

DAET COALITION NEWSLETTER

A community resource to help prevent youth substance use in Ashland



FALL 2022

A LETTER FROM OUR NEW YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

My name is Eliza Dodge and I am thrilled to join DAET as the Youth Engagement Coordinator. I am a Special Educator and Clinical Social Worker by trade and come to you after most recently working as a Resource Coordinator for the City of Newton. I hold an MSW from Simmons University and attended the University of Vermont where I received a B.S. in Human Development and Theatre. I was raised in Holliston and am thrilled to be returning to the MetroWest area to support the developmental trajectory and well-being of Ashland's youth. I am drawn to this work for the opportunity that quality community health programs provide our young people. Being a community health provider allows me to combat the powerful, influential systems that young people access daily. This role also allows me to work with wonderful, action-oriented community members like yourselves to redefine the systems and messages that young people receive through personal interaction and media. Systems such as the schools we attend, the town we are raised in, along with the information we receive from outside sources, have a major impact on development in adolescence.

These messages are major factors we need to consider while supporting our youth, especially as it pertains to identity and behavior development. Our data shows that positive, evidence-rich messaging and affirming-care communities are two of the most valuable assets in supporting young people today. I consider this role an opportunity to deliver positive messaging to our community, specifically our youth. Through messaging and influences like our STAND campaign and our youth coalition, young people in Ashland are empowered with knowledge and information that will encourage them to make the best personal decisions for themselves.

I am privileged to have had a number of stakeholder conversations during my first few weeks. As communicated by these stakeholders, it is clear we sit at a precipice of great opportunity for our coalition. The combined factors of a new school year, an increasingly "normal" COVID environment, and my addition to the DAET staff are all factors that incite feelings of hope for me. I am hopeful that we will be able to work through remaining residue from the pandemic that has rightfully limited us from moving forward. This looks like re-energizing our participation base, engaging youth in both school and community settings, along with rolling out new social media campaigns for the public. I look forward to the continued opportunity to meet new faces, including our business partners and community representatives.

While there are many things we don't know about this upcoming year, we can anticipate our youth feeling vulnerable and disoriented from the past few years of disrupted learning and socialization. It is my hope that I can contribute to addressing these inevitable challenges through programs that emphasize our youth population's strengths and capabilities. I hope to be a present, motivating force for the Town of Ashland to continue to address the risk of substance use, especially as it now sits at a direct intersection with mental health and social isolation. With a new sense of zest and enthusiasm for DAET, I look forward to entering this school year with you and doing right by Ashland's young people.

Let's get started!

~ Eliza

Thank you

In early August, Decisions at Every Turn was notified that Senate President Karen Spilka secured funding in the FY23 Massachusetts State Budget for our coalition to continue its important prevention work. I am not only grateful to Senate President Spilka for her support of DAET, but to each of you in the community who share in our mission to reduce and prevent youth substance use in Ashland. By working together to address the root causes that can contribute to unhealthy behaviors and to promote the factors that can improve youth health, you are all making a positive impact on our community.

Last year's funding helped support youth leadership training; parent & community educational programming; student SEL resources and tools; translation services; support of our DAET newsletter printing & distribution; and Mental Health Awareness Month. None of which would be possible without the collaboration of our schools, public safety, businesses, Town Departments, local organizations, parents, youth, and many others.

This upcoming year will be no different. We will prioritize a collaborative process to identify strategies to address the most pressing needs for Ashland youth. Your voice is needed and encouraged. Let us know how you think DAET can best support Ashland youth by contacting Kristin French at kristin.french@AshlandDecisions.org.

Resource Reminder!

DAET has created and shared many valuable prevention resources through the years. Here are a few of our favorites to support a healthy school-year. For more resources, visit the Resources tab at ashlanddecisions.org

Parenting for Prevention tip sheets

ashlanddecisions.org/resources/tip-sheets/

How do You Really Keep Your Kids Safe from Addiction (video)

<https://youtu.be/gI83f1NR1qQ>

Parent Prevention Packet for Elementary Ages (multi-lingual)

<https://eadn-wc01-3361090.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/MHM-Resource-List-.pdf>

Mental Health Resources

<https://eadn-wc01-3361090.nxedge.io/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Parent-Prevention-Packet-for-Elementary-Ages-Multilingual.pdf>



VOLUNTEER CORNER

Looking for meaningful ways to contribute your time and meet new people? DAET is looking for you!

My name is Liz Colvin and I'm a new volunteer with DAET. I'm excited to have been given the opportunity to contribute to the newsletter. I'll be reporting on volunteer activities and describing my experiences, in the hopes of generating volunteer interest. I personally believe in the mission of the Coalition, and I feel that supporting the health and well-being of Ashland families is fundamental to substance abuse prevention. Education and awareness go hand in hand to accomplish these goals. Volunteering plays a vital role and you can make an impact!

To date, I have participated in activities that have provided experiences for me to learn about DAET. I attended a virtual Coalition meeting featuring data from the 2022 DAET Parent & Caregiver Survey which assesses the knowledge and perceptions that parents/caregivers of school-aged children have about different substances such as alcohol and cannabis, among others. The meeting included representatives from the Ashland Public Schools and the Ashland Health Department. I found the data to be informative and enlightening. The attendees had a thoughtful discussion, which certainly increased my awareness.

In August, I helped host the DAET table at the Ashland Farmers Market Community Tent with Kristin and one of our Ashland Youth Coalition members. We spent a very enjoyable morning (albeit hot and humid!) talking with people and providing materials to educate and increase awareness about the Coalition. We also had games, prizes, and crafts set up for children. I really enjoyed interacting with them.

There are many different ways you can volunteer with DAET. The amount of time you can contribute is entirely up to you. We're excited to learn about what interests you!

If you're interested in volunteering and would like to learn more, please contact Kristin French at kristin.french@ashlanddecisions.org

For more information and for upcoming events, check out our website at www.AshlandDecisions.org and follow DAET on social media for ongoing opportunities.

We hope to see you soon!

~ Liz



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



HANG CAMPAIGN POSTERS

JOIN A WORKING GROUP

ASSIST WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

HELP PLAN PARENT PROGRAMS

HOST/PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP

CREATE/DISTRIBUTE PROGRAM FLYERS

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

HELP OUT AT EVENTS

SHARE PROGRAM/EVENT INFORMATION



YOUTH UPDATE * YOUTH UPDATE



**THE ASHLAND
YOUTH JUSTICE
COALITION**

Community is what
we care about

The Ashland Youth Justice Coalition (YC) is a youth-led and adult-guided group of students who want to create positive change in the Ashland Community. The goal of the YC is to provide a greater opportunity for the youth voice to shape and impact our prevention work in Ashland.

Do you know a middle or high school student who may be interested?

Reach out to Eliza Dodge
Youth Engagement Coordinator
eliza.dodge@AshlandDecisions.org



DECISIONS AT EVERY TURN

PREVENTION CALENDAR AT A GLANCE 2022 - 2023

SEPTEMBER

Back to School

OCTOBER

Substance Use & Mental Health

NOVEMBER

Tobacco Cessation (smoking & vaping)

DECEMBER

Impaired & Drugged Driving Prevention

JANUARY

Mental Health & Self-Care

FEBRUARY

Healthy Relationships

MARCH

Alcohol, Other Drugs & Inhalants

APRIL

Alcohol, Medications & Opioids

MAY

Mental Health

JUNE

Safe Summer Celebration

Coalition Meetings

Tuesday, Jan 10 5:30-7PM
Tuesday, April 11 5:30-7 PM
All are welcome

Programs & Events

Community programs & events are added through the year. All are FREE and open to the public.
ashlanddecisions.org/calendar/

Follow us on social media for the latest DAET news, updates and prevention campaigns!



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