

# DAET COALITION NEWSLETTER

A community resource to help prevent youth substance use in Ashland



WINTER 2022

## A LETTER FROM THE COALITION

Dear Ashland Community Members,

As we enter 2022, I wish to take a moment to thank you for being a part of a community that cares deeply about its youth and families. While Decisions at Every Turn is an “organization”, it is really so much more than that. At its core, DAET is people. People who have weathered a lot these past few years and people who have the determination to adapt so we can continue to support Ashland youth and those who care for them.

This issue is dedicated to the prevention efforts that have continued to take place (in many ways!) with existing and new partners and throughout Ashland. I am calling this issue “This is Prevention” to showcase the many different ways that this work unfolds. We can look at prevention through various lenses – risk & protective factors, social ecologies, and strategies for environmental change. Some prevention strategies are easy to identify ... most people are familiar with community-based education programs that share information and seek to increase prevention knowledge and skills. But prevention can also happen in subtle ways, such as giving young people a safe space to share ideas or to help out a community event.

I invite you to use the THIS IS PREVENTION tool on the right as a guide through this newsletter. Everything that you see on the following pages reflects a prevention strategy. The icons will identify which prevention strategy is represented. My hope is that we can see that prevention happens in a lot of different ways, that DAET takes great care to ensure that our work is clearly tied to proven prevention strategies, and that it could not be accomplished without our members, partners, and community. We look forward to continuing and growing this work with all of you in 2022.

Kindly,

~ Kristin French, DAET Director

## THIS IS PREVENTION

**Prevention** is a comprehensive, evidence-based approach using a mix of strategies to prevent or reduce the risk of a behavioral health problem. Each DAET program, activity, or initiative reflects one of the prevention strategies below.



### Information Dissemination

Fact sheets, brochures, postcards, websites, newsletters



### Education

Health curricula, skill-building activities, facilitated group discussions, strategy-building trainings or workshops



### Community Based Processes

Collaborative action planning, grassroots community organizing, community coalitions



### Alternatives

Youth groups, substance-free events, school-based activities, leadership & volunteer opportunities



### Environmental

Social norms campaigns, media articles, policy & regulations



### Problem Identification & Referral

Youth Education & Intervention/Diversion Programs

### FEBRUARY 14-18

#### KINDNESS WEEK

Watch for kindness events, resources and activities throughout the community.

### MARCH

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Planned discussion series on media/visual literacy & culture and the impact on mental health & substance use in girls, teens, and young women

### APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>

#### DRUG TAKE BACK DAY

Keep your family and community safe. Take your expired, unused, or unwanted medications to the Ashland Police Station for safe disposal.

### MAY

#### MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

A month-long recognition to decrease stigma, share resources and provide tools to better understand, address, and support mental health



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Prevention education happens in the schools & in the community. Our programs reach youth & adults on a variety of substance use and mental health topics. Here a few that took place in recent months. Looking for a training opportunity? **Read below for our Mental Health First Aid offer.**

## MINDING YOUR MIND

More than 250 AHS 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders and all AMS 8<sup>th</sup> graders recently participated in the educational program Changing Minds: Stories Over Stigma, delivered by Minding Your Mind. Students learned about mental health through stories of lived experience, hope, and recovery from young adult speakers who successfully and productively cope with their own mental health challenges. Through the process, students acquire knowledge and skills to address mental health stigma and concerns, positive coping strategies, and how to seek support when needed. This is the second year at AHS and first year at AMS that we have worked with Minding Your Mind to deliver this program.



In January, DAET partnered with Ashland Public Schools to bring the Search Institute's Introduction to Developmental Relationships virtual workshop to school staff and DAET members & stakeholders. Participants learned the fundamentals of Developmental Relationships, developed a shared language, and identified key actions to nurture relationships with young people. This training further strengthens our community's foundation of a supportive norm of positive adult/youth relationships to promote positive behavioral health and reduce risky behaviors by Ashland youth.



Mental Health Collaborative

Also in January, DAET collaborated with APS and Mental Health Collaborative on *Let's Talk About Mental Health*. This community education program was designed to increase mental health literacy and help parents/caregivers talk with their children about mental health and to know when to seek help. If you missed the presentation, you can watch the recording here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IT8QCmlouoLtiB7wXyH2Jsk3QPA9FAsO/view?usp=drive\\_web](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IT8QCmlouoLtiB7wXyH2Jsk3QPA9FAsO/view?usp=drive_web)

### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING CERTIFIED IN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

DAET would like to offer Ashland residents who are interested in receiving a Youth MHFA certification a FREE training opportunity later this year. Youth Mental Health First Aid was created for adults, including parents, coaches, youth group leaders, counselors, and others who work with youth. **This is an 8 hour certification training. The training is designed for 10 - 15 participants.**

If you are interested, or would like to know more, please email Kristin French at [kristin.french@AshlandDecisions.org](mailto:kristin.french@AshlandDecisions.org). If there is enough interest, we will take steps to plan a community-wide training. You can review the training flyer at [https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/060921-Youth-MHFA-One-Pager\\_Rebrand-v2.pdf](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/060921-Youth-MHFA-One-Pager_Rebrand-v2.pdf)



We had a wonderful time at the **Holiday Stroll**. Visitors in the holiday spirit stopped by to create magnets, ornaments and inspirational tiles.



Ashland High School, as well as nearly 100 other schools across Massachusetts, is partnering with Mass General Hospital/ Harvard Medical School on their new substance use diversion & education program called iDECIDE (Drug Education Curriculum: Intervention, Diversion, and Empowerment). iDECIDE aims to provide students experimenting with substances and/or who got caught using substances at school the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to make healthier decisions.

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## YOUTH UPDATE \* YOUTH UPDATE \* YOUTH UPDATE \* YOUTH UPDATE

There are many great examples of Alternatives. The Youth Coalition provides leadership & prevention training; focus groups and student newspapers reflect the youth voice; and community events allow youth to demonstrate planning, organization, and collaboration skills. Alternatives build confidence, resiliency and competency.



### THE ASHLAND YOUTH JUSTICE COALITION

Community is what we care about

#### What Youth Coalition members are saying:

*"When I joined the youth coalition I was looking to be a part of a change in Ashland. I love the community oriented feel of the group. It is a great place to share your ideas and watch them come to life." ~AMS YC Member*

#### What Youth Coalition members are up to:

- 3 members were trained in leadership & substance use prevention skill building
- Members helped out at Murphy's Friday Night Fun and Ashland's Spooky Walk



Talia and members of the YC take a break from Murphy's Friday Night Fun Event for a photo.

Do you know a youth who may be interested? Reach out to our Project Coordinator, Talia Seavey, at [talia.seavey@ashlanddecisions.org](mailto:talia.seavey@ashlanddecisions.org).



#### STAND Campaign Spotlight By: Charlotte Perry



Every Ashland High School student has seen the posters around the school advertising the amount of students that don't use drugs or substances. What students might not know is that the Decisions at Every Turn Coalition creates these posters in an effort to reduce substance abuse in the student body.

Students Taking a Noble Direction, STAND for short, seeks to "highlight the fact that most Ashland High School students are making healthy and safe choices" comments Talia Seavey, Coalition Project Coordinator. The main goal is to create a space where students don't feel pressured into using substances. A widespread misconception is that every youth today uses substances, but STAND serves to change that perception through data collection. After looking at the data it is clear that, in Ashland, the norm is to not use substances. DAET hopes to encourage more conversations around the topic and behavioral change in today's youth.

STAND hopes to create an environment "where healthy decision making thrives" and continues to thrive in the years to come and as high school students become the next adult generation, says Seavey. Though the campaign faced a temporary pause during COVID, it will be up and running again this school year.

STAND has always involved students and aims to reach students in its messaging. Students are involved in pilot testing for the posters in particular. Most upperclassmen have had someone come into their class to get student feedback on the poster's message, aesthetic, and overall impact.

Through this widespread testing on their target audience they are able to make a more effective campaign that reaches more people. The coalition, though an independent organization, also works with several student clubs such as Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and Breaking the Barriers. The Coalition is always open to student feedback and if any student has something they would like to see from the Coalition or discuss with the Coalition, they are welcome to. Decisions at Every Turn Coalition is a volunteer-based group in Ashland that strives to prevent youth substance abuse using evidence-based strategies. Working with school administration, police, youth, and community members they are able to solely focus on improving the community. If any 6th-12th graders would like to get involved there is a Youth Coalition where they can express any ideas they would like to see or have discussions about anything DAET has presented in the past. This coalition serves to get the perspective of more students and create better campaigns and community service for the years to come.

To reach Ms. Seavey, email [talia.seavey@ashlanddecisions.org](mailto:talia.seavey@ashlanddecisions.org). Follow @ashlanddecisions on Instagram.

- Nov – Dec: 38 AMS and AHS students participated in focus groups to share their perspectives and ideas about prevention
- Coming soon! Feb. 6: Teen self-care/kindness event in collaboration with Ashland nutrition & AHS volunteers.

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Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Baptist minister and social activist that had a huge impact on the civil rights movement of the 1950's in the United States. King was assassinated in 1968 and will be remembered for his non-violent protests against segregation. To honor this man and his legacy, here are some suggested books for all ages:

**Preschool-elementary**

- Bedtime Bonnet by Nancy Redd
- We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past by Jacqueline Woodson
- Hot Hot Roti for Dada-Ji by Farhana Zia
- Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History by Vashti Harrison
- Pink Is for Boy by Robb Pearlman
- Proudest Blue by Ibtihaj Muhammad

**Early Elementary**

- Sadako & the Thousand Paper Cranes (Puffin Modern Classics) by Eleanor Coerr
- Esperanza Rising (Scholastic Gold) by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- The Most Beautiful Place in the World by Ann Cameron

**Middle School**

- The Color of My Words by Lynn Joseph
- A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story by Linda Sue Park
- The Crossover (The Crossover Series) by Kwame Alexander
- They Called Us Enemy by George Takei
- All American Boys by Jason Reynolds

**High School/Young Adult**

- The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
- Twelve Years A Slave by Solomon Northup
- Brown Skin Girl: An Indian-American Woman's Magical Journey from Broken To Beautiful by Mytrae Meliana
- Call Us What We Carry: Poems by Amanda Gorman
- Mexican White Boy by Matt de la Pena

Book list generously provided by AREA (Ashland Residents for Equity & Action)

Our Parenting for Prevention library has 26 tip sheets for parents and other caring adults on important youth issues including substance use, mental health, physical health, health literacy and communication. Available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian.

Visit the library at:

<https://ashlanddecisions.org/resources/tip-sheets/>



**VIRTUAL Hidden in Plain Sight**  
An excellent resource for parents & caregivers of kids and teens 12-18



**VISIT HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT**

<https://ashlanddecisions.org/hidden-in-plain-sight/>

## DAET 2022 CALENDAR

FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>Themes:</b> ~ Random Acts of Kindness Week  ~ Developmental Assets/Relationships: Action Steps	<b>Themes:</b> ~ National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week  ~ National Poison & Inhalants Week	<b>Theme:</b> ~ Alcohol Awareness ~ Opioid/Medication Overdose Prevention ~ Drug Take Back Day	<b>Theme:</b> ~ Mental Health Awareness Month	<b>Theme:</b> ~ Kickoff Substance-Free Safe Summer
Prevention Training or Event	Prevention Training or Event	Spring Coalition Meeting <b>APRIL 12</b>	Prevention Training or Event	End of Year Celebration



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