

READING COALITION AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

STAFF

The RCASA staff included two full time employees. The **Director** oversaw personnel, fiscal management, public relations, and coordinated coalition work, including planning, training, communication, data collection, dissemination, reporting, and evaluation. The **Outreach Coordinator** coordinated project services and activities, including communication and information dissemination. As a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, the Outreach Coordinator supported residents impacted by substance use disorders. A new part-time Youth Coordinator) will join the RCASA team in 2015, supported by new grant funds.

LEADERSHIP

The 24-member Board of Directors met monthly to accomplish critical tasks including data gathering, outreach, and leadership development. Adult and student representatives provided valuable status reports on initiatives. New members appointed in the spring included Adam Bakr (RMHS), Officer Michael Muolo, John Halsey (Selectman), and Sherri VandenAkker (Parent, Documentary Filmmaker). In June and August, the Town Manager, Chief of Police, Deputy Chief, Elaine Webb, and Pat Shannon met with members of the Zoning Advisory Committee to review the options for potential zoning of medical marijuana dispensaries. The options presented included placement in the industrial zone near Walkers Brook Drive with a buffer zone from schools or places where children gather. Board leaders participated in additional ZAC meetings and issued a letter in support of the 500sq foot zoning by-law, which Town Meeting approved in September. In September, the RCASA Nominating Committee also conducted officer elections and reported roster changes at their Annual Meeting.

Professional Development: The Director was submitted as Candidate for the new Certified Prevention Specialist credential through the MA Board of Substance Abuse Counselor Certification. The credential required completion of 100 hours of continuing education in prevention practice, theory, ethics courses; 2,000 hours of substance abuse experience; and competency in Planning, Evaluation; Skill Development; Community Organization; Public Policy, and Environmental Change. The Outreach Coordinator was renewed as a Licensed and Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

Regional Connections: The Outreach Coordinator participated as a judge for the Middlesex Partnerships for Youth PSA Contest through the DA's Office. She also participated as an expert panelist at Wakefield's opioid abuse forum in April. A team from Newburyport Public Schools visited Reading to learn more about the School District and RCASA on May 20 and met with the RCASA Director to learn more about the Chemical Health Education program. The Reading Public Schools, MA Advocates for Children, and Lesley University co-sponsored a conference for 13 Safe and Supportive Schools grantees on June 3. The RCASA Director was on the event panel to share behavioral health initiatives. The Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition involving the communities of Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Stoneham and Wakefield continued their opioid prevention and intervention project. Reading benefits from the collaborative through access to data, capacity building and training. The regional team presented their needs assessment results to all six communities involved in the spring. State Senator Jason Lewis, in

partnership with the Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition and RCASA, hosted a regional forum in Reading in October to discuss opioid abuse. The forum generated a deeply meaningful discussion, with a focus on challenges faced at the local, regional, and state levels. The Director also presented at conferences in Wilmington, Ashland, Pittsburgh, PA, and Washington D.C.

PROJECTS/EVENTS

Staff carried out federal Sober Truth on Underage Drinking Prevention (STOP) grant activities throughout the year and launched new grant activities in October through the SAMHSA Drug Free Communities Grant and Project AWARE Grant. The Director met weekly with the School Support Services Administrator weekly to collaborate on the School Climate Grant and the AWARE Grant. She also met with the Finance and School Leaders to outline responsibilities.

A.) TARGETED ALCOHOL PREVENTION

A1.) Implement Extracurricular Alcohol Education Programs

RCASA hosted a series of WHO CARES ABOUT KESLEY documentary screenings for 100 High School staff, the principals of all 8 schools, 65 students enrolled in special programs, and an event for 225 residents. The film addresses a young women's behavioral disability while coping with her mother's alcoholism. The film discussions and expert panel promoted access to supportive services for managing dual disorders. Kelsey visited the district in February to meet with 350 faculty, students and community members.

RCASA hosted THE ANONYMOUS PEOPLE film screening on May 21 at the Showcase Cinemas for 110 participants. The film focuses on changing the addiction conversation from problems to solutions. We promoted the film using press releases, online newsletter and social media. We recruited 14 sponsors to help screen the film including-12 Step Education of New England, Comics for Recovery, Hallmark Health System, MA Organization for Addiction Recovery and 9 local coalitions. The post-film discussion focused on enhancing referrals for families impacted by substance use.

The School Resource Officer and Administrators promoted safe party prevention for upperclassmen in 2014. Trained adult chaperones used breathalyzers at school dances. The High School purchased new breathalyzers for 2015 activities.

A2. Health Educators use Glencoe Health Education Program- Staff worked with the School District to continue integration of substance abuse prevention lessons in grades K-12 using interactive elements, skill building and relevant content. To supplement regular curricula, staff and the School Resource Officer taught opioid and alcohol prevention classes for 400 students. Staff educated 25 students on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in the Child Development class and discussed the impact of underage drinking on adolescent brain development. The Director presented a detailed presentation of the Glencoe curriculum to the School Committee and addressed questions regarding efficacy.

A3. Improve Underage Drinking Prevention Policies- The high school issued Chemical Health violations under their progressive discipline policy for students enrolled in sports, clubs, drama, and band during the school year and summer. Police continued their Zero Tolerance Policy for youth caught with substances and enrolled youth in their pre-trial diversion program.

Staff presented the Annual Update of the Chemical Health Policy to the School Committee on May 6. To keep the community informed, staff demonstrated the policy impact through the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Results compared to the state and national data (released in the summer of 2014) for the RCASA Board, School Committee, Selectman and community members at our Annual Meeting in September. The results showed decreases in underage drinking for three data points. The RCASA Director participated in interview teams for key positions that impacts policy implementation including the high school Principal and School Resource Officer positions.

A4. Improve Local Sanctioning Procedures- RCASA staff conducted classes for youth with violations and provided case management for court-involved youth. School violations result in 25% loss of activity season (games only) and participation in a 2-hr class. Pre-trial violations results in community service hours, 2-hr education class and other court conditions. High school administrators (school violations) and police (Pre-trial Diversion Program) referred 40 youth as of December. Overall 95% of these offenses involved underage drinking. Staff conducted monthly Chemical Health Education classes (using Hazelden’s Alternate Routes curriculum) for youth with violations.

A5. Provide Chemical Health Expectations and Attitudes Training- Working with high school staff, we implemented a new Youth Leadership Program “Reading Rocket Revolution” and Coaches Education “Adults Assist”. Staff offered the first ADULTS ASSIST To Deter Substance Abuse Workshop on May 13 for 10 coaches. During the summer, RCASA staff formed an Action Team including a high school Guidance Counselor, Teacher/Coach, and Assistant Principal to develop the “Rocket Revolution”. The name captures the school’s mascot name and the spirit of changing school culture. The Rocket Revs engaged 62 students to promote the Chemical Health Policy and school core values. On August 14, the Action Team hosted the first training for all of the school’s captains and club officers to develop their leadership capacity. One activity demonstrated that the youth felt their leadership skills should focus on their capacity to be seen by their peers as hardworking, honest, respectful, understanding and approachable. The second leadership event in October was the formal “Rocket Revs” Kick Off for 60 students, focused on mission, vision, and planning.

A6. Enhance Referral and Counseling- Staff members met frequently with key school leaders to build the support network. Staff provided consultation and referrals to families calling RCASA for assistance. Youth involved in the Chemical Health Education Program was required to meet with staff within two weeks of the class to debrief. Staff provided youth with referrals for additional services. Staff disseminated our local resource list at classes, workshops, community events and through our website. In June, staff partnered with the Schools and Police to expand resources for referrals to counseling through a grant application which was ultimately funded. Staff developed info kits for 20 local healthcare providers and 150 parent kits. We disseminated these small gift bags filled with resources by visiting local providers and via two community events. Over the next two years, 600 adults will be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid to enhance referrals to counseling or other support services.

A7. Provide Risk Screening- Staff compiled the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey questionnaire (including grant core measures) and provided guidance to the School District to

engage a qualified consultant to analyze the data. Students will take the survey in early 2015. In September, the District was awarded a School Climate Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which allows for full implementation of the Multi-Tiered Support System, which helps identifying and addressing students' needs.

B. CONDUCT ALCOHOL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM- On March 7, two teams of officers conducted surveillance of package stores. No underage persons observed trying to purchase liquor. On March 21, one officer conducted surveillance of package stores. No underage persons observed trying to purchase liquor. The Director presented to Police Supervisors on the text a tip and the juvenile diversion programs to reduce underage drinking in June. Staff conducted field training for new police officers on underage drinking in July. Promotion of the anonymous tip line was conducted throughout the year including outreach conducted at the High School Future Freshman Night (300 students and parents) and the Town Fall Street Faire (5,000 visitors). Based on tips, Reading Police found three violations for sales to a minor. The Selectman issued an unprecedented 90-day suspension, upheld by the ABCC upon appeal. With state funds, local detectives conducted alcohol compliance checks and party patrols. In August, there were 24 checks with zero failures. Police conducted surveillance on September 5 and 12.

FINANCE

RCASA staff worked diligently with town, police and school staff to generate quality grant proposals for a number of public funding entities. RCASA, Police, and the Reading Public Schools were successful in securing five grants to support substance abuse prevention and mental health education. RCASA contributed to grant proposals for the Police (\$5,000 for Alcohol Compliance) and Schools (\$1.25 million for School Climate).

Grants Supporting RCASA	Annual	Amount	End	Renew
SAMHSA STOP Act, awarded 9/30/12	\$48,258	\$190,032	9/30/15	Yes
SAMHSA/White House Office of the National Drug Control Policy, awarded 9/30/14	\$125,000	\$625,000	9/30/15	Yes
SAMHSA President's Projects of Significance, awarded 9/30/14	\$50,0000	\$100,000	9/30/15	Yes

The Director compiled the required federal Prevention Management Reports. These 100 page reports cover all aspects of grant implementation. The town, school and police departments contributed \$160K in match resources for RCASA's office/meeting space, supervision, and financial oversight. A donation from the Young Women's League of Reading was also received.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Staff created newsletters, updated the website and social media to keep the community informed. Police posted RCASA news on their twitter reaching over 2,200 followers. Large posters, online invitations, flyers, and a program were developed for the Coalition Film Series, which reached 500 people. Staff sent Press Releases to three local news outlets. Local news shared coalition articles. RCASA also used YouTube to release four new videos. Staff connected with elders through two senior center events including their Annual Health Fair.