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Student Assistance in Action*

their parents' drinking was not the reason for their referrals.

Taken together, our results exemplify what the program is all about: early identification of behaviors of concern and a systematic response by schools to link children and their families to appropriate interventions and resources for each according to the concerns and pressures they face.

At WestEd we have developed a multimedia CD ROM, due out this summer, on how to conduct an elementary student assistance program. We are also in the process of developing technical assistance packages to assist other schools in implementing an SAP using the integrated database management system. For more information contact www.wested.org and click on Student Assistance Programs.

Cynthia Peck, PhD, is Project Director of Creciendo Saludable and has been developing student assistance and children of alcoholic model programs for 12 years.

IN MEMORIAM

Seymour Gretchko, long-time strong student assistance supporter, and Michigan's 2000 "Superintendent of the Year," died of a heart attack in March.

Dr. Gretchko, who was still an active superintendent at age 71, came to the West Bloomfield School District in Michigan 20 years ago. Upon his arrival, a group of the school district employees asked him to close schools for a day and bring Claudia Black, PhD, in to educate every employee from the bus drivers to top administrators about children of alcoholics,

SAP AND COAs

By James Crowley

Research has shown, and it is now readily accepted, that children growing up in an alcoholic or drug dependent family fall into predictable, unhealthy patterns of reactive behaviors. These children bring their unhealthy coping skills to school and they negatively affect the ability of the child to reach the goals of the educational system.

School Student Assistance is an early-identification and support program designed so that these young people can be identified and referred to services that can help them before their problems become serious. A school-based program provides the greatest leverage in working for change with this very needy group of children. For example, the fifth grader who is learning self-destructive behavior patterns from her alcoholic parents can be offered support for behavior change.

James Crowley, MA, started some of the first student assistance programs in the nation during the 1975-76 school year.

their needs and the school systems opportunities to help them.

Although opposed to closing school, unaware of the connection between children of alcoholics and school issues, and never having heard of Claudia Black, Dr. Gretchko listened to his employees. Thus began one of the finest student assistance programs and best educated school systems on alcohol and drug problems. Dr. Gretchko, who loved children and believed they could "reach for the stars" with appropriate understanding and support, will be sorely missed.

VIDEO SHELF



SAP TODAY VIDEO LIBRARY

By Stephanie Abbott

Student Assistance Programs,

modeled on Employee Assistance Programs, have come of age and proved their worth in identifying and providing solutions to common problems of children in the school system. A trained core team of teachers, counselors, school nurses, and administrators devise appropriate in-school support or referral for students with observable problems. Follow up and statistical evaluation insure that the program proves its worth, particularly to school boards that approve the expenditure.

The process is admirably explained by a new package of three videos by the always superb Gerald T. Rogers Productions with Performance Resource Press (the publishers of Student Assistance Journal). It is the result of the vision of PRP's founder George Watkins. The package includes three videos: the Overview provides the basics — who it is for, how it works, and how it benefits schools. The second, Join the Team, explains the roles, responsibilities, and training of the SAP core team members. The last, Referral, is designed to help students understand the kind of support available to them and encourages them to use their school's SAP.

I recommend the videos to all who work with the student population. For more information, or to order, see PRPonline.net or call 1-800-453-7733.