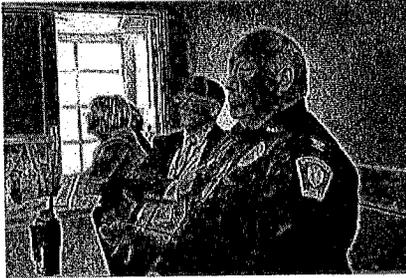


[dailyadvocate.com](http://www.dailyadvocate.com)

Organizations eye youth mentor grant

By Stacie Ward sward@civitasmedia.com

February 14, 2015



DARKE COUNTY - The Darke County Chamber of Commerce continued on its roll to tackle local issues with the Drugs in Darke County Initiative on Tuesday as an informational meeting aimed at bringing grant dollars in to help youth was hosted with many local leaders in attendance.

The Community Connectors Grant, proposed by the office of Governor John R. Kasich during his 2014 State of the State address, is aimed at helping students reach their full potential by bringing together parents, schools, communities, faith-based groups, businesses and students in mentoring programs.

This \$10 million grant program will match three dollars for every one dollar provided by local partnerships with a maximum award of up to \$500,000.

According to Chamber President, Sharon Deschambeau, one of the projects in the Drugs in Darke County Initiative strategic planning session was "role model and mentoring." This project will reach out to high risk groups with role models of health, drug and substance free living, proving this grant closely aligns with the initiative.

"The Community Connectors Grant offered by Governor Kasich's office presents an opportunity to bring 3:1 matching grant dollars to Darke County. The grant would provide dollars for an organized approach to mentoring not only high-risk students, but other students as well," she stated.

In discussions with Jeff Vaughn, Achievement Center for Educational Success (ACES) Coordinator, it was learned that the Council on Rural Services (CORS) was considering applying for the grant and soon collaboration among CORS, the Chamber and the Drugs in Darke County Initiative was well underway.

"I applaud Jeff Vaughn and the CORS for wanting to bring this to the students and businesses in Darke County," said an encouraged Deschambeau.

According to Vaughn, the grant is based on five core principals of hope building. They include setting goals for 21st century careers, building character, decision making/critical thinking skills, resiliency and the belief in a positive future.

In addition, there are many benefits of an organized mentoring program such as work readiness and career exploration opportunities, HR departments speaking to students and information on skill sets needed in the company. Professional etiquette, tours of facilities, job shadowing and internship opportunities and strengthening of the workforce are also experienced.

"Our businesses and human resources professionals have described the workforce in Darke County as 'aging' and have also noted that the Ohio Department of Development has projected a declining population for Darke County in the next 25 years. This stresses the fact that every student in Darke County is important as a potential future employee," added Deschambeau.

Vaughn continued to share his belief in mentoring success due to first-hand information.

"I see our kids succeed in ACE because they have built relationships with our adults, and it's all about creating that 'relationship building' with them, to help them become successful," he stated. "We've had a great track record with these kids graduating and becoming employed, which part of this grant is based on job readiness. Mentoring does work."

Goals of the Community Connectors Grant are beneficial community-wide.

They include reduced drug and alcohol use, a better prepared workforce for employees, a stronger community network and an increase in community pride. Youth will have a brighter future and citizens will be invested in Darke County. Workplace culture and professional etiquette will be improved and youth will be motivated and inspired to find their purpose and reach for the stars.

Deschambeau further added the need and importance of community involvement.

"I would encourage businesses in Darke County to invest in the future workforce by making a financial contribution, an in-kind donation or consider mentoring," emphasized Deschambeau in regards to this particular grant.

According to Bev Delk, CPA, any taxpayer, including individuals and businesses, can deduct a contribution to any donee that is designated as a 5019c(3) organization. To be deductible, these contributions are subject to the applicable limitations for each type of taxpayer.

If the contribution is more than \$250, the taxpayer must obtain a written acknowledgement from the donee organization by the due date of the taxpayer's return that shows the amount of cash contributed, or a good faith estimate of the value of any goods or services provided.

For additional information on the Community Connectors Grant presentation by Vaughn and the partner worksheet, visit the CORS website, www.councilonruralservices.org.

Link: <http://www.dailyadvocate.com/article/20150214/news/302149984/>

© 2014 Civitas Media, All rights reserved