available at www.chesco.org/planning/lib/planning/transportation/pubtrnen.pdf.

West Chester Pike Transit Service Report. Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission report focuses on improving transit services between West Chester and the 69th Street Transportation Center in Philadelphia.

Boosting the Bus: Better Integration Along West Chester Pike attempts to identify a set of best practices to improve the quality of transit service in the West Chester Pike corridor, with a focus on SEPTA Route 104, along with its integration with corridor development, including speed and running ties.

A copy of the report is available at www.dvrpc.org/reports/10033.pdf.

Area Gas Prices. Prices at gas stations in your area or where you are traveling, updated three times a day by actual transac-

tions (significant change still may occur after posting). Available by county or zip code.

In periods of significant price fluctuations, prices can vary as much as 20-cents per gallon some days within relatively short distances, particularly if one is traveling. www.motortrend.com/gas_prices/31/Pennsylvania/index.html

Energy Savings Information for Churches

ENERGY STAR, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the federal Department of Energy, provides free information on how churches can save money by investing in energy efficiency.

The departments said that most congregations can cut energy costs by up to 30% by investing strategically in efficient equipment, facility upgrades and maintenance.

With free, unbiased information and technical support from ENERGY STAR, congregations can more easily improve stewardship of both church energy budget dollars and the earth by reducing energy waste and energy costs, while protecting the environment, the agencies note.

Information on the initiative is available at www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_congregations.

Electricity Monitors

Patrons at Honey Brook Community Library and Bayard Taylor Memorial Library in Kennett Square now can check out a Kill A Watt™ Electricity Monitor to see how much electricity home appliances use and where money might be saved.

The device is easy-to-use and includes a spreadsheet for recording purposes. Further information is available at the libraries at 687 Compass Road (Route 10), Honey Brook, (610) 273-3303, or at 216 East State Street, Kennett Square, (610) 444-2702.

Research Your Chester County Home.

Chester County Archives and Records Services has published a new online guide, *Researching Your Chester County Home*, that provides an in-depth explanation of how to perform research on the history of Chester County properties at

http://dsf.chesco.org/archives/lib/archive/s/Abridged_Printable_Guide.pdf. An abridged printable guide also is available on the site.

Speaker Podcasts.

Phoenixville Library makes available audio files of selected speakers that have provided presentations at the library during the past year on a wide range of subjects. They are available online at <http://www.phoenixvillelibrary.org/Podcasts.aspx>.

Regional Planning Handbook

Inter-Regional Planning Cooperative (IRPC), comprised of inter-municipal planning groups from the Upper and Central Perkiomen and Indian Valleys, and the

Pottstown and Phoenixville Regions, have published a *Regional Planning Handbook* as a primer for regional planning in the five contiguous areas. The IRPC is a voluntary and advisory body comprised of representatives of the regional planning organizations in those northern Chester and western Montgomery counties that meets to share information, identify areas of mutual support and cooperation and promote the cause of regional planning.

A copy of the *Handbook* is available at http://www2.montcopa.org/planning/cwp/fileserver/Path,PLANNING/pdf_files/RegPlanningHandbookfinal.pdf,assetguid,20d41043-c313-4a0f-a6ee0cb923b80411.pdf.

Employment-Related Information

Road to Employment. A Chester County Workforce Investment Board website providing information on employment-related resources is available at www.chesco.org/JobSeekerToolkit.

Support Groups for Unemployed and Underemployed

Several networking/support groups (open to everyone) are available at area churches for persons who are unemployed or underemployed, with each providing its own variety of specific services in support of those who attend:

- **Downingtown** (Lionville/Exton) -- Barnabas Group meets from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. Mondays at Calvary Fellowship Church, 95 West Devon Drive (rear entrance) at Route 113. This activity includes a short Bible study, networking opportunities and periodic special presenters. Additional information is available at BarnabasGroup@hotmail.com.
- **Manheim** -- Career Network (C3N) meets from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Mondays in Room 112 at LCBC (Lancaster County Bible Church), 2392 Mount Joy Road, Manheim with networking opportunities and workshops. Additional information

is available at www.lcbcchurch.com/careernetwork.

- **New London Township** -- Weathering the Storm group meets from 6:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. every other Thursday at the New London Presbyterian Church 1986 Newark Road (Route 896), Lincoln University, with a speaker and networking. Further information is available from Beth McDonough at mcddono@verizon.net or at (302) 894-9223 or at www.nlpcfamily.com/NLPC-Web/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=170.
- **Wayne** -- A one-on-one Employment Guidance Ministry, along with periodic special employment related events to aid jobseekers is available at St. David's Episcopal Church, 763 South Valley Forge Road, Malvern. Further information is available from George Vosburgh at gbvosburgh@aol.com or (610) 688-7947.
- **West Chester** -- Unemployment support group meets bi-weekly from 5:45 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 130 West Miner Street, West Chester, to learn tips and techniques related to job searches. Additional information is

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available from Elisabeth Hartwell at (610) 696-0554 or ehartwell@firstpreswc.com.

- **Area Affiliates of Joseph's People** meet during the month:
 - **Upper Uwchlan Township** -- 7 p.m. on the first and third Mondays at the School Education Center, St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church, 100 Fellowship Road, Chester Springs. Further information is available at (610) 321-1200 or at longtobefree2@hotmail.com.
 - **Media** -- 7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays at Hassler Chapel, Media Presbyterian Church, 30 East Baltimore Pike. Further information is available at (610) 566-3944.
 - **Downingtown** -- 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays, at St. Joseph's Parish, 338 Manor Avenue (Route 322), in the parish meeting room behind the school at the back of the property. Further information is available by leaving a message at (610) 873-7117.
 - **Springfield** -- 7 p.m. on the third Tuesdays at St. Francis Church Parish Rectory, 136 Saxer Avenue. Further information is available at (610) 543-0848.
 - **West Chester** -- 7:30 p.m. on the first Thursdays in the Fellowship Hall, Trinity Assembly of God Church, 1022 Pottstown Pike, West Chester. Resume review, interview practice, cover letter preparation, and job search strategies provided by volunteers. Further information is available from Dennis Cheek at ststoday@comcast.net or (484) 459-1981, or Geri Lessley at (484) 716-7123 or geri.lessley@gmail.com.

Additional information on Joseph's People and its individual units is available at www.josephspeople.org.

Free Services to Aid Youth Job/Career Preparation. Services to assist Chester County youth in realizing their full career potential are being offered in West Chester.

The House of Original Dreams (H.O.O.D.) is serving federally eligible youth ages 16 to 21 at facilities at 530 East Union Street.

The T.E.A.M. at the HOOD offers assistance with GED preparation, job readiness training including adult mentoring and supportive services, career counseling, and college preparation including assistance in completing college applications and financial aid research.

Free transportation is available from the Coatesville and Phoenixville areas and transportation assistance is available from other areas of the county.

Additional information is available at (610) 344-4225, at teamthehood@live.com or at www.thehoodonline.org.

Green Jobs Training. Organizations in Chester and Montgomery counties are providing assistance in obtaining certification in green jobs weatherization. Chester County OIC, 790 East Market Street, West Chester is conducting an on-going program to recruit weatherization installers, crew chiefs and energy auditors for a federal program designed to help reduce heating costs for low-income families and others. Installer positions are available immediately.

Training vouchers are provided on a first-come, first-served basis, with no income eligibility requirements.

Additional information is available at or at (610) 692-2344.

A downloadable information poster is available at <http://dsf.chesco.org/wib/lib/wib/pdf/2009/weatherizationflyer.pdf>.

Montgomery County Community College and North Montco Technical Career Center also are offering free training at the North Montco facility for individuals seeking to become a certified installer, crew chief and energy auditor for weatherization programs.

Further information is available at www.mc3.edu/Media/Website%20Resources/pdf/coned/weatherization.pdf or from Joan Branch at jbranch@mc3.edu or (215) 619-7331.

Child Care Certificate Training Program.

Chester County Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC) is providing a free child care certificate training program for income-eligible persons seeking positions in this growing field.

Further information is available at www.cc-oic.org/CCert.html or from Ceil Harkness at charkness@cc-oic.org or at (610) 692-2344.

High Priority Occupations in Chester County.

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry has released a High Priority Occupations list for Chester County that details the estimated number of jobs expected to be created annually, average wages and associated education.

The list is used to help identify government funds to be designated for use in developing education and training to help meet job creation needs and can be used by job seekers to determine areas that they may want to concentrate education and employment efforts.

The occupations list is available at http://dsf.chesco.org/wib/lib/wib/pdf/2010/final_2010_wia_hpo_chestercounty.pdf and the policy that helps determine government investment is at www.paworkstats.state.pa.us/admin/gsipub/htmlarea/uploads/HPO_Policy_090910.pdf.

Careers Exploration Web Site.

ExploreYourFuture.org is a website that provides assistance in exploring careers in health care, engineering and bio-tech. The site includes videotapes of different career fields and a gifts-careers matching program that assists persons in looking to the future as they plan potential jobs. The site is being expanded regularly.

Career Webinar Series for Most In-Demand Jobs.

The Chester County Regional Career Education Partnership (RCEP), in collaboration with RCEPs in Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks and Lehigh counties has started a monthly webinar series, *The Virtual Reality Career Webinar Series: Bringing*

You Real-Life Career Information on Pennsylvania's Most In-Demand Jobs.

These free online information sessions, created for students, parents and educators will provide information about Pennsylvania careers, along with follow-up resources for ongoing career exploration.

Further information and a webinar series schedule are available at www.careerreality.wikispaces.com.

Guide to Scholarships for Minorities

The DFW International Community Alliance publishes a free *Guide to Scholarships for Minorities and New Americans* that includes information on available scholarships and applying for college. The document is available at www.dfwinternational.org/resource_center/Scholarship_Guide.pdf.

Labor Market Information System.

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry has introduced a re-vamped website to aid job seekers and employers obtain employment-related information.

In addition to market information and career and recruitment services, the site now has job spidering technology that grabs job postings from any site and lists them to a common job board. The new site is available at <https://paworkstats.geosolinc.com>.

One-Stop Career Information Center.

Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor is sponsoring a *CareerOneStop, Pathways to Career Success*, website that provides a variety of consolidated job search, unemployment and other benefits, education and training, and other state-by-state information for those seeking employment.

Information is available through www.careeronestop.org.

On-the-Job Training Funds Available to Employers.

An On-the-Job Training Program that will reimburse employers for up to 50% of a new employee's salary while in training, up to \$6,000, is available through PA Career-Link®-Chester County.

Occupations with growth potential that result in permanent, full-time employment for qualifying employees are eligible for consideration.

Further information is available at the Chester County CareerLink office at 250 Harmony Street, Coatesville, or at (610) 384-9393.

Computer Workshops and Online Learning Opportunities.

Chester County Library at 450 Exton Square Parkway, Exton, provides online courses for several Microsoft, Adobe and WordPerfect software applications, along with other learning skills assistance programs, through library card holder services at

www.learnatest.com/LEL/index.cfm/?HR=http://www.ccls.org/databases/azdbsip.htm.

A synopsis of the services is available at www.ccls.org/assets/pdfs/learningexpress.pdf.

Online Jobs Searching and Computer Use Tutoring Classes.

Volunteers are providing free computer tutoring sessions at the Phoenixville Library, 183 Second Avenue, Phoenixville, and at the Chester County Library at 450 Exton Square Parkway, Exton.

At Phoenixville, a two-hour session on *Computer and Internet Basics* is available at 7 p.m. the first Monday and at 2 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month; with a one-hour *Introduction to E-mail* available at 7 p.m. on the second Monday and 2 p.m. the second Wednesday of the month.

A 90-minute *Job Searching Online* program is held at 7 p.m. on the third Monday, 2 p.m. the third Wednesday, and 10 a.m. the third Friday of the month; with a one-hour *Download! eBooks and eAudiobooks* being offered

Free activities. Further information and registration is available from Mark Pinto at (610) 933-3013 x32 or at mpinto@ccls.org.

At Exton, volunteer tutors provide two hours of assistance for persons who have never used a computer, with the program concentrating on using the equipment and basic skills for using the Internet and Ya-

hoo e-mail. Other courses also are available.

Appointments, based on tutor availability, can be made at (610) 280-2666.

Assistance for Persons with Disabilities to Obtain Employment .

Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare has a resource website for persons with disabilities who want to obtain employment.

Works for Me[™] can direct persons to agencies and programs that help Pennsylvanians with disabilities who want to work and improve their financial security. Caseworkers will review an individual's specific situation and provide guidance to resources to help find a job, obtain training, retain health insurance, obtain assistive technology, or find other support that may be needed, without losing benefits.

Information is available at www.worksforme-pa.org.

Additional Resources for Job Seekers.

Chester County Workforce Investment Board provides links to several resources that may provide assistance to the unemployed and underemployed, including career exploration guides, green jobs information, and lists of the county's top employers and high priority occupations, at www.chesco.org/wib.

Regional and National Online Veterans Career Fairs. Milicruit, a virtual career fair for veterans, and the White House Joining Forces Initiative conducts national and regional online career fairs for veterans, active duty personnel and military spouses, with private sector and federal agency employers being on hand for participants to visit employer booths, talk with recruiters, view and apply for jobs, build a profile, upload a resume, and chat with peers in the networking lounge.

Further information and registration are available at www.veteranscareerfair.com.

Free Business Support Services for Owners and Startups. Montgomery County Community College new Center for Entrepreneurial Studies (CES) that includes a business incubator is offering entrepreneurs an array of free support services, in-

cluding legal, accounting, marketing and technology. Representatives of the Small Business Association and Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) also available by appointment to answer business questions.

SCORE, a resource partner of the federal Small Business Administration (SBA) also holds *Business Ownership Basics – Live Your Dream* workshops from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month in Room 104, Parkhouse Hall, 340 DeKalb Pike, Blue Bell. Representatives discuss the importance of having a vision, strategy and structure, as well as methods to develop and grow a business, with participants doing a self-assessment and evaluation to determine whether being an entrepreneur is a good fit.

Further information is available from CES Director Ayisha Sereni at (215) 461-1140.

Grants Available for Energy-Related

Employment. Smart Energy Initiative of Southeastern Pennsylvania, a program of the Chester County Economic Development Council, has \$5,000 to \$6,000 grants available to hire unemployed Pennsylvanians for eligible “green”, energy-related positions. Funding must be confirmed prior to hire.

Further information is available from Will Williams at (610) 458-5700 x259 or wwilliams@cceconomicdevelopment.com.

Interview Clothes for Women

Two sites are available to provide free interview clothing for women seeking employment.

Soroptimist International of Pottstown and the Salvation Army are collaborating in a First Impressions Women's Career Clothing Closet at 137 King Street, Pottstown, to outfit women with attire for job interviews, entering or re-entering the workplace, college interviews, court appearances and other business-related needs.

First Impressions will provide an outfit for the first interview and one for a second interview/first day or work, with women having secured employment receiving five outfits.

Appointments are available from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays through vouchers from authorized referral agencies. Further information is available from Lee at (610) 326-8442.

A second women's outfitting initiative is available with Wings for Success in Malvern. Further information is available at www.wingsforsuccess.org.

Information in this E-Update Resources™ is designed to highlight primarily free resources that can help enhance Christian principles relative to development of healthy child, individual and family relationships.

Recipients are encouraged to print and post this Resources Guide to employee and public bulletin boards for benefit of others.

Information included in this publication is gathered from various submissions and other sources. No representation is made as to accuracy or value. Due to changes that may occur from time to time, users are encouraged to contact organizations prior to participation in any activity.

*Organizations wishing to submit information for consideration in future updates should provide brief descriptions **in the specific format contained in this publication** and e-mail them to bps461@msn.com. All necessary information must be provided, including any fees that will be charged, and whom to contact for information or registration, including appropriate and specific e-mail addresses and web sites.*

Information is selected on a subjective basis, with organization collaborations being given preference.

Timing of any future updates are dependent on volume and other considerations. Persons wishing to be included in future e-mailings of updates, should request inclusion by e-mailing bps461@msn.com.