

Riverhead Community Awareness Program, Inc. (CAP)

Annual Report 2013-2014

www.RiverheadCAP.org



Introduction

Riverhead Community Awareness Program, Inc. (CAP) is a nonprofit community-based organization founded in 1979 by a coalition of volunteers to address growing problems caused by alcohol and other drugs within the Riverhead schools and community. In 1982 CAP embarked on an ambitious agenda of providing a monthly prevention education program to all fifth and sixth grade students in Riverhead Central School District (currently about 750 students). This program is taught by community volunteers who are assisted by peer leaders from Riverhead High School and Middle School, and continues today. In 1986 CAP expanded its mission from school and community awareness and education programs to include counseling services and crisis intervention to students and families of students at risk for present or future drug problems. Presently CAP provides licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) for the Riverhead School District in the High School, Middle School, Roanoke Avenue and Phillips Avenue Elementary Schools. Riverhead CAP is also the lead agency for the Riverhead Community Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Youth and in 2013 was awarded a Drug-Free Communities Support Grant from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy to increase its coalition-based prevention initiatives.

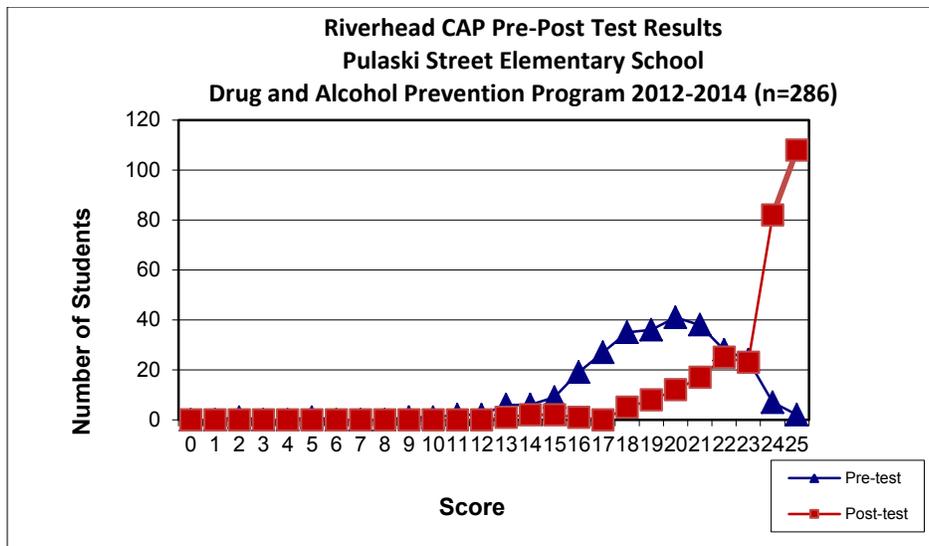
Riverhead CAP's mission is to reduce and prevent alcohol and other substance abuse within the Riverhead schools and community. The three specific goals of CAP are:

- (1) To prevent or delay experimentation with alcohol or any drug by school-age population.
- (2) To prevent experimentation from leading to abuse.
- (3) To prevent the abuse of alcohol and drugs from leading to serious harm to the individual, the individual's family, peers and community, namely to prevent accidents, automobile crashes, health problems and addiction.

Today, CAP is the major provider of drug and alcohol prevention and counseling services in the Riverhead Central School District and surrounding communities. Following is a summary of CAP's programs and services for the 2013-2014 school year.

Prevention Services

During its thirty-second year, the **Pulaski Street School Prevention Education** program directly served 747 fifth and sixth grade students, in a total of 29 classes each month for eight months. This two-year, evidenced-based *Life Skills* program addresses self-esteem, advertising, decision making, communication, assertiveness, peer pressure, refusal skills, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and substance abuse in the family. The program is taught by community volunteers who are assisted by peer leaders from Riverhead High School and Middle School. A pre-post test given to the participants demonstrated highly statistically significant positive outcomes. That is, students clearly demonstrated increased knowledge and understanding of the material, including risk factors and refusal skills, which were directly related to participation in the program. In addition, the overwhelming majority of students evaluated all components of the program very favorably.



Thirty-three middle school and 40 high school students participated in CAP's **Peer Leadership Program**. Peer leaders assist community volunteers in presenting the monthly program at Pulaski Street School, and are trained by CAP social workers each week during their lunch period. Peer leaders act as role models and sign a voluntary no-use contract. The program demonstrated statistically significant positive results for the peer leaders based on both pre-post tests and a confidential year-end profile. Participation in the program specifically helped 95% of the students who never used alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by delaying experimentation, as well as the remaining 5% who reported that they had tried one or more of these substances and stopped using all since joining the program. In addition, 22 community volunteers received monthly training to teach the prevention program to Pulaski Street students. Teacher evaluations of both the presenters and peer leaders were favorable.

CAP conducted a two-day **Summer Workshop** on June 26 and 27, 2014, to prepare new middle school peer leaders to enter the program in September, 2014. Forty new peer leaders attended both days; 10 high school peer leaders helped facilitate the activities. The workshop allowed the students to learn and practice communication skills, role playing, public speaking, team

building, leadership skills and stress management. Student evaluations and staff feedback were overwhelmingly positive.

Fourteen students in Roanoke Avenue and Phillips Avenue Elementary School participated in the **Girls Circle** program. This program helps girls develop a healthy foundation with female identity, friendships, and body image by addressing risk factors and building on protective factors. An additional 34 students in both schools participated in the **Peacemakers, an Anti-Bullying Club**. This innovative peer-led group was initiated in 2012 by a third grade student at Roanoke who had a desire to prevent and stop bullying; it is facilitated by the CAP social worker. Students meet twice per month to plan bullying prevention activities and initiatives using peer and social skills, role-modeling techniques, and classroom presentations to raise awareness and recruit participants. The group made presentations to 15 classes at Roanoke, a total of 419 fellow classmates and teachers, and 25 classes at Phillips, a total of 611 fellow classmate and teachers. Both Peacemakers groups and their respective schools participated in The Great Kindness Challenge in January 2014 and helped their schools become Kindness Certified by KidsforPeace.org. The Peacemakers program has received widespread school and media support.

Prevention Counseling Services

CAP social workers provided **individual, group, and family counseling, as well as crisis intervention and assessment/referral services** to:

- 60 high school students
- 30 middle school students
- 38 elementary school students (19 each from Phillips Avenue and Roanoke Avenue Elementary Schools)

At least 80% of students who were admitted and continued with individual, group or family counseling, or were seen for crisis intervention, showed improvement in one or more of the following areas: absence or cutting problems; academic failure; completing assignments; discipline problems; parent/child conflict; severe peer conflict; severe depression; suicidal ideation or family planning (referrals made); loss; anger or stress; self-esteem; nicotine, alcohol or other substance abuse; inappropriate classroom behavior; coping with parental or family substance abuse.

The role of CAP's school-based prevention counseling is to address risk factors for current or future substance abuse, teach students to utilize the appropriate coping strategies, and increase protective factors. Students who are experiencing issues that do not fall within the scope of the prevention counseling guidelines are assessed and referred for the appropriate services.

An additional 13 students at Roanoke and 16 at Phillips participated in **Banana Splits** groups facilitated by the CAP social worker. Banana Splits is a program for young children from changing families. Groups of second, third and fourth graders met biweekly during lunch to

provide peer support, normalize feelings through sharing, and increase self-esteem through mutual help. The social worker trains the children in problem solving and coping skills. The program has also been shown to support parents and school staff working with participants and increase communication among children, parents and school.

CAP social workers interact and participate actively on all levels of the school system. They receive regularly scheduled clinical supervision from CAP's clinical supervisor, who is also the middle school social worker.

Community, Collaborative and Coalition Activities

On June 6, 2014, CAP sponsored the **29th Annual Say No to Drugs March**. This flagship event celebrates the completion of the Pulaski Street Prevention Education Program in which students and invited guests wear "Drug Free Body" t-shirts and affirm their commitment to live drug free. About 1,000 students, teachers, parents and government officials participated. Riverhead Police Officer Dennis Cavanagh, the *Riverhead News Review's* 2013 Public Servant of the Year led this year's march and the Riverhead Town Board issued a proclamation declaring it **Say NO to Drugs Day** in the town.

CAP awarded the **Jack Hansen Memorial Peer Leadership Scholarship** to a graduating high school peer leader, and once again partnered with Tanger Outlets to sponsor the **Seventh Annual Essay Contest** for fifth and sixth graders in Pulaski Street School. Our **Annual Volunteer Luncheon** in June recognized the work of our dedicated volunteers. Riverhead Town Supervisor Sean Walter awarded the volunteer certificates.

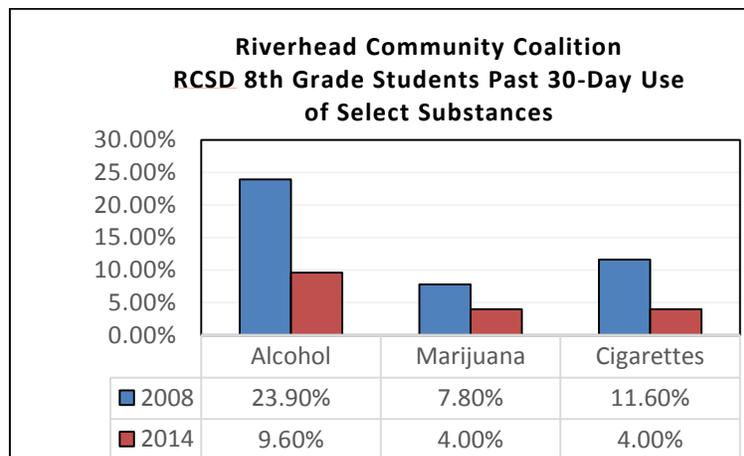
CAP is the lead agency for the **Riverhead Community Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Youth**, a strategic planning system that empowers communities to use advances from prevention science to guide their prevention efforts. The coalition includes diverse representation from all sectors of the community including Riverhead Central School District, Riverhead Police Department, Southampton Youth Bureau, First Baptist Church of Riverhead, Riverhead United Methodist Church, Peconic Bay Medical Center, Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Suffolk Community College, Riverhead Local, Riverhead Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, Family Service League, Suffolk County Prevention Resource Center, parents and students. Coalition members meet monthly; our mission is to engage collaborative partners in the planning, implementation and evaluation of strategies that prevent youth substance use, namely underage drinking and prescription drug abuse.

Coalition Activities during 2013-2014 included:

- A social media contest in the high school where students expressed why they live a life free of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- Project Sticker Shock: a youth empowerment activity where adult and youth volunteers went into Riverhead Beverage and placed stickers warning about the penalties for providing alcohol to minors

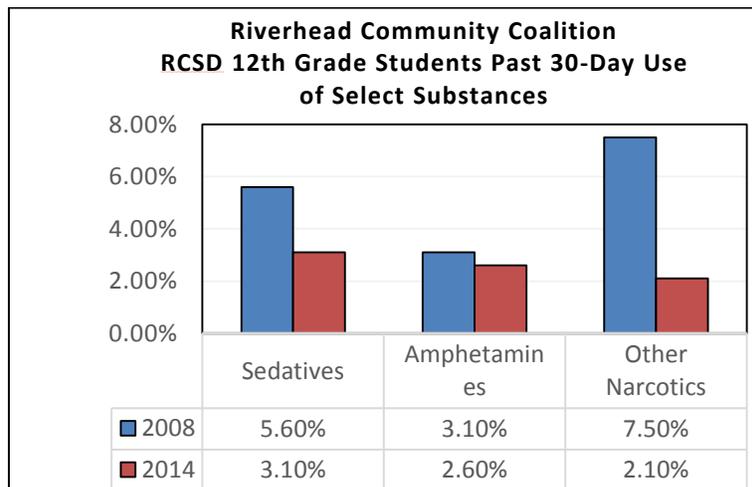
- Presentations to youth groups about the coalition and increased capacity among our youth committee
- A presentation the Rotary about best practices for selling alcohol at fairs and festivals
- Environmental scans at the Polish Town Fair and the Riverhead Country Fair in order to develop policies to reduce youth alcohol use at these events
- Environmental scans at local public parks and beaches in order to develop policies to reduce youth alcohol use in these areas
- Organizing a successful pre-prom event at Riverhead High School to reduce youth access to alcohol; it resulted in no alcohol- or drug-related incidents before, during and after the senior prom
- Increasing awareness of Social Host Law
- Changing school policy to include copy of Social Host Law with parent prom contract
- Working to secure a permanent medication drop box at Riverhead Police Department to reduce access to illegal prescription drugs in the community
- Working with Riverhead Police Department and Peconic Bay Medical Center to publicize and support semi-annual DEA Drug Take-Back Events
- Providing information on medication abuse on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages
- Conducting a Town Hall Meeting as a call to action to the community to increase coalition capacity and participation in environmental prevention strategies
- Conducting a Prevention Needs Assessment to all 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grade students in the Riverhead Central School District every two years beginning in 2014

The 2014 Prevention Needs Assessment indicated the following positive outcomes:



- The percentage of 8th graders reporting past 30 day use of alcohol **decreased at a rate of 59.8%** from 23.90% in 2008 to 9.60% in 2014.
- The percentage of 8th graders reporting past 30 day use of marijuana **decreased at a rate of 48.7%** from 7.80% in 2008 to 4.00% in 2014.

- The percentage of 8th graders reporting past 30 day use of cigarettes **decreased at a rate of 65.5%** from 11.60% in 2008 to 4.00% in 2014.



- The percentage of 12th graders reporting past 30 day use of sedatives **decreased at a rate of 44.6%** from 5.6% in 2008 to 3.1% in 2014.
- The percentage of 12th graders reporting past 30 day use of amphetamines **decreased at a rate of 16%** from 3.1% in 2008 to 2.6% in 2014.
- The percentage of 12th graders reporting past 30 day use of other narcotics **decreased at a rate of 72%** from 7.5% in 2008 to 2.1% in 2014.

CAP is an active member of the **East End Partnership for Youth** which works to organize both the annual East End Youth Leadership Summit for East End Youth and a Prevention Conference for individuals from community organizations, law enforcement, schools and human service organizations each year through an annual conference that addresses issues concerning violence prevention and gangs. We partner with the **Southampton Youth Bureau** and to provide three 10-week interactive programs for 50 elementary students that focused on stress management, social skills and bullying prevention. In addition, CAP has significantly increased our outreach efforts by providing presentations to and partnering with the following organizations: Riverhead Rotary Club, Pulaski Street PTO, Riverhead Middle School PTO, Roanoke Avenue PTO, Phillips Avenue PTO, Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island, Riverhead Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, First Baptist Church Community Life Center, East End Arts Council, Riverhead Free Library, and Peconic Bay Medical Center. We are working on expanding youth membership and participation in the coalition through partnerships with the Southampton Youth Bureau and the Riverhead Council for Unity and with Suffolk Community College in a mentoring capacity. CAP staff participates in ongoing workshops and professional training throughout the year to stay current with trends and strategies in the field of substance abuse prevention. Dr. Harold Holder, former Director of the Prevention Resource Center for the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), has provided numerous workshops to us on **Strategic Planning for Environmental Prevention of ATOD Problems Using a Logic Model and**

Data Analysis, and has assisted us with technical assistance to implement this planning. The Suffolk County Prevention Resource Center provides training and assistance as well.

Since its inception, CAP has been a prevention resource for the community. We maintain a current multimedia library as well as a collection of evidence-based prevention programs. We have a website that is updated regularly; we publish a quarterly electronic newsletter and maintain Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo and Flickr pages keep the community updated on our activities. When possible, we provide access to resources in both English and Spanish. In addition, we regularly publish press releases and enjoy a positive relationship with all local media outlets. CAP serves as an advisory to the Riverhead Town Board and has advocated on behalf of local residents and businesses regarding alcohol outlet density issues in downtown. We are available to provide prevention workshops and training for community groups. There is never a fee incurred for CAP's services for anyone residing in the Riverhead Central School District.

CAP Staff 2013-2014

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Suffolk County Youth Bureau
Town of Riverhead
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