

Carbondale Partnership with Penn State Prevention Research Center Recognized Model by White House

On October 27th, PSU's Dr. Mark Greenberg joined First Lady Laura Bush and other prominent prevention researchers, policymakers, and educators for the first ever White House Conference on Helping America's Youth.

The conference focused on the problems facing at-risk youth in America and provided an opportunity to highlight examples of proven effective practices, such as those taking place in Carbondale, at the Prevention Research Center and in Pennsylvania PROSPER Communities. The Center's research has addressed a wide range of preventive intervention projects involving youth and families—including prevention of substance abuse, youth violence, and promotion of academic success.

The Prevention Research Center was nominated for the White House Conference based on its innovative PROSPER (PROmoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience) project with Carbondale and six other communities across Pennsylvania.

Through PROSPER, families in Carbondale and the Greater Upper Valley have the benefit of receiving access to PSU's cutting-edge research. PROSPER is a unique partnership between the Prevention Center, PSU Extension and the Carbondale Area School District.

Evidence-based programs implemented through earlier generations of the community partnership model have shown significant improvements in communities, including more effective parenting, better academic achievement, decreased alcohol, marijuana, meth and cigarette use and less violent behavior.

The seven PROSPER communities in Pennsylvania, including Carbondale, are utilizing an evidence-based family strengthening program—the Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14. An economic analysis suggests that for every one dollar invested in this program, a community will receive an estimated \$9.60 return on their investment.

“We are very fortunate to be part of the evidence-based PROSPER partnership model,” says Karen Thomas of PSU Extension. “Carbondale has an opportunity to make a real difference in our children's future—the programs we are implementing here are proven effective and we are thrilled that the First Lady recognizes the importance of what we are doing.”

PROSPER in Carbondale and the Greater Upper Valley has been supported through grants from PSU, and funding from local businesses and organizations including Kartri

Sales Company, Inc, Gateway Health Plan, Knights of Columbus, Marian Community Hospital, The Ben Mar Restaurant, The Windsor Inn, and Pizza Hut. For more information about getting involved in the Carbondale PROSPER program please call: Karen Thomas at 963-6842.