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# Parent Handbook

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# Welcome to the



# SHINE Afterschool Program

hosted by Wilkes University

We are excited to welcome you and your child to our program. SHINE (Schools and Homes in Education) is a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering Arts and Math) project-based program designed to engage and excite children about learning, and to interest and encourage them to pursue a future in STEAM fields. Our children are our future and will be the workforce of tomorrow!

We are pleased to have your child as part of our after-school program and hope you will be pleased with the knowledge, self-confidence, and many creative learning opportunities your child will encounter. We hope you will experience some new conversation around the dinner table discussing robotics, coding, environmental science, 3D printing, and new career possibilities! We want your child to SHINE in all that they do!

### **Our program goals are to:**

Improve academic performance

Improve student behavior and school attendance

Increase knowledge of STEAM concepts and subject areas

Facilitate family involvement in student learning and improve family literacy

Provide a safe after-school space and serve as a deterrent for gang involvement and juvenile crime

Provide the opportunity for students to explore STEAM based career pathways, which will lead to better educational and career options in the future



SHINE is based on a successful nationally-recognized program originally developed through Lehigh Carbon Community College and located throughout Carbon and Schuylkill Counties. Research demonstrates that students who participate in afterschool programming have stronger academic ability and increased participation in school throughout the K-12 years. SHINE has shown positive outcomes in these areas over its 10 years of existence.

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## Program History

Operation Gang Up (OGU) is a regional initiative that was created to address the ongoing problem of gang activity in Northeastern PA. The initiative, founded in 2011 by Congressman Lou Barletta and Senator John Yudichak, combined the expertise of key legislative, education, law enforcement and community leaders. The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development served as the project's coordinator. Early research conducted by the Institute identified that the most successful efforts at deterring gang involvement included after-school programming and increased parental involvement. The Institute investigated case studies from all over the United States in an effort to identify a model that would meet the needs of Luzerne County. The SHINE program was determined to not only be one of the most successful efforts, but also a program that could be replicated in Luzerne County with minimum modifications. SHINE was developed to address issues plaguing the county such as low higher education attainment, challenges in student performance, attendance issues, and economic and workforce development issues.

# Who is a good referral for the SHINE Program?

Students who fit the following description are generally referred to the program by their counselor or teacher:

- May need a jumpstart in their academic performance or some extra motivation to succeed in school
- Have attendance issues
- Have expressed interest in STEAM fields of study
- Must have passing grades



# Who qualifies for the SHINE Program?

**There are no income-based guidelines.** Students must be interested in the program and be willing to participate in the program activities. In addition, students must exhibit good behavior. Inappropriate or acting out behaviors will not be tolerated, as they affect the learning environment for other students. Students will be removed from the program for such behavior.



# Grade Levels of SHINE

1. **Home Visiting** - Children in pre-K and Kindergarten participate in a Home Visiting Program. Students at this level are referred by their teachers and are found to need skill-building in basic academic foundations such as letter and number recognition, basic arithmetic, reading and language, and writing and communication skills. This skill enhancement often aids the student in a more successful transition to the next academic level. Visits occur once a week for 1 hour in your home by a teacher. Each student has an educational plan developed to meet their needs.



2. **Elementary** - This program level occurs after school in a school setting and follows the SHINE schedule as listed in the next section. Children either stay in their school or are transferred by bus to the SHINE center in their district after the regular school day ends. Busing home is available at all centers except Kistler Elementary and Heights Murray Elementary in Wilkes Barre which serves students in close proximity to the school. Children at this level have worked on projects such as Earth Science, meteorology, forensics, bridge building, coding, art, and entrepreneurship and will be exposed to the latest in technology; utilizing tablets, 3D printing, and Virtual learning Zspace units. We want students to get excited about learning, stay engaged in school and start to think about STEAM based careers that may be in their future! Students at this level commit to attending 4 days a week.

**3. Middle School** –Students at this level will also follow the SHINE schedule, but will engage in more complex projects and learn about some of the latest technology. Students at this level will be exposed to more advanced levels of the elementary projects, as well as Robotics, Advanced Coding, Circuitry, Engineering, Architecture, and community service projects. Students will even get the opportunity to design, build, and race a derby car. Students at this level will focus on working on real life problems by utilizing the scientific method to develop potential solutions through using the tools available to them in the center. Middle School students may also participate in observed learning and shadowing experiences outside the classroom as appropriate. Students will begin more in-depth exploration into career pathways and have the opportunity to learn about STEM related careers of the future. They will have interactions with members of the community that share information about careers and the skills needed for specific jobs. This program level is housed at the 3 Career and Technical Centers located in Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, and Pringle. Students will be bused to and from the program. This gives them the opportunity to work with Carpentry, Electronics, Culinary Arts, Healthcare, and other programs, all under the guidance of trained experts in the field of study.

Students at this level must commit to attending 2-4 days a week.





# A Typical Day at SHINE

The SHINE Program runs 36 weeks out of the year, from mid-September to May, and does so in conjunction with your school district's schedule. The program operates Monday through Thursday for 3 hours after school each day. A typical day at SHINE includes:

**25 minutes of homework help** - Students are advised to prioritize what homework they need assistance with and the teachers and teacher assistants will provide help on those subjects. Always check to be sure your child has completed their homework each night. A child with complete homework is more likely to feel confident and engage during the school day. However, teachers cannot spend more than the allowed 25 minutes on homework, as SHINE is not a tutoring program.



**35 minutes dinner and movement activities** - All SHINE students will have a meal each day and then participate in some activities to get them moving. Students have been sitting all day. Activities are planned to give them some exercise!

**2 hours of project based STEAM activities** - Each center may work on different projects based on the age of the students and the project plan for that center. Units are developed to engage students in critical thinking and communication skills, real world issues, an understanding of careers of tomorrow, and an understanding of the importance that education beyond high school plays in their future.





In addition to concentrating on math, science, reading, and writing in a fun, hands-on, creative setting, SHINE students learn character and relationship building and resiliency, and have numerous opportunities for cultural, recreational, and service-based activities.

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## Attendance

Students who attend school regularly are much more successful in their future endeavors. Attendance is a major emphasis of the SHINE program and regular attendance is extremely important! Your child will be more engaged and show more improvement if they are consistently present. If for some reason your child is in school on a particular day, but NOT going to SHINE, you must let the SHINE teacher know in advance. Otherwise, your child will be expected to be in attendance. Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us, so we need to be sure of their whereabouts at all times.

- **If there is no school, there is no SHINE.**
- Parents will be asked to sign a parent-teacher agreement to promote regular attendance in school and in after-school programs.
- Teachers will emphasize regular attendance. We strive for 90% attendance rates.
- There are class size limits at all levels of the program, and often a waiting list. If your child does not demonstrate regular attendance they may be removed from the program.

# Discipline

SHINE has developed a behavior modification approach that emphasizes positive reinforcement for good behavior. All students are made aware of the behavior policy appropriate to their level of SHINE when admitted to the program. Children that are disruptive, or are a danger to themselves or others, may be removed from the program. Parents and guardians will always be notified when an issue arises. It is important that administration, teachers, and parents partner in ensuring all students have the opportunity to enjoy SHINE as it is designed. Students who continuously make the decision to demonstrate negative or dangerous behavior may be removed from the program. Students may be given a time out from SHINE to evaluate if the program is truly beneficial to the student. The decision will be made by the Lead Teacher on site in consultation with the administrative staff.



# Parent Involvement and Volunteering



Parents and family members have the opportunity to join SHINE monthly for scheduled Family Nights. At Family Night, you will have the opportunity to share a meal with your child's class and teachers and participate in a project-based STEAM activity. In other words, you will have the opportunity to see how we engage your child in learning, as well as in having fun! We also use this time to share information about important community resources and program updates. It is important that you are actively involved in your child's education and have the opportunity to get to know your child's SHINE staff. Please plan to attend your child's monthly family night!!

We also encourage you to get involved! If you have a career that you would like to share during our career discussions or a talent or hobby that may fit into our lessons, please mention this to your child's teacher. Careers or hobbies such as carpentry, cooking, arts and crafts, etc. are all welcome. For safety purposes, volunteer parents are never left alone with children. If you would like to volunteer on a regular basis, you will need to have the necessary clearances. Again, we invite you to be an active partner in your child's after school experience.



## Family Identified Student Goals

When your child enters the SHINE program and at the beginning of each subsequent school year, you will be asked to choose some goals that you would like to see your child achieve. We will work with their teacher to develop an Individualized Instruction Plan while keeping your thoughts in mind.



## Family Goals

We will offer information and referrals to various community organizations that may be helpful to your family, such as:

- Food Banks and clothing rooms
- CEO (Commission on Economic Opportunity) services
- Links to library services
- Information on the WIC program
- Information on personal finance
- The opportunity to work on a GED or participate in ESL classes (paid for by the SHINE program). You just need to let us know how we can assist!



# Emergency Policy



If there is a change in the emergency contact established during enrollment, it is your responsibility to provide the changes to your child's teacher and the SHINE office. It is important that we are able to reach either you or a designated secondary contact in the case of an emergency.

In the case of an emergency evacuation from the SHINE Center, you children will be moved to a safe predetermined location. This will be shared with you at the beginning of each school year.

**You will be provided with the SHINE Cell Phone number of the Lead Teacher assigned to your child's SHINE center. If you need to reach your child at the program, have a question about your child, or need to pick them up early, this is who you must call. The School office is closed during SHINE and the building will be locked.**



## Safety

Your child's safety is of the utmost concern to us at SHINE! SHINE teachers are made aware of custody issues regarding parent pick-up of students, so please do not be offended if the teacher asks you for ID. We will only release students to the persons named on your paperwork. They must be over the age of 18.

# Dismissal and Transportation

Most of the SHINE program sites provide you an option of picking up your child after the program or busing your child to a bus stop close to your residence. **\*There is no bus transportation home from the Kistler Elementary or Heights Murray Program as all attendees live in very close proximity to the building.** NO child is allowed to walk home **alone** from the SHINE Program or their bus stop. You must provide the program with names of authorized individuals that have permission to pick up your child. Again, your child's safety is very important to us.

At the end of the program, it may be dark, cold, etc. If there is failure to meet the bus on time or pick up your child on time at the school, **it may result in your child being dismissed from the program.**

**If you would like to discuss any special circumstances related to dismissal and pick up, please call the SHINE office at (570) 408-3326.**



# Snow Days and Early Dismissals

SHINE **does not** operate during school vacations, snow days, and cancelation of after-school activities or early dismissals. It **does** operate on days that have late starts. Because we work with 8 different centers, you will be provided a calendar specific to your child's site each month. It will highlight days off and special events, such as Family Night. If the school changes a day off or something happens that requires us to alter the calendar, you will be notified. If you have any questions, please call the SHINE office at (570) 408-3326.

Early dismissals will be posted on local TV channels (WNEP and WBRE). We also utilize an "All Call" system, called Remind, to notify parents when we have to close SHINE. It is important that you provide us with the most updated phone number to ensure you get these calls, which occur between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:00 pm. Please let the SHINE office know if you do not want to be messaged through Remind.





# Health Related Concerns



If your child has any food allergies, please let the SHINE office and your teacher know. A monthly menu can be provided to you if your child has special dietary needs. There will only be one meal option served each day. If your child needs an inhaler, even occasionally, please see to it that they have one in their book bag and their SHINE teacher is notified of the necessity. The school nurse is **NOT available** during the after-school hours. All incidents involving health and safety are reported to the Director of SHINE, as well as logged on an incident report form. You will be called immediately. If you have a question about something that happened during the SHINE day, please free to call both the SHINE teacher and the Director.

## Media Events and Field Trips



Parents are asked to sign a photo release form upon enrollment. If you do not want your child photographed during an event, kindly indicate so. Our after school program is highly newsworthy, and we often capture the attention of the media and enjoy sharing the great things our SHINE children do with our community. From time to time, there may be an opportunity to attend a learning experience outside the classroom. If this is planned, you will be asked to sign a special permission slip before the event.



# Administration



(570) 408 - 3326

## Office Address

Wilkes University  
University Towers Building, Suite C  
141 South Main Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766

## Mailing Address

Wilkes University  
84 West South Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766

**Director:** Carol Nicholas

**Asst. Director:** Marlon Pitts

**Asst. Director:** Deanna Drako

**Administrative Assistant / Enrollment Specialist:** Carrie Jackson

## Social Media



Our SHINE Program also has a Facebook page (<https://m.facebook.com/SHINELuzerne/>). Please check it out to see what is going on at SHINE!





# Parents'

# Acknowledgement Form

*\*\*\*Please detach this page and send back to SHINE with your child. Submission of this form allows SHINE to recognize that you understand the SHINE program and your participation in it as a parent or guardian of a SHINE student.*

**Student Name:**

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**Parent or Guardian Name (print):**

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**Parent or Guardian Signature:**

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**Date:**

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