



## Parents, residents asked to fill out survey on youth

**By Katie Farrell**  
Staff writer

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NEWBURYPORT — The Beacon Coalition is asking the community to take some time to fill out a survey sharing how they perceive youth and the issues facing the city's youth.

"We're really hoping the survey takes off," Beacon Coalition director Sarah Hayden said.

The survey comes in two formats — one specifically for parents of children in grades six to 12 and the other for all other community members. It will be available online starting Monday.

Each survey is anonymous, Hayden said, and the results will be used to help plan prevention programs and help the coalition determine where to focus its efforts.

The Beacon Coalition formed in 2006. This is the first survey the group has distributed.

Coalition members began planning for a survey last spring and worked with the Northeast Center for Healthy Communities in Lawrence to help format a survey that the group will use to fit the needs of Newburyport.

Through the survey — which will take between 10 and 15 minutes to fill out — participants will share how they view youth. Questions will ask participants about "risky behavior" such as drugs, alcohol and tobacco use by teens.

Hayden said the coalition is hoping a wide range of community members takes the time to respond, from business owners to clergy or law enforcement and parents.

"Raising a healthy youth really is a community effort," she said. "We invite all community members to take it."

The survey is available online at [www.beaconcoalition.com](http://www.beaconcoalition.com) through Oct. 8. The Beacon Coalition will write and release a report based on the survey's findings.

As the school year gets underway, the group is working with the schools on several initiatives. The coalition will attend conference nights at the high school next month in order for parents to have a chance to add their name to the parent directory, which is available online or in hard copy at the Beacon Coalition office at City Hall, and at the high school.

Also, starting this fall, the coalition will run a parenting program for families with kids ages 12 to 17. Referrals to the program will be accepted, and the first session will likely start this winter. There will be a fee for the program to cover the costs of supplies, and it will run about six weeks, Hayden said.

For more information about the Beacon Coalition or its programs, contact Hayden at 978-463-8977.

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