

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

SUMMMER 2017

A LETTER FROM THE COALITION

Hello!

My name is Saumya Sankhavaram, and I am the new Drug Free Communities Project Coordinator for the Decisions at Every Turn Coalition. I've only been in the position for a few weeks, but I'm already fired up by the discussions I've been having with colleagues and community members to get more involved with the important work and collaboration that DAET has been working on.

I am a recent graduate of the Boston University School of Public Health, where I received my Masters in Public Health with a concentration in Social and Behavioral Sciences. Before that, I was an undergraduate college student at Indiana University Bloomington, where I received degrees in Biology and Gender Studies. I have also had the opportunity to work and volunteer in a number of fields, from serving on a crisis call line for a domestic violence shelter to working in a residential setting with adults with disabilities, to conducting phone referrals for patients who needed extra help with resources like financial assistance, transportation, and housing. My educational and work experiences have all led me to a strong belief in prevention as a cornerstone of the health and well-being of communities.

Since I have been working with the coalition, I have already had a couple of opportunities to interact with the Ashland community as well as substance abuse prevention colleagues at large. On my first day as coordinator, I attended the Courageous Conversations event held at Ashland High School, and the week of June 5th I attended the New England Institute of Addiction Studies' Summer School. At Courageous Conversations, I was able to meet with many community leaders in Ashland, and to learn more about how everyone in Ashland envisions their town's future. It was a great opportunity to meet people from throughout the community, and it gave me a sense of how invested everyone is in building community unity through open, honest discussion.

At NEIAS, I learned more about current trends in substance use and abuse around New England, including what other state and local programs have used when working with youth. Importantly, I was able to talk to others in the field about what has and hasn't worked to prevent and reduce youth substance use in different parts of New England. It was great to hear from others who are already working on the ground in substance abuse prevention, as well as recovery and treatment. I especially appreciated hearing about how collaborative prevention is and how many strides have been made in reducing youth substance use. I left the conference feeling empowered to come back and employ what I had learned here in Ashland, while still learning more about this community and what works for youth in Ashland. I hope that over the summer and into next year I am able to learn more about this community, and to use my experiences to work with everyone in the community to support the work of the coalition.

*Saumya Sankhavaram
DFC Project Coordinator*

A GREAT TIME TO TALK WITH YOUR TEEN

Summer is here and the kids are out of school. These next few months are an excellent opportunity to check in with them and take advantage of unplanned opportunities for conversation. Here are some topics and tips to get your tweens and teens talking:



Create a safe environment for your child to share the truth. Assure your child that he can always be honest with you – without fear of ridicule or blame.



Don't answer the phone or allow other interruptions while you're talking to your teen.



Listen to your child vent. Sometimes she just needs to complain and get things off her chest.



Rephrase your teen's comments to show him you've heard what he's saying or give nonverbal support and encouragement by nodding and smiling.



Be attentive for topics that lead into drugs or alcohol (Example: perhaps your teen describes someone at school who is "always high" or mentions a celebrity who has gone to rehab). Ask your teen what he thinks about those people or their behavior.



Focus completely on your child and try to see things from your child's point of view. This will help you sympathize with his/her situation.



Be aware that your child could be hiding true feelings out of fear, embarrassment, or something else, and you should be careful to not just take what the child says at face value.



Listen between the words. Pay attention to body language, facial expressions, or difficulty finding the right words to use.



Recognize and confess when you don't have the energy to be a good listener and agree to restart the conversation (as long as it isn't dire) at a later, better time.

Source: The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids (www.drugfree.org)

You can find more conversation tips in our *Parenting for Prevention* series at:
<http://www.ashlanddecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html>

REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS: UPDATE

DAET is fortunate to be part of three collaborations that take a regional approach to substance abuse prevention. Through these partnerships, Ashland has been able to strengthen its own capacity to address youth substance use and to bring knowledge and expertise to our neighboring communities.

MetroWest Substance Abuse Prevention Alliance (MW-SAPA): In September of 2015, several MetroWest communities convened to identify ways that community coalitions and prevention advocates could positively impact youth health. Since then, coalition members and prevention professionals from 15 communities have met monthly to share best practices and collaborate on initiatives that prioritize youth well-being through the prevention of substance use. Through a generous grant from the MetroWest Health Foundation, MW-SAPA hosted the MetroWest Youth Teaming Together (MYTT) Summit, which brought together more than 40 youth from 8 communities to learn about primary prevention and to generate ideas for innovative youth programming. This fall the youth participants will build on the ideas developed during MYTT and develop a project to support and celebrate MetroWest teens.

Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative (SAPC): Now in its second year, Central MetroWest SAPC has begun to implement several strategies to prevent youth alcohol use in our region, with a focus on 1) Caring adult-youth relationships and 2) Social access to alcohol. Spearheaded by Hudson, the SAPC cluster also includes Ashland, Framingham, Northborough, Southborough and Natick. This past spring, nearly 100 adults across the 6 communities were trained by Andrea Egmont of Egmont Youth Development in Positive Youth Development, with a focus on building supportive youth-adult relationships through the use of 40 Developmental Assets. In the coming months, SAPC will explore hosting a community-wide training on developing strategies to effect municipal-level policy and systems change regarding alcohol access and begin the process of developing a social norms campaign targeting parents.

Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (MOAPC): After a busy first year, the MetroWest MOAPC has completed the collection and assessment of opioid-related data and is using the findings to develop strategies to 1) Prevent opioid first use and 2) Reduce/prevent the consequences of opioid use. Spearheaded by Framingham, the MOAPC cluster also includes Ashland, Natick and Hudson. This past week, more than 30 municipal leaders and community members attended trainings provided by the Harm Reduction Coalition on harm reduction principles and to learn how communities can benefit from implementing harm reduction strategies as part of a comprehensive plan to address the opioid epidemic. The following day, more than 100 community members attended the MetroWest Opioid Forum, a half-day discussion facilitated by leaders recognized for their support of communities to reduce drug related harms. The forum was sponsored by MOAPC and Justice Resource Institute (JRI).

MW-SAPA, SAPC and MOAPC groups are open to community members who are interested in working toward community solutions to prevent and reduce youth substance use. If you would like to learn more about these efforts or are interested in becoming involved, please email CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org.



MYTT youth attendees brainstormed regional substance abuse prevention project ideas



Participants in the SAPC training learned about the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets framework. Learn more at <http://www.search-institute.org>



Attendees of the MetroWest Opioid Forum ask questions from the panel of experts in harm reduction strategies and concepts.

DAET COALITION NEWSLETTER

A community resource to help prevent youth substance use in Ashland



PAGE 3

COALITION REWIND

May

- Published "Bridging Ashland's Generations" in *Ashland Directions*
- Published "A Great Time to Talk with Your Teen" in Ashland Town Pages
- Hosted the Community Program *College Transition: A Program for Parents* for parents of AHS seniors
- Hosted the Community Program "Summer Send Off" for AHS students and parents
- Co-hosted "Courageous Conversations" with the Town of Ashland, Ashland Public Schools, Ashland Cultural Council, MetroWest YMCA Family Outdoor Center, Engage Ashland and Friends of the Ashland Public Library
- Presented work accomplished by the DAET Opioid Prevention Working Group during the "Community Spotlight" segment of the Central South Middlesex Opioid Task Force meeting
- Hired new DFC Project Coordinator
- Unveiled final round of STAND posters for the current year and reviewed intercept survey results to plan for next year's campaign
- Sent three coalition members to the "Build Them Up Workshop" with Andi Egmont sponsored by the Central MetroWest Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative

June

- Published "Developmental Relationships" in *Ashland Directions*
- Sent two staff members to the New England Institute of Addiction Studies conference
- Co-hosted The Ashland Intergenerational Oral History Project: *Stories of Ashland* community celebration for project participants and Ashland community members
- Sent two coalition members to the "Build Them Up Workshop" with Andi Egmont sponsored by the Central MetroWest Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative
- Supported eight coalition members in a multi-day training and educational forum on opioid issues and harm reduction principles
- Supported SADD Sticker Shock program

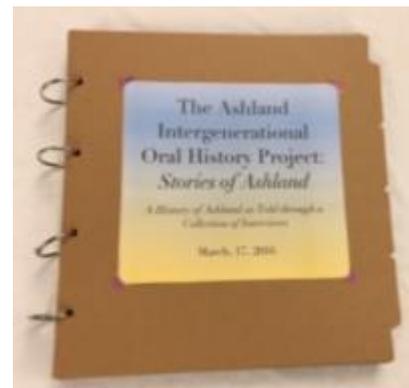
BRIDGING ASHLAND'S GENERATIONS



A unique non-profit called Bridges Together Inc. aims to build supportive communities through its dedication to educating, empowering, and connecting generations.

In March, Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn (DAET) Coalition, the Friends of the Ashland Public Library, Ashland Public Schools, Ashland's Youth & Family Services, Ashland's Historical Society, Ashland Board of Selectmen and the Ashland Business Association hosted the *Ashland Intergenerational Oral History Project* as an opportunity for Ashland youth and seniors to engage in a meaningful dialogue about history, family, and community.

Eleven Breaking the Barriers (BTB) youth group members and AHS students and 16 Ashland seniors participated in videotaped one-on-one interviews which explored many different themes. The students asked questions about significant historical events, childhood friendships, family memories and living in Ashland. The seniors responded with amazing stories and an eagerness to share their experiences.

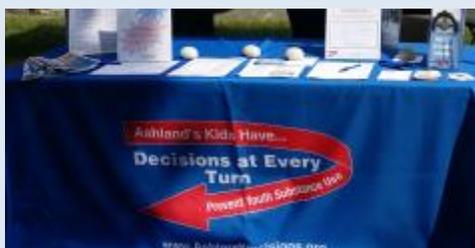


Earlier this month interview participants, family members, and community supporters gathered at the Ashland Public Library to celebrate the culmination of this innovative multi-generational endeavor.

Everyone is eager to make this a recurring

event and we are already planning to continue our intergenerational interview series.

Come visit us at the Ashland Farmers Market on September 9th and Ashland Day on September 16th.



DAET COALITION NEWSLETTER

A community resource to help prevent youth substance use in Ashland



COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

DAET & the Friends of the Ashland Public Library are working on the 2017-2018 programming schedule and have a lot of valuable and enriching programs in store. Watch for the program announcements in early fall. We will showcase the programming schedule on the back page of the Fall DAET Newsletter and have it available on both the DAET website at www.AshlandDecisions.org and the Friends of the Ashland Public Library website at www.friendsoftheapl.com.

If you missed out on any of last year's programs, visit www.ashlanddecisions.org/community-programming--2016-2017-.html to access program materials.

Please email Betsy Emberley at PositiveNorms@AshlandDecisions.org if you have suggestions, questions, or would like to help with an event.

COME TO A COALITION MEETING

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.

MEETING DATES FOR THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR WILL BE ANNOUNCED SOON. PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT <http://www.ashlanddecisions.org/calendar.html> FOR UPDATES.

HAVE A SAFE SUMMER!

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



Find us at:
Decisions at Every Turn



Follow us at:
@AshlandDAET



Check us out at:
AshlandDecisions.org