



November 10, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

We are so pleased to be able to share the work of the BEACON Coalition with you. The Coalition has evolved over the past 4 years from the work of the Mayor's Taskforce on Underage Substance Abuse, created in response to a number of teen tragedies.

The Coalition has over 40 members at this time, representing all sectors of the community. The Newburyport Public Schools are a critical stakeholder in the work we are doing. So often in communities, the work of prevention and the unfortunate the blame for tragedies falls on the shoulders of the schools. The coalition was created to spearhead the issue and have the schools involved in a *community wide effort*. For the past few years we have worked closely with the schools to begin building our community's capacity to make positive changes that supports that effort to build healthy youth and reduce substance use. With all of the changes in the district including many changes in administration, we have been forced to move a bit slower than expected. We are now in an exciting stage of this partnership. The new administration has proven to be open to the resources and support that we can provide. We are excited to begin sharing the data and more importantly the expertise that can enable the schools to utilize this information in an effective way.

The Coalition is overseen by the City's Youth Services department, who has been using this data to develop programs and assess some of the needs in the community, very successfully. The partnership with the Schools has been a wonderful one, of sharing resources and trying to provide support both programmatically as well as financially through our Federal Drug Free Communities Grant.

Included in this packet is: information on the surveys funded by the BEACON Coalition, successes of the Coalition in the Community, ways in which NYS and Coalition members have used the survey results and a summary of Asset Data from 2004. We have just received the data from the 2006 Asset Survey and would be happy to come and present it to you. Please feel free to contact us for any other information you may need.

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Overview of BEACON Coalition Funded Surveys

In order to accurately understand our community needs and resources, the BEACON Youth Project will continue to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on an annual basis. This data will be used to build a multi-year analysis to map Newburyport's strength and weaknesses regarding substance abuse, norms, service delivery systems, policies and laws. We anticipate that our strategic plan will evolve over the five-year grant period to effectively impact change regarding use of ATOD within our community.

The Newburyport School District has administered the Youth Risk Behavior Survey bi-annually for the past six years and will re-administer this survey to grades 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12 during year one, three and five of the grant project. The Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors was administered initially in October of 2004 and will be re-administered in years two and four of the grant project to grades 6,8, 10 and 11. In addition, a gap identified in our data is parents' perceptions about drug use and their awareness of their child's behaviors. This additional data will provide valuable opinions on appropriate drug prevention programming as research indicates that student responses are often inconsistent with parent responses. We are looking to conduct The PRIDE Parent Survey as well in the future. These surveys will support the need for quantitative data and measuring change over the five-year grant period.

The BEACON Youth Project will also continue the ongoing partnership begun five years ago by the Youth Commission with the Northeast Center for Healthy Communities (NECHC). NECHC is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and currently provides support, training and assessment and planning services to a dozen communities in the northeast region of Massachusetts. An NECHC staff person will serve as an advisory member and evaluator to assist in our ongoing needs assessment, data analysis, strategic planning and coalition improvement process. The NECHC also has the unique ability to be able to coordinate sharing and learning opportunities between several Drug Free Communities in the region, increasing our capacity for effectiveness and success.

THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY (YRBS)

The YRBS focuses on the major risk behaviors that threaten the health and safety of young people. This anonymous survey includes questions about tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors that might lead to unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, dietary behaviors, physical activity, and behaviors associated with intentional or unintentional injuries. Data from the YRBS provide accurate estimates of the prevalence of risk behaviors among public high school students in the City, and are important for planning health education and risk prevention programs

THE SEARCH INSTITUTE PROFILES OF STUDENT LIFE: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS (The Asset Survey)

The 156-item survey provides an aggregate portrait of the 40 Developmental Assets as experienced by your 6th-12th grade youth. In addition to measuring Developmental Assets, the

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survey also measures eight thriving indicators, five developmental deficits, and 24 risk-taking behaviors. This is a tool used to begin community dialogue about our children's strengths and areas we can better support.

How Are We Using the Data?

Community Initiatives

ASSET INITIATIVE. In the spring of 2005, 50 community members, both youth and adult gathered to review that first year of asset data. At this event three assets were identified as areas of concern. These three areas then helped to guide the direction of many of the coalition's projects.

- **Community Values Youth:** NYS has created a Youth Council to represent the city's teens and assist with planning events and programs. We had created a Middle School Drop-In Center that was serving over 70 youth during the hours of 2- 5:30pm. After School Programming has been brought to each elementary schools. Seasonal Programs and Events have increased significantly in the past three years, many of which have been suggested or planned by youth (please see Youth Programming below).
- **Restraint:** The Coalition has successfully implemented All Stars into the school curriculum for middle School students. This is an evidence based, model program replacing the DARE Program which was not proven to be effective. The Coalition continues to work with the High School faculty to support their curriculum and use the YRBS Data to guide their lesson plans.
- **Healthy Adult Relationships:** The Coalition has hosted a number of events to educate parents and community members. We are continuing to work with adults in youth serving organizations, religious groups and parents to educate them on the power of the youth assets and how simply they can help build assets in young people they know.

The ASSET Initiative Continues this year as we are presenting the new data in January of 2008 at a public forum to discuss the results and identify areas of concern. 30 Youth from the middle school and high school will be trained on the Assets and will work on creating a presentation at that forum.

Youth Programming

Since 2005, Youth Services has been using the Asset Survey data to help determine areas of programming that may increase our city's youth assets. We are continuing to

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develop programming with community groups. The YWCA has recently begun offering after school programs in each of the elementary schools, both their child care and summer programs have been developed looking that the 40 assets.

The Newburyport Clergy Association will continue working to build youth assets within their congregations and in the community and increase spiritual opportunities for teens.

The Public Library is working on a program to increase reading for pleasure (one of the assets) and will be involved in a program for reluctant readers. The Learning Enrichment Center has also added two new literature based programs to their offerings (Mother Read and Teen Book Club).

We have increased our number of activities offered by the City for youth. We have increased to 35 programs for fall and winter this year from less than 10 programs last year. We now offer over 20 summer programs as well.

School Curriculum

Now that we have two years of data from the Asset Survey, the coalition is working with the Prevention Specialists to work within each of their school communities to identify issues. It is our hope that the data will be used to direct some of the wellness programs as well as provide a measurable tool when evaluating program effectiveness. Many schools and communities utilize data to support changes in policy. We are providing the school faculty with training on Prevention Strategies that Work as well as additional training that would build their capacity to address issues of substance abuse

Funding Support

The data collected from both the YRBS and the Asset model has supported grants received by Youth Services for both youth programming as well as a \$10,000 grant for a new program NBPT Youth Against Tobacco to address the issue of chewing tobacco by high school youth.

We are working with other coalition members to begin utilizing this data to support their funding requests for anything that builds youth assets and prevents substance use.



Original Risk and Protective Factors Identified by the BEACON Coalition.

Domain	Risk Factors Identified to be Reduced	Protective Factors to be Supported/ Increased
<i>School</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents and community members not actively involved in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fosters active involvement of students, parents and community members ▪ Sponsors substance-free events ▪ School responsive to students' needs
<i>Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alcohol and other drugs are readily available ▪ Laws and ordinances are unclear and inconsistently enforced ▪ Norms are unclear or encourage use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meaningful community service opportunities exist for youth and adults ▪ Policies and norms encourage non-use ▪ Opportunities exist for community involvement ▪ Informal social control
<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents have trouble keeping track of teens, who they're with and where they go ▪ Lack of clear rules and consequences regarding alcohol and other drug use ▪ Parents have trouble setting consistent expectations and limits ▪ Parents use drugs and/or involve youth in their use or tolerate use by youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear expectations and limits regarding alcohol and other drug use ▪ Encourages supportive relationships with caring adults beyond the immediate family ▪ Education is valued and encouraged, and parents are actively involved
<i>Individual/Peer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less involved in recreational, social and cultural activities ▪ Inappropriate coping responses ▪ Thinks most friends use ▪ Association with drug-using peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bonding to pro-social culture ▪ Positive relationships with adults ▪ Views parents, teachers, doctors, law enforcement officers and other adults as allies ▪ Youth involvement in alternative activities ▪ Has positive future plans