

# Promise

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pieces that have been lost for one reason or another, and at the same time filling the holes in these families' lives with love and compassion for our fellow man," Xenidis said in a letter to Johnson.

Clients of Family Promise will not be housed at the day center, but will use it for taking showers, use the laundry facilities, receive tutoring and use the computer center. The day center provides the families with a temporary address and place for children to come after school, as well as a day care for kids not old enough to be in school, while parents are working.

"The focus of the program is an alternative to dealing with homelessness," Allen said. "Right now, the options in Cape May County are not really good for a person who needs help. If you're going to get public assistance, you can't work. You can't have a job. So, if you're the kind of person who wants to work because it's part of your focus, then public assistance isn't the way you want to go. Your other option would be to live in your car, which isn't a great option."

Emily recently began her

new job, while her children attend the Middle Township Elementary School. She said was extremely lucky to have found Family Promise and her outlook on life has improved immensely.

"She can start building rent deposits, get her feet back on the ground, save up to buy a car - that's the beauty of this program. It truly helps people," Allen said.

Allen said using public assistance often provides people with meager living conditions, while Family Promise provides families with the safe, drug and alcohol free environment of a church or other house of worship. Johnson said all adults in the Family Promise program are drug tested and put through criminal background checks, so families can feel safe around one another.

Emily said she went to Social Services when her situation arose, but received minimal assistance. At Family Promise, she feels she has been given much more than just assistance. She said since arriving in March, she has been embraced by staff members like Johnson and Family Advocate Kathleen O'Neill.

"My kids love Lauren and Kathleen. They come in and



Above left, a sitting area in the new Family Promise center has a homey feel.



Above right, a play area for children.

want to tell them all about their day and what they made in school. Lauren and Kathleen have pictures of my kids on their walls. It really is like a home and they're family," Emily said. "Finally, someone cared about what was going on."

Johnson said there are numerous ways to contribute to Family Promise. Donors are honored for their generosity with symbolic decorations like the "Buy a Brick of Hope Campaign," where an engraved brick with the name of the individual or business

that contributed is laid at the center. The "Club180" donors pledge to contribute \$180 a year for five years, which provides a child 40 days of a safe place to sleep, nutritious meals, transportation and counseling. These donors are granted puzzle pieces that complete jigsaw puzzles on the wall at the new center. There is also the "Star" program where a tin star is hung in the name of a donor who is willing to give \$1,000 a year for five years. Donating \$365 a year for five years gets the name of a group, business or

individual on a petal of the decorative sunflower in the wellness room of the new day center.

"In five years from now, we could be totally self-sufficient from pledges, stars and puzzle pieces from the community," Johnson said. "We don't use government money at this point, and we hope we won't have to. Other affiliates in the United States are hurting because they put all of their eggs in that basket."

For those who would rather volunteer their time rather than contribute money,

there are numerous trades and skills needed at Family Promise, such as hair cutting, yard and building maintenance, accounting, counseling, public relations, tutoring and more. Johnson said Family Promise currently hopes to find volunteer landscapers and builders willing to erect a playground at the new day center facility.

For more information about Family Promise of Cape May County, call (609) 846-7862 or visit [www.familypromisecm.org](http://www.familypromisecm.org).

# Heroin

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is a powerful pain killer used with cancer patients. A USA Today article on May 5 reported more than two dozen deaths and caused over 300 to be sent to the hospital in the eastern United States in the prior three weeks.

Still, Taylor said Cape May County is better off than some other counties.

"Ocean County had eight deaths in one month," he said. To combat heroin and other drug trafficking, the Prosecutor's Office established a Narcotics Task Force a number of years ago. Taylor could not give a lot of detail about the task force, but said he has recently asked for one more detective so he can have the task force working on

simultaneous investigations.

"I have wanted two teams to do more investigations, but there has been a hiring freeze for a couple of years," Taylor said.

Taylor said they used to get officers from local police departments to work on the task force, but many of the police departments are working with fewer police officers - even the ones with a higher rate of heroin users. According to Taylor, these are the municipalities with the higher populations: Middle Township, Lower Township, and the Wildwoods.

"With a higher population you are going to have more drug abusers," Taylor said.

Taylor said, in this case, as the rate of heroin use goes up so does the crime rate. He

said there is a definite link between heroin use and theft, burglary, shoplifting, and so on. He said there is a link between heroin use and copper theft - thieves taking copper water lines from under people's homes or churches. He said there have even been instances of home invasions.

To combat the heroin use and related crime, Taylor said the Narcotics Task Force, which receives no state or federal funding, does a number of things. One thing is developing intelligence on where heroin is being sold, who is buying it, trying to get information from undercover sources, using surveillance - both by law enforcement personnel and with technology - to build the case for a search warrant so they can

seize the dealers' property and put them out of business. Taylor said all of this is done out of the public view, which sometimes leads to the misunderstanding that nothing is being done to combat drugs.

Taylor said he believes there are two crucial elements to ramp up the effort against heroin in Cape May County.

"The first is I need to get two teams, so we can conduct simultaneous investigations," Taylor said.

The second, he said, was to develop an educational program in schools.

"We're working with the Chiefs of Police, some board of education members from Sea Isle, the county superintendent of schools and Cape Assist to develop a program

for the fall," Taylor said.

Taylor said they are planning to create an interactive program, such as D.A.R.E., to inform kids that a single use of heroin can result in death. Some D.A.R.E. programs have been dropped either due to lack of funding or doubts about the program's effectiveness, but Taylor believes some sort of educational program is paramount.

"Anything we can do to get them to not use heroin is a good thing," Taylor said. "Having all our detectives working and incarcerating all the users is not going to help if our young people are addicted to heroin."

Taylor said some parents neglect to educate their children about heroin - sometimes because they are igno-

rant of the facts. Additionally, he believes some parents are not able to recognize the symptoms of their child being on heroin.

"We want to give parents the signs of their child being on heroin," Taylor said.

He said if the parents won't get on board with educating their children about the dangers of heroin, then they will take the information to the children.

Taylor said he is not ignoring the incarceration factor, and has been working with State Sen. Jeff Van Drew on legislation to increase the penalties for heroin distribution, but with no increase for heroin addicts.

# Prosecutor's Office announces county deaths attributed to heroin overdose

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE - Cape May County Prosecutor Robert L. Taylor, Wildwood Police Chief Steven Long and Lower Township Chief Brian Marker report that during the weekend of May 17 through May 19, the Cape May County Prosecutors Office along

with local Detective Units from Wildwood and Lower Township investigated several drug overdoses, two of which resulted in the deaths.

On May 17, the Wildwood Police Department along with the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office Major Crime Unit initiated an inves-

tigation into the death of a 19 year old female. The female, who was a local resident of Wildwood, was found dead in a rooming house located in the City of Wildwood. Indications and observations revealed the female's death may have been the result of a possible drug overdose. An autopsy is scheduled and the

investigation continues.

On May 18, the Wildwood Police Department was alerted to a medical emergency for a male, 58, in the city of Wildwood. The male was transported to Cape Regional Medical Center for treatment. Investigation of this incident by the Wildwood Police Detective Unit revealed that just prior to the male having this medical episode this male, who is a resident of the City of Cape May, had purchased and ingested an amount of heroin.

On May 19, the Lower

Township Police Department Detective Division and the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office Major Crimes Unit initiated an investigation of the death of a female, 54, from the Rio Grande section of Middle Township. From this investigation it was revealed the death may have been related to a possible heroin overdose. An autopsy is pending and the investigation continues.

The investigations into these drug related crimes are on-going and any information concerning these deaths from

the public is greatly appreciated. The Prosecutor's Office along with local Municipalities throughout the County are aggressively investigating the large influx of Drug related overdoses specifically Heroin within Cape May County.

Any information regarding these investigations or any drug activity throughout Cape May County the public is asked to call the Prosecutor's Office at (609) 465-1135 or to their respective Police Department.

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\*\*Epic 3D PG: 11:30, 4:20, 9:15  
Iron Man 3 PG13: 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:20, 10:05

\*\* No Passes

# Vance's

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additional lots on St. John Street. The funding will take care of demolition of the old structure, as well as legal fees and appraisals for the park project.

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the state's Green Acres and Blue Acres programs are funding approximately half of the project, with the other half coming from Cape May's open-space fund. MacLeod said a por-

tion of the funding would also cover the expenses for demolishing the former tavern.

Landscape architect students from Temple University drafted designs for the park project, which were presented to the public last year. MacLeod said the application to the Blue and Green Acres Programs included the draft design. However, if the property is acquired by the city, there will need to be a final design process undertaken, which MacLeod said has caused some confusion among residents.

Please see Vance's, page A3

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Apogee, May 13  
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