

Youth Task Force Annual Report 2009

The Youth Task Force successfully secured funding from two sources providing long term funding for initiatives in this community to address underage drinking and drug prevention, last year. In July 2008 the YTF was awarded a three year \$300,000 grant from the Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Abuse Services to continue middle school substance abuse prevention efforts. Beginning in October 2008 the YTF has been awarded a 5 year \$625,000 (\$125,000 @ year) to provide substance abuse prevention targeting high school students and their families. This money is to enlist the support of community wide strategies to have a real impact on this issue in our community.

In January, 2009 the Youth Task Force hired another coordinator, Jamie Vanderhoop to support the expansion of the efforts into the High School population. The efforts of the YTF are focused on community based initiatives as illustrated in the descriptions of our work below.

Community and Parents:

Safe Homes Pledge:

The Youth Task Force (YTF) continues to view parent networking as one of the biggest supports that it can offer to our community. After much discussion and consistent reference to the needs of parents here in our community, the YTF designed a Safe Homes Pledge (attached) and distributed it to all households of 7th-12th grade students. The Safe Homes Pledges were mailed to each household, through the collaboration with each middle school and the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. Presently we have 175 parents enrolled in the Safe Homes Pledge Network and continue to recruit participants through a variety of public events and advertising campaigns.

Rural Health Scholars:

The YTF as a subcommittee of the Dukes County Health Council was afforded the opportunity to benefit from a program offered by the UMASS Medical School as a Student Clerkship. Six medical/nursing students came to the Island in October to look at health education and parent involvement on the Island. YTF coalition members assisted with the coordination of their efforts, and in a short period of time the Rural Health Scholars were able to canvas a large sample of individuals to provide them with information about alcohol and drugs on the Island for youth. The students were on the Island from October 8th – 21st and presented their findings in a power point on Tuesday, October 20th. At the presentation, it was apparent that although our anticipation was that they would solve some of our challenges with canvassing a large population of people, without the inherent knowledge of the community the conclusions that they came up with were merely confirmation of our known challenges.

Website:

The website continues to develop and the Youth Task Force has been subcontracting with a person to assist in the collection of resources for the site. We have been meeting quite regularly with our graphic designer to finalize the templates for the site. We have also decided to create an online database for all of our safe homes pledge families with login information required for access. Presently the website is on the deck of the programmer and we are hoping for a February launch date.

Social Host Liability:

On December 10, 2009, Mark J Hoover, an attorney from, Campbell, Campbell, Edwards & Conroy presented to our community for the second time on Social Host Liability. After low attendance in June for the same presentation, 50 people filled the room at the MV Hebrew Center. The presentation was extremely informative, and well received. In addition to parents, there were

educators from the High School as well as High School students in attendance. The YTF hired professional filmmakers to film the presentation and in January the film will begin to be aired on local access television.

In addition to the meeting with the community, the YTF set up a meeting for Mark to discuss the Social Host Liability law with local law enforcement. At this meeting, law enforcement individuals were able to honestly and frankly share their involvement in underage drinking prosecution and their challenges in pressing appropriate charges. Law enforcement individuals were appreciative of this opportunity and were grateful for the additional information. Campbell & Campbell provided our community with a great supply of informative brochures about the law and the implications of the charges. Again, police appreciated this resource and will look forward to using these brochures as a teaching tool in our community.

Liquor Outlet Outreach:

Compliance Checks

The YTF is arranging for its third compliance check in the last two years, in conjunction with the local police and the ABCC. Notification is in the paper (attached) and we are awaiting a date from the ABCC.

Sticker Shock

The YTF facilitated a Sticker Shock at 100% of the liquor outlets on the Island. Over 5000 stickers (attached) were placed on multi packs and bags at 8 out of 8 of the package stores on the Island. All package stores participated and the YTF purchased a large ad thank establishments for their participation. (attached)

Youth Suicide Prevention:

The YTF in acknowledgement of the strong connection between substance abuse and suicide has begun exploring a collaborative community effort to address the risk of youth suicide here on Martha's Vineyard. The YTF has designated a coalition member; Beth Toomey as a contact to the Youth Suicide Prevention Project for the Cape & Islands. Beth attends regular meeting on the Cape and assures that the Island needs are communicated in the development of all assessments and strategic planning.

The YTF has been working with Maura Weir, Project Manager for the Youth Suicide Prevention Project (YSPP) to bring together focus groups of key players in our community to be involved with youth suicide prevention. On November 3rd and November 20th the YTF hosted 2 focus groups with over 25 key representatives from police, fire, emt's, educators, therapists and youth organization workers to discuss youth suicide prevention here on the Island and our needs. Maura will be writing these needs into her strategic plan for services for the next three years.

Through our affiliation with the YSPP the YTF has been planning and recruiting participants for a Post Traumatic Stress Management 2 day training to be held on January 7th and 8th. (attached) 50 community members have registered and are scheduled to be in attendance.

Surveys:

YRBS

Due to an unusually low return rate from last year's survey, (64% HS and 74% MS) the YTF has decided to survey youth this year as well. In the process of refining survey questions with the help of Health Imperatives, questions have been added and revised in an effort to be more culturally sensitive to our community's needs. This refinement of the questions allows us to anticipate more relevant results to assist us in the direction of our work.

The anticipated survey date is February 8th for all 7th-12th grade students. For the first time this year, the YTF will be facilitating training on the YRBS for all school staff for the two weeks prior to the survey in an effort to strengthen school staff's assistance in increasing the return rate.

Parent Survey

The YTF has designed a high school parent survey. The survey was launched in December with the endorsement of the Martha's Vineyard High School. The YTF has received over 160 surveys at this time and anticipated closing the survey in January with the results compiled and reported by Health Imperatives in February. Survey has been advertised in local papers, facebook, email and is on the high school Edline. (Survey link is :www.surveymonkey.com/s/MVParentSurvey) This survey asks questions about parent's rules and boundaries regarding underage alcohol use as well as their perception of their peer's protective behaviors.

Teacher Survey

The YTF has also designed a teacher survey for all Middle School and High School teachers here in our community. The survey again was designed with the support of Health Imperatives, was launched in December and we anticipate the results in January. This survey was designed to find out from teachers their beliefs about Martha's Vineyard Youth use of substances as well as their understanding of the Social Norms Theory. This is also considered a pre test as we plan to have a Social Norms training in January and will re survey after the training.

Social Norm Marketing:

The YTF has facilitated focus groups with middle school students to develop new marketing materials including two new posters for the middle school population. These posters are distributed in the schools as well as the general community on bulletin boards at libraries, stores, ice arena etc. Newest posters are attached.

Marijuana and Non-Prescription Drug Use Assessment:

While the primary focus of our work centers around youth alcohol abuse, we have received comments from parents and other community members concerned about marijuana and non-prescription drug use. We have begun a series of assessments to gauge the scale of the problem in our community including key informant interviews and surveys. After we have completed the assessments, they will be analyzed and compiled into a report and based on the findings, an action plan will be created.

Non-Profit Organization Outreach:

The Community Outreach subcommittee has met with the leaders of several non-profit organizations in the community that host annual fundraising events where alcohol is served. In the first meeting with these leaders, a discussion was initiated about steps each organization can take to ensure underage drinking is prohibited at their events. The group was able to share both their past successes and describe areas where they are in need of improvement and education. A follow-up meeting with this group has been scheduled. In addition, a tentative date for a lawyer from the law firm of Campbell, Campbell, Edwards and Conroy to come educate the group about the criminal and civil consequences of furnishing alcohol to minors has been established. The non-profit organizations are enthusiastic about attending this upcoming educational presentation.

Parent Network:

The Parent Involvement Subcommittee has been successful in creating a parent liaison at each Island school. Each parent representative has committed to receiving and relaying information about our

initiatives and upcoming events to the school's Parent Teacher Organization and existing parent contact lists. It is our hope that this parent-to-parent information sharing will increase participation at YTF events and enable more households to receive education and resources.

Focus Groups:

In an effort to ensure that the coalition is doing work that continues to be relevant to the community's current needs, the YTF facilitates the Youth Behavior Risk Survey in the school for students in grades 7-12 every two years. In addition to the survey, the YTF conduct a series of focus groups to collect information. This quarter focus groups have been conducted with the following groups: High School parents, High School students, Middle School parents, Middle School Students, and community representatives affiliated with suicide prevention. These focus groups have produced valuable information that is currently being analyzed by Health Imperatives.

Guidance Counselor and Health Teacher Outreach:

Currently, there are several school guidance counselors and health teachers that serve as members of the YTF coalition. Recently, this group of professionals (representing all five middle schools on the island) organized themselves and requested a meeting with the YTF in order to incorporate YTF materials into their school curriculum. This exciting new endeavor is an excellent example of coalition members taking initiative and creating sustainability in the community. Initial meetings have taken place and a planning session is scheduled to take place on January 20, 2010.

Law Enforcement Outreach:

The Policies and Ordinances subcommittee has met with the chiefs of police of each of the six towns on the island to discuss the current protocol in regards to underage drinking parties. Each police department was very receptive to meeting with the YTF and forthcoming with sharing information about their practices and situations that they often encounter. These meetings were extremely important for the YTF in establishing a working partnership and understanding with all the local police departments. Both parties left the meetings with a better understanding of the work that each group does and an agreement to continue communication.

The subcommittee also met with Assistant District Attorney (D.A.) Laura Marshard to discuss the prosecution of individuals caught furnishing alcohol to minors under the Social Host Liability law. The meeting with Ms. Marshard was very informative and she was very interested in the YTF's initiatives. It was suggested by the Assistant D. A. that we also meet with the Dukes County court magistrate and have a similar conversation. Ms. Marshard offered to help the YTF to schedule this meeting in the near future.

Community Outreach

During the past quarter, the YTF has participated in and distributed information at several events in the community including the Principal's Coffee, School Wellness Day and the Edgartown School Play (see attached.) In addition to our attendance at these events, the YTF continues to post information and positive social norms messaging in public spaces on the island.

Internal Organization

The YTF continues to work closely with Health Imperatives focusing on our timeline for the work proposed in our work plan. This has been very productive use of our time – as we want to most efficiently handle the workload.

Coalition Assessment

The steering committee of the YTF has been focused on strengthening its policies and procedures from a very organic style to something with more expectations on both sides of the table. Through an assessment of needs within the coalition, it was determined that the coalition would benefit from some teambuilding, skills assessments, as well as cultural competency.

Retreat

On October 6th, the YTF hosted it's first coalition retreat. Coalition member, Paul Bracy facilitated a full day coalition retreat focusing on values clarification activities, teambuilding and cultural sensitivity. The retreat was held at the Administrative Building at the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and 30 coalition members attended with positive feedback from attendees. After the retreat some follow up activities around values clarification and creation of a skills register for coalition members has assisted the coalition in the focus of our work.

Coalition Subcommittees

In an effort to create more opportunities for coalition members to participate and gain ownership of current initiatives, the following four subcommittees were created:

1. Community Outreach

Initiatives:

- Sticker Shock
- Compliance Checks
- Shoulder Taps
- Non-profit Outreach
- Information Distribution and Participation in Community Events

2. Parent Involvement

Initiatives:

- Refine Parent Survey
- Survey/Interview Parents
- Parent Networking
- Safe Homes Pledge
- Parent Event Planning
- Chat & Chowder Dinners
- Parent Mailings

3. Educational Outreach

Initiatives:

- Lake Forest DVD
- Responsible Beverage Server Training
- Social Host Liability

4. Policies & Ordinances

Initiatives:

- Party Hotline/patrol
- Responsible Beverage Server Training Ordinance
- Sticker Shock Ordinance
- Social Host Liability Ordinance
- Standardize police policies for underage drinking parties
- Alcohol Delivery Policies

Each YTF member has joined a subcommittee and committed to meet regularly and report progress back to the larger group at the monthly coalition meetings. This important addition to the coalition structure has been positively received by all members and has increased the coalition's capacity and efficiency in expanding accomplishments in our community.

2. Community Mobilizing

Our coalition is represented by members of the police departments including youth officers, police chiefs and DARE officers, school guidance and health teachers, the school superintendent is a very active member, as well as clergy, parents, youth, grandparents, domestic violence prevention specialists, therapists, doctors, nurses, school principals, youth counselor of the Wampanoag Tribe, members of the business community, youth probation officer, DCF caseworker, EMT, mentors and members of the NAACP.

The YTF continues to expand its membership of the coalition in a thoughtful manner. New, interested participants for the coalition are invited to a weekly steering committee meeting to meet the steering committee and coordinators of the YTF. During this meeting YTF representatives are able to discuss the initiatives and goals of the coalition and new potential members share their thoughts about the issue and why they are interested in participating on the coalition. This new procedure has been extremely helpful in determining the best fit for the interested recruit as well as the needs of the coalition. At this time, the YTF often encourages new people to participate in the work of a subcommittee rather than the coalition as we are growing at a fast rate and need peoples efforts directed towards specific initiatives in our community.

We have very favorable relationships with key stakeholders including the superintendent of schools, principals and other school personnel, police departments and mental health professionals. We have positive interactions and involvement with youth, parents and medical professionals as well.

3. CMCA Implementation

The YTF had several major accomplishments this quarter. For the first time, the coalition was able to secure participation from 100% of the liquor stores on the island. In order to achieve this goal, the YTF staff and coalition members engaged in several conversations with storeowners in order to foster relationships and trust. Participation by every store on the island is validation of the community's support for our work. Additionally, one liquor store created their own sign stating that if a customer was going to purchase alcohol for an underage drinker, they did not want their business (see attached photo).

Another major accomplishment was the establishment of relationships with all the police departments on the island. The creation of these relationships will assist our efforts in the future.

4. Organization & Staff

There have not been any changes to the staff at this time.

Jamie & Theresa regularly attend Prevention Institute activities at our regional center, Health Imperatives in Brockton, MA.

