

...reads with Laredo Hixson, 9, of Lewisburg, Tuesday during homework time at the after-school program offered by the Donald Heiter Community Center.

Centers teach 9 percent of state's students

By Marcia Moore
The Daily Item

The hundreds who gathered in Harrisburg recently emphasized the importance of after-school programs for keeping children safe and inspired to learn.

Joining the National Lights on Afterschool Week effort to encourage Pennsylvania lawmakers to continue funding programs for students is the Donald L. Heiter Community Center in Lewisburg.

Parents of the 68 children enrolled in the center's after-school program have been asked to sign a petition to retain funding for all agencies across the state, Executive Director Andrea Tufo said.

"If after-school programs in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh get cut, there will be a trickle-down effect and we'll have to start competing with them for funds," Tufo said. "If they cannibalize those financial sources,



Liz Rohde/The Daily Item

Kleo Carter, left, shares her newly written story with Laredo Hixson, center, and Mary Marshall at the Donald Heiter Community Center in Lewisburg.

unfortunately our at-risk kids would be affected."

The 68 students at the community center pay \$7 per day for educational-based programs that costs \$17 daily per student to provide, she said. Programs are provided until 7 p.m.

"These are children we're helping to be better citi-

zens," Tufo said. "We help them with homework and social skills. Because we're cramming so much into a school day, they're not getting that at school."

About 605,000, or 9 percent, of K-12 students in Pennsylvania participate

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AFTER-SCHOOL FACTS

After-school keeps children and youth safe

■ Juvenile crime triples between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

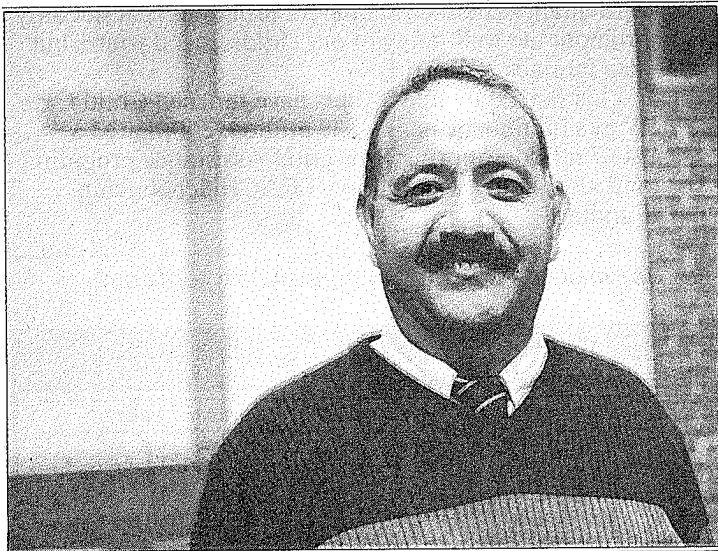
■ Youth in after-school programs are 50 percent less likely to smoke, drink or use drugs.

After-school inspires learning

■ The absence of summer learning programs can cause lower-income children and youth to fall more than two and one-half years behind their more affluent peers by the end of fifth grade, di-

See **FACTS, B2**

Milton whittles language barrier



Robert Inglis/The Daily Item

Pastor Immer Ramirez has joined the staff of Christ Wesleyan Church in Milton.

Police, churches speak Spanish to reach 6 percent of residents

By Tricia Pursell
The Daily Item

MILTON — Police officers are learning to speak Spanish and area churches are adding staff to reach a Hispanic population that has tripled the past 10 years, and represents 6 percent of all borough residents.

Not only are there churches specifically for Hispanics, English-speaking congregations have begun ministries specifically to reach the Spanish-speaking community.

Christ Wesleyan Church has

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■ School spends \$250G to teach English/**Page B6**

added a Guatemalan pastor to its staff — Immer Ramirez.

"My passion is to reach people," Ramirez said, "share the Gospel with them."

Formerly a coordinator for Impacto Ministries in Guatemala, Ramirez met Christ Wesleyan members who had

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Centers teach 9% of state's students

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in after-school programs, according to Afterschool Alliance.

The programs work to reduce juvenile delinquency and improve school attendance and performance, according to Kacy Conley, director of the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network.

"Kids' formative, after-school hours can be filled with quality youth development programs that not only promote the well-being of our children and youth, but also families," she said.

This year, state budget cuts have reduced Child Care Works funding by nearly \$39 million; eliminated a \$46.7 million tutoring Education Assistance program and most of the \$6.8 million TEACH Scholarship Funding.

■ [Email comments to mmoore@dailyitem.com](mailto:mmoore@dailyitem.com)

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