

# Family and Community Resource Booklet

By: Adelina DiTullio and Rachel Schwartzmiller



# Allegheny Children's Initiative

## **Who is this organization?**

Allegheny Children's Initiative is a trauma informed social services agency located in Pittsburgh's Southside neighborhood. It provides behavioral and mental health oriented services to children and adults between the ages of 2 - 21 in Allegheny County.

## **What do they do?**

Allegheny Children's Initiative brings families, schools and community organizations together! They help children to function at their highest abilities by providing services that assist in anger management, anxiety, depression, trauma, direction following, eating disorders, sleeping disorders and bullying.

## **Why is this important?**

Everyday, many children struggle either in the classroom, at home or even in both environments. They struggle to find a place where they are understood, valued or seen. That is where Allegheny Children's Initiative comes in to assist not just the student but the entire family. They help by listening to the parents and child about their difficulties, pulling out the strengths and developing treatment plans that can be implemented in the comfort of the child's home. They teach, consult and answer parents questions on how to assist their child who is struggling while providing a sense of hope via a plan that is tailored to each and every family.

# Allegheny Family Network

## **Who is this organization?**

Allegheny Family Network is a family-run organization rooted in supporting and partnering with families who have children with mental and emotional health needs. AFN works to improve the quality of life for families with children who are struggling both mentally and emotionally.

## **What do they do?**

Allegheny Family Network provides support for all levels and members of families within Allegheny County. They offer family education and training, including GED programs and other adult education. AFN provides programs for children and youth, as well as, programs specifically tailored to fathers. They also offer support groups for families.

## **Why is this important?**

Allegheny Family Network's mission to provide support to families with students who suffer from social, emotional, and mental health concerns, allows for families to be educated, trained, and informed on how to manage situations they may find themselves in. AFN also provides support and support groups for families that may need additional assistance. AFN is an important resource to provide to families so that they are aware that they are not alone in their search for aid in managing social and mental health concerns within students.

# Big Brothers and Big Sisters

## **What is this organization?**

Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh is a youth mentoring agency that matches children ages 6 - 18 from single parent families, low income households and underperforming schools with adults looking to make a profound and direct impact on the youth that need them most.

## **What do they do?**

Big Brothers and Big Sisters provide the gift of friendship by spending quality time with the “littles” in simple, affordable means. This can be as simple as spending a few hours together throughout the month playing board games, going to the park or participating in the events sponsored by Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

## **Why is this important?**

Many schools in the Pittsburgh area are categorized as underperforming schools with children from single parent, low income families. These are the exact students that would benefit from the partnership that Big Brothers and Big Sisters offers. By recognizing this organization and encouraging students to utilize its services, a teacher is connecting that student with an adult who can lead, guide and push that student to reach his/her full success. It could even provide the student with an adult that they feel comfortable discussing things with that they would discuss with their parents. All in all, this is an awesome organization to keep in mind as you come into contact with students who need that extra person who cares, supports and pushes.

# Down Syndrome Association of Pittsburgh

## **Who is this organization?**

The Down Syndrome Association of Pittsburgh works to enrich the lives of those with down syndrome as well as families and their communities. This organization works to establish communication, education, advocacy and support for those with down syndrome.

## **What do they do?**

The Down Syndrome Association of Pittsburgh offers parents a number of events that provide them the opportunity to bond with other families and find the positives of raising a child with down syndrome. They also offer extensive medical correspondence through Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh by providing unique health care, consultations about developmental or behavioral health, providing resources to get children involved and more!

## **Why is this important?**

As an early elementary teacher, you will be one of the first liaisons that a parent has with any caregiver of their child. Some parents will have it all figured out, but others will still be struggling to fit all the puzzle pieces. That is where a recommendation to the Down Syndrome Association of Pittsburgh comes into play. Making parents aware that there are resources out there to help not only their child but also their family could serve as the difference between an attainable, fulfilling lifestyle or a struggling, desperate parent. When parents know they don't have to figure it all out alone, you develop a positive, trustworthy relationship that will leave them confident in your ability to care for their child during the school day.

# Family Links

## **Who is this organization?**

Family Link's mission is to provide support to children, families, and seniors within the community to ensure that the people they serve have the ability to be happy and healthy individuals. Family Links works to strengthen the community, building up the community by providing support to those within it.

## **What do they do?**

Family Links offers a variety of supports and services including mental health education and assistance, school services, and housing and independent living assistance. Family Links also offers services for older individuals within the community to remain active and healthy through activities and exercise. Family Links is an all encompassing organization that works to better the community, through bettering individuals.

## **Why is this important?**

Family Links is an amazing resource to provide to students and families. With a variety of programs, supports, and services, Family Links uses community resources to better the members within the community. Family Links partners with other community organizations to foster a better sense of community and engagement. Family Links works to serve over ten thousand people within Western Pennsylvania, connecting individuals to one another, creating a united community. By fostering connections, by building up the individuals that reside there, Family Links is bettering the community they serve.

# Greater Pittsburgh Area Food Bank

## **Who is this organization?**

The Greater Pittsburgh Area Food Bank works to bridge communities by helping those who suffer from food insecurities. The GPAFB helps individuals live happy, healthy lives, by providing food resources to those in need. Food is a fundamental essential to life. The Greater Pittsburgh Area Food Bank supports the community, through helping those who need assistance.

## **What do they do?**

The Greater Pittsburgh Area Food Bank collects, packages, and distributes food for those within the community who are in need. The GPAFB offers healthy food options for children and adults within school and daycare settings, ensuring a nutritious meal. They partner with schools, shelters, and senior living centers to provide healthy meals to those they can.

## **Why is this important?**

By providing healthy options to those who are food insecure and struggling, the Greater Pittsburgh Area Food Bank brings the community together, ensuring that all families within the area are healthy and well. Hunger can cause serious concentration, attention, energy, and achievement issues within the classroom. By ensuring that all students are well-fed and well taken care of, the Greater Pittsburgh Area Food Bank is helping students live healthy, happy lives. The Greater Pittsburgh Area Food Bank is a wonderful resource

for families to utilize, ensuring that all students and their families can be well nourished.

# Jewish Family and Community Services Pittsburgh

## **Who is this organization?**

The Jewish Family and Community Services Pittsburgh is dedicated to serving the community and community members through support in all endeavors in life, including changes and challenges that life throws. The JFCS Pittsburgh is working to ensure that all community members have the resources and ability to reach their full potential.

## **What do they do?**

The Jewish Family and Community Services Pittsburgh offers a variety of services to community members. Services range from career development, counseling, immigration and refugee consultation and legal support, scholarships, and senior citizen services.

## **Why is this important?**

The Jewish Family and Community Services Pittsburgh is an important resource for students and families. The JFCS Pittsburgh works to ensure that all members of the community are provided for and have the potential to thrive within their lives and community.

The Jewish Family and Community Services Pittsburgh is an organization that cares about the well-being of all community members. They partner with other community organizations to

promote a better life for all community members, working to push individuals within the community to reach their maximum potential.

## North Hills Community Outreach

### **Who is this organization?**

North Hills Community Outreach is a community and interfaith based organization that assists the needs of people who are suffering from crisis, hardships and poverty. They desire to create a community where no one is cold, hungry or alone.

### **What do they do?**

North Hills Community Outreach does everything! There are multiple food pantry locations, services for senior citizens, legal assistance from reliable law personnel, employment assistance, utility aid and more! Most importantly, all of their services are **free!**

### **Why is this important?**

How can we expect a student to learn when they are coming to school hungry or going to bed shivering? We must consider their physiological needs as laid out by Abraham Maslow before we consider educational needs. There may be families in our area who could benefit from the services provided by the North Hills Community Outreach, thus if a teacher observes this behavior in a student a recommendation to utilize such services could vastly improve the quality of life for a family. Additionally, the services provided by the North Hill Community Outreach could positively affect the performance of the student in school as they can now focus

on their educational goal attainment as opposed to their physiological needs.

## The Highmark Caring Place

### **Who is this organization?**

The Highmark Caring Place is a center for grieving children. The Caring Place offers a safe space for children to work through grief surrounded by others who are experiencing similar situations. The Highmark Caring Place offers support to children and families, ensuring every person that is experiencing grief has the opportunity to work through their emotions in a healthy manner.

### **What do they do?**

The Highmark Caring Place offers support, for children and families, through peer support groups. Children and families are able to process grief in group support settings, learning through others' experiences and processes. They also partner with schools to explain grief in a way that students can acknowledge and understand. The Caring Place provides grief education through training and education for school professionals and parents.

### **Why is this important?**

Grief is often pushed aside as something that people can just "get over." Especially for children experiencing loss, the effects of grief on everyday activities last longer than a funeral. By providing an outlet for processing grief, the Highmark Caring Place is emphasizing the

importance of coping with losses that children experience. The Highmark Caring Place is dedicated to helping children and families.

## The Wesley Family Services Center

### **Who is this organization?**

Wesley Family Services is a non-profit organization that is committed to providing high quality behavioral healthcare services and support programs to children, adults, and families over the course of their lifespan so that they are empowered to reach their full potential.

### **What do they do?**

The Wesley Family Services Center provides services for children as young as three to senior citizens as well as families. These individuals could seek assistance from this organization if they were struggling with autism, behavioral issues, addiction, financial troubles and even incarceration. The Wesley Family Center will provide evaluations, counseling, support groups and more unique to each family. With locations across western Pennsylvania as well as designated school facilities, the Wesley Family Services Center is sure to be a helping hand in a struggling family.

### **Why is this important?**

Families are bound to be burdened by a number of situations that are unpredictable with solutions that seem unattainable. The Wesley Family Services Center is capable of identifying the resources that a family may benefit from and making them achievable via their

transformative care leaving behind an empowered child, adult and family. By encouraging families to utilize these services, we are laying the path for a more effective and efficient care plan.