

# Prevention and Early Intervention

## Responsibilities

- ◆ Work with Texas communities to develop and improve prevention and intervention services for children and families at risk of abuse, neglect and delinquency.
- ◆ Support those community-based programs designed to prevent abuse, neglect and delinquency.

## Advances

Community Youth Development grew from 13 programs to 15 programs. The two new programs in Pasadena and Dallas are community-based initiatives designed to prevent juvenile delinquency in targeted areas.

Facility-Based Youth Enrichment Services expanded from one to three programs. Houston, Fort Worth and Lubbock now have these after-school and summer programs targeting youths at risk of juvenile crime or dropping out of school.

Communities In Schools (CIS) of Texas hosted more than 500 field staff and volunteers from 26 local programs at a training conference. National CIS representatives helped implement the national training model at the first-ever statewide conference. In addition to networking, participants were introduced to PEI and new CIS field staff received orientation training.

PEI added the At-Risk Mentoring (ARM) program to its integrated data management system. The automated system allows PRS and ARM providers to more effectively manage contracts and prevention services.

During 2001 PEI staff prepared for the first annual PEI Provider Conference scheduled for FY 2002. The conference provides a forum for PEI's 16 different program providers to network and learn from each other. The conference focuses on issues such as budgeting, contract monitoring and fiscal evaluation, that affect every program provider.

## Work in Progress

The Children's Trust Fund became part of PEI on Sept. 1, 2001. PEI is working to integrate Trust Fund programs into PEI for seamless prevention services

without duplication. Executing and monitoring contracts consistently is one focus of the merger.

PEI continues to expand its automated data management system. This is a secure Web-based application that allows PRS and providers statewide to manage contracts and prevention services. So far, Services To At-Risk Youth (STAR), Community Youth Development, At-Risk Mentoring and Communities In Schools are online.

The Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program is developing a request for proposals for respite care statewide.

PEI is working with the United Ways of Texas to implement the Legislature's directive to assess the needs of and coordinate seamless prevention services to six non-urban counties in Texas. The project targets youths at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

## Significant Legislation

The 77th Session of the Texas Legislature enacted a number of bills of interest to PEI, including the following:

- ◆ SB 55 creates a statewide infant mortality prevention education program.
- ◆ HCR 254 directs PRS, in conjunction with the United Ways of Texas, to assess the needs of and coordinate prevention services for youths at risk of entering the criminal justice system in six non-urban counties.
- ◆ SB 1475 transfers the Children's Trust Fund to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.

## What PEI Does

PEI manages and contracts with community-based programs designed to prevent the abuse, neglect, delinquency, truancy and dropping out of school of Texas children. PEI also supports programs that address the abuse, neglect and exploitation of the elderly and adults with disabilities. PEI programs are administered through contracts with local community agencies or organizations. PEI also helps local communities enhance the services that all PRS programs provide.

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)



All services are not available in all Texas communities. To find out if your community has services available, visit our Web site at [www.tdprs.state.tx.us](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us).

## Programs Benefiting Children, Youth and Families

### At-Risk Mentoring

Adult mentors spend time on a weekly basis with youths. Mentors are supervised during their involvement with the youths to ensure that the relationships are mutually beneficial. Youth served through this program are ages 7 through 17 and at risk of substance abuse, educational failure, dropping out of school, juvenile delinquency, gang activity or running away. In 2001, PRS supported 11 community-based mentoring programs.

### Communities In Schools (CIS)

CIS develops and coordinates programs, community and business partners, and resources as a one-stop shop to improve school attendance, academic performance, everyday behavior and the Texas dropout rate. At the end of 2001, there were 26 CIS programs that received state contract funds.

### Community Youth Development Grants (CYD)

The CYD program provides grants to develop juvenile delinquency prevention approaches in communities that have a high incidence of juvenile crime. Mentoring, parenting skills, tutoring, youth employment, career preparation and alternative recreation activities are examples of the approaches used by communities to prevent delinquency. Local communities decide the exact prevention services provided. In 2001, PRS

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awarded grants to serve 15 targeted communities. PRS provides ongoing training and technical assistance for all local CYD programs. PRS also supports an annual youth conference, the Teen Summit, to promote youth leadership and provide training and activities.

### Dan Kubiak Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Program

This specialized program is designed to develop honor, pride and dignity in minority and at-risk youth. The goal is to reduce and prevent risky behavior, truancy and juvenile delinquency in males ages 10 to 17. The program strives to increase youth volunteer work, community service, leadership and cultural activities. Referrals are received from juvenile probation departments, schools, churches and civic groups. There are five projects located in Bexar, Dallas, Tarrant, Tom Green and Washington counties.

### Facility-Based Youth Enrichment Services

Local after-school and summer youth programs deliver enrichment activities to youth who reside in communities identified as at risk due to indicators such as juvenile crime and high dropout rates. In 2001, PRS funded three such programs.

### Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

HIPPY helps prepare children ages 3 to 5 for school and increase their parents' skills. Home instructors, recruited from the targeted community, are trained paraprofessionals who have or have had a child in the HIPPY program. In 2001, PRS funded four HIPPY programs in Austin, Dallas, Denton and Houston.

### Juvenile Sex Offender Treatment Project

By pooling resources, PRS, the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, and the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation offers a model treatment project for juvenile sex offenders. This project is in Galveston County, where services are also provided to the juveniles' families, victims and victims' families.

### Parents As Teachers (PAT)

Volunteers, mostly former teachers, work with the support of age-appropriate curricula and parents with newborns to 5-year-old children to minimize developmental problems and lay the foundation for school success. During 2001,



## Volunteering to Listen

**A**mrin Malik, a student at the University of Texas at Austin, volunteers her time each week to the Texas Runaway and Youth hotlines. She and many other dedicated community volunteers answer the statewide hotline and provide callers with a caring voice and a listening ear.

"So many youths have had a very difficult life, and I want to do what I can to make it easier for them," said Amrin. "Volunteering at the hotline is so rewarding because I feel that I am making a difference in their lives."

Amrin talks to youth and parents who face a variety of issues including family conflicts, delinquency, truancy, running away, and abuse and neglect. Sometimes callers just want to talk to someone who will listen.

PRS funded five PAT programs in Austin, Falfurrias, Garland, Laredo and Taylor/Callahan counties.

### **Second Chance Teen Parent Program**

This program provides an array of services to teen parents who receive benefits through the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. The goals are to reduce and prevent the problems teenage parents and their children face and to break the cycle of welfare. Services are accessible to teens referred by the Texas Department of Human Services. Priority is given to those youth who can't live at home and are at risk of losing their TANF benefits. Second Chance programs operate in Bexar, Dallas, Harris and Hidalgo counties.

### **Services To At-Risk Youth (STAR)**

Through contracts with community agencies, STAR offers family crisis intervention counseling, short-term emergency residential care, and individual and family counseling to youth ages 7 to 17 who experience conflict at home, have been truant or delinquent, or have run away. STAR services are available in all 254 Texas counties.

### **Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS)**

TFTS provides contracted funding to community-based programs that alleviate parental stress, promote parental competency and increase child nurturing while working toward family self-sufficiency. During 2001, there were 17 programs that provided services in approximately 39 counties.

### **Texas Youth and Runaway Hotlines**

PRS operates the Texas Runaway Hotline, toll-free at 1-888-580-HELP and the Texas Youth Hotline at 1-800-210-2278. The hotlines, which include a workforce of about 90 volunteers, offer crisis intervention, telephone counseling and referrals to troubled youths and families. Many callers face a variety of problems including family conflicts, delinquency, truancy, and abuse and neglect issues. During 2001, the programs increased public awareness through television, radio, billboards and other media efforts. Calls to the hotlines have increased by almost 300 percent from 11,176 calls in 1994 to 43,261 calls in 2001.

During 2001, hotline staff and volunteers provided callers with 10,904 referrals to community organizations, including social service agencies and other youth-related organizations.

## **Programs to Address Abuse**

### **Abuse Prevention Campaigns**

In April 2001, PEI, along with other PRS divisions, began the second year of a three-year statewide, multimedia campaign to prevent child abuse and neglect called *It's Up To You*. The focus in 2001 was community responsibility – "Keeping Kids Safe is Everybody's Business." The campaign was produced with a combination of public and private funds.

In May 2001, PEI collaborated with other PRS divisions to launch a statewide, multimedia campaign to prevent adult abuse titled *Not Forgotten*. The focus was on preventing isolation – a key risk factor for adult abuse, neglect and exploitation. "The elderly and people with disabilities want the same thing you do – to be remembered."

Both campaigns include English and Spanish commercials for television and radio, as well as print advertising for billboards, buses, movie slides, etc. The campaigns Web sites — [www.itsuptoyou.org](http://www.itsuptoyou.org) and [www.notforgotten.org](http://www.notforgotten.org) — include resources to prevent abuse.

### **Child and Adult Abuse Prevention Kits**

PEI worked with Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services to increase public awareness about abuse, neglect and exploitation of children, elderly and adults with disabilities. This year's Child Abuse Prevention Kit represented continued collaboration between PRS, the Children's Trust Fund and Prevent Child Abuse Texas. The Adult Abuse Prevention Kit has been used as a national model for APS programs. Both kits contain overviews of the agency's programs, statistics, public awareness materials such as sample press releases and posters, and various informational resources. Thousands of kits were distributed as a resource for communities. The kits also can be downloaded from the agency's Web site at [www.tdprs.state.tx.us](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us) under "Child Protection" and "Adult Protection."

### **Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program (CBFRS)**

These contracts enable local communities and state networks to plan and coordinate family resource and support programs aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect. During 2001, PRS worked with 10 communities to increase awareness and community involvement in

preventing child abuse and neglect. The Federal grant — part of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act — also funded child abuse prevention awareness materials and a small respite care project.

### **Family Outreach**

Family Outreach is a community-based program that helps families in times of stress. The program enlists volunteers to provide support, encouragement and parenting information under the supervision of a PRS case manager. There are 30 Family Outreach centers throughout the state supported by one PEI contract for training and technical assistance.

### **Greater Texas Community Partners: Rainbow Rooms and Adopt-A-Caseworker**

Greater Texas Community Partners supports two projects that help CPS caseworkers meet the needs of their clients: Rainbow Rooms and Adopt-A-Caseworker. Rainbow Rooms, supported by community contributions, provide donated clothes, toys, formula and supplies in a store-like setting. Adopt-A-Caseworker projects pair church and civic groups, businesses, and individuals with CPS caseworkers to help families and children. Participants donate items such as birthday gifts, household goods, bus passes, new clothes, gift certificates for children's meals and money to pay for utilities. A unique public/private partnership with PRS, local Community Partners support more than 80 Rainbow Rooms and 275 adopted caseworkers statewide.

### **Healthy Families**

An intensive home visitation program, Healthy Families is a primary child abuse and neglect prevention program. Healthy Families services begin as early as pregnancy and may continue until the child is 5 years old. Services are provided by trained professionals and include intensive home visitation, parent education, case management, and information and referral. During 2001, there were 1,808 families served by Healthy Families contracted programs.

### **Tertiary and Secondary Prevention Training and Technical Assistance**

PRS contracts with Family Forward, formerly known as Parents Anonymous of Texas, to provide tertiary and secondary prevention training and technical assistance services to community-based, parent support groups throughout the state. The goal is to promote positive parent behavior that will prevent child maltreatment.



## **Duffel bags bring dignity**

photo by Larry Kolvoord  
story by Claire Osborn  
excerpted from the *Austin American-Statesman*

**A** garbage bag. When state social workers remove children from abusive homes, sometimes a thin, plastic trash bag is all they can provide for the children's belongings. Now, thanks to one Austin woman, for many children that small indignity is no more.

Carol Castlebury raised \$35,000 from Texas Elks Lodges to buy 4,500 duffel bags to be given to the children for their personal belongings. For her efforts, Castlebury, 52, was chosen as one of the nation's top volunteers by the Eckerd Foundation.

Castlebury said she was inspired by a 1999 Newsweek article about a 9-year-old Maryland girl named Makenzie Snyder, who had started a drive to collect used suitcases for abused children.

Castlebury's voice started to quaver as she talked about the children's plight. "It just fills your heart up and brings tears to your eyes, because we don't normally think of children being abused."

The children who have received them have been excited, said Jenny Hinson, a Child Protective Services caseworker. "What I hear is: Wow, cool. I get my own bag. You mean I really get to keep it?" Hinson said. "With a lot of older kids, you see this instant pride on their faces."