

Town of Bedford, Town Center, 12 Mudge Way, Bedford, MA 01730-2171

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Web Site: www.bedfordma.gov/youth



Special points of interest:

- *RAY of Hope*
- *Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan*
- *JGMS After School Program Winter 2015*
- *Youth and Family Services Committee 2015-2016*
- *Job Match*
- *Youth and Family Donors*
- *Clearing Away the Smoke: Facts & Fiction About Marijuana & Youth*
- *Keeping Your Kids Drug Free*
- *Getting Support for Yourself*
- *Fuel Assistance*
- *Promote Creative & Imaginary Play*
- *Veterans*
- *Holiday Gift Options*

RAY of Hope - Recognize a Youth

Initiated in 2011 by Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) and the Bedford Chamber of Commerce (BCOC) and modeled after a similar program in Needham, the RAY of Hope Program (**R**ecognize **A** **Y**outh) is designed to identify high school age young people who have performed outstanding service to the Bedford community and/or who by their actions are excellent role models for their peers. The RAY of Hope Program is a recognition that young people and their development are of critical importance to the functioning of the Bedford community and our collective futures.

Annually the BCOC will recognize one outstanding young

person or group, coordinate a gift from the BCOC, and will work with the local press to inform the larger community of the achievements. BCOC and BYFS will accept nominations at any time from local businesses, schools, religious or civic groups, or individuals, for high school age youth who are deserving of recognition.

To nominate a young person please fill out the application form (download it from the BCOC website www.bedfordchamber.org) and mail to Bedford Chamber of Commerce, ATTN: RAY of Hope, 12 Mudge Way, Bedford, MA 01730. The form can also be faxed to 781-275-7767 or emailed to:

YouthandFamily@bedfordma.gov

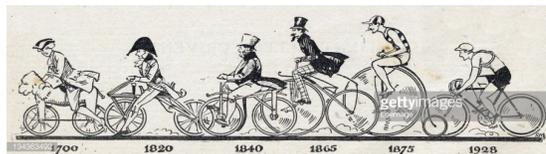
Nominations will be reviewed by representatives from BCOC and BYFS, and the youth with the most compelling service accomplishments will be selected and honored at the BCOC Annual Dinner in January or February.

Deadline for submission is January 6, 2016.

For questions about the award or the process, please contact BCOC Executive Director Maureen Sullivan at 781-275-8503 or BYFS Director Sue Baldauf at 781-275-7727.

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Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan (P/BMP)

In 2014, the Town of Bedford launched a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (P/BMP) project funded by Community Preservation funds. This process, along with the now completed plan, has provided a tremendous opportunity to improve bicycling and walking in town, and its implementation will contribute to a healthier, safer, more vibrant Bedford community. Going forward, the P/BMP will assist the Town in identifying and prioritizing investments to

improve our pedestrian and bicycle network and provide additional transportation and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

The P/BMP process included an analysis of existing conditions and extensive community engagement to ascertain resident need and desire. The final plan includes prioritized recommendations which will improve and expand the Town's pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure as well as

non-infrastructure strategies designed to encourage safe walking and bicycling.

Although this project was shepherded by the Healthy Bedford Task Force and the Bicycle Advisory Committee along with engineering consultants Toole Design Group, the broader community actively contributed to the development of the P/BMP through two community

JGMS After School Program Winter 2015

**BABYSITTER
TRAINING**

GIRL TALK

**SHOOTING &
EDITING FOR TV**

**YOGA FOR THE
MIDDLE SCHOOL
BODY & MIND**

Bedford Youth and Family Services in collaboration with John Glenn Middle School is gearing up for another successful Winter After School program with a focus on the most popular activities including Babysitter Training with Maureen McDermott, Girl Talk with Bedford High School student leaders and advisors Wendy Tanahashi-Works and Kristin Frazier, Yoga for the Middle School Body and Mind with Nicole d'Entremont, and our always popular Shooting & Editing for TV with Greg Dolan

and Brian Dorrington.

Activities begin the week of January 4th. The registration deadline for all programs is December 18th. *Space is limited; be sure to sign up as soon as possible to secure your spot.*



You can find our flyer and registration form at: www.bedfordma.gov/youth (Click on the Youth Development section). Flyers are also available in our office at Town Center and at JGMS. Feel free to call Jessica Wildfong at 781-275-7727 ext. 262 or email at jessicaw@bedfordma.gov with any questions or concerns.

2015-2016 Youth and Family Services Committee:

Tom Pinney, Chair ~ Alison Malkin, at Large ~ Peter Ricci, at Large ~ Marcia Morgan, at Large
Caroline Fedele, Selectman & Recreation Liaison ~ Jeff Wardwell, Police
Dan Brosgol, School Committee Liaison ~ Caroline Donnelly, Board of Health Liaison

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BYFS Staff Queries - Main Number: 781/275-7727

Sue Baldauf, Director, x263 - Counseling referrals or questions ~ General dept. questions ~ Community concern ~ Issue related to Violence Prevention Coalition, Bedford Community Partnership, Business Diversity Training, Progress Fund ~ Parenting Education Topic

Fran Stander, Administrative Assistant, x264 - General questions ~ General community & Resources ~ Job Match ~ Events & Press Releases ~ New Resident Packets ~ Volunteer Opportunities

Jessica Wildfong, Youth Development/Prevention, x262 - JGMS After School ~ Peer Mentoring ~ Youth Website ~ Other youth related issues - Alcohol, tobacco, or drug education ~ Diversion ~ Youth Risk Behavior Survey ~ Safe Homes ~ Fuel Assistance

Carla Olson, Healthy Bedford Coordinator, x260 most Thursdays ~ Safe Routes to School

Bill Linnehan, Veterans Agent, 781/275-1328 - Any veterans related question

Eliot Counselors: 781-275-7727 Sarah Hollaway x261, 978-369-1113 Kristen Herlihy x115, Holly Boker x134

Job Match - Applications online or at BYFS Office



Students from middle and high school interested in working at jobs such as child care, yard work, snow shoveling or odd jobs may find a great job match with Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS).

Young people may have an after school commitment to sports, music, or other school activity may not be able to work in the stores or private industry.

Youth ages 13-18 may register with Job Match. While some youth may be inexperienced, many others are not. The younger youth want a little extra spending money and this opportunity gives them practice for the world of work to come. The older youth may not want to get locked into a steady job and would enjoy the flexibility of being associated with BYFS and a resident in need of help.

Once the paperwork is completed, BYFS matches the student with an available job. We give the residents who call us the names of a few students to call that we know are capable of performing this particular job given the youth's age and skills. The resident and the youth negotiate the rate of pay, depending on the job.

Odd jobs in the last year have included helping out at home

parties, light office work, some computer instruction, and watering a garden while residents are away.

Applications for teens can be downloaded at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under Job Match or pick one up at our Town Center office.

Residents with a job can call Fran Stander at our office at 781/275-7727.

P/BMP

cont'd from page 1

meetings and through participation in an interactive online Wiki map process which revealed over 1000 individual community suggestions.

Bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities enjoy many benefits that lead to overall improvement in the quality of life for residents.

Encouraging safe biking and walking options reduces a community's automobile dependence and traffic congestion. It allows residents to become more active, reduces air pollution, and



creates an equitable transportation network open to all.

This is an exciting endeavor for Bedford!

To see the plan in full visit: www.bedfordma.gov/engineeringgis-division/pages/pedestrian-and-bicycle-master-plan

Clearing Away the Smoke: Facts & Fiction About Marijuana & Youth

The two communities of Bedford and Concord were proud to jointly sponsor a parent education event **Clearing Away the Smoke: Facts & Fiction About Marijuana & Youth** featuring Dr. Kevin Hill, McLean Hospital Director of Substance Abuse Consultation Service and author of *Marijuana: The Unbiased Truth About the World's Most Popular Weed* on Tuesday, November 17, 2015, from 7 to 9 pm at Concord-Carlisle High School Auditorium. About sixty parents and community members attended.

Sponsored by Bedford Youth & Family Services (BYFS), Concord-Carlisle Youth Services, Bedford Police Department, and Concord Police Department, the free event also featured Annie Pitasi speaking about her own history of addressing addictive behavior and both Concord and Bedford Police Chiefs Joseph O'Connor and Robert Bongiorno informing the audience about local data and use among youth. After the question and answer session and thanks to the Concord Bookshop, residents had the opportunity to mingle with the presenters and purchase Dr. Hill's book.

Ever since Massachusetts decriminalized marijuana some

three years ago, the state has seen an increase in youth use of the substance as well as some confusion about whether decriminalization means it is now 'legal.' With marijuana for medical use also now sanctioned by law, concerns exist about its use continuing to spread among youth. More people use marijuana than any other illicit drug. In fact, as marijuana use has been increasing, its perceived risk is declining, according to Dr. Hill, making it especially dangerous for young people.

Dr. Hill addressed the gap between the science and the public perception of marijuana use and talked about the current average THC content in marijuana being between 13% and 30% when in the 1960's, 1970's, and even 1980's it was 3% or less. While many think of marijuana as not being addictive, Dr. Hill countered that assumption with his own facts, saying roughly 9% of adults and 17% of youth do become addicted to the substance. Hill cited data from several studies that showed early use led to poor cognitive function and a decline in IQ. Other studies noted increases in anxiety, depression, and the risk of psychosis. Even one-time use can negatively impact decision-making and driving and can increase the risk to the lungs for

chronic bronchitis and respiratory infections.

Ms. Pitasi in opening the event spoke movingly about the efforts of her family and friends to help her stay clean and sober and how many times she relapsed until she was able to commit to total recovery. She was helped by the 12 step amends process of Alcoholics Anonymous and sees herself "doing recovery every day." Part of her recovery includes speaking to parent and community audiences.

Parents need to continue to bone up on the facts and latest scientific research regarding marijuana and youth as well as other potentially dangerous substances that youth may experiment with unknowing about safety risks. Whether your child is in high school or just starting elementary school, it is never too late or too early to begin the conversation about challenging choices and decisions. If you or a loved one are addicted to marijuana, Marijuana Anonymous has several group supports in the Bedford area, including Jamaica Plain, Marblehead, Cambridge, Watertown, and Arlington. If you have questions or need more information please contact BYFS at 781-275-7727 or email youthandfamily@bedfordma.gov

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Bedford through
your Taxes

Keeping Your Kids Drug Free

Parents Have More Influence Over Their Child Than Friends, Music, TV, The Internet and Celebrities

Kids who learn a lot about the risks of drugs and alcohol from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use than those who do not.

Help your teen stay safe and make healthy choices by:

- Talking and listening regularly
- Being directly involved in your child's everyday world
- Making it clear that you do not want him or her drinking and using drugs
- Setting limits

How to Explain to Your Teen Why You Don't Want Him/Her Drinking or Using Drugs

Don't want your teen drinking or using drugs? Tell him how you feel and what you expect from him. Be warm but firm. For example, you might say:

"I'm not trying to ruin your fun. I love you and I want you to stay healthy. The best way to do that is to stay completely away from drugs and alcohol. I need you to promise that you will."

"I realize there's a lot of temptation out there. I also know you're a really smart, strong person. That's why I expect you to stay clean - no matter what your friends are doing. Agreed?"

"There's a lot of new science about teens, drugs and alcohol. It scares me to know how easily you could damage your brain or get addicted. I want your word that you'll steer clear of all that, and keep me in the loop on kids you hang out with, too."

Research shows that when parents talk openly about drugs and drinking, children have better self-control and develop more negative perceptions of these risky behaviors.

Credit: www.drugfree.org/teenbrain

Getting Support for Yourself

Being a parent is the most important job you'll ever have but it can also be very stressful. Stress can be harmful to your health and your family life if it goes unchecked. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are too many demands causing stress?
- Are you frustrated because your children don't listen to you?
- Do you find yourself yelling at your kids or saying hurtful things?
- Do you feel as though you take your frustrations out on your kids?
- Are you overwhelmed and see no way out?

If you answered "yes" to any or all of these questions you may want to:

Take a parenting class or read about child development.

The more you learn, the easier it gets for you and the better it is for your children. For more information on parenting groups, books, and web sites, visit www.mctf.org, the site for The Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund.

Ask for help.

A child's behavior may be caused by a medical or other problem. Talk to your pediatrician or doctor.

Talk to other parents.

It can be a relief to know you're not the only parent who feels frustrated. Other parents may be able to offer you some new ideas.

Take care of yourself.

When you are tired, small problems can seem huge. Being good to yourself will help better your relationship with your child.

Credit: Children's Trust Fund

2015-2016 Fuel Assistance

If you could use some help paying your home heating bills, the Commonwealth's Fuel Assistance Program may be for you! Bedford residents of all ages are invited to apply for the program which provides a benefit to those who meet certain income guidelines to pay fuel bills.

To be eligible, you must be a Bedford resident and have an income ranging from \$33,126 for a one-person household to \$84,089 for a six-person household. The income limit is higher for families with more than six members. The amount of the money the program provides depends on the number of household members and the household income. Those who enroll in the Fuel Assistance Program will be automatically eligible for a free home weatherization program, free heating system repair or replacement, free energy-saving devices, and discounts for many utilities.

To apply, Bedford residents under age 60 should call Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) at 781-275-7727 and those age 60 or older should call the Bedford Council on Aging (COA) at 781-275-6825. The YFS or COA will set up a time to assist you with the application. Please be assured that all information given to the friendly agency staff who help you will be held in the strictest confidence. Remember, your taxes paid for this program, so if you think you qualify, apply for the benefits you deserve!



Income Guideline:

Household Size

Yearly Gross Income

1	\$33,126
2	43,319
3	53,511
4	63,704
5	73,987
6	84,089

Promote Creative & Imaginary Play

Use the following "Toy Selection Guide" to assist you when choosing toys and other play materials for children.

Choose Toys That:

- Can be used in a variety of ways.
- Promote creativity and problem solving because they let children decide how they will be used.
- Can be enjoyed at different ages and stages.
- Will continue to be fun and engaging over time.
- Can be used with other toys to create new and more complex play opportunities.
- Promote respectful, non-stereotyped, non-violent interactions among children.

Don't Choose Toys That:

- Can only be used one way.
- Encourage everyone to play the same way and work on problems defined by the toy designer.
- Appeal primarily to a single age or stage.
- Will sit on a shelf after the first 10 minutes.
- Will channel children into imitating the often violent scripts they see on TV.
- Encourage violence and stereotypes that lead to disrespectful, aggressive interactions.



From "Violence in the Media," by Diane Levin, circa 1998

Veteran's Day Ceremony

On November 11, 2015, the Patriotic Holiday Celebration Committee organized the annual Veterans Day Ceremony. This year's event was moved to the Bedford High school Auditorium due to inclement weather. Bedford Honor Guard led a procession of representatives from Hanscom Air Force Base, State and Town officials, Bedford Minutemen, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, ROTC, and Boy Scouts.

All marched from the Bedford High School cafeteria to the auditorium for the ceremony. Guest speakers included Senator Michael Barrett, Representative Kenneth Gordon, Jon (OC) O'Connor, and John Monahan. Paul Purchia served as moderator.



Bedford/Lexington Veterans Services

781-698-4848 Lexington

781-275-1328 Bedford

Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30 Lexington ~ Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:30-4:30 Bedford

Bedford Green

The Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, VA Supportive Housing Program (VASH), will be conducting two information sessions regarding the new Bedford Green during which time they will be taking applications. Currently under construction on the Bedford VA campus, Bedford Green will provide permanent housing of one bedroom units with an array of supportive services for its resident population that will be comprised of homeless veterans over age 55.

The informational session was held on November 30th. at the Bedford VA Theatre.

Admission Criteria

- Veterans age 55+
- Homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness (documentation required)
- Registered with the Bedford VA Medical Center

- Identified need for & willingness to participate in case management services
- Not be listed on the lifetime sexual offender registry
- Earn under \$32,950 per year (approximately, amount may vary depending upon family size)

For more information, contact Pat Collins at the Bedford VA at 781-687-3521.

Did You Miss the Beacon Santa Deadline?

If you are a parent looking for some help with toys for your children during the holidays and missed the Beacon Santa deadline, consider filing an online application with the Toys for Local Children coordinator at www.toysforlocalchildren.org/

Some Bedford firefighters organize a donation drop off of toys for this program at the Bedford Fire Station but requests for toys go through the program coordinator at the central office in Somerville.

Bedford Youth and Family Services may



have a few small gift items available in their Holiday store so give them a call to arrange a time to check that out early December.

Other places that might provide assistance include Bedford Food Pantry, Salvation Army, and our local churches. And remember - the best holidays are the ones that involve sharing time and a meaningful activity.

Consider checking out the free and low-cost holiday events in the community or borrowing one of the Bedford Public Library passes to a local museum over the holiday period. Have fun!

