

## Calendar Year 2012 Annual Report



### READING COALITION AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE (RCASA)

#### **HISTORY**

RCASA was formed in 2006 as a sustainable, collaborative community approach to substance abuse prevention based on a strategic prevention framework and model of community change.

#### **STRUCTURE**

The executive partners of RCASA are the Town of Reading, represented by the Town Manager; the Reading Public Schools, represented by the Superintendent; and the Reading Police; represented by the Police Chief. Their Executive Partnership Agreement, signed in 2007, describes the process for staff supervision, financial support, and access to data.

#### **STAFF**

From January-September, the **RCASA staff** included 1.5 full time employees. From October-December, the Outreach Coordinator position was increased to a 1.0 full time equivalent due to the receipt of grant funds and town support. Staff members are employees of the Town of Reading and maintain an office at the Reading Police Department. The **Project 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 Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC), the Coordinator provided support to residents seeking services.

According to partners, both staff members were instrumental in recruiting and training youth leaders, engaging stakeholders, and advocating for change in enforcement, policy and educational efforts. The Director was honored by Parker Middle School in their "**Heroes Among Us**" Award Ceremony for her service on local youth issues. The Outreach Coordinator participated in the **National Leadership Forum** sponsored by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA).

#### **LEADERSHIP**

The Board of Directors met monthly and members served on a variety of workgroups and committees to accomplish critical tasks including data gathering, outreach, and leadership development. The Board is governed through their by-laws and is designed to include diverse representation. Adult and student representatives provided valuable status reports on initiatives.

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*Board Appointments:* Ashley Testa departed for Northeastern University and Jane Duggan's term as the Faith Sector liaison ended. The Nominating Committee filled vacant slots and reported the 2013 roster changes at the fall Annual Meeting for all 12-community sectors:

1. Youth Sector: Kelsie Pace, Scott Freeman and Jesse Shamon
2. Parent Sector: Elaine Webb, Patrick Shannon and Richard Abate
3. Business Sector: Maureen Hanifan
4. Media Sector: Joanne Senders
5. Youth Organization Sector: Amy Vendt
6. Law Enforcement Sector: James Cormier and Corey Santasky
7. School Sector: John Doherty, Ann-Marie Baccari, Charles Robinson, Kevin Higginbottom and Thomas Zaya
8. Faith Sector: Timothy Kutzmark
9. Community Sector: Richard Hand and Ruth Clay
10. Health Professions Sector: Lynn Dunn, Mary-Ann Tillotson and Melissa Roberto
11. Government/Elected Officials Sector: Peter Hechenbleikner, James Dwyer and Steven Goldy
12. Substance Abuse Experts Sector: Larry Berkowitz and Jason Moscato

*Executive Board:* The Town Manager, Police Chief, Superintendent of Schools and Board President, met monthly with the Coalition Director to provide guidance. The group was instrumental in organizing a Spring Community Dialogue Event. The group also guided the policy changes below:

- The School Committee approved a new ***Chemical Health Policy*** that states students will be disciplined if in direct or constructive possession of any substances even if the violation occurs during summer or weekends. Violations result in a temporary loss of activity time, mandatory education and counseling. *Effective 6/2012*
- The Board of Health passed a ***By-Law to Ban All Tobacco Sales in Local Pharmacies*** sponsored by the RCASA Youth Crew. *Effective 7/2012*
- The Police Chief implemented a ***Zero Tolerance on Underage Drinking*** protocol instructing officers to code and document all juvenile and "under 21" alcohol interactions. The *Reading Police Pre-Trial Probation & Diversion Program Protocol* now enables the police prosecutor to work with court, Middlesex District Attorney's Office, RCASA, and local partners to design pre-complaint diversion conditions for juveniles that commit first time offenses related to substance use or possession. *Effective 9/2012*
- Town Meeting approved a ***By-Law to Prohibit Any Marijuana Dispensary*** within the town of Reading through Zoning Regulations. *Passed 11/2012 (pending Attorney General approval)*

*Data Workgroup:* A review of the ***2005-2011 Reading Youth Risk Surveys*** showed declining rates of substance use. Middle school youth alcohol use went down by 10% while cigarette use dropped by 5%. With high school age youth, impaired driving declined by 4%. Tobacco use declined in all areas including a 14% drop in cigarette smoking. Alcohol, marijuana, ecstasy, and meth use all declined by 2%. A key focus for the Workgroup was planning for the ***2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Project***. Products developed included: 2013 Questionnaires,

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Frequently Asked Questions Document for Parents, Survey Rationale, Confidentiality Form, Parent Letter and Staff Guidance Packet. Questions were added to comply with federal core measures and to explore areas of stress and behavioral health. The survey consultant (retained by Reading Public Schools) is Amanda Ayers of Health Resources in Action.

*Risk Behavior Workgroup:* The group focused on developing ways to educate the school community on multiple risk behaviors including substance abuse. First, the School Wellness District Committee and the Youth Leaders planned the **3rd Annual Health & Wellness Day** at the Reading Memorial High School. In the fall of 2012, RCASA working with School Leaders and Sarah Lennon, Health Educator developed the **Chemical Health Education Program** to address the needs of school and court referrals.

*Youth Workgroups:* The **Youth Crew** comprised of 29 members focused on leadership development, media projects, and community outreach. Youth met 8 hours monthly during the school year and 16 hours monthly during the summer. Youth leaving for college recruited new members, conducted interviews and mentored leaders. The **Student Club** comprised of eight members met weekly at the High School to conduct projects as a SADD Chapter (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and a 84 Chapter (Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program). The Club Advisors included Coalition Staff, Wellness Educators and the School Resource Officer.

Youth Leaders made valuable contributions through their work. Emily Ames, Zachary Camenker, Erin Cunningham, Katherine DeBenedetto, Zachary Driscoll, Kelsey McCarthy, Avery Stroman and Ashley Testa were acknowledged for their service to RCASA at the **Reading Memorial High School Ceremony for Seniors**. At the RCASA Annual Meeting, 22 youth received the **President's Volunteer Service Bronze Medal Award** for contributing 300 volunteer service hours. Medal recipients included Samantha Abate, Clare Bishop, Maggie Breen, Jill Callahan, Jacob Camenker, Jennie Dockser, Julia Dudley-Kramer, Scott Freeman, Sophia Kalogeris, Jack Shannon, Abigail Vieno, Alex Webb and Meghan Whelan.

*Collaborative Workgroups:* The **Behavioral Health Task Force** chaired by Dr. John Doherty included concerned school leaders, faculty and coalition staff that met throughout the year. The Wellness Chairperson and RCASA Director conducted the **K-12 Wellness Assessment Review**. They presented the results to Dr. Doherty and their recommendations were approved in the school budget process. To support *regional development* staff worked with the Wakefield Coalition and North Reading to provide guidance as they developed their local programs.

### PROJECTS/EVENTS

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter:** Staff worked with the District Behavioral Health Coordinator and Superintendent to implement the **Teen Screen Pilot Program** with 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. RCASA advocated for the program, supported staff training and assisted with the screening process. The School Nurse Director, Coalition staff, School Psychologists, School Social Workers; screened 76 students. Twelve students were identified for further behavioral health evaluation and eight students were

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identified for health-related referrals. The rates of participation were on par with the National Teen Screen averages. The ***Annual Health & Wellness Day Event*** was held in March at the High School for 1,100 students and faculty. The RCASA Exhibit Area featured the School Resource Officer conducting the ***Fatal Reflections Program*** to prevent impaired driving. Youth Leaders created posters highlighting the dangers of substances and healthy ways to cope with life's challenges.

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Presentations by the Town Manager and School Superintendent prioritizing ***Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse*** as a town priority were conducted to the full body of Spring Town Meeting. Two new health courses were approved for 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades during the budget process. To prepare, coalition staff collaborated with administrators to hire two new educators, order books and finalize technology. All freshman students enrolled in the Decisions Program completed the ***RCASA Choose 2 Refuse Opiates Program*** taught by coalition staff and the School Resource Officer. RCASA hosted a ***Community Event*** at the high school. The event featured Youth and Adult Learning Groups with interactive stations on school, health, legal and community issues for 75 participants. Topic areas included underage drinking prevention and compliance efforts, Chemical Health Regulations, and Programs & Resources.

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: The Outreach Coordinator conducted ***TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures)*** for seven employees from Oye's Restaurant. Amy Vendt, President hosted the ***Coalition Annual Meeting*** and reported on data reductions. Jacob Camenker, Youth Leader conducted an activity on perceptions of substance use. Julianne DeAngelis and Linda Goodemote discussed the impact of addiction on the family. Pat Shannon, Board Member presented on Marijuana Issues including the state ballot question and local zoning. Samantha Abate, Youth Leader, provided an overview on youth projects and shared the "*Point of No Return*" film on underage drinking prevention.

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: During the fall of 2012, RCASA supported ***Glencoe Health*** implementation, the new evidence-based curriculum for 7th, 9th and 11th grades. RCASA and Wellness Staff hosted the Glencoe Consultant to conduct in-depth staff training. Coalition staff provided online curriculum assistance so students could access class resources. The Coalition Director and School Resource Officer conducted ***Impaired Driving Prevention*** workshops for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in the Health Issues course. The new ***RCASA and Reading Public Schools Chemical Health Education Program (CHEP)*** was launched to include 1) Group Education, 2) 1-1 Youth Support, and 3) Family Follow-up. Thirty-seven youth violated the School Chemical Health Policy and completed the CHEP Program in the last quarter of 2012. Staff also accepted four court referrals and met with these youth to address their diversion conditions.

### FINANCE

The coalition is primarily supported by grant funding detailed below:

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Grant Source	Amount	End	Renewal
United States White House Office of National Drug Control Policy- Drug Free Communities	<b>\$99,957</b>	9/30/12	2014- TBD
Health Resources in Action- Tobacco Prevention	<b>\$ 3,250</b>	6/1/12	2013-approved
Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety & Security (Reading Police working with RCASA)	<b>\$ 5,000</b>	10/1/12	2013-pending
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration- Sober Truth on Underage Drinking	<b>\$48,000</b>	9/30/13	2013- approved
Federal Town Hall on Underage Drinking Prevention	<b>\$ 1,000</b>	6/30/12	2013-pending

The in-kind resources provided to RCASA totaled \$160,000 from the town, school and police departments. These resources included the provision of office and meeting space, matrix supervision, and financial oversight. Staff conducted Responsible Beverage Service training and collected \$210 in fees. The coalition accepted a donation of \$500 from Executive Home Detox.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Staff sent Press Releases to three local news outlets including the Patch, Chronicle, and Advocate. Local newspapers published 35 coalition articles and shared info on the outlets below:

Website Link	Type	Purpose	Host
<a href="http://conta.cc/Wp214W">http://conta.cc/Wp214W</a>	News	Member share	Constant Contact
<a href="http://bit.ly/VL355V">http://bit.ly/VL355V</a>	Website	Info sharing	Edline
<a href="http://bit.ly/13QomLQ">http://bit.ly/13QomLQ</a>	Website	Student Club	MA Tobacco Unit
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/">https://www.facebook.com/</a>	Social Media	Youth Crew	RCASA Reading Facebook
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/">https://www.facebook.com/</a>	Social Media	Info sharing	RCASA Facebook
<a href="http://bit.ly/YyjtTY">http://bit.ly/YyjtTY</a>	Youth PSAs*	Substance Abuse & Behavioral Health	RCASA Youth Crew YouTube Channel
<i>*PSAs titled "Dear 16 year old me" and "Its ok to get help" available on YouTube</i>			

### **RCASA CONTACT**

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### **RCASA SUPPORT**

Would you like to make a donation to support our work? Please send your tax-deductible donation to the address below:

Julianne DeAngelis, RCASA Outreach Coordinator  
 15 Union Street, Reading, MA 01867