

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 2016

A LETTER FROM THE COALITION

Greetings Ashlandites!

As a parent volunteer for the Decisions at Every Turn Coalition, my involvement is tri-fold. I have a love of our town and our children, 15 years of professional experience with those in recovery, and personal experience. These have culminated into a desire to create a healthier, supportive environment for our youth. My opportunity to represent DAET at CADCA (www.cadca.org) trainings in February and May 2015 confirmed that Ashland is not alone in working towards this goal.

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (<https://ncadd.org/>) individuals who start drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to develop alcoholism later in life than those who begin drinking at age 21. Other research affirms that the potential risks of dependence or addiction are also relevant to early use of other substances, including prescription drugs and marijuana. Our mission as a coalition is to implement a broad range of strategies to prevent underage alcohol use and other substance use and to promote the social, emotional, mental, and physical benefits of delayed use. While some may think, "Oh, kids these days, of course they're going to try things. Lord knows I did!" the actual percentage of 'the kids' referenced is lower than teens and parents think. The STAND social norms campaign uses data collected from the 2014 Positive Norms Survey to communicate that most Ashland teens are making good decisions around substance use.

With respect to substance abuse and mental health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is working toward a recovery-oriented model of treatment, "a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential." (*Mental Health: The Big Elephant in the Room*, *Huffington Post*, 2015). When I was working with homeless families who were struggling with addiction, the first thing our local agencies did to help them was to connect them with therapists. As SAMHSA knows all too well, the 'Elephant in the Room' in our society is mental health. Those who have experienced trauma and the mental health issues that come about due to trauma often self-medicate. By addressing mental health first, we can hopefully head-off the inclination to turn to drugs or alcohol as ways to make life more bearable. DAET is working hard in our town to do just this; provide support and open communication so our youth can go on to lead healthy lives as adults. Read more about our recent Community Discussion on adolescent social, emotional, and mental health inside.

I invite you to learn more about the Coalition's educational and volunteer opportunities, including *Community Conversations* and *Volunteer Working Groups* (Page 3) and our *Community Programming and Coalition Meetings* (Page 4).

Rebekah Carter
Ashland Parent, Coalition volunteer member

DAET COALITION WELCOMES NEW PARTNER ASHLAND PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (ASHPAC)

ASHPAC would like to express our excitement on becoming a community partner with Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn (DAET) Coalition. We look forward to collaborating with DAET on programs and projects that increase awareness of our mutual commitment to support Ashland youth.

ASHPAC is a small group of parents who work towards the understanding, respect, support and appropriate education for all children with special needs and/or disabilities in our community. As a volunteer organization we count on our members to share valuable knowledge, help keep information current and increase the awareness of the activities and works of this group to the whole community. In addition to providing feedback from parents to the Ashland School administrators, ASHPAC offers workshops and speakers that educate on a broad range of topics relevant to all parents. ASHPAC also provides scholarships to graduating seniors and helps fund staff requests for supplies and teaching materials.

To find out more information please visit us at ashpac.org, follow us on **Twitter at ASHPAC_Ashland** and follow us on **Facebook at ASHPAC**. Our remaining schedule is listed below; please join us if you can:

- **February 3rd:** Executive Functions: Fit the Strategy to the Learning Profile by Jackie Stachel, MS CCC-SLP, Beyond Book Smart (snow date 2/10)
- **March 14th:** 10 Traits of Effective Parents in the Special Education Process by Attorney Jeffrey M. Sankey
- **April 11th:** Transition Regarding Adult Services by Ellen Kilicarlan
- **May 10th:** Parent Relaxation Tips and Techniques by Mary-Ellen Kramer, Certified Yoga Instructor (RYT 200)



www.ashpac.org

Why do YOU support Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn Coalition?

"I support DAET because it is wonderful to have a whole community willing to talk to our children about important life choices."

~ Katy Shander Reynolds, Ashland Parent

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL DISAPPROVAL – IMPACT ON AHS ALCOHOL USE

Research shows that parents have significant influence on teen attitudes and behaviors, including substance use. Results from the 2014 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey show that Ashland youth who report that their parent(s) would feel that it was **wrong** or **very wrong** to use alcohol were **less likely** to report doing so. Ashland parents are doing a great job communicating a clear, consistent “no use” message about alcohol use. Here are some helpful facts and tips to remember as you continue to have these conversations with your tween or teen.

FACTS:

- ~ It is illegal to drink alcohol under the age of 21
- ~ Youth who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence later in life
- ~ Alcohol affects the developing teen brain
- ~ Teens who drink alcohol are at an immediate increased risk for unintentional injuries including falls, fights & alcohol poisoning
- ~ Long-term alcohol use may result in, malnutrition, liver disease, cancer of the mouth or throat, or addiction

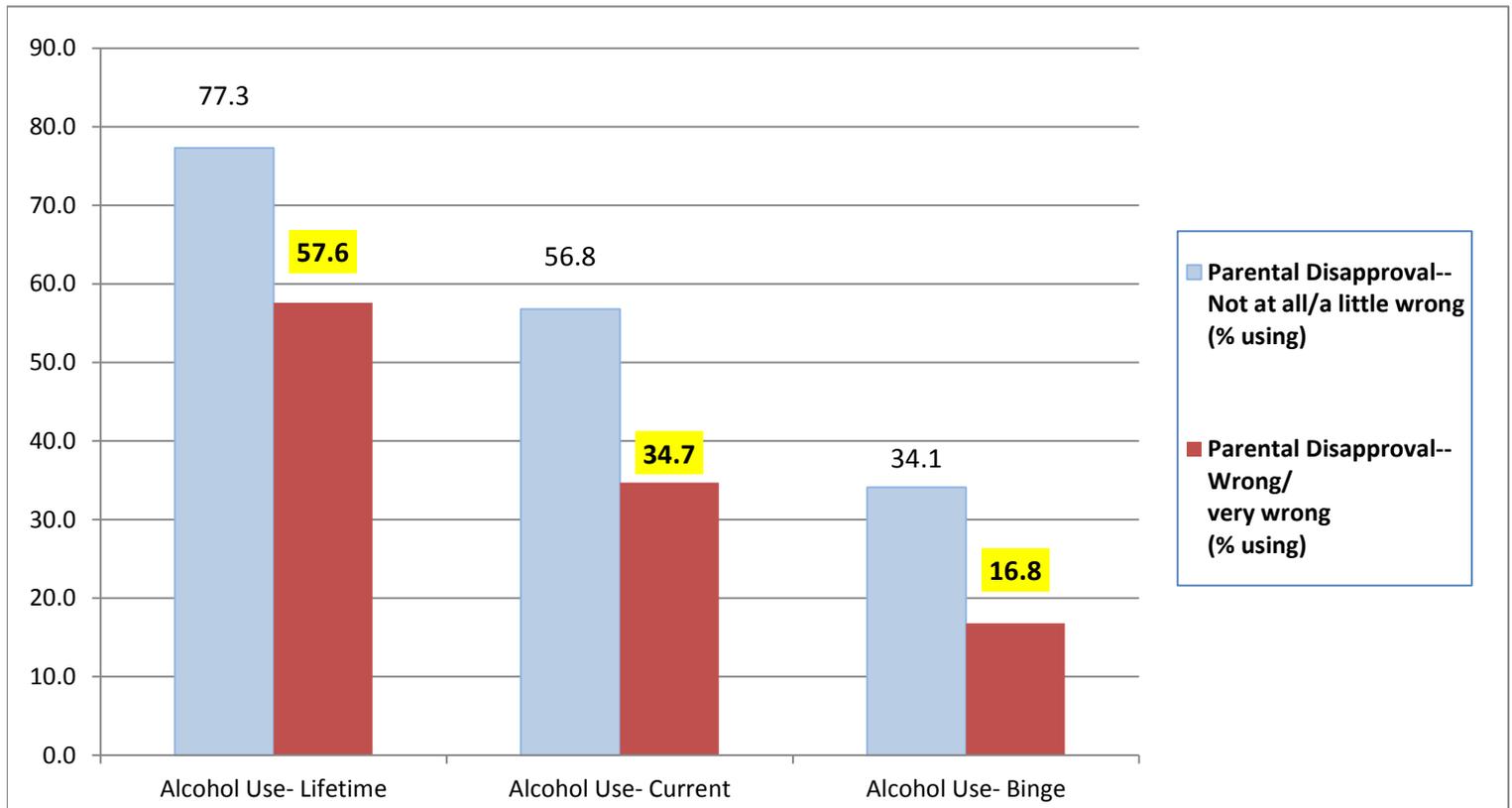
WHAT YOU CAN SAY & DO:

- ~ Have frequent conversations
- ~ Set clear rules and consequences if the rules are not followed
- ~ Practice refusal skills (show your teen different ways they can say “No” if offered alcohol)
- ~ “Check in” on teens when they are hanging out in your home (in the basement, garage or other secluded space)
- ~ Lock up all alcohol in your home
- ~ Identify all of the positive choices your teen is already making

For more facts, tips, and conversation starters: www.ashlanddecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html

SURVEY SNAPSHOT - ALCOHOL USE 2014 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

Ashland High School students who perceived that their parent(s) **disapproved** of youth alcohol use were **less likely** to report lifetime use, current (30-day) use and binge drinking of alcohol.



COALITION REWIND

October

- Hosted our first youth-focused Coalition Meeting with 10 youth and 14 adults
- Pilot tested STAND posters & messages. Hung '15 -'16 Round 2 posters with messages, sent e-flyers with STAND messages for parents, held Lucky Tray Day #2
- Held Community Discussion: Social, Emotional & Mental Health – How to Support your Child through the School Years
- Held Medication Safety in Older Adults program at the Senior Center
- Published "Join us at a Coalition Meeting" in Ashland Directions

November

- One staff member and one Coalition member attended the opioid prevention training Words Can Work: Engaging Youth in Preventing Opioid Addiction
- Published "Senator Karen Spilka Gives Opening Remarks at DAET Coalition and Community Programming calendar in Ashland Directions
- Pilot tested STAND Round 3 poster images & message
- Launch of pilot Diversion Program

December

- Published "Reaching Ashland Parents One Conversation at a Time through Community Conversations" and Community Conversations flyer in Ashland Directions
- Hung STAND Round 3 posters, held Lucky Tray Day #3, sent e-flyer with corresponding parent message
- Supported AMS & AHS MWAHS Survey presentation
- Registered four AHS youth to attend the CADCA National Leadership Forum

THE BEST WAY TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE COALITION IS TO VOLUNTEER!

We have two newly formed working groups! We are looking for community members to be part of the [Mental Health Working Group](#) or the [Opioid Prevention Working Group](#).

Email CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org for more info.

Learn about all of our volunteer opportunities at: www.ashlanddecisions.org/volunteer-opportunities.html

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH



The topic of youth mental health is being discussed by community coalitions all across the country. Research shows that youth who report stress, depressive symptoms, self-injury, or suicidal ideation are at a greater risk for substance use and other unsafe behaviors. Like many substance abuse prevention coalitions, DAET recognizes the importance of addressing the social, emotional, and mental well-being of our youth as part of a comprehensive prevention plan.

On October 27th, parents and other concerned community members gathered at Ashland High School for our *Community Discussion: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health – How to Support your Child through the School Years*. Representatives from Ashland Public Schools and the Ashland Police Department participated in a panel discussion to share their concerns about Ashland youth with respect to student mental health, strategies currently being used to address these concerns, and tips for parents to support mental health at home.

The panel presentation was followed by a facilitated discussion which provided an opportunity for participants to share their primary concerns about youth social, emotional and mental health, and thoughts about what the schools' and broader community's role should be in these efforts.

Handouts with parent tips and strategies you can use in conversations with your child and a summary of the facilitated discussion are available at: www.ashlanddecisions.org/community-programming-events-materials-2015-2016.html

HAVE YOU HOSTED A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION YET? CONTACT US NOW TO RESERVE YOUR DATE!



These facilitated conversations are helpful discussions about good decision-making, youth substance abuse, the effects of substance use on the developing teen brain & proven prevention strategies.

- Age-appropriate conversations to have with younger children about making good choices
- Strategies for talking with teens about the risks of youth substance use and abuse

See our flyer for additional information:

www.ashlanddecisions.org/community-conversations.html

To schedule your Community Conversation today contact:

CommunityConversations@AshlandDecisions.org

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING



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, Location, Audience
Mindfulness Tools	Lisa Campbell, HHT, MMIC	Date: Thursday, January 7 Time: 7-8:30 pm Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Adults and kids 12+
So Much to Worry About: What is Causing Anxiety in Our Youth, Why We Should Be Concerned, and What We Can Do	Carolyn Chapman, MSW LICSW; Mara Acel-Green, MSW, LICSW; Lauren Morris, MSW, LICSW; and Kerry Luoma, LMHC	Date: Thursday, January 21 Time: 7-8:30 pm Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents of all aged children
Social Emotional Learning and Resilience Building	Susan Rivers, PhD Deputy Director, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence	Date: Thursday, February 11 Time: 7-8:30 pm Location: Ashland High School Auditorium Audience: Parents of all aged children, Community
Ready, Set, Go! Using Unstructured Time: How to Support Learning in Young Children without Pushing	Courtney Arsenault, MS	Date: Tuesday, February 23 Time: 7-8:30 pm Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Parents of Pre-K to Grade 4
Nutrition	Lisa Beaudin, CHHS Director of Nutrition, Ashland Public Schools	Date: Thursday, March 3 Time: 7-8:30 pm Location: Ashland Public Library Audience: Community
Pre-prom/Senior Week Program	Co-Presenters: Middlesex County DA's Office and TBD	Date: Tuesday, May 10 Time: 7-8:30 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.

January 12*	2:30 – 4:00 PM	April 12*	2:30 – 4:00 PM
February 9	5:30 – 7:00 PM	May 10	5:30 – 7:00 PM
March 8	5:30 – 7:00 PM	June 14	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.

SIGN UP FOR THE DAET COALITION NEWSLETTER

To receive notice about the next online issue, join our email list at: CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org