

RCASA Annual Report- 2010

Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse

Key milestones included:

- 1) Expanded the youth leadership crew and engaging local parents;
- 2) Strengthened police enforcement to reduce minors' access to alcohol;
- 3) Modified policies implemented on school issues;
- 4) Launched prescription disposal program;
- 5) Passed town by-law to prohibit public consumption of marijuana;
- 6) Improved local data collection
- 7) Increased understanding amongst youth, parents and residents of environmental strategies and multi-sector collaboration to reduce substance abuse.

Board of Directors: The board met monthly at the Reading Police Department Community Room throughout the fiscal year. Board members grappled with challenging issues this past fiscal year and worked to raise the profile of the coalition. RCASA leaders provided support for School Policy changes which led to the implementation of the School Breathalyzer/Search & Seizure Policies by the School Committee. Student Representatives provided valuable status reports on their tobacco prevention project and other Youth Crew initiatives. Board members served on a variety of workgroups and committees to accomplish critical tasks including data gathering, outreach, and leadership development. Coalition leaders appointed the nominating committee to fill vacant slots and recruit members. A report of the roster changes and motions related to by-laws was provided at the FY2010 Annual Meeting. We mourned the loss of Patrick Schettini, charter member of RCASA and former Superintendent of Schools in January 2010. Youth Crew leaders delivered a moving speech in honor of Mr. Schettini's valuable contributions to the coalition.

Awards:

RCASA Underage Drinking Town Hall Event, April 2010- The "Outstanding Youth Advocate" awards were presented to 3 coalition leaders including Sgt. Richard Abate, Elaine Webb and Pastor Pam Paquette.

Northeast Regional Tobacco Prevention Advocate Award, May 2010- Timothy O'Sullivan, RCASA Youth Crew was presented with an award for regional youth leadership by the 84- MA Tobacco Control Program. The event was televised on Channel 5-WCVB.

Reading Memorial High School Ceremony for Senior Awards, May 2010 - The awards for "Outstanding Youth Leadership" were presented to 6 RCASA youth leaders including Taylor McLelland, Dan Pomerleau, Tim O'Sullivan, Alex Grizzell, Courtney Farrar and Will Cunningham.

Reading MHS Graduation Ceremony, June 2010- The awards for "Outstanding Contributions to RMHS Health & Wellness" were presented to Maxwell Lawton and Shawna-Leigh Morton by Tom Zaya, Chair of the Wellness Department on behalf of RCASA.

President's Volunteer Service Awards, Annual Meeting, Sept. 2010- The awards for President's Volunteer Service were presented by the Board of Selectman and School Committee at the RCASA Annual Meeting in 2010.

- Nancy-Linn Swain was honored with *"The President's Volunteer Service Bronze Award"* and the *"The President's Volunteer Service Silver Award"*.
- Barbara Meade, the Chairperson for the Board of Health was honored with *"The President's Volunteer Service Bronze Award"*.

Official town proclamations for the 2009 Red Ribbon Week and 2010 Recovery Month were issued by the Board of Selectman.

Committees/Workgroups:

The Executive Board, comprised of the Town Manager, Police Chief, Superintendent and RCASA President, met bi-weekly with the RCASA Director to provide guidance.

The Data Workgroup (DWG)

The workgroup included sector representatives from school, police, and evaluation. The DWG worked with the Director and met quarterly to support data collection. The leaders created pathways for staff to access additional school, police and town data. The table below outlines new data collected:

Type	Source	Comments
Death Certificates	Health Dept/ Clerk's Records	Director conducted a manual review of 1,600 death certificates from 2005-2010
School Disciplinary Records	High School	Principal Freedman provided all substance abuse related incidents from 2005-2010
Police Data	Reading Police Detective's Division	Detective Halloran ran all substance abuse and related incidents from 2005-2010. Manual review of key cases.
Fire Data	Fire Dept.	Pvt. Lapolla and Capt. Guarino gathered data for all overdose calls and any cases involving Narcan i.e. indicator of opiate overdose.
School Data	School Dept.	Tom Zaya and wellness teachers administered the 2009 YRBS survey and shared results with RCASA.
Tobacco Compliance	MA Tobacco Control Program	Ron Beauregard, regional representative provided compliance rates for the last 5 years.
Other Tobacco Products	Youth Crew	Youth Crew leaders conducted a survey of 40 stores regarding availability of other tobacco products.

The DWG obtained permission to host a joint meeting of the Board of Selectman, Board of Health and School Committee to receive the final DWG report on 9/30/10.

Special thanks to Chief James Cormier, Sgt. Det. Mark Segalla, Det. Michelle Halloran, Sgt. Richard Abate, Supt. John Doherty, Principal Elinor Freedman, Sara Grinnell, Chris Caruso, Peter Hechenbleikner, Nancy-Linn Swain, Erica McNamara, Officer Corey Santasky, Thomas Zaya, Darlene Foley, Ron Beauregard, Larry Ramdin, Capt. Paul Guarino, Pvt. Joe Lapolla, Connie DeBenedetto and the RCASA Youth Crew Leaders.

The Risk Behavior Workgroup (RBW)

The focus of this group was to develop ways to educate the school community on multiple risk behaviors including substance abuse.

The RBW presented the results of the 2009 Reading Youth Risk Behavior Survey to the School Committee in the fall of 2009. A series of smaller presentations were conducted with PTOs in the school district. The 2009 state and national results were compiled into comparison charts. The RBW included adults and students from the high school.

The group sponsored an in-service training for faculty on Sexual Assault & Children in the last fiscal year. An experienced panel of speakers from law enforcement and SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program) provided valuable information for adults that work with young people to better identify and refer victims of childhood sexual assault. Information was also shared on the links between childhood trauma and substance abuse. Special thanks to Sgt. Detective Mark Segalla, Detective Michelle Halloran, and Sgt. Richard Abate for their expertise in developing this training.

The workgroup also planned the 1st Annual Health & Wellness Day at the Reading Memorial High School in the spring of 2010. This special day featured in-service training, student workshops, and health fair. The project also included an evening parent presentation on Social Host Liability. The event reached over 900 high school students and 200 8th grade students. Special thanks to Tom Zaya, Event Chair and RCASA youth leaders for their hard work in planning and executing this event. The Reading Public Schools and “Middlesex Partnerships for Youth” provided the parent presentation.

The *Youth Crew* comprised of 35 members focused on youth leadership, media campaign development, outreach, and prevention products. The Youth Crew launched a Student Club at Reading Memorial High School in November of 2009. Youth Crew representatives conducted a speaking engagement at a local elementary school for Red Ribbon Week. They conducted an in-depth research project on “other tobacco products” and presented their research to key town stakeholders.

They participated in local, regional and state-wide training with the Mass Youth Against Tobacco and MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). They established connections to state and national networks by developing student chapters. The Student Club earned chapter status

with the *Mass Youth Against Tobacco's '84' Initiative* in the fall of 2009. The “84” represents the eighty-four percent of Massachusetts youth that choose not to use tobacco. The Student Club also established a SADD chapter in the fall of 2010. In addition to special events, the Youth Crew leaders met every other Sunday for five hrs throughout the school year and two afternoons a week during the summer to develop their projects.

The Student Club met every Tuesday at Reading Memorial High School throughout the school year. They conducted a tobacco prevention project and co-organized the first Health & Wellness Day. The club was featured in the high school yearbook for the first time and ended their school year with an ice cream social. The advisors for the club include RCASA Staff, Chair of the Wellness Department and the School Resource Officer.

Staff: Erica McNamara, RCASA Director, and Connie DeBenedetto, RCASA Outreach Coordinator. **Personnel/Consultants:** JBS Professional Services (municipal and law enforcement training) – Sara Grinnell (Evaluation Services) - Youth (dialogues, prevention campaigns and underage operatives)

Coalition Progress and Highlights

Objective # 1: Implement strategic plan and mobilize the community to support the RCASA mission

Results:

- RCASA staff and Youth Crew reached 2,351 individuals compared to 868 people in FY09

Objective #2: Monitor fiscal and reporting obligations

Results:

- Completed federal Drug Free Communities reports and all required reports for the Health Resources in Action mini grant on tobacco research.

Objective #3: Coordinate community needs assessment and data collection

Results:

- Reviewed more than 2,500 surveys and/or evaluations to expand the RCASA community needs assessment

Objective #4: Facilitate meetings, community forums, and groups

Results:

- Co-sponsored the 1st Annual Health & Wellness Day and Social Host Liability workshop, 1,140 students, faculty and parents

Objective #5: Communicate progress of coalition activities

Results:

- Staff generated 40 press releases, news features, or fact sheets which yielded 18 articles
- Staff worked with youth leaders to develop 4 e-newsletters for coalition members. 90% of content developed by youth leaders.

