Speaker: Children of Divorced Parents Can Do Well

Family Service Association hears Barber: "Children of Divorced Parents Can Do Well"

Barber: "Divorce is painful. Divorce is painful. Divorce is painful. Divorce is painful. Divorce is painful. Divorce is painful. Divorce is painful."
Professor contests myths about kids of divorce

By JEFF WALSH
Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — Children of divorce are portrayed as potential school dropouts and pregnant teens who are likely to spend their adolescence depressed and delinquent.

Bonnie L. Barber says these negative characteristics thrown on children of divorce are startling, considering divorce rates are running at 50 percent.

"It seems that characterizing such a large number of families as somehow dysfunctional does them a serious disservice," said Barber, an assistant professor of human development at Penn State University.

Barber gave a speech Monday on "Divided Families: Promoting Successful Adjustment After Divorce" at the Family Service Association's 99th annual luncheon.

Challenging negative perceptions and media, Barber developed FAST (Families and Successful Teens) — a program of parallel groups for both parent and child. Prior programs have focused solely on the individuals and didn't bring the parents and the teen together.

Barber's program was offered in the Wilkes-Barre area last year in a partnership between Penn State and the Wilkes-Barre School District. Another course will be offered in the spring, meeting once a week for seven weeks.

Guest speaker Bonnie Barber, left, talks Monday with Phyllis Belk, director of university relations at Penn State-Wilkes-Barre, and the Rev. Donald Lyon of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wilkes-Barre, at the Family Service Association luncheon.