

November 2014



# coalition news

Prevention news and information from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition

## Coalition Seeks “Prevention Partnerships” with Local Organizations

Looking at a list of every organization in Tiverton most people would see only one dedicated to preventing and reducing the use of alcohol and other drugs by Tiverton teens. Through a prevention lens, however, many town organizations are actively involved in “prevention work” — and the Coalition aims to build stronger ties with these organizations through “Partners in Prevention,” a new program it plans to launch in 2015.

“Even though you may not find ‘prevention’ in their mission statements, many town organizations offer programs or create environments for kids that have been proven to reduce teen alcohol and drug use. Working more closely with these organizations can enhance prevention efforts now and help sustain prevention work in Tiverton, especially after our federal and state grant monies dry up in a couple of years,” Rebecca Elwell, Coalition Coordinator, said.

Studies show that youth who are involved in school and town sports, for example, are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs (AOD). Evidence shows the same to be true for kids who are active members of a faith community. On average, they are nearly 50 percent less likely to experiment with AOD than teens their age who are not active in a faith community.

Scouting programs have specific no-tolerance policies, proven to reduce use. Boy Scouts of America has also

created its own prevention education program called “[Drugs: A Deadly Game.](#)”

[The Tiverton Public Library](#) is another example of a town organization “doing prevention work.” Its year-round youth programs teach kids that books, music, art, imagination and being involved in wholesome groups are great ways to experience life’s “natural highs.” This “life lesson” becomes a protective factor when kids are making decisions about experimenting with AOD when they’re out there on their own or with their friends.

“Partners in Prevention” will kick off in January when the Coalition will contact town organizations and request 15-minutes during one of their regular monthly meetings. A Coalition member will give a presentation about specific ways each organization can become a prevention partner with the Coalition.



“We’re very conscious that most residents involved in town organizations have busy schedules,” Rebecca said, “so ‘Partners in Prevention’ offers organizations the opportunity to have a positive impact on prevention efforts in Tiverton — with little additional time investment by the organization and its members.”

Members of organizations interested in the “Partners in Prevention” program may also contact Rebecca Elwell by [e-mail](#) or by phone at 401.835.5311.



## REBECCA'S notes

This Thanksgiving, I think it would be great if every parent of middle and high school students takes a moment at the table to raise a toast to their kids for making healthy decisions.

When we hear news about teens and alcohol and drugs, it's usually negative. If it bleeds, it leads, as they say in the media world. The often forgotten fact is that *most Tiverton teens do not use alcohol, marijuana or prescription drugs to get high* — even though most all of them could if they chose to. In student surveys, most kids tell us that alcohol and drugs are readily available to teens in Tiverton. Still, the majority of our kids choose NOT to seek them out and, if offered, most of them are saying, "No, not for me."

So, at our Thanksgiving meals this year, let's raise a glass. A Mocktail will make the toast extra special! Let's praise them for making healthy decisions. Tell them we appreciate that they're learning how to take good care of themselves when they're out there on their own. Most of all, let them know how thankful we are that they are our daughters and sons. *Happy Thanksgiving!*

## Preventing Medicine Abuse: 3 Easy Steps Every Parent Can Take

According to the 2012 [Partnership Attitude Tracking Study](#), sponsored by MetLife Foundation, one in four teens has misused or abused a prescription drug at least once in their lifetime — a 33 percent increase since 2008. The Medicine Abuse Project, a program of [Partnership at Drugfree.org](#), aims to reverse this trend.

The nationwide program hopes to prevent half a million teens from abusing medicine by 2017. The study reports that kids who abuse medicine are also starting early. One in five kids has done so before the age of 14, according to the study.

The program recognizes that parents are the first line of defense in protecting teens from the dangers of using someone else's medicine. The good news is that preven-

tion studies confirm that kids who learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol early and often are much less likely to develop addiction than those who do not receive these critical messages at home.

Parents can follow a proven, three-step prevention program at home: Monitor. Secure. Properly Dispose. Check out [Protect Your Kids: 3 Steps to Safeguard Your Home](#). And don't forget that you can safely dispose of unused medicine, no questions asked, 24/7 at the Coalition's Rx Drop Box at the Tiverton Police Station.

## Kids, Families, Goats and Tigers: A Halloween Tale of Community Service



Tiverton teens who belong to "Above the Influence," a THS club sponsored by the Coalition, hosted nearly 70 families at a two-hour Halloween Party for the town's "little kids" on October 25. Events included The Children's Halloween Costume Parade around the track at Bulgarmarsh Park, where ATI members handed out candy, followed by a variety of activities at Sandywoods — including a meet-and-greet the THS Tiger, in full costume, and some of Sandywoods' goats.

The Coalition sponsors the ATI program at THS with DFC grant funds. Studies shows that teens who participate in community service and extracurricular activities are less likely to be involved in drugs and alcohol.

