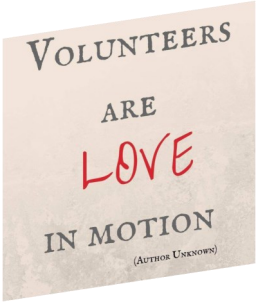
TRUANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM
STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

March 2016 MONTGOMERY COUNTY

21 New Volunteers Train to Tackle the Challenge



What is the Challenge?

Truancy. Truancy is missing 10% or more of school days in a year without lawful reason ("unexcused" absence).

Compulsory Attendance Law. Parents/Guardians who fail to see to it that their child attends school regularly can be charged under ED Article 7-301 with a criminal offense, if the child has 20% or more unexcused absences. A conviction for compulsory attendance can include jail and/or fine.

Consequences. Truancy could lead to low academic achievement, irresponsible behavior, disconnectedness to school and overall increase in high school dropout rates, substance abuse, criminal activity and lower lifelong incomes.

"Our intents survive — and thrive — thanks not only to our own ability to persevere but to our willingness to call on the people around us to help — and their generous, selfless, sometimes miraculous willingness to show up."

- - Malika Chopra, Living with Intent

The Solution

TRUANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM (TPP)

THE TPP IS A VOLUNTARY, EARLY INTERVENTION, AND SUPPORTIVE IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM.

The State's Attorney's Office, in partnership with Montgomery County Public Middle Schools, the Montgomery County Police Department, and Community volunteers confront truancy by addressing academic, school, personal, and family related factors.

The Goal

TO KEEP THE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AND FAMILIES OUT OF COURT.

- Reduce the unexcused absences of each child by at least 60%
- Provide positive influence, support and encouragement
- Improve goal setting and academic skills

THINK ABOUT IT

Truancy is costly: "..it costs businesses, which must pay to train uneducated workers. It costs taxpayers, who must pay higher taxes for law enforcement, and welfare costs for dropouts who end up on welfare rolls or underemployed" (Center for Children and Youth Justice Report, "Truancy Reduction: Research,

Even if you don't think so.....

Students report that having a person at school who is checking up on them, gives the sense that someone cares and motivates them to come to school.

—Center for Children and Youth Justice Report, "Truancy Reduction: Research, Policy and Practice" (Washington State)

Truancy Prevention Program Volunteers Orientation & Training, Jan. 22-23, 2016

State's Attorney John McCarthy welcomes the new volunteers and explains why his favorite number is zero

Officer Percell Gregory leads mentor group discussion

Rexanah Wyse discusses truancy judge and site coordinator roles.

George Simms, Chief of Outreach Unit orients the new volunteers with the community need and talks about the Compulsory Attendance Law

Welcome to the TPP TEAM:

Al Blount
Bob Wood
Dowin Coffy
Ericka Arancibia
Jack Weld
Jerry Udell
Joyce Smith
Kimberly Jones
Leslie Frenette
Mamta Rajan
Dr. Mary Jackson
Nancy Paz
Priscilla Wiafe
Rachel Shuster
Ronald Griffin
Veronica Renderos
Sarah Giacalone
Sandy Selman
Stephanie Nguyen
Sydney Bhagratti
Terry Melo

AT TRAINING, volunteers are oriented with the community need & volunteerism; get an overview of the truancy problem, and what the State's Attorney's Office and its Truancy Prevention Program are doing to address the problem. What is the TPP Model, what is its impact on the students and families it serves, what is my role and how do I fit in the Program's network of support? These are just some of the questions that were addressed at Training to prepare the new volunteers to serve over 150 students enrolled in the Truancy Prevention Program for the spring 2016 semester.

THE GOAL IS zero. Mr. John McCarthy, Montgomery County's State's Attorney came to training to personally welcome the new members of the TPP Team, and to illustrate why this program is one of his most important initiatives. He also shared the story of how the Truancy Prevention Program came to Montgomery County, partnering with the University of Baltimore School of Law, and expanding from 2 schools in 2010 to 15 schools today. Mr. McCarthy also made a personal appeal to the volunteers to help him achieve his goal of reaching his favorite number ~ ZERO. That is, zero prosecutions! Mr. McCarthy recognizes that truancy is correlated with many delinquent behaviors by children and believes that efforts at reducing truancy is critical to public safety and the key to preventing possible delinquent or criminal behavior.

TPP Spring 2016
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What's NEW?

Tutoring launches in 4 schools

The TPP expanded to 3 new schools, bringing our partner schools up to 15 this spring 2016 semester, from 12 last fall semester.

The TPP also launched, for the very first time, its tutoring program in 4 schools this spring.

TOGETHER, WE ARE CURRENTLY SERVING 157 MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN IN 15 SCHOOLS ACROSS MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

Our Network of Support

Community Volunteers - 22
State's Attorney's Office - 8
Pupil Personnel Workers - 15
School Resource Officers -14
School Counselors - 49
School Principals - 15
and many more from the schools' administrative staff.

Persistence

"You cannot force someone to comprehend a message that they are not yet ready to receive. Still, you must never underestimate the power of planting a seed."

Remember why you volunteered with us?

Here are your reasons:

I want to be a TPP volunteer because I...

- want to help children reach their full potential
- want to help create positive attitude towards education
- enjoy teaching & making a difference in other's lives
- want to get involved in the community & give back
- want to inspire & show that hard work pays off
- struggled with truancy too & would like to provide support and acceptance to those who may be dealing with it
- want to provide support through encouragement & skill building
- have been blessed with educational opportunities all my life & this is an opportunity to help others who may not be as fortunate
- want to help children see the value of an education & the opportunities that education provides one in life
- have seen students improve with the help from others & I know the TPP is a way to help students to problem solve

- want students to be able to have someone to confide in
- want students to feel that they matter & that someone cares
- want to continue to use my teaching background to support the success of a child
- want to be part of a program that provides the capacity to assist students who are in need of some guidance, or just need a listening ear
- believe I can teach children special skills and habits vital to success that they will continue to utilize throughout their lives
- had mentors that provided me with support, and I am a firm believer of "paying it forward"
- want to remove students' fear of math

- would like to give children the tools to discover their self worth, abilities & to improve their self esteem
- have lots of life experience & I am a great listener
- believe that every child needs some source of direction, mentoring & care
- would like students to realize that education is the key to a good, solid, productive life
- would like to experience something new & different
- want to continue to teach & tutor in a setting with different types and ages of students
- would like to do whatever I can to help children improve their lives

It is our hope that your TPP volunteer experience helps you stay true to your intentions.

Mark your calendars!

April & May

Late April ~ Early May

★ Individual school graduation
(check with site coordinators for dates)

June 1

★ Countywide TPP graduation ceremony
(details to follow)

THE SAO TPP TEAM

George Simms. *George is an Assistant State's Attorney, heads our Community Outreach Unit & serves as Truancy Judge in 3 schools. Because George has been involved in the TPP from its inception in 2010, he has a deep understanding and commitment to the program.*

Phil Andrews. *Phil co-leads our Unit with George, also the Director of Crime Prevention Initiatives & serves as Truancy Judge in 3 schools. Phil served in the County Council for many years, giving him a broader perspective of our County's needs & making him an asset to the Community Outreach Unit.*

Lynda Earle. *Lynda is an Assistant State's Attorney & also serves as Truancy Judge in 3 schools. Having served as Truancy Judge from the TPP's inception in 2010, Lynda has the experience & significant insight on the program that can be valuable to program quality assessment and capacity building.*

Rexanah Wyse. *Rexanah is an Assistant State's Attorney & TPP's Program Manager , who also serves in 7 schools as Site Coordinator . Rexanah is instrumental to the success of the program, from coordinating SAO's partnership with UB School of Law, to helping develop & implement the program's expansion, including the launching of the after school tutoring which is the newest component of the TPP.*

Joseph Hooks. *Joseph recently joined the Team as Assistant TPP Coordinator . He brings with him many years of experience with the youth as School liaison and Recreation Specialist. His experience working with the MCPS & most recently as After School Activities Coordinator with the Recreation Department has already proven to be valuable to the Program.*

Yasmine Eleazar. *Yasmine is an AmeriCorps member serving as Volunteer Maryland Coordinator under a VM-SAO Partnership to develop the TPP's tutoring component & also to implement and manage the Volunteer Program including recruitment, training, support systems, and program sustainability.*

Please stay in touch. Email or call **Yasmine Eleazar** for questions, feedback, suggestions: (240) 777-7501; yasmine.eleazar@montgomerycountymd.gov