

DAET COALITION NEWSLETTER

A community resource to help prevent youth substance use in Ashland

Ashland's Kids Have...

Decisions at Every Turn

Prevent Youth Substance Use

WINTER 2015

A LETTER FROM THE COALITION

Dear Ashland Community,

I hope this letter finds you all well. Thank you to the Decisions at Every Turn Coalition (DAET) for inviting me to welcome the community to read, learn about, and become more familiar with the great work being done. I have been fortunate to be involved with the Coalition for over five years, where I have witnessed community members volunteer their time to better the lives of our youth. DAET is dedicated to collaborating with schools, parents, the community, police, etc. to assist our community in combating the significant factors that influence youth substance abuse.

As Superintendent of Schools, I ask that each member of the community take a moment and think about what we all can do to assist in the prevention of youth substance abuse. Some of you will begin to implement changes at home, and others will seek outside assistance. What I would suggest, however, is that YOU consider joining the DAET. We meet regularly and the schedule can be found at www.AshlandDecisions.org.

Every decision we make is critical to the well-being of our youth and entire community. Please consider joining us.

Be well,

Jim Adams
Superintendent of Schools



ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Have you been to Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn Coalition website lately? Visit www.AshlandDecisions.org to check out the latest trending topics, learn about "The Myths of Smoking Pot" and test your knowledge on underage alcohol use and its impact on youth.

We've added three new information tip sheets to our **Parenting for Prevention** educational series.

- **Tobacco**
- **Opioids**
- **Risk & Protective Factors**

You can find all of the Parenting for Prevention tip sheets at: www.AshlandDecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html

Dr. Jane Greenstein will present "Positive Approaches to Power Struggles" at the Ashland Public Library on January 21st at 7:00 PM. See Page 4 for more details.

TEEN TALK SADD SUPPORTS PROJECT PURPLE



In the month of January all the high schoolers in Ashland are focused on one thing: Basketball. Even those who do other sports and activities ask who has been doing well and what the team's record is. There is something however that started up two years ago during basketball season that deserves as much attention as the sport itself: Project Purple.

Founded by Chris Herren, a former basketball player for the Boston Celtics, this event promotes an anti-drug and alcohol campaign. That is because Herren's career was cut short. After coming out of Fall River, Massachusetts, where he scored 2,073 points during his high school career at Durfee High, our hometown hero went to Boston College, and eventually went on to be drafted in the 2nd round of the NBA Draft. Though he seemed to be ready for success, he did have one issue: drugs. He had to drop out of BC due to failed drug tests for marijuana and cocaine, and right before ending his NBA career, he started taking Oxycontin, Vicodin, and Percocet. He was later caught for doing heroin, and was dead for 30 seconds after a drug overdose caused him to crash into a utility pole. Such a hopeful life was ruined, but Project Purple is a reminder to us that we can avoid making the same mistakes, starting with our youth, as that was the time in which drugs began to ruin his life.

Please pass this story on to your children: they all have the same potential Chris Herren did, but in their own way; whether it be sports, music, or art. Don't let them ruin that potential by turning to drugs and alcohol.

Todd Carter
AHS SADD Vice President

SADD will recognize Project Purple at the end of January with announcements and presentations at a basketball game. A similar event is also being planned at a hockey game. Visit Resources on Page 3 for more information about Project Purple.



AROUND ASHLAND

Around Ashland celebrates the collaborative energies of our community partners who work with us and within the broader community to provide a positive environment for Ashland youth. This issue features the Ashland Board of Health.

The Board of Health would like to thank Decisions at Every Turn members for supporting recent tobacco regulations adopted by the Board of Health that prevent youth access to tobacco and nicotine delivery items. Starting this January 2015, flavored tobacco products shall be prohibited for sale in facilities that allow the entry of customers under the age of 21 years of age. Other requirements preventing youth access include the minimum age of 21 to purchase tobacco products and nicotine delivery items/e-cigarettes.

The Board of Health appreciates the help from the students who attended our public discussion in support of these tobacco regulations. It should be noted that the Board of Health received tremendous support from Attorneys who represent the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards and the Massachusetts Municipal Association. These tobacco regulations were adopted with credible studies nationwide from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noting that of the 15.7% of students nationwide who currently smoke cigarettes and were less than 18 years old, 14.1% usually obtained them by buying them in a store (i.e. convenience store, supermarket, or discount store) or gas station; nationally in 2009, 72% of high school smokers and 66% of middle school smokers were not asked to show proof of age when purchasing cigarettes; more than 80% of all adult smokers begin smoking before the age of 18; and more than 90% do so before turning 20 years old.

The Board of Health has hired a tobacco compliance inspector through the Town's support for a revolving fund to provide the needed resources to effectively conduct tobacco compliance checks and to conduct inspections at the point of sale. Additional plans are in place to provide educational programs and additional support thanks to a regional grant shared by our neighboring communities. This grant was received from the MetroWest Health Foundation.

Thank you to DAET for their help in preventing youth access to tobacco products and nicotine delivery items/e-cigarettes.

Mark Oram
Board of Health Director



Last spring Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn Coalition administered a Social Norms Student Survey at Ashland High School. The purpose of this survey was to gather information related to student attitudes and perceptions of substance use among their peers and within the Ashland community at large. These data are being used to design a health promotion project using a social norms approach to reduce alcohol and other drug use among AHS students.

Research consistently shows that students overestimate the extent to which their peers consume alcohol and other drugs. The social norms approach is an effective, scientifically-driven strategy that uses locally derived student data to reduce students' misperceptions of peer alcohol and other drug use. In doing so, it reinforces the positive, non-using behavior of the clear majority of students on many metrics, and thereby relieves the pressure which students often feel to drink and use drugs. This evidence-based method has had positive results in many high schools and colleges/universities across the country.

Social norming assumes many forms including posters, flyers, and media-based messaging to consistently communicate accurate information about the norms of health, safety, and responsibility of most students. Our campaign is named **STAND (Students Taking A Noble Direction)** and was developed by students at Ashland High School. The first round of posters was implemented in late October. It is normal for students to doubt and question the validity of the messaging displayed on the posters because it challenges their perceptions. The AHS faculty and staff have received training regarding this type of validity questioning and have started to have some great conversations regarding these perceptions. Look for STAND posters next time you're in the high school!

COALITION REWIND

September

- Hosted a display table at Ashland Farmers Market
- Participated in Ashland Day
- Held two *Community Conversations*

October

- Launched Parenting for Prevention (tip sheets) educational series
- Distributed 6,600 inaugural DAET Coalition Newsletters through Ashland Directions
- Announced new *Community Conversations* initiative in Ashland Directions and in the fall issue of the DAET Coalition Newsletter
- Held one *Community Conversation*
- Co-hosted the Dr. Robert Brooks parent program with the Friends of the Ashland Public Library at Ashland High School

November

- Hosted the Community Discussion: "Diversion – What Will Work in Ashland?"
- Announced *Ashland Parent Survey* results in Ashland Directions article

December

- Outlined Community Discussion: "Diversion – What Will Work in Ashland?" highlights in Ashland Directions article

6 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH DAET

Looking for an opportunity to learn more about the Coalition or to become involved in community efforts to promote healthy choices among Ashland youth? Here are 6 different ways you can get involved.

Attend a Coalition meeting: Coalition meetings are open to anyone in the community. Meetings are a chance to learn more about the Coalition, current initiatives, and volunteer opportunities.

Join a Working Group: Working Groups focus on a specific objective and assist DAET in setting and accomplishing goals in the areas of Communications; Policy; Membership/Recruitment; and Special Projects.

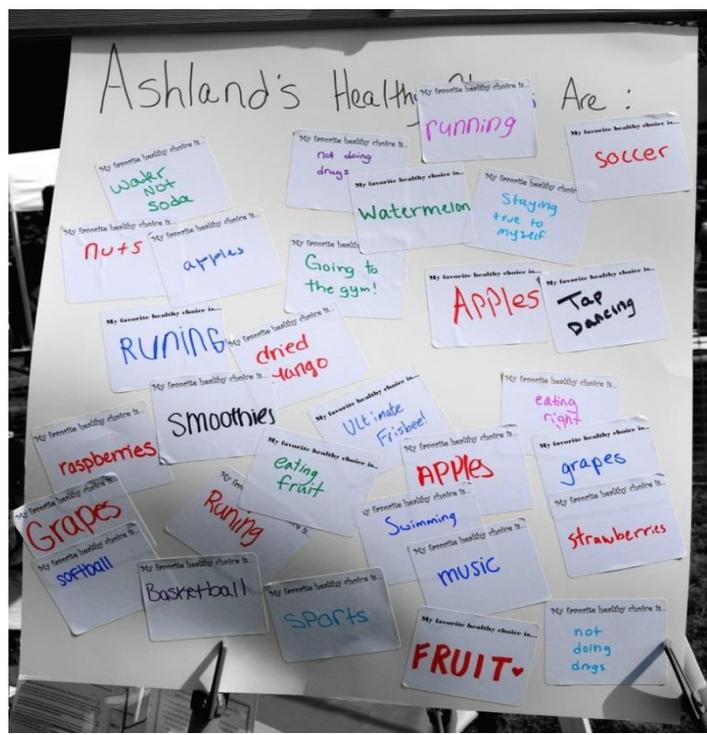
Attend or Volunteer at a Community Program: DAET and the Friends of the Ashland Public Library host a series of community programs for parents, youth, and other audiences. Come learn more about a particular subject or volunteer your time to help with an event.

Host a Community Conversation: Host friends or neighbors in your home to learn about youth substance abuse, the effects of substances on the teen brain, proven prevention strategies, and age-appropriate tips for talking with children/teens about alcohol and other drugs.

Become a Community Partner: Community Partners work with and alongside DAET by contributing their energy, abilities and commitment to supporting healthy youth.

Visit our website and join our email list: DAET has a dynamic website with valuable information and an email list that is used to share important Coalition information.

For more information:
Visit our website at www.AshlandDecisions.org
or email us at CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org.



RESOURCES

The Herren Project: Project Purple Initiative
<http://goprojectpurple.com/>

National Drug Facts Week
<http://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-facts-week>

Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth
<http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/>

DON'T FORGET TO SIGN UP FOR FUTURE DAET COALITION NEWSLETTERS
To receive notice about the next online issue, join our email list at:
CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org

At Ashland Day we asked kids and teens "What are your healthy choices?" Here's what they said. Way to go, Ashland!

Photo: Maddie Graves Photography



COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING



DAET and the Friends of the Ashland Public Library are pleased to be co-hosting an ongoing parenting workshop series as well as community programming. Library sessions will provide parents with tips and talking points and the opportunity to collect new skills, share challenges, and get answers to compelling questions. Programs and parent workshops are free and open to all. For questions about programs at the library, please contact president@friendsoftheapl.com. Please direct other inquiries to CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org.

Topic	Speaker	Date, Location, Audience
Positive Approaches to Power Struggles	Jane Greenstein	Date: Wed. January 21 Time: 7-8:30pm Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents of all aged children
Understanding The Teen Brain	Dr. Elizabeth Byrnes	Date: Wed. February 4 Time: 7-8:30pm Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents of all aged children
The Digital Age: Safety and Time Restrictions	TBD	Date: Wed. March 25 Time: 7-8:30pm Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents of students in grades 4-12
Community Discussion: Youth Event	Rick Cresta, LICSW, MPH	Date: Mon. April 13 Time: 7-9pm Location: AHS, Cafeteria Audience: Youth in Grades 7-12
Understanding Youth Marijuana Use: Parent Discussion	Rick Cresta, LICSW, MPH	Date: Mon. April 28 Time: 7-9 PM Location: AHS, Cafeteria Audience: Parents of all aged children
Ready, Set, Go! Using Unstructured Time: How to Support Learning in Young Children without Pushing	Courtney Arsenault	Date: Thursday May 7 Time: 7-8:30pm Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents of Pre-k to Grade 4

2015 COALITION MEETING DATES

Coalition meetings are open to anyone in the community. Come learn about the Coalition, our current initiatives, and volunteer opportunities. New members are welcome! An orientation meeting can be made by prior arrangement.

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| January 13 | April 14 |
| February 10 | May 12 |
| March 10 | June 9 |

All meetings are held on Tuesday evening
 Ashland Middle School
 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM