



East Haddam
Youth & Family Services, Inc.

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Spring 2016

Upcoming Events

5th Annual Polar Plunge

March 19
East Haddam Town Beach

Alicia Farrell Presentations

March 21 & May 24
7:00-9:00pm
NHRHS Library

Mindful Parenting

March 22
6:00-7:30pm
EH Elementary School

Ladies Night Out

May 11
6:00-8:00pm
Grange Hall

Open to girls in 4th & 5th
grades with their mother/
caregiver

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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:

Every day we hear more about opioid abuse, including heroin, and the frightening accounts of repeated relapses, overdoses and death. We see it in the news and we hear about it from our neighbors and fellow residents. For the last several months, we have seen our legislators organize community forums throughout the state to bring awareness to what is being described as an epidemic. Opioids are highly addictive drugs and for those who do become addicted, life becomes a roller coaster of devastation, heartbreak and loss.

The fact that there is growing concern and public discourse about this issue has opened a door. There is no question that we have to better understand the disease of addiction, provide easier access to treatment, increase family support and deliver better recovery programs. There is no question that we must do everything we can to save lives, but we have to do more.

Typically, drug addiction doesn't start with opioid abuse and heroin. Clearly, for some it begins with a prescription for medication to control pain. For most, particularly our youth, it starts with the use of other drugs - most often, alcohol and marijuana. But, youth alcohol and marijuana use is preventable. Early prevention is a crucial part of a comprehensive effort to support and guide our kids away from ever beginning to use these substances. It requires community awareness and engagement. It requires that we be proactive. It requires that we begin when they are very young and remain consistent through their adolescence. It works.

Kids today are bombarded with messages that normalize and glamorize the use of drugs and alcohol. Whether the medium is music, television, movies, the internet or social media, there is a growing acceptance of alcohol and marijuana use as a part of our culture. In Connecticut, we are about to legalize marijuana for recreational use. The messages are powerful and constant. We have to be the "other voice in their heads". We have to "get in the way" of our kids using drugs, including alcohol. Drug addiction can be prevented if one never begins to use drugs.

Please contact us if you would like to be part of the conversation and the solution.

Toni McCabe

Asset Building in Action:

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



In this edition, EHYFS would like to highlight the exceptional work and dedication of one of our local police officers. Officer Jeff Rhoades began his affiliation with East Haddam as a Resident State Trooper and when he retired, continued his work as an officer in our local police department. Not only does Officer Rhoades work tirelessly in his police duties, but he consistently extends himself beyond those duties in the service of the East Haddam community. This can readily be seen in his commitment to numerous programs that benefit our youth.

Officer Rhoades serves as the Middle School D.A.R.E. instructor, teaching 5th grade students decision making skills that help them lead safe and healthy lives. He was instrumental in developing the East Haddam Juvenile Review Board, a diversionary and prevention program that offers juveniles and their families a positive community based alternative to the Juvenile Justice System. In addition, he serves on our Local Prevention Council where he plays an intricate role in designing and implementing youth substance use prevention strategies including prescription drug take-back days, the confidential tip line, compliance checks and party patrols. He also serves as a consultant to the EHYFS Board of Directors.

Beginning last spring, Officer Rhoades worked with EHYFS and Banner Fitness to create a Youth Fitness Club, which he facilitates. The purpose of this program is to help students increase their self-esteem, confidence and sense of purpose by engaging in a healthy lifestyle through exercise, reinforcing positive peer relationships, and building a positive connection between youth, police, and other adults.

The importance of this work is not just in the activities themselves, but in the way they impacts our kids. Officer Rhoades recognizes that building relationships with kids increases their ability to make positive decisions and healthy choices throughout their lives. He is one of our community's finest assets and as such, is instrumental in building assets among our youth.

Kick Butts Day: March 16, 2016

Kick Butts Day is a national day of activism that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco.

On Kick Butts Day, teachers, youth leaders and health advocates organize events to:

- Raise awareness of the problem of tobacco use in their state or community;
- Encourage youth to reject the tobacco industry's deceptive marketing and stay tobacco-free; and
- Urge elected officials to take action to protect kids from tobacco.

The first Kick Butts Day was held in 1996.

This national anti-tobacco event serves as an important opportunity for parents to talk to their children about the dangers of smoking. Use the information your children will receive over the next few weeks as a guide to discuss the dangers of tobacco use. Let your child know that they have a voice in the fight against tobacco simply by saying "NO".

Feel free to contact East Haddam Youth & Family Services, or visit our website at www.ehyfs.org if you are interested in additional information or resources. It is never too early to begin talking to your children about the dangers of smoking and tobacco use.

BE YOUR BEST SELF presented by Parents Helping Youth

Only 21% of East Haddam kids feel that adults in the community value them*



Parents Helping Youth (PHY) wants to increase that number and needs your help! Research shows that young people who have three or more caring adults in their lives besides their parents/guardians are happier and more hopeful, do better in school, and are less likely to engage in risky behavior. Together, we can easily show our kids that they do matter.

You're busy and why should you bother? Because it's the right thing to do, it's easy and everyone has the capacity to make a difference. In fact, we bet you're already doing it in your everyday lives.

This month, PHY challenges you to BE YOUR BEST SELF and take a few moments to connect with a young person outside of your own family. Pay attention whenever you see a young person, at church, the library, or a school event. Below are some seemingly small gestures that over time create a sense of positive nurture in their lives.

- Learn their names and use them. While checking out at the grocery store, say thank you to the teen bagging your groceries. If you don't know his/her name, look at their nametag.
- Ask them about themselves. You're at the pharmacy and see a group of kids selling baked goods. You may not be interested in buying cookies, but you can stop by and say hello, ask about their group and perhaps donate a dollar to their cause.
- Include them in conversations. The car is a perfect place to engage in conversations. While carpooling to soccer, ask the kids in the car who their favorite teacher is. Tell them a story about your favorite.
- Share a meal together. Invite your child's friend over for lunch or dinner. Engage them in the conversation at dinner. Ask them about their hobbies and interests.

"When you are living the best version of yourself, you inspire others to live the best versions of themselves."
— Steve Maraboli, author and motivational speaker.

*The above statistic was obtained from the 2014 Developmental Assets Survey based on the responses of 500 Nathan Hale Ray High School and Middle School students

Family Dinner Night **March 11 - 5:30-7:30pm** **NHRMS Cafeteria**

After-school activities, late workdays, and long commutes make a traditional family dinner challenging. Yet studies show that sharing a family meal together is an important part of healthy living. Kids who eat dinner with their parents experience less stress and have a better relationship with them. Other research reported a consistent association between family dinner frequency and academic performance.

Families of all ages are welcome to attend a Family Dinner Night on Friday, March 11th (5:30-7:30pm) at the Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School Cafeteria. The event is free, but space is limited. Please RSVP to East Haddam Youth & Family Services at 860-873-3296.

The evening is sponsored by Parents Helping Youth (PHY) and Youth Helping Youth (YHY) and is funded by East Haddam Youth & Family Services with a grant from Middlesex United Way.



5th Annual Youth Helping Youth Polar Plunge:

By Matthew Tung, YHY Public Relations Coordinator

Saturday, March 19
East Haddam Town Beach
Registration begins at 9:30am

It's that time of the year again! The winter is winding down and in order to "spring" into the new season, Youth Helping Youth* is sponsoring the 5th annual Polar Plunge. The Plunge will take place on March 19th, rain or shine, at the East Haddam Town Beach. Registration begins at 9:30am and we will plunge at 10. This year we are adding a new team element where members of an organization, or even just a group of friends, can join the competition to see who can get the most participants to dress the same and plunge.

The Polar Plunge is a fundraising event for the Youth Helping Youth scholarship awarded annually to a graduating senior. Youth Helping Youth suggests at \$10 donation to participate, but you will receive a Polar Plunge t-shirt when you donate \$20 (pre-registration is required to receive a t-shirt).

Registration forms are available at the Nathan Hale-Ray High School main office or at www.chyfs.org. Registration forms will also be available at the event. The Polar Plunge is open to all East Haddam community members and there will be free snacks and refreshments available for all participants.

Questions? Contact East Haddam Youth & Family Services at 860-873-3296 or email YouthHelpingYouth@hotmail.com. We hope to see you there!

*Youth Helping Youth is a high school leadership group that works in partnership with East Haddam Youth & Family Services to provide positive activities and experiences for East Haddam youth.

Raising a Well-Adjusted, Confident and Self-Reliant Boy:

Monday, March 21, 2016
7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
Nathan Hale-Ray High School Library
Please RSVP (860) 873-3296

Featuring guest speaker Alicia Farrell, Ph.D.

Boys need different experiences and support to form a strong sense of self and to become self-reliant. You will learn about:

- The gender gap in education and its consequences to boys' development.
- Why always being told what to do and how to do it compromises boys' confidence.
- How to communicate with a boy at any age and what to expect in return.
- What we can do as parents, administrators, teachers and mentors to help our boys become men.

Are you raising a boy? Are you teaching boys? Are you coaching boys? Are you counseling boys? This talk is for you because boys are different than girls. Come. Learn. Be Inspired.



Ladies Night Out:

Open to girls in 4th and 5th grades with their mothers/caregivers

Wednesday May 11th, 2016
6:00-8:00pm
Grange Hall - 488 Town Street

Get ready for change! Join us for a fun, informational night designed to give girls a better understanding of the changes their body will go through during puberty. Topics will also include the importance of maintaining a positive body image and how to deal with difficult situations during this dynamic time. This event includes resource materials, goodie bags and dinner.

Middle school health educator Patty Cournoyer will facilitate this course. There is no cost to attend this event, but space is limited. Call EHYFS to register.

East Haddam Early Childhood Council Upcoming Event:

Mindful Parenting:

March 22, 2016
6:00-7:30pm
East Haddam Elementary School - Room 304

Simple and powerful solutions for raising creative, engaged and powerful kids in today's hectic world. Childcare available. No Cost Workshop - appropriate for parents, caregivers and childcare providers

Join with Martha Rouleau, Mindfulness coach, educator and consultant to learn:

- Simple Explanations: How the brain works and why parents & kids today often feel stressed and anxious, as well as the impact of adult emotions on children.
- Practical Solutions: Things parents can do to create a more relaxed and happier home by recognizing personal patterns of reacting to others and strengthening relationships.
- Quick Tips: that can be used in the moment to help families relax, recharge, provide full attention and create happiness.

Register by emailing Lauren Kasperowski at Lauren.Kasperowski@yahoo.com or by calling 860-873-3296. Or sign up at the Family Resource Center! When registering please provide name and age of child if childcare will be used.

East Haddam Confidential Tip Line: 860-873-5013

The East Haddam Police/Resident Troopers Office have established a confidential and anonymous Tip-Line to receive information from concerned citizens about parties or gatherings where underage alcohol and/or drug use is happening and other crimes or suspicious activity. The Tip-Line is answered by a voice mail system and reviewed by a Police Officer. You may leave crime information or suspicious activity information anonymously. The Tip-Line has no Caller ID and your contact information is not available to the police unless you provide it. You will receive a return call only if you provide your contact information and request a callback. All information is kept confidential.

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