



RIVERHEAD

*Community Coalition for
Safe and Drug-Free Youth*



Riverhead Youth Coalition RYC

Riverhead Community Awareness Program
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The goal of the ***Riverhead Community Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Youth*** is to prevent alcohol and other drug use among youth and promote a safe and healthy community.

We educate, raise awareness and employ environmental strategies to improve and/or change policies. Our membership includes all sectors of the community and there are many ways to be involved. By engaging youth and community members, and through shared skills and resources, we believe we can achieve our goals that reduce alcohol and drug use among youth.

Our prevention efforts have been funded through the federal Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program grant in conjunction with the White House Office on National Drug Control Policy.

The reasons for substance abuse are complex. Not one strategy or outreach effort will reach everyone in the community, but with your help, we can broaden our ability to identify and educate the Riverhead community about the risks and consequences of substance use.

Enclosed you will find information that will help orient you to the Riverhead Coalition, our strategies, and outreach methods.

Thank you for supporting efforts to prevent drug use, underage drinking, and youth access to drugs and alcohol.

Creating a safe and drug-free community has always been our mission.

Founded in 1979, Riverhead Community Awareness Program (CAP) emerged from a group of concerned volunteers to address growing problems caused by alcohol and other drugs within the Riverhead schools and community. Since that time, Riverhead CAP has become the leading agency in the prevention of youth substance abuse through it's advocacy, Education, and evidence-based programs. Partnering with Riverhead School District, Riverhead Town Police, Peconic Bay Medical Center, parents, civic groups, youth, health and human service agencies, churches, and countless volunteers, Riverhead CAP created The Riverhead Community Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Youth .

To further affect change in the community. In 2013, CAP was awarded a Drug-Free Communities Grant from the Office of National Drug Control Policy to increase coalition membership and community-based prevention initiatives.

The Riverhead Coalition is comprised of representatives from the 12 Sectors of the community including:

- Parents
- Law Enforcement
- Schools
- Other Substance Abuse Agencies
- Business
- Media
- Healthcare
- Government
- Youth-Serving Organizations
- Religious Groups
- Civic & Fraternal Organizations

And of course, Youth!

Membership and Meeting Attendance

The Riverhead Youth Coalition (RYC) welcomes new members to participate in meetings, projects, and campaigns. Youth volunteers are required to submit an application with parental permission slips.

RYC meetings are held once a month at the Riverhead CAP office located at 518 East Main Street Suite 106 in Riverhead. All members are notified of meetings via e-mail. Additional RYC meetings may be scheduled as needed when projects are in progress.

It is a requirement that youth coalition members attend a minimum of **two meetings** per school year to maintain their membership and obtain community service hours, if applicable. In addition, youth coalition members are required to participate in a minimum of two coalition projects per school year.

Meeting Structure and Ground Rules

- Members will sign in at each meeting.
- Members are expected to share their ideas, opinions, and feedback.
- Members will speak one at a time.
- Everyone will respect one another's opinions, values, and contributions.

RYC members serve as role models and represent the mission of the Riverhead Youth Coalition. As such, youth coalition members must agree not to smoke or use alcohol or illegal drugs while involved in the coalition. This includes special occasions. If members have a concern about other youth coalition members violating this clause, they are expected to speak to staff at Riverhead CAP.

In addition, there are times when members of the RYC will participate in projects in school and in the community. It is expected that RYC members conduct themselves in a mature manner and exhibit appropriate behavior.

RYC Projects

The purpose of the RYC is to develop leadership skills and to affect change in the Riverhead community and beyond by raising awareness about the risks and consequences of drug and alcohol abuse among youth. The RYC accomplishes this through a variety of projects.

Sticker Shock Campaign

The Sticker Shock campaign targets underage drinking and highlights the fact that it is illegal to provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. While that may seem obvious, unfortunately older friends, siblings, and even some parents themselves, violate this law and endanger their underage friends and children by providing them alcohol, especially at house parties. Participants in this campaign will, as a group and under the supervision of law enforcement, staff, and adult volunteers, place stickers on beer and alcoholic beverages in local stores. The stickers will say that it is illegal to sell or purchase alcohol for minors.

Medication Take Back Events

The CDC reports that one in five teens have taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription and each day more than 2,000 teens use prescription drugs to get high for the first time. In most cases, prescription medication is easier to obtain than street drugs; the majority of teens get them from family members, friends, or in the home. Teens that become addicted to prescription drugs are likely to turn to heroin which is much cheaper to buy on the street.

Medication Take Back Events are conducted in partnership with the Riverhead Police Department to help residents safely dispose of their unwanted, unused, and expired medication. RYC members help promote the event by making posters, distributing giveaway at the events, and raising awareness about the Medication Drop Box at Riverhead Police Department.

Environmental Scans

An environmental scan is a useful assessment method coalitions can use to gather visible information on local conditions surrounding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Environmental scans are led by coalition leaders, who travel to “hot spots” in the community where alcohol and/or drug use is reported to be occurring. At each location or event, volunteers take notes of the types of signage and lighting in the area, take pictures of any drug or alcohol paraphernalia they see and record their observations of activities or behaviors they witness. Environmental scans are conducted under the supervision of staff and/or adult volunteers.

Media Campaigns

The “youth voice” is essential to the success of the coalition. RYC members help develop media campaigns that appeal to youth and raise awareness about the risks and consequences of substance use. This includes recording radio public service announcements, creating youth videos about staying above the influence of drugs and alcohol, being interviewed by local media about coalition activities, developing public awareness campaigns, participating in Town Hall meetings, etc.

Samantha Skunk Program

The Samantha Skunk Program is an interactive presentation targeting children in Pre-Kindergarten to 2nd grade. RYC present the Samantha Skunk program to educate younger children about the dangers of taking medication with adult supervision.