REGIONAL CRISIS TEAM (RCT)

By Michael Sellet, Regional Safety Coordinator

- You may not know about a team in our region that does incredible work each year to support our schools. In fact, in May 2009, the RCT was a recipient of the American Red Cross in Westchester County's Community Impact Heroes Award.

- The Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES Regional Crisis Team was established in 1999 after the tragic events at Columbine High School prompted us to take proactive measures to assist our component school districts should they experience a serious crisis situation related to a national disaster, school violence, or the death of a school community member. The Regional Crisis Team, as it is organized today, consists of volunteers from our 18 component school districts, as well as several community mental health agencies in the region.

- The team meets on a monthly basis to discuss best practices in the areas of crisis prevention and intervention. In addition, they are available to provide onsite post-crisis support (consultation, observation, counseling, etc.) and follow-up (debriefing, evaluation, etc.) services after the occurrence of a serious school crisis.

- Since its inception, the Regional Crisis Team has responded to crises in many of our districts. This year alone the Crisis Team has responded to 17 calls from districts.

To request assistance from the Regional Crisis Team, please contact either of the Co-Chairs: Dr. Lynn Allen 914-248-2311 or Mike Sellet at 914-248-2457.

CPR TRAINING

On April 22, 2016, Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES offered CPR training for 32 staff members. All training from CPRed follows the program of the American Heart Association, and certification is valid for two years. Contact us to get training for your staff, students, nurses and coaches. Call Cynthia Braden today for more information.
SPRING HAS SPRUNG! IT IS TIME FOR SCHOOL SPRING CLEANING

From the EPA IAQ webpage

A great way to get your schools ready for spring and keep your indoor air quality (IAQ) healthy and safe is through green cleaning. The goal of green cleaning is to protect the health of staff, students and the environment. The chemicals found in certain standard cleaning products can cause health problems, and when the products contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs), the associated adverse health effects can provoke asthma, upper respiratory irritation, nasal congestion, dizziness and nausea. Green cleaning products and practices may help avoid these health effects.

Take the time to schedule routine cleaning, and look for cleaning products that meet third party certification such as EPA’s Safer Choice standards. Use less toxic, third-party-certified green cleaning products, paper products and hand soaps. These healthier cleaning products should have neutral PH levels and no known carcinogens, low or no fragrance, and low or no VOCs. To help make the cleaning process more efficient, be sure to update and maintain school equipment. Try using high-efficiency vacuums and filters. HEPA-filtered vacuums are best for carpets. These tools can reduce chemical use and improve productivity.

Incorporating a few simple green cleaning practices into the way building maintenance staff operate can help increase the longevity of school facilities. Start by preventing dirt, and work toward updating and improving school cleaning methods. Reducing particulates in the air can be as easy as installing dirt-grabbing walk-off mats at all major entrances and vacuuming these daily. Separate routine general cleaning from spot disinfecting, and determine high-risk areas to clean daily. For example, focus on the location of bacteria in classrooms—desks, walls, floors and chairs—and use safe cleaning products.

In NYS the OGS Green Cleaning Website is an invaluable tool for all things Green Clean. Our department can review your chemical inventories and help you to come into compliance with the NYS Green Cleaning Legislation. We also provide training to custodial and maintenance staff on chemical safety. Contact Carol Sneyd at csneyd@pnwboces.org to schedule this service.
An important part of mosquito control around your home is making sure that mosquitoes don't have a place to lay their eggs. Because mosquitoes need water for two stages of their life cycle, it's important to monitor standing water sources.

- Get rid of standing water in rain gutters, old tires, buckets, plastic covers, toys or any other container where mosquitoes can breed.
- Empty and change the water in bird baths, fountains, wading pools, rain barrels and potted plant trays at least once a week to eliminate potential mosquito habitats.
- Drain temporary pools of water or fill with dirt.
- Keep swimming pool water treated and circulating.

According to the CDC, cases of Zika virus in the United States are those that have been contracted by travelers to the countries shown in purple above. In our area, there is more concern from West Nile Virus.