Schools addressing childhood trauma

Lower elementary district programs deal with adverse experiences

By JACOB FICTER

Cape May Star and Wave

COLD SPRING — The middle

school counselor at Cold Spring

Elementary School, Jennifer

Shivers, has attended training ses-

sions with a number of teachers

about adverse childhood experi-

ences such as emotional and ph

ysical abuse, neglect, loss of a parent

due to separation or divorce, living

with someone abusing al-

cohol or drugs.

Carl T. Mall Seco

School Principal

Shivers said each school in the coun-

try was invited to attend three days

of resiliency training last sum-

mer. He said the Lower Township

Elementary School District sent

staff from each of the schools to

the training. The information

was then shared with all staff

members.

“The district has implemented

new strategies and techniques

learned into each of its

schools,” he said.

“An increased popula-

tion of students that live in

stressful family environments

and have experienced some

type of trauma in their lifetime,”

Shivers said. “As a result of this,

impacting them not only socially

and emotionally but impacting

behavior and their ability to learn

and learn and “The training also

provided a number of methods to

counteract some negative child-

hood experiences. The seminar

covered adverse childhood ex-

periences deemed as extremely

stressful to a child, which can

affect brain development as well

as the immune system and

increase the risk of lifelong health

and social problems in adulthood.

“We need to provide those stu-

dents with positive role models

and mentors and we’re able to

do that with several programs

we have implemented,” Shivers

said.

Teachers and guidance coun-

selors identified students who

would benefit from a program

titled “Check In-Check Out”

which partners a student with a

role model at the school including

teachers, security staff, guidance

counselors and custodians, he

said.

Shivers said the students

check-in first thing in the morn-

ing and talk with their mentor

about how their day is going and

sometimes set a goal for the day.

In the afternoon, the students

check-out and tell their mentor

how their day went, how they are

feeling and if they achieved their

goal for the day.

A total of 23 students are par-

ticipating in “Check In-Check-

Out,” he said.

The school district has a re-

Source: See Schools, Page A2

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