



Sussex County Coalition for Healthy and Safe Families

A program of The Center for Prevention and Counseling

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Sussex County Coalition for Healthy and Safe Families

Annual Report Card

Coordinating community efforts for a healthy Sussex County since 1998.

2008-2009



Our Mission... to help every family in Sussex County to be healthy, safe, and free from the effects of substance abuse and addiction.

Dear Community Member,

As hard as it is to believe its been nine years, it is inspiring to see how many community members we have reached and how many people now recognize the Coalition and it's work. It is awesome to see all the new and returning faces at each Coalition meeting and event and realize the scope of our outreach into Sussex County. Thank you all for helping us in our mission to ensure that "every child has a safe place to grow."

We look forward to our continued collaboration in the upcoming year. The Coalition continues to thrive thanks to the involvement of you and others like you. We are so fortunate to be a part of this caring community, whose members have assisted us in our mission through use of our services, volunteering, and in-kind and monetary donations. In the upcoming year, we will be looking for additional ways to sustain our efforts as we are entering our final year of federal funding. For more information, or to get more involved, please contact us at 973-383-4787.

Sincerely,

Becky Carlson, Coordinator; Meg Samuel-Siegel; and Laura Breiten

Every Child Deserves a Safe Place to Grow

Our Goals:

Goal 1: Enhance collaboration among all sectors of the community by strengthening and supporting the efforts of the Sussex County Coalition for Healthy and Safe Families.

The Coalition strives to establish, maintain, and increase membership across all sectors of the Sussex County community. Sub-committees are established to address specific issues and events as needed.

Goal 2: Reduce the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by county youth.

The Coalition works to educate the community about drug use trends, signs and symptoms and build awareness of the importance of assets in order to affect positive change in our youth.

A comparison of the results of our 2005-2006 and 2007-2008 countywide American Drug and Alcohol Survey showed a reduction in 8th, 10th, and 12th graders who have ever tried alcohol, who have used it in the last 12 months, and who have used it in the last month!

Thanks to the collaboration of five county school districts, the survey will be repeated in the Spring of 2010 for current data and trends.

You get more by working together!



Coalition Signature Events

Taking Flight to Change– Countywide Anti-Bullying Summit



Creating a school community where every student feels connected and cared about and has a sense of belonging takes consistent effort. It is important for each student to recognize his or her role and responsibility in creating a school where bullying is not tolerated. For the past nine years, the Coalition has addressed this need with students, school administrators, faculty, and parents, with their annual Summit on School Violence.

When asked to share one thing they learned at the Summit, middle school attendees said,

This year, over 900 middle and high school students were in attendance to hear the phenomenal keynote speaker, Keith Hawkins, reinforce this idea through his presentation and workshops, in which he shared with students how to have the courage to speak out for themselves and others, among other things. The theme of the summit, **POWER IN YOUth**, was selected because it reflects students' power as individuals and their power collectively to make changes– for the better.



- Knowing that it doesn't matter what kind of bullying it is - we can always help
- Remembering how much your words can affect others
- Learning courage - I have courage to talk to someone
- Making people feel comfortable in this school
- Instead of watching people get bullied, I will do something

98% of respondents agreed that the Summit prepared them to address bullying in their school.

One of the primary goals of the summit is for students to gain the knowledge, motivation, and confidence to improve the culture of their schools and communities, which will allow each student to perform at their best. To assist in this regard, each student and adult who attend the summit received a binder full of information to help them work independently and together to build leadership skills and affect change. Armed with great new ideas and the binders, students and advisors developed an action plan, an activity or idea, which they will implement throughout the year to improve their school's climate. The Coalition follows each school's progress during the year and highlights their exciting work in its monthly Kids2Kids newsletter, which is distributed to each middle school.



Countywide Red Ribbon Day Celebration



The Coalition continued its celebration of anti-drugs during its 9th countywide Red Ribbon Day Celebration. Over 20 exhibitors, from the Drug Enforcement Administration and the NJ National Guard, to local law enforcement, agencies, civic groups, and businesses were present to engage and educate the approximately 500 people who came out for this fun, free event. The Showcase of Talent, the highlight of the event, featured 100 students ranging from 6-17 year olds, demonstrating or telling about their anti-drug. Everyone in the audience heard the same message loud and clear from the participants, "I have better things to do than drugs!"



When asked for one thing they learned from participating in Red Ribbon Day, a parent answered, "How to keep my boys drug free."

This event is called Red Ribbon Day *celebration* for a number of reasons. First, it is an opportunity for county students to share the hobby, passion or person that keeps them drug free. Secondly, it is a chance to celebrate the fact that the Showcase participants are not only talented but are positive role models. Thirdly, families get to spend a fun, free afternoon together, while learning about resources available to them and information about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Last, but not least, it is a time to honor the life of DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, who was killed in the line of duty. He believed, as we do, that a child could become anything he or she wanted to, if given the chance.

Project Alert Drug Trend Updates

The Coalition continues to offer Project Alert drug trend updates to county schools, businesses, civic organizations, parents and other interested community members. Becky Carlson has reached over 14,000 community members with her presentations since 1998! This grant year she educated over 1,200 people through 28 Project Alerts. These presentations are continually updated with current local and national drug trends, signs and symptoms, and are tailored to meet the needs of individual communities. Becky is frequently accompanied by law enforcement officers, treatment professionals, and/or youth in recovery from within the county.

"Thank you for holding this presentation. I truly appreciate everything you all are doing. You have given me a lot of information to start a conversation with my children."
- Project Alert Attendee

Asset Building Workshops

Search Institute's Asset Building is a concept the Coalition continues to promote. Assets are the positive building blocks that young people need to grow up to be healthy, happy and caring adults. 132 parents, teachers, Vernon school bus drivers, and other community members, participated in 10 fun and interactive Arm Your Child with Assets and Building Bridges (intergenerational) workshops, which are designed to educate participants about positive experiences and characteristics that both protect young people from many engaging in risky behaviors and promote positive attitudes and behaviors.

One participant said, "I am going to do the asset checklist with my children. This opened my eyes to some facts with self-esteem and children."
Another attendee noted that they learned, "We can always do 'one more thing' to improve the lives of our youth."

Annual Anti-Drug and Alcohol Awareness Contests



Over 1,400 youth from 37 county schools participated in the Coalition's 9th "What's Your Anti-Drug?" contest. To kick off Red Ribbon Week, 55 entries, at least one from each school that had a student enter, were featured in a supplement in the October 26th edition of the New Jersey Herald. DARE officers and school staff members met at the Herald's loading dock early that morning to help deliver the newspapers to schools. Thanks to the Sussex County Municipal Alliance, along with the paper, all county K-8th grade students received a red ribbon with the message, "Drug-free is the key, it starts with me!"



In April, over 200 students from around the county entered the Coalition's Public Service Announcement contest for Alcohol Awareness Month. Students submitted a poster or essay regarding the contest's theme, "Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix." NJ Senator Steve Oroho and Freeholder Glen Vetrano presented contest winners with awards at a Town Hall Meeting addressing underage drinking on April 7th.



Coalition Highlights

Youth Leadership Institute (formerly DEFY Youth Group)

The Coalition's youth group, Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), is an amazing group of 8th-12th grade students from various schools around the county who are working together to make a difference in Sussex County. The YLI had an incredibly busy and successful year. In addition to the monthly meetings; when they meet to hang out, eat pizza, do some activities, listen to guest speakers, and plan community events; members also participated in fun teambuilding activities such as mini-golf, laser tag, and movie nights. This group offered many different opportunities for teens this year, including:



- the 7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens Summer Program, developed by YLI coordinators, which was attended by 20 members. The 5 day program taught the best selling curriculum developed by Steven Covey.
- the Straight Talk game show, which members presented to over 125 middle school students. Participants receive a tiny remote, which allows them to anonymously log in their answers to questions regarding alcohol and other drug use. This technology allows YLI members to tailor their presentation to the audience's knowledge.
- a Sticker Shock campaign. Members visited several liquor retail stores in the county to place stickers on multi-packs of beer, wine coolers, and other alcohol products that appeal to underage drinkers. The goal of this project is to bring awareness to the community on the possible penalties a person can face by providing alcohol to people under 21.
- sociodrama, a new exciting project that members will be offering to county middle schools in 2010. Members will be developing short interactive skits focusing on important issues adolescents face such as substance abuse and peer pressure.
- attending community events held by Mentoring Plus, to play with young attendees and assist with activities. At a recent event, members held a relay race that educated participants on the effects alcohol and other drugs have on one's body.
- creating a video Public Service Announcement for Alcohol Awareness Month. The PSA, entitled "Parents who host, lose the most", aimed to bring awareness to parents about the potential consequences they face if underage drinking occurs on their property. The PSA aired on local cable channel during April and is posted on YouTube.
- hosting a table during Red Ribbon Day and Healthy Kids Day, to run a fun craft project for attendees, educate about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs, and promote their group.



Underage Drinking Initiatives

- Keep It Legal!- In order to raise awareness about the drinking age law, the Underage Drinking Task Force is implementing a Sticker Shock campaign in which youth group members put bright blue and yellow stickers on multi-packs of alcoholic beverages that appeal to underage drinkers, reminding liquor store patrons that it is illegal to purchase or provide alcohol for minors. Task force volunteers visited local stores before the Super Bowl, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and Labor Day, to remind those purchasing alcohol to "Keep It Legal!"
- The Coalition purchased its first billboard, through a partnership with The Liquor Factory and funding received from our STOP (Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking) grant. The billboard, which encourages parents to be a "brick wall" when it comes to their underage children drinking, went up on Route 206 S going into Andover Borough in October 2009.
- In April, the Coalition implemented a media campaign for Alcohol Awareness Month. In addition to the PSA contest noted on the previous page and the YLI's PSA video, task force members crafted and printed a Letter to Parents that was copied and distributed to county schools to be sent home with students or report cards. Attached to each letter was a hanger for parents to place on a liquor bottle, which said, "At your age, drinking is dangerous. So are really angry parents." Members also facilitated an interactive underage drinking presentation, entitled Reality Check, for students at



Prescription Drug Task Force

The Coalition's task force addresses the growing trend of prescription drug abuse on a local level.

- Members designed a warning label containing the following message: "One in Five Teens Abuses Prescription Drugs—Is Your Child One?" Several pharmacies in the county placed the labels on customers' prescription bags.
- The Coordinator facilitated two Project Alerts regarding prescription drugs for county doctors and two for pharmacists. Many of the pharmacists in attendance completed a survey to help the task force devote their efforts to prevention strategies appropriate for local issues.
- The task force helped initiate Operation Medicine Cabinet (OMC), the first statewide initiative to safely collect unwanted prescription medication. The event was held on October 14th at nine locations throughout the county. In cooperation with area police departments, businesses and pharmacies, over twenty garbage bags full of medicine were collected by task force members and Coalition volunteers. Due to the great success of this endeavor, please continue to check our website, www.centerforprevention.org, for information regarding future events.



Other Accomplishments

- Coalition Coordinator Becky Carlson was awarded its 2009 "Distinguished Service Award" by the Sussex County Council of Agencies. The award recognizes outstanding performance in human services work.
- In recognition of the Coordinator's expertise, The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign and the national organization, Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), contacted Becky, asking for her input into their programs.
- The Coalition's cyberbullying prevention training has been presented to 655 community members, including students, school staff, and adults, since it was developed in 2007.
- The Coalition's bi-monthly *Coalition, Parent, DEFY* and monthly *Kids2Kids* newsletters were distributed to thousands of members each month. Current and past newsletters are accessible online through : <http://www.centerforprevention.org/coalition-parent-newsletters.htm>
- The New Jersey Herald continues to publish "What's Your Anti-Drug?" contest entries in their weekly school section.
- Sussex County Community College's educational TV station, channel 20, aired prevention programs about current drug issues and DEFY's PSAs for the Coalition at least four hours a week throughout the year.

Sussex County Coalition for Healthy and Safe Families

The Coalition aims to empower all community members through our prevention work to support healthy youth development and protect against problem behaviors in adolescence, by reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors in children's lives. Since the receipt of a Drug-Free Communities Support Grant in 2000, the Coalition has become a well-recognized resource for schools, parents, students, community members and the media looking for information and programs about alcohol and other drugs, including signs, symptoms, effects, and current local and national trends, youth violence, and prevention tools.

Key to achieving our goals has been to establish a foundation of membership in the Coalition that represents a cross-section of the Sussex County community. Leaders have been identified from education, local government, law enforcement, juvenile justice, social services, health services, parent groups, students, religious and business leaders, and the media.

The Coalition's monthly meetings afford members and guests the opportunity to:

- Learn something new
- Share information about projects or events
- Discuss & develop solutions for community issues
- Learn about committee work & progress
- Connect with other community members
- Request assistance/partners to address an issue

We would like to invite you to join with other community leaders to improve the lives of local youth. We would love for you to attend our monthly Steering Committee meetings. Please contact Becky at 973-383-4787 to confirm your interest or for more information.

I support the mission of the Sussex County Coalition for Healthy & Safe Families. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of \$_____.

Thank you for your interest and support!
Please make your check payable to
The Center for Prevention and Counseling
(or CFPC) and mail your donation to:
S.C. Coalition for Healthy & Safe Families
61 Spring St., 3rd floor, Newton, NJ 07860
Call 973-383-4787 or email
becky@centerforprevention.org for more info.

Every child deserves a safe place to grow. How can you help?

- Join the Coalition
- Attend community prevention events
- Initiate "alcohol-free" events in your family
- Initiate "alcohol-free" events in your community
- Participate in National Alcohol Awareness Month each April
- Participate in Red Ribbon Week each October 23-31
- Don't allow unsupervised parties in your home or on your property
- Educate your children about the dangers of alcohol and other drug use
- Don't permit youth use of alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, or other drugs
- Don't supply alcohol or tobacco to underage youth
- Secure your prescription medications in a safe place
- Communicate with and welcome communication from other parents regarding your children's activities
- Arrange for a responsible adult to monitor your home when you are out of town

Thank you to all our Sponsors, Supporters and Affiliates for your contributions!

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