Cray YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Winter 2025

CRAY REVIEW

A publication for the friends and families of Cray Youth and Family Services, Inc.

Office: 44 South Beaver St.

New Castle, PA 16101

(724) 654-5507

www.CrayYouth.org

www.ConfluenceCoffee.org

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GIVING BACK, BEING THANKFUL, HAVING FUN

Over the years, we have had so many kind and wonderful individuals and businesses donate to our organization. This has never been more true than during the holidays. One of the ways we at Cray give back during this season is by ringing the bell for the Salvation Army. This year our Executive Director passed the "bell" to our Equity Advisory Committee (EAC). EAC has chosen to focus on unity and harmony this year and we thought it would be fun to ask other social service agencies if they would like to participate.

We know the holidays are a busy time of year for all of our agencies, so to make it a little more fun, we decided to create a little challenge. This year our theme was "Ugly Holiday Sweater." We challenged other agencies to ring the bell in their ugliest holiday sweaters and then send us a picture! Not only did we have many staff and students participate, we were incredibly thankful that Lawrence County Drug and Alcohol Commission chose to join us. We never did decide who had the ugliest sweater. However, we were all winners! We are hoping that next year more agencies will join us. We can't wait to see what Lawrence County Drug and Alcohol decides for the theme. Thank you to everyone that participated. Thanks, also, to every agency, individual, and business that continues to support Cray kids and families.











From The Director...

It has been a crazy cold and snowy winter so far. Of course that darn **Punxsutawney Phil** saw his shadow so we must endure 6 more weeks of winter! I hope you all are doing what you need to stay warm and safe this winter season.

As we think of this harsh winter here at Cray, we have made it our mission to help our kids and many former Cray kids to keep warm and safe in wherever they may be in our community. This help may take the form of warmer clothing, coats, and proper footwear/boots, or helping with their rent and utilities. Cray is able to do this thanks to the generosity of our many committed donors at the Holidays. And speaking of Christmas donations, I continue to be humbled by all the businesses and individuals who come together each year to make amazing Christmas mornings for over 250 children and their families in our community!



(More specific information on who some of these donors are is contained in this newsletter)

Be on the lookout in this newsletter for details on our upcoming **Bowl-a-thon supporting Cray Mentoring Programs.** Again, I can't thank you enough for the incredible giving and thoughtfulness that was bestowed on our youth by our awesome supporters. Stay warm and God Bless.

We Appreciate Our Donors

The Eagles, FOE #455 runs games of chance during BINGO night. Since they are required to donate a portion of the proceeds, they chose Cray as one of their recipients! The money will be used to install a shower in the school and support the mentoring efforts of Cray 1-to-1 Mentoring Programs. Want to help support the Eagles in their efforts to give back to the local community? Bingo is open to the public every Monday. Doors open at 5:30. Earlybird at 6:30 with a 7pm start.



Also our deepest appreciation goes out to **The David Barensfield Family Foundation, Preston Auto Group, Kim Aven, Brenda Devincentis and Neshannock Staff, Brown & Brown of Lehigh Valley, Treloar and Heisel, Mia Greco & Family, Erie Insurance, Seubert and Associates, Cascade St. Post Office and every single person who shopped for a Cray child or family in need.**

PROJECT SEARCH

Project SEARCH is a unique, business led, one year school-to-work program that takes place at UPMC Jameson. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through several internships. Project SEARCH has been at UPMC Jameson for 8 years with a 93% success rate of interns obtaining competitive employment within the community in which they live.

Project SEARCH graduates gain marketable and transferable skills that are essential to employment. Supports are provided to assist these students in finding competitive and integrated employment post-graduation. Private informational tours can be scheduled Monday thru Friday by contacting **Amy Donston, Project SEARCH Skills Trainer at 724-656-4637.**



The Project SEARCH application process takes place each spring. The applicants must be between the ages of 18-21 (age 22 depending on birthday), completed all graduation requirements but not yet received their high school diploma, have a disability, and a desire to obtain competitive employment. Applications are being accepted for the 2025-2026 school year and due by Friday, March 14th. Please reach out to Amy Donston, Project SEARCH Skills

THANK YOU MEAT GUYZ!

Back in November, The **Meat Guyz** collected socks, undies, hats, gloves, and hygiene products for the Crays kids in all of our programs. They filled up an entire room in our Cray office!

CROSSROADS

The **Crossroads** Program again celebrated Thanksgiving and Christmas with dinners that were prepared by all the staff under the supervision of **Barbara Hambrick**. For Christmas 2024 all the gifts given to our Crossroads children were provided by **St. Vincent De Paul Church**. The children were very appreciative and excited for all the gifts they received during our dinner.

In December we also welcomed a new staff member by the name of **Kaylene Lane**. Sometime in August the Crossroads Program will be relocating to a new home and we are all looking forward to this transition and new beginnings.

A quote from the staff at Crossroads!

"Challenges are what

make life interesting.

Overcoming them is what

makes life meaningful."



Cray Mentoring Programs

1-to-1 Mentoring &

Compeer Youth Lawrence County

44 South Beaver Street
New Castle PA 16101
Phone: 724-654-5507
Fax: 724-654-5546
Email: Craymentor@gmail.com
Website: Crayyouth.org

1-to-1 / Compeer Advisory Council

Chip Rickenbach: Chairperson
Bernie Muckian– Vice Chair
Don Hollerman: Treasurer
Ashley Carr
Carla Krisuk
Michele Kelly-Thompson
Vickie Thompson

1-to-1 / Compeer Staff

Director: Allisyn Wolfe

Case Worker: Samantha Dubetz

Currently Serving

43 Children and 30 Volunteers

Visit Crayyouth.org for more info About 1-to-1 Mentoring and Compeer Youth Lawrence County.



Bowl-A-Thon is "Out Of This World" in 2025!

Last year, Sim's Lanes surpassed all of our expectations as a venue for our biggest annual fundraiser! This year, we're headed back to Sim's, but doing something a little "extra" . **Our 31st Annual Bowl-A-Thon** will be our first ever "Cosmic Bowling" event! Cosmic bowling features fun colorful lighting in a slightly darkened bowling alley. (Don't worry– it's not completely dark!)On Saturday May 3, 2025, We'll kick off bowling at 4:00 PM. Each team will get two games of bowling, shoe rental, refreshments, and entertainment. We will also have door prizes and our auction. All bowlers who register before the deadline in April will receive this year's Bowl-a-thon T-shirt! Event sponsors will be recognized before, during, and after the event. Bowl-A-Thon raises between 15-20% of the annual operating expenses for 1-to-1 Mentoring and Compeer Youth Lawrence County. As you may be aware, the mentoring programs at Cray do not utilize public funds for operation. Grants and donations from our community allow us to match youth in Lawrence County with a mentor. The profound positive impact one caring adult outside of the immediate family can have on a child is well documented. Becoming involved with our programs as a mentor, donor, or bowler makes you a partner in our mission to make life better for kids!

Sponsorship and team packets can be requested by calling **724-654-5507** or emailing craymentor@gmail.com. Information can also be found on our website, Crayyouth.org.

Holiday Season 2024—The Most Wonderful Time of the Year, Indeed!

All year long, our programs rely on volunteer mentors to build the relationships that inspire the youth in our program to reach their full potential. We are thankful for the families that trust us with their children and take the time to communicate with our staff and mentors despite their packed schedules. Our advisory council members meet monthly and do so much behind the scenes to strengthen our programs. Local donors and foundations provide the funds to financially support what we do. Partnerships with other organizations in Lawrence County like the **YMCA** and **Clen-Moore** and **Highland Presbyterian Churches** enhance our programs and provide new opportunities for kids and families. This time of year, we reflect on the holiday season, which always brings out the best in a community that is very generous! We were the recipient of local "drives" for hats and gloves, hygiene items, and toys. We had groups and individuals grant Christmas wishes by shopping for specific children in our programs— over 60 children received something they specifically had asked for this year. When I ordered my thank you cards, I received 20. As I began filling them out, I realized I was going to need another box!

We would like to thank the following Christmas donors : **Advisory Council members, The Portersville McDonald's, PetSmart, The United Way of Lawrence County, Crossroads North Campus Life Group, The Westminster College Office of Faith and Spirituality, and several anonymous "elves" that made a huge impact on one of our families this holiday season!**

We would also like to thank the following foundations for grants made to our programs this year: **The Ecolab Foundation** and the **Firefly Community Grant** .

CRAY EDUCATION CENTER

Cray Challenges and Cray Education Center works to develop support systems with all of our students. Nothing matters more when working with students and their families. The system is explained below.

Our school system is based upon supporting each other, our leaders provide training for employee's whom work daily to create a positive and productive environment.

Today's world of education is based upon supports. Providing multi-tiers levels of support is the foundation of our school. The MTSS system offers our students supports that mandate success.

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a proactive and preventative framework that integrates data and instruction to maximize student achievement and support students social, emotional, and behavior needs from a strengths-based perspective.

MTSS offers a framework for educators to engage in data-based decision making related to program improvement, high-quality instruction and intervention, social and emotional learning, and positive behavioral supports necessary to ensure positive outcomes for districts, schools, teachers, and students. The MTSS framework is comprised of four essential components:

1. Screening

2. Progress monitoring

3. Multi-level prevention system

4. Data-based decision making.

Depending on state law, MTSS data may also support identification of students with learning or other disabilities.

WELCOME

Cray Challenges and Cray Education Center has added two employees to our staff this fall. Our first is **Kyle Bradley**, whom has a Masters in Counseling. Kyle started his career with Cray's Independent Living Program. Our second in **Joanna Muttart**, who is a licensed Social Worker. She is currently working towards completing her Masters in Counseling. They join our other wonderful group of counselors to help out students.

Cray will always look for staff whom are dedicated to the positive growth of our students. We are proud of the work they are doing with our students and are thankful for their contributions.





The Confluence

coffee.conversation.community.

214 E. Washington St.
New Castle, PA 16101

(724) 698-7604

www.ConfluenceCoffee.org



Don't Forget About Us!

The Confluence!

Planning an event? We're here to make it unforgettable! From intimate gatherings to grand celebrations, our beautiful venue and expert catering ensure a seamless experience.

Meet Chef Mandy! She crafts delicious dishes with fresh ingredients.

- **Best Prices in Town**! Enjoy exceptional food and service at unbeatable rates with customizable catering.
- **Perfect for Any Occasion**! Weddings, corporate events, birthdays, and reunions—our space is tailored to fit your needs.

Let's plan your event! **Email confluencenc@gmail.com or call (724) 698-7604. Follow us on social media for exciting updates**!

Thursday Night Music is BACK!

Get ready to groove because Thursday Night Music is making its return, and we can't wait to see you there!

When? Every Thursday

Doors Open: 5:00 PM

Music Starts: 7:00 PM

Food & Drinks: Available for purchase

Join us for an evening of fantastic live music, great vibes, and delicious eats. Whether you're coming to dance the night away or just enjoy the tunes, we've got a seat (and a beat) for you.

So grab your friends, bring your best dance moves, and come boogie with us!

Stay Updated! Be sure to follow our Facebook page for announcements, band lineups, and special updates.

Convenient Free Parking

(We are not affected by the East Washington St. Bridge closure.)

Cray Youth and Family Services, Inc.

44 South Beaver Street

New Castle, PA 16101

Non-Profit Org

U.S. Postage

Paid

New Castle, PA

Permit #5

Return Service Requested

BE A SUPERMAN TODAY AND HELP MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR KIDS

As Cray transforms for the future to meet the growing challenges that face kids and families in Lawrence County, we need your help! Please consider a donation to Cray.



YES, please accept my contribution of $ _____

Please designate my contribution to assist:

_____ 1-to-1 Mentoring _____ Where Most Needed

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please make checks payable to Cray Youth & Family Services

*All donations, monetary & in-kind, are tax-deductible.

_____ Please check here if you do NOT want your donation publicly acknowledged.

Donations can be made online through JustGive.org by visiting our website:

www.CrayYouth.org/donate

(credit card fees and processing charges are deducted from gift online)

What's in your will is a testimony of what is important to you. When thinking about giving, an ultimate gift is one that will last. Please consult your attorney or tax advisor when considering your estate planning.