

Behrend mentors 'adopt' Diehl school students

by Libbie Johnson
staff writer

As part of Penn State Behrend's Adopt-A-School program, students have the opportunity to affect students at Diehl Elementary, a local school. This program is especially important because 87% of Diehl students live at or below the poverty level and many students do not have access to artistic and cultural opportunities in the community.

Shawna Pelasky, coordinator of Greek life and student leadership programs, organizes the Adopt-A-School program. She said that it is a long-standing tradition for Penn State Behrend to have this partnership with Diehl. According to Pelasky, each semester about 20 students serve as weekly mentors weekly. Also, a number of other students participate in special events, such as Diehl Reading Day, throughout the year.

"You will build a relationship with a student who is greatly in need of your role modeling while gaining communication and team working skills," Pelasky remarked.

Pelasky said that each mentor will be assigned to a specific student for an entire semester. The mentors will be informed of the student's needs (both personal and educational), and the problems that put these Diehl students at high risk. The teacher and mentor will set educational goals for that student and will work together to see that these goals are achieved.

Pelasky wants to increase participation in the mentoring program: "Student groups and organizations interested in volunteering will be matched with a special project that focuses on the core knowledge that students must learn at a certain grade level."

This is Sarah Orr's first year as a mentor for the Adopt A School program. Orr, a fifth semester communications major, said she joined because she likes working with kids. "I hope I can have an impact on the students lives," Orr said.

Orr encourages fellow students to become involved with the program. "If any student's thinking of participating or wants to just help out in any way, definitely join Diehl Adopt-A-School, definitely become a mentor."

The program began September 11 this year, but Pelasky welcomes new applicants. "We can always use mentors and other volunteers," she encouraged.

Those students interested in the Behrend's Adopt-A-School program can stop by the Office of Student Activities for a brochure and an application. Mentors must commit to at least one hour per week, but are able to sign up for as many days as they want. Students will be matched up with a teacher who can use help during those hours.

The Adopt-A-School Program is also an important part of the Music at Noon: Logan Wintergarden Series, according to Daniel Barnard, choral director and coordinator of the Logan Series. "All of the Logan groups perform at Diehl. And we take great pains to attempt to coordinate those performances with the curricula of the Diehl students."

Barnard also said that some of the Diehl students are bussed here for the noon concerts in the Wintergarden. "This serves as a reward for exceptional students and they all look forward to it."

Dean Lilley's Goals for 2000-2001

Every year, Dean Lilley comes up with a list of his top ten goals to accomplish during the academic school year. Listed are his goals for the 2000-2001 school year.

1. Secure the release of the Research and Economic Development Center (REDC) for the Schools of Business and Engineering and Engineering Technology, making possible the AACSB accreditation of the School of Business, greater collaboration between the two schools, growth for both schools, and proper space for the School of Science.
2. Continue to appoint, tenure, and promote excellent faculty through nationally competitive salaries, careful review, and the promise of permanent offices.
3. Improve the quality of instruction, academic support, and student life through the appointment of additional faculty and staff and through the improvement of technology, particularly the library and the GE Foundation Computer Center's many labs.
4. Continue the development of the College's research and outreach missions through increased external funding of research, the continued development of Knowledge Park, and the continued development of Sea Grant.
5. Continue to raise the substantial dollars as a part of the Grand Destiny Campaign and to tell the College's story nationally.
6. Continue to improve enrollment management by raising admissions standards, attracting more international students, sending more students abroad for international experiences, growing Behrend majors, and minimizing growth until we get more space.
7. Continue the renovation of facilities to support instruction and to achieve handicapped access.
8. Plan a new addition to the Academic Building for Humanities and Social Sciences faculty offices and laboratories.
9. Secure the renovation of current student housing, secure additional housing, and provide additional parking and proper signage.
10. Acquire additional property as it becomes available within the approved campus master plan.



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