

Pennridge adopts "Forty Assets"

By Rachel Worthington

It is on your school calendar. It was the reason Pennridge had a half-day on Monday, October 8, 2001. But what exactly is "it"? "It" is a program called 40 Assets, a framework from an organization known as Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth (HC/HY.) The program is designed to support the positive development of young people. It helps to promote the concept of asset building through the community initiatives, specifically activities involving families, neighborhoods, and schools. Meetings began roughly a year and a half ago in a successful quest to gain support from

grams to implement in the community, and conduct an evaluation to determine the success. The Pennridge HC/HY is combining the CTC approach along with the approach of the HC/HY and 40 Assets. In short, the more developmental assets out of a possible forty that one possesses the more likely they will be to lead healthy, productive lives.

The program began last year when eighth, tenth, and twelfth graders were asked to take a survey on various subjects. The results were calculated and from this data the Pennridge HC/HY team, was able to draw conclusions for the community. The three identified risk factors in the community are: perceived

styles for all ages. They hope to help educate parents about drugs and start homework clubs. The Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, which allows high school students to tutor elementary school students, is being started this year with the help of student council and Mr. Creeden. The HC/HY team also hopes to implement Families and Schools Together (FAST), a parent involved program that addresses substance abuse, violence, and school drop-outs.

Many students are not aware of the 40 Assets program or HC/HY. There are a few students in the high school who have been involved in the development of this program. Students are welcome to attend future meetings to provide additional program input. The program that was held on October 8, 2001 featured Clay Roberts, a prominent expert on youth development and community. Faculty, community members, and select students were invited to a luncheon followed by both a presentation from Roberts and workshops. Students who attended had mixed reactions. One student felt it was a little late to implement these assets in high school students, after students have already developed. Yet another student felt that the program was absolutely fantastic and a great idea and wished that she'd known about it sooner.

Either way, the 40 Assets program is now implemented in the Pennridge School District with hopes that it will foster greater community involvement with its youth. The 40 Assets team lent its support to the skate club in their effort to build a park in the area. The Pennridge HC/HY team wants to make this community a more enjoyable place to live while helping to bridge the generation gap.



Photo by Brenda Oelschlagel

Clay Roberts addresses students, staff, community members, and government officials.

members of the community, churches, organizations, and schools.

The Pennridge HC/HY team applied for a state grant on July 1, 2001. The grant, totaling \$135,000, began October 1, 2001 and will last for three years. The grant is part of a state organization, Communities That Care (CTC), initiated in 1994. There are 125 communities in Pennsylvania participating in CTC. CTC determines risk factors, sets a three-year action plan, selects research-based pro-

academic failure, favorable parental attitudes toward problem behavior, and constitutional factors (impulsiveness and sensation seeking.) After identifying these problem areas the committee has formulated an action plan involving the creation of a strategy for promoting academic success in school, the engagement of all community members in after-school activities, heightened community awareness of positive youth development, and promotion of healthier life-