

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 2017

A LETTER FROM THE COALITION

Dear Ashland Community Members,

Welcome to the winter edition of the Coalition Newsletter. After a two-year hiatus, I am proud to be a member again of this dedicated group of community leaders, parents and substance abuse prevention specialists. Over 9 years ago, I began volunteering with this group after attending a community review of the 2006 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey. The results were presented and discussed by a panel of town leaders including representation from the schools, the police, and the Board of Health. The numbers showed that our teens were abusing alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana at rates consistent with or in some cases higher than other MetroWest towns. I was shocked by the results. I was afraid for my own children, their friends, and our community. As I looked around the room, I was sad to see that only 10 parents came to hear this important information. I decided to make a commitment and volunteer to do what I could to help keep our Ashland youth healthy and safe.

At that time, the group consisted of a few individuals with no funding. We worked hard to bring awareness of our mission to promote healthy decision-making in our community. We made presentations to town organizations. We set up booths at Ashland Day and the Ashland Farmers' Market. We solicited free literature from state and federal agencies so that we could distribute pamphlets and educate the community on substance abuse prevention. We struggled, but we never gave up because we envisioned a healthier Ashland. As time went on, we gained the support and recognition of our town leaders. We developed partnerships with various Ashland organizations and collaborated to bring positive changes to our community. Finally, we felt Ashland met the criteria to apply for a federal Drug Free Community Grant and in 2013 Ashland was awarded the grant.

What started out as a grass-roots organization is now a supported coalition that is able to bring evidence-based education and prevention strategies to our community in order to reduce and prevent alcohol, cigarette, and other drug use among Ashland youth. I am so proud of the accomplishments of the Coalition and the Ashland community. I hope you will join us by attending a Coalition meeting and investigating how you can help keep our youth free from substance use and abuse.

*Claudia Rose
Parent and DAET Treasurer*

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

What's your New Year's resolution? If **volunteering** is on your list, please consider Decisions at Every Turn. We have many meaningful ways you can get involved. Ask us how, at CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES IN THE AGE OF RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

In November 2016, Massachusetts voters voted in favor of Ballot Question 4, allowing home growing and commercialization of recreational marijuana. It looks like a Legislative Working Group will be spending time this Winter to help craft a Recreational Marijuana Law that is in the best interest of public health and safety.

These new changes in marijuana policy must be considered in the context of our current understanding of the effects of marijuana on the brains of adolescents and how policy changes influence teen perceptions and behavior. With these considerations, prevention has never been more important. Research has shown that legalization of a substance is associated with a decrease in the perception of harm, perception of parental disapproval, and perception of peer disapproval associated with that substance. These changes in perception are very often correlated with an increase in use of that substance.

We suggest that parents talk with their children often about making healthy choices, in general, and the potential consequences of marijuana use (See Page 3), in particular. Under the legalization of recreational marijuana law passed in November, home growing of up to 12 plants, possession of up to 10oz, and "giving away" up to 1oz (approximately 50-100 joints), are now legal. Edible products infused with high levels of THC (the psychoactive chemical in marijuana) can be difficult to distinguish from regular sweet treats and have been associated with significant adverse events in children of all ages, adults, and even pets in states such as Colorado. Having conversations with children about not eating candies, cookies, or other products unless they are certain of what they are and where they came from, will prove to be increasingly important. We, as a community coalition, are committed to our continued efforts aimed to prevent youth substance use, including marijuana.



How much do you and your teen really know?

TAKE THE 2016 NATIONAL DRUG & ALCOHOL IQ CHALLENGE

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/quiz/national-drug-alcohol-facts-week/take-iq-challenge/2016>

FOSTERING RESILIENCE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

By Carolyn MacDuffie Chapman, MSW, LICSW

As we enter the winter months, we have been thinking a lot in Ashland about fostering resiliency in our children. Our inspiring day with Ken Ginsberg in October reminded us how important this is. Resilience is the ability to “bounce back” in the face of challenge and problem solve to cope with stressors. At this time of year, the New England climate requires us all to be a bit more resilient.



With expected winter weather, we must work a bit harder to be in touch with nature, as increased exposure to our natural world helps us feel more grounded, and increases endorphins (the “joy” chemicals) in our body while decreasing the stress chemical called Cortisol. Reminding our kids (and ourselves!) to put on their warm clothes and play outside, go for a walk, sit in the sun, or build a snow person will be vital.



Social and Emotional health in general, but especially resiliency, depends on having some positive coping skills for when things do get hard, and for many of us things feel much harder during these cold, darker, snowy days. Exercise (shoveling counts!), healthy eating (complement the holiday sweets with some fruits and veggies), and connecting with others (shovel a neighbor’s driveway, call an old friend, or volunteer in the community) are all important things to remember to continue to do in the winter months.

This winter we will also all be in a national time of transition. Any type of transition or change (regardless if we feel it is positive or negative change) increases a sense of vulnerability in each of us. We will all feel and be more resilient if we focus on compassion and empathy. As Superintendent James Adams said in a recent community email, “celebrate one another, care for one another, support one another, and most of all teach one another what it means to be a caring, compassionate, empathetic, and accepting human being”. When we are kind, we feel better, and so do our kids.

So, as the darker days and cold comes, remember that under the ice and frozen ground, there are bulbs waiting to bloom, fish swimming, and animals sleeping. Similarly, under our sometimes-rushed expressions, quick exchanges, and within our busy days, there are many moments where we can care for ourselves, reach out to others, and connect through kindness. Keeping this in mind will help us feel and be more resilient as individuals, foster resilience in our kids, and stay resilient as a community.



About the Author:

DAET member Carolyn Chapman has worked in the field of Clinical Social Work for over 20 years in school, home, and office based settings. She currently has a private practice in Westboro where she works with individuals, couples, and families.

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS & GUARDIANS

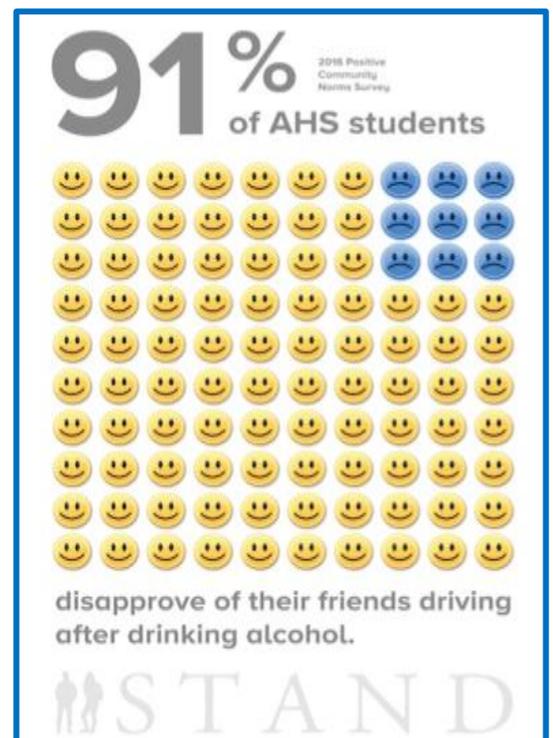
Please take a moment to acknowledge the good choices Ashland High School students are making. The recent STAND (Students Taking a Noble Direction) positive social norms campaign message shows that Ashland students are looking out for their friends. That’s something to be proud of.

Use these conversation starters to talk with your teen about underage drinking and the health and safety risks associated with underage use, including impaired driving. This is a good opportunity to come up with a code word that they can use with you if they need help getting out of an unsafe situation, such as a party where alcohol is present or if they suspect the person about to drive them has been drinking alcohol.

Ask your teen ...

- What do you think about the message?
- What do you think about the nine percent who do think it's okay to for their friends to drive after drinking alcohol?
- What would you do if you found yourself in a situation that could become unsafe due to someone wanting to drive after drinking alcohol?

Remember, one of the best ways parents & guardians can help prevent underage alcohol use is to make healthy decision-making about alcohol and other drug use an early and ongoing conversation.



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COALITION REWIND

September

- Held the 2nd Annual DAET Coalition Retreat
- Co-Hosted the Community Program “Marijuana & Vaping: The Big Picture: A Look at the Health, Wellness & Policy Impact on Ashland Youth” with the Friends of the Ashland Public Library
- Published “A Look at What We Have Planned for Year 4” in *Ashland Directions*
- Published “Ashland Raises Happy and Healthy Kids Encourages Outdoor Play” in Ashland Town Pages
- Supported the Ashland Police Department’s Alcohol Retailer Training

October

- Published “Senator Karen Spilka Thanks Ashland at DAET Coalition Retreat in *Ashland Directions*”
- Published “Spotlight on Resilience” in Ashland Town Pages
- Co-Hosted the Community Program “Building Resilience” featuring Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg with the Friends of the Ashland Public Library, ASHPAC and the Ashland PTO
- Breaking the Barriers (BTB) youth group had their 1st meeting
- Community stakeholders participated in “Science of the Positive”, a training to support positive change in Ashland using the “Positive Community Norms (PCN) Framework”.

November

- Published “DAET Welcomes Breaking the Barriers Youth Group(BTB)” in *Ashland Directions*
- Published “Helping Children Express Feelings” in Ashland Town Pages
- Co-hosted the World Café “Community Discussion About Alcohol Use” with the Friends of the Ashland Public Library

December

- Published “Students Say That Family Conversations about Alcohol Use Are Common” in *Ashland Directions*
- Published “Safe Holiday Celebration Tips” in Ashland Town Pages
- Acknowledged by Governor Baker, Lieutenant Governor Polito, and the Ashland Board of Health for our commitment to substance abuse prevention.
- Held DAET Steering Committee meeting



We had a great turnout to the DAET/FAL World Café event “Community Discussion about Alcohol Use” on November 15. Thank you to all the youth, parents, school and community members who participated.

2 NEW PARENTING FOR PREVENTION TIP SHEETS
RESILIENCE
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH

Find all of our tip sheets at:
www.AshlandDecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html

Marijuana Prevention Tips: How to Take Action

Today’s teens are bombarded with messaging that influences their perceptions of risk about marijuana use. *Use your influence* to remind your teen that marijuana use is dangerous and can be addictive. It can interfere with safe driving, school, friends, and personal goals. Smoking marijuana or ingesting marijuana edibles can be harmful to the body, can have negative short-term and long-term effects or can change who they want to grow up to be.

Short Term Risks

- problems with learning and memory
- distorted perception (sights, sounds, time, touch)
- poor motor coordination
- increased heart rate
- decreased motivation

Long Term Risks

- school failure
- disruption of personal relationships, daily functioning
- heart and lung vulnerabilities
- dependence
- other drug use

TALK WITH YOUR TEEN

~ Arm yourself with some basic information to begin the conversation: it can be addictive, it is not harmless, it is unsafe to use if you are behind the wheel, it is associated with school failure, and it can cause psychosis or a panic attack, especially if used with alcohol.

~ Be clear about your values, expectations, and no-use rules about marijuana and alcohol use.

~ Ask your teen to talk about their perception of risk with using marijuana. Is it different than their perception of risk with using alcohol? Why or why not?

~ Identify opportunities in movies or on TV to talk about how marijuana use is portrayed.

~ Ask them to name things that are important to them – drama, music, sports, college? Encourage them to talk about how marijuana would interfere with those goals.

~ Divulging personal use is an individual decision. What matters most to you today is protecting your child from the dangers of drug use and to make conversations about making good decisions a regular habit.

~ If you suspect your teen is using, talk with his or her physician about your concerns.

Additional information can be found on our
Parenting for Prevention: Marijuana tip sheet at:
<http://www.ashlanddecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html>

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING 2016 - 2017

Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn (DAET) Coalition and the Friends of the Ashland Public Library are pleased to be co-hosting programs for parents and the community. Programs will provide parents with strategies, the opportunity to collect new skills, and get answers to compelling questions. Programs are free and open to all. For questions about programs at the library, please contact president@friendsoftheapl.com. For questions about programs at other locations, please direct inquiries to CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org.

Topic	Speaker	Date, Time, Location, Audience
Addressing Challenging Behaviors with RESPECT	Courtney Arseneault, MS	Date: January 18, 2017 Time: 7:00 - 8:30 PM Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents of children in Pre-K - Grade 2
Putting the Fun in Family Dinner Series (3 program series; includes dinner. Registration will be required)	Lisa Beaudin, Director of Nutrition Services, APS Cindil Redick, Program Manager, The Family Dinner Project	Dates: February 11, March 11, & April 12, 2017 Time: 5:30 – 7:00 PM Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents & their children in Grades K-5
Community Book Read	Jim Adams, facilitator Superintendent, Ashland Public Schools	Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2017 Time: 6:30 - 8:00 PM Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Community
Ben Speaks: The Power of Choice (Co-hosted with ASHPAC and Ashland PTO)	Judy Giovangelo	Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2017 Time: 7:00 PM Location: Ashland High School Audience: Parents
College Transition: A Program for Parents	Janice Kassman, Former Dean of Students at Colby College; Bev Madden, Parent & co-chair SPAN-DS; and Julia Madden, Middlebury College graduate, 2014	Date: Tuesday, May 2, 2017 Time: 7:00 – 8:30 PM Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents of high school seniors
Summer Send-Off for AHS Students & Parents	Chief Craig Davis, APD; Marian Ryan, Middlesex County DA, and John Morello, Actor/Comedian	Date: Tuesday, May 9, 2017 Time: 7:00 – 9:00 PM Location: Ashland High School Auditorium Audience: AHS Juniors/Seniors and parents

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.

September 13	5:30 – 7:00 PM	February 14	5:30 – 7:00 PM
October 4*	2:30 – 4:00 PM	March 14	5:30 – 7:00 PM
November 1	5:30 – 7:00 PM	April 11	5:30 – 7:00 PM
December 13	5:30 – 7:00 PM	May 9*	2:30 – 4:00 PM
January 10*	2:30 – 4:00 PM	June 6	5:30 – 7:00 PM

The Coalition meets monthly on Tuesdays. Administration Building/Ashland Middle School - Room #5

***Meetings will be held from 2:30PM – 4PM and youth are encouraged to attend.**