

# GO PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS!



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## Project TEAM - Making A Difference In Kid's Lives

### LACEY LAPP

Project TEAM is a school-wide program that focuses on building leadership and team work through education. Lindsey Covert, the founder of the program, started to design the program seven years ago right after grad school, when she was a counselor at Hamilton Heights Elementary School. It is one of the first team building programs, and the ultimate goal, according to Covert, is to "teach leadership and team building... and give students a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose."

There are 10 goals in Project TEAM, based on six foundations. The foundations consist of helping others, positive changes in behavior, anti-bullying/social skills, problem solving and conflict resolutions, resiliency, and leadership. The first goal is to "give

students a sense of belonging and a sense of teamwork through working together as peers and as a school toward one common goal." Covert hopes that if students feel connected to school, they'll want to be there, and if they want to be there, "they're going to do better academically, socially, and emotionally."

The next two goals are to "create an environment where every adult in the building has an opportunity to help with this effort" and to "involve parents and the community to create relevance for our students."

"A lot of students and teachers have personalities that don't match," Covert explains. "The hope is that this gives students the opportunity to get reinforced through other adults that they have connections with." When students can get reinforcement from an adult

they connect with, whether it's a teacher, a parent or someone in their community, the hope of Project TEAM is that an adult can create relevance for the student. Covert states that students are able to understand things better if they understand the relevance.

Two more goals are to "motivate our students to do the best they can and be the best they can be" and to "decrease bullying by reinforcing leadership and teambuilding skills." Covert states, "a lot of programs try to intervene or have interventions for bullying... but I think it's important to be proactive and teach, 'this is how you treat other people, and these are some ways you can prevent bullying.'"

The last five goals are to "help to increase leadership and teambuilding skills through student teams and classroom teambuilding sessions", to "create quality connections and relationships for

our students", to "give kids a sense of ownership and responsibility", to "promote a physically and emotionally safe environment", and to "help students understand they can make a difference."

The symbol of Project TEAM is a house. Each side or part to the house stands for one of the six foundations. The school has a painted dollhouse that they put "Teamwork Tickets" into. As counselors talk to the students during each foundation session, and teach them each of the six foundations, the foundations are visually depicted on the house. As the sessions progress, students slowly begin to build the house as each foundation is covered.

Students also get involved with small volunteer programs for Project TEAM, such as their own "mini-THON" and a hat, gloves and scarves collection. Last year, the students had a talent show at the end of the year to raise

money and got to choose different organizations, such as Haiti, to send the money to. According to Covert, these programs give students the "opportunity to connect project TEAM with really cool stuff that's going on in the world."

Currently, the program is being used by Guildford Hills Elementary School and an elementary school in New Jersey. The program is currently for students from Kindergarten through fifth grade, but Covert hopes to eventually have a program that goes all the way through high school. According to Guildford Hills Elementary School counselor, Erica Pattillo, since the program was started in October, students have been "working more as a team and working together."

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