

READING COALITION AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY- Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse (RCASA) mobilizes community partners, residents and youth to build collaborative approaches and reduce youth substance abuse. With grant support, RCASA offers educational programs for residents in Substance Abuse Prevention, Youth Mental Health First Aid and Active Parenting. To address substance use, staff operates a juvenile diversion program in concert with the Reading Police Department and a Chemical Health Education Program with the Reading Memorial High School. To increase access to mental health services, RCASA sponsors the Interface Referral Service, operated by William James College. Learn more at www.reading.k12.ma.us/community/readingcoalition

FINANCE-The Director tracked spending and compiled state and federal reports totaling \$135,000. The federal grant for 2019 totaled \$125,000. The town, school and police departments contributed match resources for RCASA’s office/meeting space, supervision and oversight. During this year, the Director and Town Accountant filed the federal financial reports required by federal funder (SAMHSA). At the end of 2019, the Director completed the Final Performance Report for the five-year federal grant and closed out the project.

SAMHSA Grant Supporting RCASA	Annual	End
White House Office of National Drug Control Policy	\$125,000	9/30/19

The Director worked with Town Leaders and Town Counsel regarding RCASA’s Sustainability Plan. State Representative James Dwyer, an RCASA supporter submitted a request to add an earmark to the state budget for \$10,000 in annual funding to support RCASA’s sustainability. RCASA accepted a donation from the Young Women’s League of Reading (\$1,350) The Chief of Police included the coalition in his public budget presentations.

STAFF- This year, the RCASA staff included a full time Director (Erica McNamara). The Part-Time Outreach Coordinator (Julianne DeAngelis) retired in January of 2019. The Town Manager re-evaluated the Outreach Coordinator position and returned the role to a full-time position with town support. These changes were approved during the budget process and ultimately by Town Meeting. The Full-Time Outreach Coordinator (Samantha Salkin) started her role on October 1, 2019. Changes to the classification chart concerning coalition staff were approved by the Select Board. Staff members are employees of the Town of Reading and maintain an office at the Reading Police Department. The Director oversaw fiscal management, public relations, community planning, training, coalition communication, data collection, dissemination, reporting and program evaluation. The *Outreach Coordinator* disseminated educational information through a variety of activities to both youth and adults. The Director and Outreach Coordinator completed their continuing education requirements including prevention training workshops with MA Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Center for Health & Safety Culture and the National Council on Behavioral Health.

LEADERSHIP- the **Executive Board**, comprised of the Town Manager, Police Chief, School Superintendent and Board President, met frequently with the Coalition Director to provide guidance. RCASA’s Board met monthly and served as the core leadership group for the coalition. The group included 24 members representing 12-plus community sectors who live, work or attend school in Reading. The Town Manager, School Superintendent, and Chief of Police all serve on the board. The Board provided overall governance, education, public relations and strategic plan guidance. The Town provided the “Ethics Guide for Ballot Question Political

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Activity”. A full review of board by-laws, coalition branding, budget needs and future feasibility was discussed by members. The Board focused on the transition off of grant funding to the town model and supported the coalition name change from Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse to Reading Coalition for Prevention & Support (as of 12/28/19). The coalition logo was also changed to reflect the new name. Starting in January of 2020, the leadership group will be an Advisory Board with member appointments made by the Coalition Director.

GOALS- The coalition is guided by two major goals. Progress on each goal is tracked annually and in benchmark increments of five years.

- **Goal 1:** Establish and strengthen collaboration among RCASA’s partner organizations in support of the community’s effort to prevent and reduce youth substance use
- **Goal 2:** Reduce substance use among youth in Reading, MA, and, over time, reduce substance abuse among adults by addressing the issues in our community that increase the risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.

FEDERAL GRANT ANNUAL ACTIVITIES- the Drug Free Communities grant administered by the US White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration in 2019 funded the following efforts.

- The Director facilitated 40 hours of Mental Health First Aid training this year.
- RCASA sponsored THE FIRST DAY, a documentary film featuring Chris Herren at the Jordan’s IMAX Theater.
- RCASA arranged for 16 doses of Narcan to be donated by the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office for the Reading Public Schools to meet the state requirement for Narcan to be stored with each School Nurse in every school.
- RCASA’s Outreach Coordinator and the RMHS Health Educator facilitated the *Chemical Health Education* program monthly. More students were referred for chemical health violations due to vaping, more than any other substance.
- Staff presented in the Reading Memorial High School’s Child Development Course on *Substance Exposed Newborns* in 2019 reaching 25 students.
- RCASA worked with police to carry out collaborative police projects including the Reading Rx Round Up for 24/7 medication collection, text a tip program, alcohol compliance program and the School Resource Officer special projects. RCASA’s grant sponsored the cost of the Citizen Observer service for Reading Police which allowed detectives to process anonymous tips via the Department’s Text-a-Tip program in 2019 and paid for compliance operatives
- Staff developed and shared printed Resource Lists for Substance Abuse Prevention and Mental Health Support annually. Over 5,000 resource lists were disseminated. We increased local use of the Mobile Crisis Unit, MA Helpline for Substance Abuse, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the SAMHSA Treatment Locator through continued promotion.
- RCASA contracted with William James College to offer the Interface Referral Service to connect 100 residents in 2019 to outpatient mental health services with the funding support of RCASA grants. The most frequent requests in Reading for mental health support were for Anxiety or Depression which is typical for most communities.
- The Reading Youth Risk Behavior Survey results for middle and high school indicate percentage declines in the four major areas of youth substance use. Results listed below are compared to the 2011/2013 baseline data points submitted in the coalition’s initial federal grant application.

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- The percentage of *middle school youth* reporting
 - o past 30-day of alcohol decreased by 8%
 - o past 30-day of cigarettes decreased by 3%
 - o past 30-day of marijuana decreased by 4%
 - o past 30-day misuse of prescription drugs decreased by 3%
- The percentage of *high school youth* reporting
 - o past 30-day use of alcohol decreased by 15%
 - o past 30-day use of cigarettes decreased by 12%
 - o past 30-day use of marijuana decreased by 2%
 - o past 30-day misuse of prescription drugs decreased by 3%

MASS SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION EARMARK FUNDED ACTIVITIES- The coalition was awarded \$10,000 to support additional prevention projects and support. The major activities are noted below.

- The Director and School Resources Officers facilitated workshops or classes including--- *Vaping Prevention* which reached 218 students and parents at the Reading Public Schools and Austin Preparatory School; *Opioid Prevention*, which reached 180 students in the 9th grade Health program at Reading Memorial High School; and *RCASA/Police Partnership*, which reached 30 participants reached in the Reading Police Citizen Police Academy.
- The Director served as Reading's Survey Coordinator for the 2019 Reading Youth Risk Behavior Survey process. This labor intensive process included the detailed review of 250 questions, coordination of staff proctors for data collection, working with staff to ensure available technology for 2,100 students on screening days, developed Parent Binders for three schools and survey follow-up with John Snow Inc.
- The staff participated in weekly SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment) screening days and entered data for 600 students at Reading Memorial High School in grades 9 and 11 with the School Nurses.
- The Director served on the Reading Public Schools Parent University Committee, hosted an info table and facilitated workshops for 27 parents in March of 2019.
- Staff responded to 24 requests for info or assistance from youth, parents, schools and police.
- Staff conducted outreach at Reading Police Department's Open House, Reading Lions Club Friends and Family Day and the 3rd Annual Jams for Jake.

REGIONAL PROJECTS- Staff and law enforcement representatives participated in regional monthly meetings including the *Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition on Opioid Abuse*, and the *Eastern Middlesex District Attorney's Task Force*.

RCASA is also one of 7 communities that work with the Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition, funded by MASS Dept. of Public Health, to prevent underage drinking and opioid misuse. Highlights from 2019 are included below:

- RCASA and the Reading Public Library were the local hosts for a special event for pediatricians on addiction medicine in June. The Mystic Valley Public Coalition, with funding support from MDPH, hosted a special workshop featuring Dr. Nicholas Chadi for Dowd Medical staff in Reading. Dr. Chadi is a Pediatric Addiction Medicine Fellow at Boston Children's Hospital (Harvard Medical School). The event's taping was shared with other medical providers in the region.

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- The RCASA Director participated in Regional Coordinator Meetings to discuss trends in liquor licensing in our region. Training for Select Boards and Liquor Licensing Boards will be made available next year.
- Staff continued to serve on the Alcohol & Women Subcommittee, which is working towards a data review of the impact of increasing alcohol use rates amongst women and girls.
- RCASA was honored to be part of the Annual Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition meeting in August at Century Bank in Medford.
- RCASA was part of the 2019 Voices for Recovery & Remembrance in Wakefield which honored those living in recovery and those we have lost to addiction and overdose.

AWARDS- The award for “Outstanding Youth Leadership” were presented to Mason Haynes, a coalition youth leader at Reading Memorial High School. Julianne DeAngelis, the former Coalition Outreach Coordinator was recognized by the Town of Reading (Select Board), MA House of Representatives (Rep. Brad Jones) and State Senate (Sen. Jason Lewis) with official citations for her eight years of service to the Town of Reading.