

Fall 2009

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NOVA NEWS

Advocacy, Prevention & Support for Victims of Crime in Bucks County

Puppets join NOVA staff

NOVA education staff is currently “training” its newest recruits—six adorable oversized hand puppets whose acquisition was made possible by a grant from the Doylestown Rotary Club—to assist NOVA educators in presenting safety skills programs to children with developmental disabilities. The team of puppets will debut in the Children with Developmental Disabilities elementary programs that begin in October.



With the new puppets are Jess Meyer, left, education department intern; Eleanor Wilhelm, right, training specialist; and Mary Worthington, elementary education coordinator, center front.

“We can’t wait to see the kids’ reactions,” says Mary Worthington, elementary education coordinator. The education department feels these oversized puppets will have a big impact—especially since they are similar to the iconic Sesame Street friends that children have trusted and loved for decades.

In the hands of NOVA educators, the puppets will help demonstrate behaviors and responses in the course of teaching social skills, safety skills and empowerment.

“Our goal for the Children with Developmental Disabilities program is to address the specific needs of the group we’re working with,” she says. “One child with autism is not exactly like any other child with autism. We tailor our programs, meeting with teachers to learn what we need to address in a class or school. Because we adapt it to meet the children’s needs, it has been well-accepted by parents, educators and administrators.”

While the puppets will be used primarily with kids with developmental disabilities, “We’ll utilize them as the need arises in other school programs, too,” says Worthington. ♻️

Inglis ACE honors NOVA

In June, NOVA received an Inglis Foundation 2009 Award for Continuing Excellence and \$20,000 unrestricted grant. The ACE program honors non-profit organizations in the Philadelphia region that enhance the quality of life for people with physical disabilities. In 1995, with initial funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, NOVA developed the Personal Empowerment Program (PEP) for people with physical disabilities. These PEP trainings address key personal safety issues and are provided to help reduce the risk of victimization. In FY 2008, NOVA provided 56 PEP trainings to 451 consumers and staff in Bucks County.



Reclaiming Dignity



Children's Advocacy Center becomes reality

The Bucks County Children's Advocacy Center, whose goal is to provide Bucks County's children with a child-focused, comprehensive, multidisciplinary team response to allegations of child abuse, has appointed Leslie Slingsby, MSW, LSW, as director. She is responsible for coordinating the Center's goals to protect the rights of child victims and promote their physical and emotional well-being during the process of moving the case toward prosecution.

In early 2008, leaders from Bucks County Children & Youth, Bucks County District Attorney's Office, NOVA and local law enforcement began meeting to discuss the need for a children's advocacy center in Bucks County. This past May, the county commissioners announced that the Bucks County Children's Advocacy Center had received start-up funding from St. Mary's Medical Center.

Law enforcement and Children & Youth will provide trained forensic interviewers and conduct investigations while the district attorney will designate key personnel to participate in interviews and team meetings and take appropriate cases forward in the criminal justice process.

Slingsby reports that the CAC has already made improvements to the system, including the use of a multidisciplinary team approach to reduce the numbers of interviews and

maximize their results. One trained forensic interviewer conducts the interview while other members of the CAC team observe through a two-way mirror and later give feedback.

"That puts every professional on the team on the same page," says Slingsby, "and enables the team to provide immediate, child-friendly therapy and victim-advocacy services—while protecting the child and keeping her or

him safe and secure."

The CAC method is beneficial in prosecuting cases in court. A single report is a more reliable and defensible tool than having several versions of a child's story for defense attorneys to pick apart.

...to provide immediate, child-friendly therapy and victim-advocacy services—while protecting the child and keeping her or him safe and secure.

CACs also help to reduce costs associated with investigations, improve communication among systems, increase family understanding of the criminal justice process and—most importantly—contribute to victims' healing.

"While we need to continue to find ways to stop abuse before it happens, we know that CACs can be effective in reducing the trauma that victims experience," says Slingsby. "Research has shown that coordinated investigations and the compassionate care of child victims are critical for successful outcomes."

NOVA Thrift Shop

Household Items Needed
Lamps, vases, pictures, holiday ware, linens
Old ~ Unique ~ Collectible
To sell for at least \$2
(or original retail \$8 & up)

1628 Swamp Road
Fountainville
215.249.8000
M-W, F & Sa 10-5:00
Th 10-7:30, Su 12-4:00

New Support Groups

Adolescent Sexual Assault Support
for girls ages 13-17
Monday evenings in Levittown
October 19 through
mid-December

Childhood Sexual Assault (CSA)
for adult women survivors of
childhood sexual abuse
Perkasie, mid-October
(day & date TBA)

Homicide Support
for family and friends of
homicide victims
Thursday evenings, bi-weekly,
ongoing
NOVA offices in Levittown
and Perkasie

Additional groups will
be forming.
Contact 215.343.6543 for
more information.



Building Strength




Create a Day of Caring for your team

Are you looking for a meaningful activity you and your coworkers can undertake that raises awareness, encourages team-building and strengthens your community? Create a Day of Caring around a NOVA project and get all these benefits, while supporting the programs and services we provide to crime victims in Bucks County.

Many local businesses recognize both the value of nonprofits in our community and the lasting advantages of volunteering. NOVA has benefited from the generous efforts of teams from Rohm & Haas, St. Mary Medical Center, Prudential Fox

Roach of Doylestown and National Penn Bank, to name a few.


Projects range from the administrative, such as mass mailings and data entry, to gardening, handiwork and painting. If you and your co-workers are interested in pitching in to help NOVA, contact Julie Dugery at 215.343.6543 or JulieD@NOVABucks.org to learn more.

We can shape a Day of Caring that fits your team's skills and interests and leaves each team member with a greater appreciation for NOVA's work and his or her role in its success. 

Give something that really matters

Many people have found that the true spirit of giving is not reflected in the things they exchange at the holidays, but in the greater good they can accomplish with financial gifts to a cause that's close to their hearts. Long-time NOVA supporters Laurie McCarthy Shutt and her husband, Bill, feel they have all they need. So last year, in lieu of gifts, they honored friends and family members with donations to NOVA.

"We had really good feedback, thanking us for doing this," says Laurie. "Besides raising awareness for an organization we believe in, it's a way to put meaning back into the holidays."

If you have questions about how you can make your holidays more meaningful with a contribution to NOVA, please call 215.343.6543 or email [Jan Finnegan, JFinnegan@NOVABucks.org](mailto:JanFinnegan@NOVABucks.org). 

We're so proud!

The Pennsylvania Office of Victim Services has announced that Kathy Bennett, NOVA's associate director, has been selected to receive the 2009 Governor's Victim Service Pathfinder Award in the category of Individual Organizational Capacity Building this November.

Bennett is being recognized for her contributions to and impact upon the victim services movement through her resourcefulness and innovation in advocating for the rights of crime victims.

Congratulations, Kathy!



"Really, Mom, the kids just love that fruitcake you sent!"

© Pat Achilles www.AchillesPortfolio.com

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Support



Prevention




Galaxy committee announces 2009 judges

A team of three well-qualified and generous art professionals have agreed to the judge 16th Annual Galaxy Art Show & Sale: Bucks County landscape painter Glenna Bye, gallery owner and widely respected conservator Paul Gratz and nationally recognized ceramics artist Lisa Naples.

Together, they will examine the hundreds of pieces in various media of more than 90 respected artists of the region exhibiting in the third-floor rotunda at the Bucks County Court House for four days, November 5 through 8. When the judges are through, we'll have six

winners and six honorable mentions to announce at the preview reception on Thursday, November 5, from 5:00 until 8:00pm.

Tickets for the reception, catered by Bobby Simone's, Crystal Rose Catering & Special Events Solution and Memorable Affairs Catering, are \$35 and can be purchased right from the NOVA website using PayPal. The remaining three days of the Show & Sale and special events are FREE and open to the public: Friday 10-10:00, Saturday 10-5:00, Sunday 10-4:00. For more information: 215.343.6543 or www.NOVABucks.com. 

FIRST FEDERAL OF BUCKS COUNTY presents

NOVA'S Galaxy ART SHOW AND SALE

16th Annual Fundraiser



Featured artist George Thompson paints *en plein air*.

www.novabucks.org

1-800-675-6900

24 Hour Victim Support Hotline

For Victims of Crime in Bucks County
Advocacy, Prevention & Support

of Bucks County



A Member Agency

Remember to designate NOVA

Tel.: (215) 343-6543
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