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Parent 2 Parent drive shows the value of a nickel

Thursday, May 11, 2006

By **Allegra Tiver**
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NATIONAL PARK -- Four women on a crusade to secure drug and alcohol treatment for children and young adults deposited over \$500 -- raised one nickel at a time -- at The Bank Wednesday, part of Parent 2 Parent's campaign to raise the state's alcohol tax.

By the gallon, the current tax on beer is 12 cents, on wine 70 cents, and on spirits and liquor \$4.40 cents. While the revenue realized is approaching \$99 million, only \$11 million goes toward prevention, education and treatment.

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Raising the levy imposed on alcohol by "Just a Nickel" would generate \$10 million for addiction treatment for 3,800 people, said Kass Foster, a founder of the Marlton-based Parent 2 Parent.

"These are sick people trying to get well -- not bad people trying to get good," Foster said. Of the eight million people in New Jersey, 800,000 seek treatment every year, and between 70,000 and 80,000 actually receive it.

Parent 2 Parent serviced 109 people last year in Gloucester County. The

organization has been reaching out for support from legislators since February.

"The additional funding would provide longer stays for detox and treatment," said Louise Habicht, another founder. "Otherwise, it's like putting a Band-Aid on gaping wound."

The Bank added \$100 to the drive. "The Bank likes being involved in the community and helping our neighbors," said Branch Manager Beth Schoch.

While Gov. Jon Corzine has included the alcohol tax in the budget, Parent 2 Parent needs a legislator to stipulate the funds go toward treatment. "We don't want to find the money in the black hole in Trenton," said another founder Kathleen Dobbs.

To find out more, visit www.justanickel.org or call Parent 2 Parent at (856) 983-3328.

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