

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 2015

A LETTER FROM THE COALITION

As I reflect back on the past year, I am struck by how conversations about substance use and abuse have been changing in the face of current realities. Today, as we find ourselves coming to terms with an emerging opiate epidemic, discussions about inadequate addiction services and the heartbreak faced by families dealing with relapse and overdose are becoming more common. Often these are families we have known for years and children we have watched grow up within our community. Inevitably, many of us find ourselves wondering what we could have done differently. And perhaps more importantly, we find ourselves asking what can we do now?

Clearly this is a complicated issue and there is no magic solution. But what we do know is that, as a community, we need to be working together on both prevention and recovery. Prevention efforts are ongoing in Ashland. The Decisions at Every Turn Coalition (DAET), with funding from the federal Office of National Drug Control Policy, is taking a multi-pronged approach to prevention working with partners throughout the community. We are also committed to partnering with those in the recovery community as we all come to terms with the turmoil that addiction leaves in its wake. I would encourage you to read more about the MetroWest Opioid Task Force that is highlighted in the current newsletter. This organization was founded here in Ashland and DAET recently partnered with them to present the documentary "The Anonymous People", a film that illustrates the value of bringing conversation around addiction and long-term recovery out into the open. This shift in public perception of addiction as a chronic brain disorder is long overdue and it is important that the prevention community plays a role in supporting these efforts. No longer should the prevention and recovery communities operate in separate spaces. We are all members of the Ashland community and together, we can strive to both prevent substance abuse and support those individuals and their families who are coping with addiction.

Liz Byrnes, Ph.D.
DAET Coalition Chair

USING POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS FOR CHANGE

The use of social norms messages, or messages that convey the majority of youth are engaging positive, healthy behaviors can curb substance abuse. These messages help correct the misperception that "everybody's doing it" and provide actual data collected from local youth. Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn Coalition has created the STAND youth campaign using social norms messaging to raise awareness that MOST Ashland teens are making good decisions about alcohol and other drugs and that the number of youth who report using alcohol or other drugs is much lower than teens and parents think.

In April 2014, students at Ashland High School participated in an anonymous Positive Community Norms survey to determine perceptions about alcohol and other drug use among Ashland teens. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, the responses were "cleaned" to weed out inconsistencies or responses by students not taking the survey seriously. More than 90% of the student body participated. For example, survey results reveal that:

- **Most** AHS students agree that parents should clearly communicate about the importance of NOT using alcohol
- **92%** of AHS students report that their parents do NOT allow them to drink alcohol at home
- **73%** of AHS students feel their parents would think it was wrong for them to drink alcohol
- **85%** of AHS students feel their parents would think it was wrong for them to smoke marijuana

Survey data were used to develop campaign messages on posters and in other media to encourage conversations among high school students that making the choice not to drink or use drugs is also the choice made by most of their peers.

The impact from the STAND campaign goes beyond the walls of the school. The message that they are sending to parents and the larger community is powerful and we must listen. Let's support the teens in our community by aligning ourselves with the culture and norms they have defined – most teens avoid alcohol and other drugs. There are many ways to do this: Talk to your child about your family's rules about NOT using alcohol and other drugs; support local substance-free activities for youth; advocate for policies that limit access to alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana products; discourage marketing or advertising that promote youth use; do not provide or allow alcohol at parties attended by youth; and talk with friends and neighbors about ways to work together to keep your teens and their friends safe.

**COME VISIT US AT THE
ASHLAND FARMERS MARKET COMMUNITY TENT
ON AUGUST 22ND.**



STAND
Students Taking A Noble Direction

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DAET COALITION WELCOMES NEW PARTNER

DAET is very excited to welcome the Greater Boston Tobacco-Free Community Partnership to our community coalition. In May, a representative from TFCP attended our coalition meeting to raise awareness about their collaborative efforts throughout the state on tobacco-free community activities. Each region has a Program Coordinator that is able to communicate on both a local and statewide level to assure that our voices are heard about tobacco-free initiatives.

The ways in which Program Coordinators are able to help are:

- Helping with updating and/or changing Ashland tobacco regulations/policies with your local board of health with the help of free state level legal advice
- Creating community awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco on youth including e-cigarettes and other tobacco products
- Providing information and education about cessation and quitting techniques
- Helping with housing authority initiatives to go smoke-free with the help of two professionally trained technical assistance providers
- Referring interested youth to The 84 Movement (please visit: www.the84.org for more information)
- Assistance in community tobacco-free media campaigns

Program Coordinators are always open to meeting members of the community, listening to their concerns, and helping in any way they can. The Greater Boston Region is currently going through a staffing transition and will announce a new Program Coordinator soon that will serve the Ashland community. We are happy to be able to feature the Greater Boston Tobacco-Free Community Partnership in this newsletter and look forward to working with them in our joint commitment to a healthier community.



www.facebook.com/findtheHEROinU

Email: HEROinU22@gmail.com

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The April 2nd showing of "The Anonymous People" was an unprecedented collaboration of recovery resources for our community. The screening, held at Ashland High School was hosted by Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn Coalition, Shining Strong, and HEROin U. Sponsors included Real You Revolution, Gosnold on the Cape, Wicked Sober, and American Addiction Centers. Also in attendance were representatives from Learn to Cope, Teen Challenge, and GRASP (Grief Recovery After Substance Passing).

The film itself addresses the social stigma that accompanies addiction issues, even after sustaining long-term recovery, and the responsive public movement building throughout the United States. From all walks of life, advocates step out of anonymity in an effort to de-stigmatize the disease of addiction and promote change in how legislation, insurance, and the country respond to accommodating treatment.

I pushed to screen this film in Ashland because for me, it's personal. HEROin U - MetroWest Opioid Task Force was born out of a mother's frustration and her supportive friend's encouragement. That mother's frustration came to a boil after her daughter's August 23, 2014 ER discharge, following a heroin overdose the previous night. Lifesaving Narcan had to be administered three times, but in the aftermath there was no psychiatric consultation, no advocate, not even a resource brochure. There was only judgment, shame, and discharge instructions stating, "You almost died tonight. Stop doing heroin and seek help."

"That mother" is me. Those discharge instructions ignited my fuse, and seeing "The Anonymous People" gave me the courage to stand up publically. Today I proudly disclose that my name is Tiffany Wallace, my daughter is an amazing young woman in early recovery and HEROin U's co-founder, Lisa Keating, and I are on a mission to form partnerships with local medical, safety, school, political, and community organizations to raise awareness and education about the opioid crisis we are in and to find treatment for those in the throes of it.

Upcoming goals include fundraising events to support HEROin U's mission, construction of a mobile advocacy panel, and organizing a bus trip for the historic UNITE to FACE ADDICTION rally on the National Mall in Washington, DC on October 4, 2015.

HEROin U is an incorporated non-profit. Donations can be mailed to HEROin U, P. O. Box 93, Ashland, MA 01721

COALITION REWIND

April

- Co-hosted *Community Discussion for Youth:- Marijuana - What's the big deal?* with the Friends of the Ashland Public Library featuring Rick Cresta, LICSW, MPH/MSW
- Co-hosted *Community Discussion for Parents: Youth Marijuana Use – Know the Risks* with the Friends of the Ashland Public Library featuring Rick Cresta, LICSW, MPH/MSW
- Provided an overview of the Coalition's efforts to prevent youth marijuana use in the April issue of Ashland Directions
- Administered STAND campaign awareness survey to Ashland High School students
- Co-hosted the screening of "The Anonymous People" with HEROin U - MetroWest Opioid Task Force

May

- Released *Communication Parenting for Prevention* tip sheet
- Held two *Community Conversations*
- Co-hosted the community program *Ready, Set, Go!* with the Friends of the Ashland Public Library featuring Courtney Arseneault, MS
- Sent two participants to the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) training
- In partnership with AHS, distributed safe prom information and messages to parents & students.
- Offered safe prom & graduation tips in the May issue of Ashland Directions.
- Supported the AHS Social Host Liability event featuring District Attorney Marian Ryan.



On April 13, Ashland High School students attended an educational presentation about youth marijuana use, facilitated by Rick Cresta. The students learned about the potential risks of using marijuana and shared their concerns, thoughts and perceptions about youth and adult use. Rick facilitated an open and honest conversation about marijuana and was impressed by the students' thoughtful questions.

He commended Ashland for being committed to encouraging dialogue about preventing youth marijuana use and offered congratulations that **8 out of 10 AHS students do NOT use marijuana in a typical month.** (*Positive Community Norms survey, April 2014*).

Parenting for Prevention

Parenting for Prevention is a DAET Coalition educational series for parents and other caring adults to increase awareness and knowledge about important youth issues & to encourage dialogue about making healthy choices.

- Alcohol
- Communication
- How to Talk to Your Kids at Any Age about Alcohol, Other Drugs & Making Good Decisions
- Marijuana
- Opioids
- Risk & Protective Factors
- The Teen Brain (**NEW**)
- Tobacco

All of our tip sheets are available for download at:
www.AshlandDecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html.

73% of AHS parents had discussed family rules about **not using alcohol** with their children in the past 12 months!

Great news! According to the Positive Community Norms survey administered at Ashland High School in April 2014, most students reported that a parent had talked with them in the past year about family rules and expectations concerning underage alcohol use.

Research shows that teens whose parents talk to them about alcohol use are less likely to start drinking.

Remember - It's never too late to start the conversation. If you haven't talked with your teen yet or are unsure of what to say to your middle schooler, here are some helpful resources to help you get started:

- [Make a Difference: Talk to your Child About Alcohol](#)
- [Partnership for Drug Free Kids: Parent Toolkit](#)
- [Talk. They Hear You. Underage Drinking Prevention Campaign](#)

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

DAET & the Friends of the Ashland Public Library hosted a very successful 2014-2015 Community Programming Series this past year. Our programs reached over 250 parents & youth with topics such as raising resilient kids, understanding the teen brain, marijuana prevention and navigating social media.

We'll be brainstorming for 2015-2016 soon
and would like your input to help plan programs for the upcoming year.

- Are there topics or issues that you would like to learn more about?
- Have you seen a speaker that other parents would enjoy?
- Do you have ideas for marketing and promoting the events?

Please email Betsy Emberley at PositiveNorms@AshlandDecisions.org if you have suggestions, questions, or would like to help plan 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 2015-2016 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

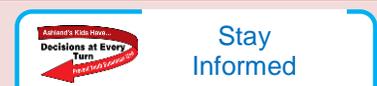
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Decisions at Every Turn



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