

# TEAMwork is supporting Middletown High students

## PSH students are mentors, volunteers

by Dani Church

Penn State Harrisburg is involved with Middletown High School in a mentoring program for teens. The program, called "Together Everyone Achieves in Middletown" (TEAM), strives to provide leadership for students who may need a little extra guidance in their everyday lives.

Modeled after the Big Brothers-Big Sisters program, TEAM matches up students between the ages of 14 and 18 with adult mentors. The program has been in existence for three years and currently has 18 matches between teens and mentors.

Penn State became involved through the Secondary Education department, but undergraduates and graduates of all majors are encouraged to participate in the TEAM project. There are several different opportunities for volunteer work. If mentoring is not your thing, there is plenty of organizational work to be done, as well as assistance with various planned events.

Expectations of participating mentors include a minimum of one verbal contact per week and one physical meeting per month. Middletown High School Principal Dennis Iezzi explains, "All you have to do is pick up the phone and ask how things are going. If you know that report cards just came out, then ask how his or her grades are. If their team had a match that week, ask how it turned out. It's that simple."

Iezzi developed the concept of setting up a mentoring program while he was working in his previous job as coach at the school. "Working with students on a one-to-one basis in athletics, I could see the effect that changes in society as a whole were having on the kids," said Iezzi. "At one time, undesirable behavior was restricted to fringe groups of students. With the breakdown of the family unit, this type of behavior was showing up in all types of students throughout the school system."

Iezzi firmly believed that role models are the answer. "Preaching and monitoring only go so far," said Iezzi. He felt that it is far more effective for adults to become involved with the students on a one-to-one basis so that they really get to know each other and develop strong communication.

Middletown alumni are very active in high

school events, and are proving to be the backbone of the TEAM mentoring program. "What better people for role models than the people who have actually walked these halls themselves?" said Iezzi.

Three times each year, TEAM hosts an activities night for students and all mentoring participants to get to know each other. The next activity night is planned for Mar. 21 at the high school. There are food and games such as volleyball, basketball and paddleball. Local merchants donate the pizzas and snacks.

Generous donations from companies such as GPU Nuclear, Family Medicine, and the Hetrick Center, to name a few, keep the organization on its feet. The Blue and Gold Club, an alumni athletic booster club, also is a contributor to the TEAM program.

The students involved in the TEAM project also feel it is important to give back to their community through service projects. Over the holidays, TEAM member students had a bake-off where they made chocolate chip cookies. The cookies were put in individual bags and given to Santa Claus to give out to the children visiting him in Hoffer Park. Future plans include working in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency to clean up streams.

Besides the regular activity nights and community service projects, special events are interspersed throughout the year. Iezzi put his coaching connections to work and set up a Pic-Tel conference with Jerry Sandusky, defensive coordinator for the Nittany Lions football team, for the students in the mentoring program. This teleconference will be held on Feb. 24 at the Capital Campus. Along with Sandusky, several athletes and scholars from University Park will also be involved in the conference.

Anyone who would like to become involved in the TEAM program is invited to contact Iezzi at 948-3333 or show up at the next monthly meeting. Organizers meet on the last Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the large group instruction room at Middletown High School. Keep in mind, an Act 34 background check on each mentor is required.

The motto of Middletown High School is PRIDE - perseverance, respect, integrity, discipline, and excellence. With the added assistance of the TEAM program, they are striving to help each and every one of their students achieve these goals.

## Support group formed for studying problems

A questionnaire was sent out over the winter break to gauge interest in a support group for students who have problems studying. Enough response was received to form a helpful support group. We normally meet on Wednesday from 12:15 to 12:55 in room W137. Anyone is welcome to join us, regardless of the challenges they may face.

Topics will include: How to study better; how to take tests more effectively; how to be

a better listener; preparing for the next semester; Attention Deficit Disorder; how to talk with teachers; after graduation, how do I talk with an employer; time management; and dealing with stress.

If anyone may have additional questions, please feel free to e-mail Kae at keb186@psu.edu or stop in at Donna Howard's office at student activities, room W117.

# Students remember Mexico



Erin Plummer explains her Pennsylvania Dutch Hex Sign presentation.

Recently, elementary education students from Penn State Harrisburg gathered with the campus community to reflect on an educational excursion to Mexico in December. Students from Penn State Harrisburg and two students from the Penn State Schuylkill spent five days in Pachuca, Mexico. Professors' Colleen Willard-Holt and Ranny Singiser, Schuylkill Campus Executive Officer Wayne Lammie, as well as Provost and Dean John Bruhn accompanied the students. The December trip continued Penn State's participation in the Sister Cities program between Pachuca, Hidalgo, and the City of Harrisburg, Pa.

During the visit the Penn State students taught classes and explored the opportunity for future student teaching placements at the Colegio Londres or London School of Pachuca (a private bi-lingual elementary and secondary school). The students also visited



A visitor looks over pictures of the students' trip.

Hidalgo University and were presented with the future opportunity, to attend intensive Spanish language courses. On the weekend, the delegation visited a variety of cultural and historic sites in the state of Hidalgo and Mexico City. At the presentation, students shared projects and experiences from the trip, in addition to showing a short video documentary of their travels.

## Pre-Law committee formed

A new committee, The Prelaw Advisory Committee, has been formed at Penn State Harrisburg. This is a group with student, staff, and faculty representatives working to develop greater support for students interested in a legal career—and those who are uncertain about whether or not they are interested in law.

The committee's first event of the year will be a program entitled "So You Want to Go to Law School?" in the Gallery Lounge on Tue., March 3, from 12:15 until 1:30 p.m. Diane Nichols from the Admissions Department at Dickinson Law School will speak about specific procedures at Dickinson and law school admissions in general. Dr. Blake Nelson, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, will focus on life in law school and how to prepare for it.

Other activities the committee might include are:

- Development of a web site to provide

information on law school and about the committee and its activities.

- Development of regular pre-law programs, such as bringing speakers to class who illuminate issues regarding the legal profession and law school.

- Development of brochures and other marketing informing new students about the program and how it can assist them toward a legal career.

One of the committee's important tasks is identifying students who may be interested in law school. Any interested student should send their name, mailing address and e-mail address to: Dr. Steven Peterson, School of Public Affairs (e-mail sap12@psu.edu; phone 948-6154) or Anita Alleman (e-mail ala1@psu.edu; phone 948-6042).

For further information on "So you want to go to law school," contact Dr. Barbara Sims at her internet address, bas4@psu.edu, or by phone, extension 6044.