



East Haddam
Youth & Family Services, Inc.

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Summer 2016

Upcoming Events

Middle School Beach Party

Wednesday, July 13
6:00-8:00pm
@ Town Beach

Open to all students entering grades 6-8. Permission forms are required for entry.

3rd Annual Summer Palooza

Saturday, July 23
11:00am-3:00pm
@ Heritage Park

A community-wide family festival

Contact Information:

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youthandfamily@prodigy.net

Visit www.EHYFS.org for additional information or if you are interested in receiving future editions of this newsletter.

You can also find us on Facebook

A Note From the Director:

Last year, EHYFS partnered with our high school leadership group, Youth Helping Youth (YHY), to launch the "MEAN IT, EAST HADDAM" campaign. The intention was to bring awareness to the fact that each of us has a role in creating a community where everyone feels connected and valued and that being a positive role model ought to be intentional rather than incidental. This year, we partnered with a newly formed parent leadership group, Parents Helping Youth (PHY), to develop the "BE YOUR BEST SELF" (BYBS) campaign. The PHY mission has been to focus on the vital role that parents and other adults play in the lives of East Haddam's youth and the importance of modeling healthy choices and positive behaviors. Their campaign is intended to build on the "Mean It" initiative and challenges us to be mindful that kids are watching, whether we realize it or not - that they are listening to what we say and learning from what we do.

You have seen the symbols (lawn signs, T-shirts, banners, magnets, posters, place mats etc.). These are the things we use to heighten awareness. Hopefully, they create curiosity and invite you to ask questions like "What does it mean?" or "Why does it matter?" The answer is this: Preparing our youth to become responsible and contributing adults requires more than building relationships at home or within schools and programs. It requires strengthening those relationships throughout the entire community, reaching beyond the boundaries of families and organizations. The idea that it takes a village to raise a child is not a new one. But it can get lost in the stress and "busy-ness" of our everyday lives, and it might be more important now than it has ever been.

The world that our children are growing up in is very different from the one we experienced. Technology has given them unbridled access to both positive and negative influences. They are bombarded with messages and images from television, movies, music, games, social media, websites, and advertising. All too often, they are exposed to the use of alcohol and drugs being glamorized, violence becoming commonplace, racist and sexist remarks being acceptable. All too often, they see political figures bullying one another and celebrities and athletes behaving badly with little or no consequence. All too often, they are confronted with texts, posts or pictures within their own peer group that make them uncomfortable.

Growing up in this world must be overwhelming, confusing, and even frightening for kids at times. This is a time when they are most vulnerable, trying to figure out who they are, where they belong and what they believe. They need us to be present. They need responsible, caring adults in their lives who will reach out and help them talk about and understand what they're seeing and hearing. They need a community where they feel safe, included and respected. They need us to be mindful of how we treat them and one another. It matters.

East Haddam Local Prevention Council:



At some time, we have heard the message: The chance that youth will use alcohol or other drugs gets higher as he or she gets older. More often than not, youth substance use starts with alcohol. Most 6 year-olds know that alcohol is only for adults. Between the ages of 9 and 13, kids start to view alcohol differently. Many begin to think drinking is OK, and some start to experiment with alcohol. It is NEVER too early to talk to your child about alcohol and other drugs.

The most important thing we've learned is that parents and other adults need to START THE CONVERSATION. It doesn't have to be perfect, it will never be done in one sitting, and it will go on for years. But START THE CONVERSATION. At a presentation on addiction at NHRHS, a parent asked a general question of young

people in attendance: "How do I start talking about these issues with my young children?" A student answered: Don't be afraid. You just have to start talking. Don't be intimidated!!

Start early: Talk to your young children about how food, poisons, medicines and illegal drugs differ. Talk to them about how adults may choose to drink, but how harmful alcohol is to children's developing brains and bodies. And that anything taken in excess, whether it's cough medicine or aspirin, can be dangerous.

Give your children strategies for saying no, and delivering an emphatic reason NOT to try alcohol or other drugs (FACT: "upsetting my parents" is one of the top reasons preteens given for why they won't use marijuana). Talk about how alcohol and drugs are promoted to kids (music, advertising, movies and TV shows). Two thirds of 4th graders polled nationally said they wished their parents would talk more with them about drugs. Parents may not realize that their young children feel surrounded by drug use. Nearly 9 out of 10 teens agree that "it seems like marijuana is everywhere these days". Although teens may not show they appreciate it, parents profoundly shape the choices their kids make about drugs.

What you say to your child about alcohol and drugs is up to you. But remember, parents who do not discourage underage drinking early may have an indirect influence on their children's alcohol and other drug use. **Talk. They hear you.**

3rd Annual Summer Palooza:

East Haddam Youth & Family Services is hosting the 3rd Annual Summer Palooza on July 23rd from 11:00am to 3:00pm at Heritage Park (located at the intersection of Great Hillwood Rd. and Falls Rd.). This is an opportunity for families, community groups, organizations and businesses to come together to provide a fun, safe and substance free event.

As always, our goal is to collaborate with as many organizations as possible to create an event that everyone will enjoy. We are currently looking for groups who are interested in participating in this event by making a monetary donation, volunteering a few hours of your time or choosing a game or activity you would like to add to the festivities.

If you are interested in participating in this event, or if you have questions, please contact us at 860-873-3296 or youthandfamily@ehyfs.org.

Youth Job Bank:

The EHYFS Youth Job Bank is designed to help students, age 12-17, build confidence, gain independence and provide a potential for growth through meaningful work. It is also designed to assist East Haddam residents, churches or civic groups who need help with yard work, babysitting, pet sitting or other light seasonal or temporary labor.

To add your name to our Job Bank directory, an application must be completed and returned to East Haddam Youth & Family Services (P.O. Box 572 Moodus, CT). Please be advised that jobs are available intermittently and sometimes infrequently.

If you are interested in hiring a youth, please contact Kaitlin Hagan at 860-873-3296. Don't miss this great opportunity!

Youth Helping Youth Scholarship:

Youth Helping Youth is a leadership group that works in partnership with East Haddam Youth & Family Services to promote safe and healthy lifestyles among East Haddam youth. Each year, this group awards a scholarship to a graduating member who has positively contributed to their school and community. This year's Youth Helping Youth scholarship recipient is Matt Augustine.

Matt has been an active member of YHY for two years and served as vice-president during his senior year. He has played a key role in organizing the annual Polar Plunge fundraiser, sticker shock campaigns, 4th & 5th grade socials and other YHY activities. He has dedicated many hours to EHYFS activities and through his involvement, has shown a commitment to helping others. Matt's dedication to his school and community has made him a valuable addition to Youth Helping Youth.

He plans to attend the University of Rhode Island to study Entrepreneurial Management

Asset Building in Action:

A snapshot of one of our community members who makes a difference everyday

Lisa Conroy is the Athletic Trainer for Nathan Hale-Ray High School. For fifteen years or more, she has cheered for, cared for, watched out for, and mentored countless numbers of students as they have passed through the halls of Hale-Ray. Always a presence on the field, Lisa is loved and respected by players and coaches alike. Her work is so much more than a job. It is a personal commitment to every one of "her" kids. She makes it a point to get to know them, make real connections with them, and be available for them.

An East Haddam native, Lisa is dedicated to our community. She is a volunteer in Little League, actively supports business, civic and parent organizations in town and has become a leader on the Local Prevention Council. In that role, she has been instrumental in getting members of Hale-Ray's sports teams actively involved in Red Ribbon Week and in a recent presentation on addiction. She has reached out directly at sports banquets and award ceremonies to encourage kids to make healthy choices and positive decisions - on and off the field - and she actively supports them in their efforts to do so.

There isn't anything magical or mysterious about what Lisa does. It comes naturally to her. She is that person who intentionally makes a positive difference in the life of every child she meets. It isn't unusual - in fact, it's commonplace to find Lisa opening up her home to "her family of kids" whether she has known them for years, or they are the newest members of one of Shawn's baseball or basketball teams. She embodies the idea of "building assets" with and for kids and we are very happy to acknowledge all that she does.

Local Businesses Win Awards For Supporting Youth:

On June 15th two local businesses were recognized by the East Haddam Local Prevention Council for their outstanding support and involvement with youth in our community. In the Second Annual Asset Builder Award presentation, **Ken & Judy Grohbrugge** of New Inn Kennels and **Zac Jezek** of Grist Mill Market received plaques of recognition for the work they continue to do with young people in East Haddam and Moodus. You change lives and touch our youth!

We appreciate the work of all local businesses that support our youth, families and community so generously! Thank you!

Middle School Beach Party:

Wednesday, July 13
6:00-8:00pm
@ Town Beach

Open to all EH students entering grades 6-8

Join your friends for a free party. Snacks and drinks will be provided. Permission forms are required for admission and can be found at www.ehyfs.org. Contact EHYFS for additional information.

East Haddam Tip Line:

The East Haddam Police/Resident Troopers Office have established a confidential Tip-Line to receive information from concerned citizens about parties or gatherings where underage alcohol and/or drug use is happening. The Tip-Line is answered by a voice mail system and reviewed by a Police Officer. You will receive a return call only if you provide your contact information and request a callback. All information is kept confidential.

NEW TEXT MESSAGE FEATURE: You can now text information to 860-615-9909.

Because the Tip-Line is confidential, it is important that you provide as much information and detail in your message as possible.

Use the confidential tip or text line



Report Underage Alcohol and Drug Use

*A collective effort
makes us stronger to
help our kids be drug
and alcohol free.*

Call: 860-873-5013

Text: 860-615-9909