

★ Identifying Needs & Services

By gathering survey and evaluation data, the MTF remains responsive to prevention and intervention needs of youth and families. Yearly surveys of youth help us to know and address alcohol and drug problems. Survey data from community members and parents also provide valuable direction.

★ Youth Input

In addition to the youth surveys, the Task Force turns to young people for direction and guidance through focus group participation. Twelve focus groups have given direction to a youth outreach campaign. We partner with the Northfield Union of Youth and others in fostering dialog between youth and adults and in generating creative solutions for reducing youth substance use.

★ Communication

MTF communication efforts help inform and educate our community on many levels. Over 20 monthly newspaper columns have been published. Web sites, radio spots, displays, mailings, public speaking engagements, newsletters, and more are used regularly to communicate our message. Productive relationships have been built with communications partners including the local media.

★ Talking Points Campaign

Talking Points offer parents ways to connect with their children and each other. Coffee shops provide opportunities for customers to try out a Mayor's Task Force-designed Conversation Starter Kit. A give-away product, developed from the kit, has questions in English and Spanish to use in triggering conversations with kids.

★ Young Adult Support

A very vulnerable time for some Northfield young adults appears to be the transition period from ages of 18-25. In the last 18 months, almost all of the young people who died of a drug overdose or who have been arrested for the sales of narcotics have been from this age group. Task Force member's initial effort with this issue is to identify the strengths and the vulnerabilities of those experiencing difficulty, and to research existing efforts and program models. Some areas of concern include: availability of resources, mental health issues, support systems, and employment opportunities.

★ Court Monitoring

The MTF engages in on-going court monitoring to reinforce the serious legal consequences for adults who provide alcohol to youth. Other drug-related cases are also monitored. MTF members address the court by reading a victim impact statement about the effects of these crimes on the community. Member's reach out and offer support to the families of both victims and offenders.

★ Targeted Parent Mailings

The Task Force distributes on-going mailings to encourage and support parents as they help their children make healthy choices. Postcards and letters are mailed for special events such as prom, graduation, and school breaks.



★ Prom Cards from Children

For three years, Project SIGHT and the MTF have worked with elementary students to create special "Prom Cards." The cards are gentle reminders that high school students are important role-models for young children who care about them and watch them closely. Prom Cards are distributed to hair salons, florists, and others to be given to their prom-going clients.

If you have comments, questions, ideas or would like to know how to get involved with the MTF, please contact:



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YOU*TH first

Northfield Mayor's Task Force
on Youth Alcohol and Drug Use

Report to the Community

May 2009



Northfield Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol and Drug Use



City Council Charges

- To raise community awareness about youth alcohol and drug use;
- To support and encourage efforts to increase community education about youth alcohol and drug use;
- To provide a citizen voice in community efforts to reduce youth alcohol and drug use;
- To examine existing policies and practices in the community around youth alcohol and drug use;
- To develop and implement the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol and Drug Use.

Partners and In-Kind Supporters

- Northfield City Council
- Rice County Family Services Collaborative
- Rice County Chemical Health Coalition (RCCHC)
- Northfield Healthy Community Initiative (HCI)
- Northfield Hospital
- Northfield Police Department
- Northfield Public Schools
- Northfield Union of Youth
- Neuger Communication Group
- Rice County Safe Communities Coalition
- Project SIGHT
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Rice County (MADD)

Mayor's Task Force Members

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|-----------------------|------------------------|
| • Pat Allen | • Joan Janusz * |
| • Curt Benson | • Kristine Matson |
| • Katherine Cooper | • Mary F. Nelson |
| • Patty Gallivan | • Susan Sanderson * |
| • Judi Harper-Malecha | • Kris Vohs |
| • Sharon Henry | (City Council Liaison) |

* Denotes MTF Co-Chair

Our Work: YOU★TH First!

The Mayor's Task Force believes there is no single idea, organization or effort that alone can achieve our goal of helping our youth "lead healthy lives, free of alcohol and drug use." Our work must include the efforts of many individuals and organizations, working to provide a wide-range of services and programming over an extended period of time. The following are some of our new and on-going YOU★TH First activities and accomplishments.

★ Compliance Checks

Alcohol and tobacco compliance checks help ensure laws established to prevent sales to minors are followed. Compliance checks reinforce to licensed sellers the importance of verifying age identification. The MTF provides press releases, awards recognition to those who pass, makes connections with possible underage volunteer buyers, and provides education regarding the value of compliance checks.

★ Alcohol Sales Procedure & Policy

In conjunction with support for compliance checks, the Task Force researches policy and recommends change, if needed. Areas of interest are: licensing issues, training requirements for alcohol servers and sales staff, and consequential follow-through for those charged with selling alcohol to minors.

Two new projects to reach young adults are in the planning stages. For those ages 18-20 information will be provided regarding how alcohol laws for adults now pertain to them. For those turning age 21, education regarding legal responsibilities for alcohol use, buying for minors, driving under the influence, and more.

★ Medication Disposal Campaign

The Mayor's Task Force, with the collaboration of others, is developing of a safe and environmentally responsible collection and disposal system for un-needed prescription drugs and other controlled substances.

Plans are underway for two permanent medication drop-off locations- one in Northfield and the other in Faribault. County-wide events to bring attention to this campaign are targeted for early fall. In the meantime, an extensive community education plan regarding the importance of controlling access and misuse of medications and other drugs is being developed to lead the effort. Many community partners will be involved to help address the Medication Disposal Campaign.

★ Positive Community Norms Campaign

The "MOST Northfield Students" campaign highlights the differences between the reality and perception of student behaviors. MTF survey data (see next page) indicates students often over-predict the percentage of their peers who engage in risky behaviors. Our goal is to correct student misperceptions regarding their peers' drug and alcohol use. The campaign addresses these misperceptions which helps to reduce youth drug and alcohol use, and provides support for students recovering from addiction.

Task Force members, in partnership with high school staff, are running a high-energy, thought-provoking campaign. Messages and images are pilot-tested with youth, with a new "message" introduced every three weeks by way of posters, T-shirts, promotional items, and other activities. About half of the campaign messages relate directly to drug and alcohol use. The rest of the messages highlight positive protective factors that are vital to a healthy community for our youth.

Next steps include reaching middle school students, parents, and the greater community. A similar process will be used to evaluate our surveys and data; reach out to our partners; utilize specific and effective concepts; and roll out an on-going and in-depth outreach campaign.

★ School Activities Support

MTF members help school partners with resources at school activity meetings for students and parents. The MTF provides information about alcohol and drugs, supports school policy regarding consequences for drug and alcohol use and provides connections to other communities working to keep school activity participants free of drug and alcohol use.

★ Buprenorphine Advocacy

The Mayor's Task Force has worked to help advocate for and support the presence of a physician licensed to administer Buprenorphine in the community. This medication is effective in helping those trying to stop using heroin and opioid drugs.

About Us

The Northfield Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use (MTF) was formed in May 2006 at the initiative of several community members, former Mayor Lee Lansing and former Police Chief Gary Smith. As the Mission Statement of the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use indicates, members are "advocates for and with youth, committed to creating a community where our youth can lead healthy lives free of alcohol and drug use."

The MTF consists of nine local residents, appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Northfield City Council. One Council member is the representative and liaison for the City Council. There are no term limits. Members do not receive monetary compensation. Staff support is provided by the Northfield Healthy Community Initiative and the Rice County Family Services Collaborative.

The Northfield Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol and Drug Use is one of five action teams of the Rice County Chemical Health Coalition.

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