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## Success By 6: Johnstown Program Helps Kids With ADHD

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All children have behavior problems at times, but those issues are more frequent and severe for kids with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

But locally, a summer treatment program in Johnstown is helping kids with ADHD function better by having fun.

ADHD is a brain condition that makes it difficult for children to control their behavior. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the disorder affects between 4-12 percent of all school-aged children. If left untreated, it can severely impact a child's ability to lead a normal life.

The program, now in its 10th year, teaches positive reinforcement that helps children function better at home, at school and in the community.

"It allows the child to get behavioral modification treatment in a comprehensive way throughout the summer months instead of just having structured treatment throughout the school year," said Mary Berge, a clinical psychologist at the Alternative Community Resource Program's ADHD Summer Treatment Program.

The program includes many recreational, academic and creative activities, all grounded in rules but designed to be fun.

The program also builds social skills and self-esteem, something that can be seriously lacking in children with ADHD.

"When kids come in, they're shy. They don't want to participate. And at the end of the five weeks, they really turn around. We see great improvement in these kids," said Brian Nagle, ACRP behavior specialist.

Parents like Rosa Watanabe agree. Watanabe came from Japan, where she said treatment for ADHD is impossible to find. She discovered ACRP's program on the Internet and said the change in her son has been dramatic.

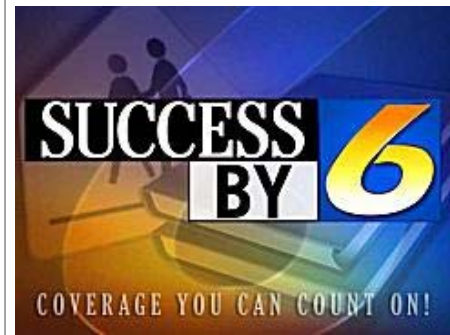
"He was not able to make friends in Japan. He was in a lot of trouble. A lot of times unhappy. Here, he's so happy. At the end of the first session, he told me he wanted to take all of his friends back to Japan," she said.

Parents who suspect their child has ADHD are advised to have him or her evaluated by a psychologist or psychiatrist. With intervention -- such as behavior modification, parent training and medication -- children can learn to cope with their condition and live a happier life.

If you know a young person or group of young people who deserves recognition, e-mail [news@wjactv.com](mailto:news@wjactv.com) or write to us at 49 Old Hickory Lane, Johnstown, PA, 15905.

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