
Parenting for Prevention

Student Assistance Services Corp., 660 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591, September, 2008

Off And Running



We had a very busy summer at Student Assistance Services. (SAS) that included a site visit by the federal project officer for the Drug Free Community

Support Program Grant awarded to the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth. She was very impressed with the level of work and commitment of the coalitions in Westchester.

In order to prepare for this visit, information was collected about all the active coalitions and eventually it was put into a binder. Often, coalitions are so busy doing the work that the scope of accomplishments aren't realized. Seeing all the work and initiatives in one place was really impressive!

Each September I begin the year by highlighting some of the work of many coalitions and I will continue to do this throughout the year. If anyone would like to get more information about these activities please contact me at 914-332-1300 or PWarble@sascorp.org and I will direct you to the appropriate person.

We are always looking for additional communities to join us at the monthly meetings of the countywide coalition. We would be happy to welcome any newcomers to our first meeting on September 11 at 11:00am to 1pm at the SAS offices. Call 914-332-1300 if you need directions.

Patricia Murphy Warble, Editor

Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions

Meaningful Projects and Achievements

In the past few years, many communities have formed coalitions or designated committees to deal with issues related to the use of alcohol and other drugs by youth. In addition, Westchester County, under the leadership of Tom Meier at the Office of Drug Prevention and STOP DWI, formed an umbrella organization to support and coordinate the work of these groups called the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth. This umbrella coalition is co-chaired by Tom, and Bruce Kelly from the District Attorney's office.

Three years ago the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth received a federal grant to support and expand its work with local groups. The grant has enabled the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth to provide on-going technical assistance to communities, trainings, and opportunities to network with the leadership of coalitions in the county. Currently, over twenty members of local coalitions or groups attend the monthly steering committee meetings.

As we start the 2008-2009 school year we are hoping that additional communities will join these monthly meetings. They are usually held the first Thursday of the month from 11:00am to 1:00pm at Student Assistance Services. However, this year Labor Day is September 1 so the first meeting will be held on Thursday, September 11.

The monthly meetings provide valuable, practical information through presentations and offer the opportunity to learn about and share projects with the other coalition members who attend these meetings. If you do not already attend the monthly meetings of the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth, please consider attending on September 11.

Coalitions that attend the monthly steering committee meetings are sponsoring impressive initiatives in their communities, in fact, too many to mention them all. However, the following are highlights of some of the activities coalitions or groups are conducting in Westchester. Further information about the activities can be obtained by calling the contact person.

Bedford, Lewisboro, Pound Ridge Drug Abuse Prevention Council

This is a community-based organization that works primarily with the staff and parents of the Bedford Central District and Katonah-Lewisboro District. The flagship event of this council is *Family University* which will be held in both districts in November.



In addition, this council also holds workshops on issues related to parenting and prevention, publishes a newsletter, *Of Substance*, and holds on-going parenting workshops based on the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting.

Chappaqua, R21K

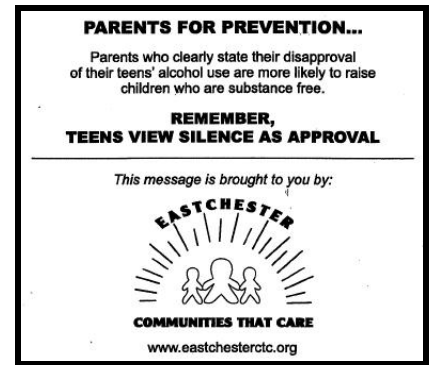
A very spirited group of leaders from Chappaqua began attending steering committee meetings last fall. Although new to coalition work they have implemented an impressive, comprehensive plan to address their concerns. One of the highlights of their year was a presentation by Sunyia Luthar who gave a workshop entitled, *Privileged But Pressured* about the challenges of growing up in affluent communities and the relationship between affluence and substance abuse and other problem behaviors.

Cortlandt Community Coalition

This coalition has effectively tapped into the energy of young people in the community. During the winter they hosted a “Youth Speak Out” event in conjunction with a Volleyball Tournament that brought together students from the two local high schools. They also worked with members of the local Leo’s club (the youth division of the Lions Club) to create and film a Public Service Announcement (PSA) where young people encourage their parents to speak to their children about the consequences of alcohol and other drug use. The PSA appeared on local television throughout the summer. In the spring, the Coalition created a Youth Council that advised them on youth programming. The youth agreed to participate in the local Family Fun Day, organize a summer movie night, and host a “Guitar Hero” competition.

Eastchester Community That Cares Coalition

The Eastchester Community that Cares Coalition has found creative venues to broadcast prevention messages. They teamed up with a local realtor to post prevention messages on supermarket shopping carts. The messages read, “Parents who clearly state their disapproval of their teens’ alcohol use are more likely to raise children who are substance free”. A local martial arts center sponsored a “Kick Out Against Substance Abuse” event that helped involve the entire community in prevention.



As part of their *Parents Who Host, Lose the Most* campaign, the coalition featured the campaign information in a coupon mailer that was sent to thousands of households. For prom season, the coalition worked with the school district to send messages home via the phone system to parents of all seniors urging them to practice good prevention to keep their youth safe.

Larchmont/Mamaroneck, Responsible Action A Drug and Alcohol Response, RADAR

This organization has been doing great work for years but last year they received a federal grant and were able to expand their activities. One of their interesting projects was to enlist a group of teens from the Mamaroneck High School to make a video about their concerns, issues and challenges. This poignant and thought-provoking video was then shown at *Youth Dialogue Day*. The goal of this event is to encourage youth of the community to speak openly and honestly with adults who are willing to listen.

Mount Vernon Community That Cares Coalition

This group has had great success working with young people to organize community-wide events. Over the past few years, a group of dedicated, enthusiastic teenagers have planned and implemented *Family Day* celebrations, Resource Fairs, World AIDS Day events, Youth Town Hall Meetings, and a Black History Month Challenge. The strength of the events is the energy that the youth bring. They are involved in all aspects of promotion, creating the agenda, and running the event. For the Youth Town Hall meetings, the youth pose questions to local community leaders about the issues that most concern them, including drugs and violence. The events also feature youth performances and poetry reading, and end with refreshments and a dance party. Hundreds of young people attend the events.

Ossining Communities That Care

Ossining has been a very active coalition for the past few years. Last year they focused on *Parents Who Host, Lose The Most* campaign and this year, Ossining developed a community-wide underage alcohol prevention campaign with the catchy tagline and attractive graphics.

They have also developed a very interesting and attractive website about their initiatives and activities. Go to www.ossiningctc.org.



New Rochelle, Project Families Organized to Curb the Use of Substances, (Project Focus)

This coalition is one of the first in the county to be funded by a federal grant. Project Focus was the first coalition to offer the Training for Intervention Procedures (TIPS) a program for alcohol beverage servers and sellers. This training promotes the responsible service, sale, and consumption of alcohol. TIPS is a skills-based program that is designed to prevent intoxication, underage drinking, and drunk driving. For more information go to www.gettips.com. The past year, Project Focus promoted the *Parents Who Host, Lose the Most* initiative in their community through a presentation for parents and teens at the New Rochelle High School, a news conference and posters at the New Rochelle train station. community approach to positive youth development.



Peekskill Agencies Together Coalition (PAT)

This group hosted an annual Prayer Breakfast this spring. The Prayer Breakfast is a wonderful strategy to engage the faith community, a sector that many coalitions find difficult to attract to coalition work. The agenda included a benediction, information on the work of the coalition, and a keynote speech

about the importance of a community approach to positive youth development. PAT has also successfully used community wide events to raise awareness of their work. The coalitions helped sponsor a prom event that included donations of prom dresses for the girls who attended. They helped plan and host a health and job fair that featured healthy food, health screenings, and information of substance abuse prevention. They are even entering a Dragon Boat in a Peekskill Celebration this summer!

Pelham, Parents and Community Together (PACT)

For the past several years, Pelham has adapted the *Family U* model to meet their own needs. *Pelham University* selects a theme and instead of holding *Family U* on one evening, they plan several presentations throughout the year. Some of the *Pelham University* topics have been sexuality, bullying, and academic stress. PACT also sponsors a program on a Saturday morning for father's only. This innovative and unique program has been well-attended and deals with issues that impact fathers in a special way.

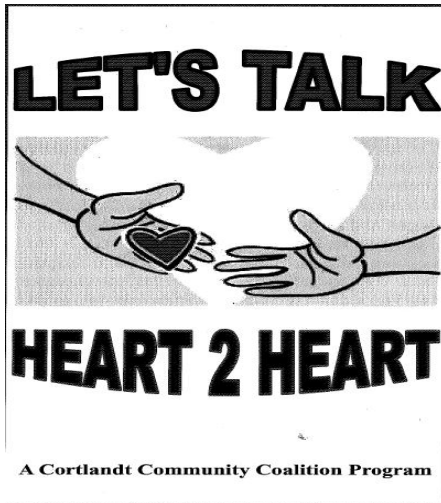
Port Chester Community That Cares

This coalition is involved in the process of coalition building. They held a Council of Community Services luncheon where the building coalition efforts were honored and the community came together to assess the value, effectiveness and impor-

tance of having a team of community leaders working together to form a strong group who care about the youth of Port Chester.

Yorktown, The Yorktown Alliance for Safe Kids (ASK)

The Yorktown Alliance for Safe Kids spearheaded a campaign that developed an attractive and informative booklet entitled *Let's Talk Heart2Heart*. It was mailed to every household in Yorktown and provided parents with valuable information about issues related to alcohol and other substance abuse. It also gave information on how to communicate effectively with children about these issues, information about legal issues, and



where to go for help. The Yorktown coalition is happy to share this booklet with other communities. The Cortland Coalition adapted the booklet and distributed this brochure in their community.

White Plains Community That Cares Coalition

This coalition has been fostering early academic success through a White Plains Reads Initiative that encourages the love of books and reading in the city's youngest citizens. This year the coalition celebrated the success of students that had shown progress in their literacy skills. The Coalition involved older youth in several projects. One program was "The West Side Story" project that helped young people and other community leaders explore issues of diversity and tolerance. The coalition also continues to support the STEP UP program and an active *Family Day* menu of events.

Flyers and brochures commemorating *Family Day* can be downloaded at the following website,

http://www.westchestergov.com/parentsand-kids_anitdrugcoalitions.htm

A free DVD for ninth grade parents is being made available by the Westchester County District Attorney's Office. The DVD will highlight issues related to prevention of teen drug and alcohol use and will be distributed through high schools in the fall.