



PHFA's Housing
Services Department
Best Practices

Altoona Evergreen Manor Family Resource Center

Category: Access to Services

Outcomes:

The scope of services available to families at Altoona Evergreen Manor is truly comprehensive and delivers concrete benefits to residents and management. From improved school grades, crime prevention and activities to keep youth engaged, to building a playground on the property, the services at Evergreen Manor make a difference.

Program Components:

- **A Youth Program conducted by “Beating the Odds” Foundation.** Founder Rocco Scalzi has donated his time and a paid staff person to conduct a “Quarter Back” Club during the summer. The club meets weekly in the Supportive Services Office. Students are also mentored during and after school. For more information go to: www.beatingtheodds.org
- **The Evergreen Manor’s Girl Scout Troop # 623** consists of thirty-five scouts, one leader, one assistant leader and four volunteers. The troop won third place for their float in the Christmas Parade and boasts third place in cookie sales in the council area their first year. The meetings are held weekly in the Evergreen Manor’s Community Room. The troop is very active, having camping trips, community projects, and earning badges.
- **Three large annual events: “All American Festival”, Fall Fest and a Christmas Celebration.** This year the third annual “All American Festival” was the best festival so far. Donations from a variety of community organizations and businesses brought in: tents, tables and chairs, food, gift certificates for restaurants and Curve Baseball tickets, DJ services, activities and door prizes. Educational events, games, contests, music and dancing, artists and magicians contributed to a great atmosphere.
- **Resident Participation:** Leadership workshops and a leadership group was established in January 2007. The initial members were four women who were leaders and volunteers for the Evergreen Manor’s Girl Scout Troop. The focus at that time was meeting organization, facilitation, roles and responsibilities, time management, and team building. The group now consists of eight women and two men who participate in Neighborhood Crime Watch, Girl Scouts, community events, welcoming new residents, problem solving, fundraising and the Summer Feed Program. The members developed the following Mission Statement for their group: “We are committed citizens whose goal is to build a stronger community

Units: Altoona Evergreen Manor Phase I & II consists of 158 units for general occupancy.

Management Agent: Improved Dwellings for Altoona, Inc.

Service Coordinator: Kathy Baskin, Supportive Services Coordinator, Improved Dwellings for Altoona, 814.283.1181.

Director of After School Program:

Toni Bilik, Executive Director of Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation, 814.949.8838.

by volunteering, recruiting others to volunteer, and being an example to others. By helping ourselves and others we take pride in doing something good for our community by volunteering and participating in youth programs, community organizations, and special events.”

- **Parenting issues** are resolved by providing information or through referrals to the Family Resource Center. The Center provides one-to-one parenting assistance in the resident’s home weekly or more often if needed. The FRC also provides individual potty training assistance.
- **Housekeeping skills** are addressed by the Service Coordinator upon referral from the Manager. The Coordinator provides one-on-one, in-home instruction and assistance to assist those who are having trouble meeting basic maintenance standards in their apartments. The Coordinator identifies residents that are eligible for free in-home assistance from an area agency and refers the resident for services, such as the Center for Independent Living, Home Nursing Agency, Blair Senior Services, and North Star Support Services.
- **Adult education and job development** provided by the Community Education Center include GED classes and employment assistance. Two residents have achieved a GED. One is a great grandmother and the other a single mother of two. The single mother, after receiving her GED secured a better job. There are eleven residents registered and seven attend regularly.
- **Budgeting skills and financial literacy** are addressed by the Blair County Community Action Agency upon referral from the Supportive Services Coordinator. Budget counselors meet with Referrals individually in the Supportive Services Office at scheduled appointments.
- **Health Promotion** activities include the “You Won’t Measure UP!” health and fitness program, a Smoking Cessation Support Group, presentations by a local physician and a food pantry that is operated five days per week. Mental health is now addressed by Nulton Diagnostic and Treatment Center with on-site individual or family counseling at scheduled appointments and through a variety of presentations on such topics as domestic violence, depression and stress reduction.
- **Crime prevention** through a neighborhood watch group is making a difference. The neighborhood Crime Watch Group attends trainings and meetings held within the county. They report suspicious activity and meet with local law enforcement to discuss areas of concern. The Crime Watch group leader, in collaboration with the Supportive Services Program, completed a grant to Operation Our Town for the purchase of additional surveillance cameras.
- **Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation after school program** works with teachers and parents to support and model good behavior and improve grades. It is achieving success in both areas. The Life Skills coach conducts classes that focus on character education, services learning, meal and laundry budgeting, cultural appreciation and civic awareness. Proud parents report that their children’s grades are the highest they have ever been.
- **The Summer program conducted by the Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation** includes exposure to creative dance, reading camps, field trips, wildlife rehabilitation, sports programs and positive character building activities. Children interact with inspirational local and regional leaders. Instructional sports clinics teach skills, self control, a good attitude, and team spirit. Kids College allowed grade school children to spend time on the Penn State Altoona campus and showed them that college really can be in their future.

- **Great Service Coordination** and management buy-in are key components to any successful services program. At Altoona Evergreen Manor all services staff meet regularly to assure smooth operations and use of resources. Monthly meetings with site management are used to review referrals, proposed activities and progress of on-going programs.

Background:

Altoona Evergreen Manor consists of 24 two-story buildings. There are a total of 158 units with one, two, three and four bedrooms. A HUD 236 development, it went under moderate rehabilitation in 2001 and 2002 to upgrade and preserve the development with PHFA financing.

Investment in Services:

Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation, in combination with funding from the United Way and Altoona Hospital, has a full-time person on the property to develop and coordinate services for children in grades K-6. The Foundation has supported services at this development for more than 10 years.

RESULTS	
Legal Expenses	have declined by 68% during the three years since the Family Resource Center started.
Bad Debts	have decreased by 19% in the same time period.
Resources leveraged:	In the first three years of the Family Resource Center Program, more than \$56,440 was raised from other sources to support programming (\$119 per unit per year).

Improved Dwellings of Altoona, Inc. expanded their services program with Family Resource Center funding in 2004. Additional resources used to support services include a Neighborhood Assistance Program Tax Credits, and the development's annual operating budget. The collaborative programming with local social service agencies is key to the success of Supportive Services at Evergreen Manor.

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