

Bedford Youth & Family Services

Spring Newsletter
March 2013

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Special points of interest:

- *Spring Parent Education offerings*
- *Healthy Communities*
- *JGMS After School Program Spring 2013*
- *Youth and Family Services Committee 2012-2013*
- *Safe Homes*
- *Online Screening*
- *Look for 2013-2014 Parenting Calendar*
- *Save the Date - Mass. Walk and Bike to School Day*
- *Youth and Family Services Donors*
- *Teen Depression*
- *Bedford Veterans*
- *Job Match*



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Parent Education Spring Line Up

Bedford Youth and Family Services in collaboration with Bedford public Schools and the school parent associations are continuing to offer community parent education events for Bedford residents.

Two spring events are scheduled so mark your calendars now!

On Field Emergencies: What the Youth League Parent/Coach Needs to Know will be offered Wednesday, March 20, 2013 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for parents of youth athletes, primarily middle and high school age. The event will be held at Bedford Town Hall in the Multi Purpose Room. Parents and coaches will learn how to prevent unnecessary injuries that can impact adolescent lives and mar adulthood. Focus will be on how to prevent head injuries as well as ACL tears and some basic injury



care for sons and daughters like what to do, what not to do and when to see a doctor.

The presenter is Gayle E. Olson, Wellness Coordinator, for MA General Hospital Health Care Center at Patriots Place in Foxboro, MA.

To Be or Not To Be a Social Host: The Civil and Criminal Ramifications of Underage Youth Alcohol Use in Bedford will be offered Wednesday, April 10, 2013 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Bedford Town Hall Multi Purpose Room. This session will better inform Bedford parents of all ages but of middle and high school age in particular about the

criminal and civil liability as well as the hidden risks of serving alcohol to youth in your home. Information on social and medical issues on underage drinking will also be discussed if time allows. Adult community members are encouraged to come and find out how they can contribute to reducing youth addiction and injury in the community.

The presenter for this event is John Sofis Scheft, Esq., the founder of Law Enforcement Dimensions. Scheft has been providing specialized legal training to juvenile police officers and allied professionals for over 20 years.

Overwhelmingly alcohol is the drug of choice among kids who

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What Makes a Community Healthy?

Let's ask Bedford...

Who's to say what makes us and our community healthy? Concepts of what we need to make and keep us healthy vary amongst individuals and from community to community. However, research tells us there are some largely universal determinants of health such as those identified by the World Health Organization (WHO):

- Where we live and our physical environment
- The services we have access to
- Individual characteristics and

behaviors

- Social and economic environment

As a result of funds received from Northwest Suburban Health Network Alliance (CHNA15), Bedford has undertaken a community-driven health impact assessment process, branding it *Toward a Healthier Bedford (TAHB)*. This planning grant process provides a means for communities to identify what a "healthy community" means to them.

The first phase of the process

involves residents identifying what impacts their health, the positives and the obstacles - with a focus on the wider social determinants of health. Bedford used the WHO definition of health which identifies health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. TAHB invited those who live and work in Bedford to answer the questions:

"What is the one factor in

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JGMS After School Program Spring 2013



Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) in collaboration with John Glenn Middle School is gearing up for another successful Spring After School program with a focus on the most popular activities: Babysitter Training with Joanna Daley, Girl Talk with advisor Amy Barnes and Bedford High School student leaders, and Fitness Room After School with Ali Mader.

Programs start the first week of

April. The registration deadline is Wednesday, March 27th; space is limited; be sure to sign up as soon as possible to secure your spot.

You can view our flyer and download a registration at: www.bedfordma.gov/youth

Hard copy flyers available at John Glenn Middle School office as well as BYFS office at Town Center.

Questions? Contact Jessica Wildfong at 781/275-7727 x262 or jessicaw@bedfordma.gov



2012-2013 Youth and Family Services Committee:
Kristina Philipson, Chair ♦ Tom Pinney, at Large ♦ Alison Malkin, at Large ♦ Sheryl Barkan, at Large
Cathy Cordes, Selectman Liaison ♦ Jeff Wardwell, Police
Noreen O’Gara, School Committee ♦ Kevin Wormstead, Board of Health Liaison

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Sign Up for Bedford’s SAFE HOMES starting in May 2013!!!

The Safe Homes program is a support network for Bedford parents with children in grades 6-12 who are concerned about alcohol and drug use at pre-teen and teen parties and gatherings.

Through Safe Homes, we are encouraging parents of Bedford middle school and high school students to make a pledge that they will provide a safe environment for youth when they have parties or gatherings in their homes - safe from alcohol, drugs, firearms and other hazardous items.

The names of those who make the pledge will be included in the Safe Homes Directory - including the grade level of their children, address and telephone number. The Directory is mailed only to those who have made the pledge.

If you have not already done so, you are encouraged to join the Safe home Program and make it clear that you are committed to providing a safe environment for teen parties and gatherings.

You can sign up online for Safe Homes starting in May by going to our website www.bedfordma.gov/youth Let’s join together to keep all our youth healthy and safe.

For more information or questions about the Safe Homes Program please call Jessica Wildfong, Prevention Services Coordinator at 781-275-7727 ex. 262.



Online Screening - Stay Healthy!

You go to the doctor for checkups, so why not give yourself a free, anonymous mental health screening? Bedford Youth and Family Services offers screenings for

depression, anxiety, alcohol, and eating disorders which can help you determine if you have a problem that requires further help. Go to :

www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/BYFS and take any of the quick and easy screenings.

Save the Date! Wednesday, May 1st
Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day
Watch School Newsletters for more information or contact: healthybedford@bedfordma.gov

Parenting Education

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abuse any substance and that includes youth in Bedford. Compared to other substances, alcohol use starts earliest and increases most dramatically with 48% of Bedford 12th graders

reporting having ever consumed alcohol (Bedford 2012 YRBS, www.bedfordma.gov/youth) A flyer announcing the yearlong series and with more information about the content and presenters

was mailed to all residents of Bedford Base and is also available from Youth and Family Services office at Town Center or on their website www.bedfordma.gov/youth

What makes a community healthy? cont'd from page 1

Bedford that most impacts your quality of life in a positive way? And **“What is the one biggest challenge you face in Bedford that interferes with your quality of life?”** Bedford residents resoundingly answered “Community” as the most often cited positive factor, closely followed by Trails and Nature. As for the obstacle most often cited, well, that would be “Traffic”

followed by “Lack of Sidewalks” and “Lack of Public Transportation”. A number of residents also cited “Affordability”. The next stage in the process is community engagement. Currently we are speaking with stakeholders to sift through the results and comments offered by Bedford residents. We are connecting with partners to hear different voices and viewpoints, with the intention to

promote dialogue among committees, departments and residents. Ultimately we hope to identify and synthesize our assets as well as to brainstorm possible “do-able” solutions to make Bedford a healthier place to live and work. We hope you will lend your voice to this project! Please see www.bedfordma.gov/BedfordInMotion for updates and our next community event!

Teen Depression: Fact or Fiction

When Deborah Garfield, LICSW, Director of Clinical Services at The Eliot Center in Concord presented **Teen Depression: Fact or Fiction** last fall, she highlighted the fact that as many as 14% of children will experience at least one episode of major depression by their 15th birthday and about 20% will experience depression before they reach adulthood. Teens who are depressed experience symptoms that are beyond the range of normal sadness and symptoms last for several weeks and include the following:

- Cranky mood, crying, angry, defiant or argumentative attitude.
- Loss of interest in sports or other activities, withdrawal from friends & family.
- Failure to gain weight as normally expected, eating to soothe oneself.
- Having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, having trouble getting up in the morning, long daytime naps.
- Inability to sit still, taking a long time to complete normal tasks, pacing back and forth, “nervous” habits.
- Feeling tired even after getting enough sleep, not having enough energy to engage in usual activities.

- Making critical comments about themselves, having behavior problems at home or school, being overly sensitive to criticism or rejection.
- Poor performance at school, drop in grades, frequent school absences.
- Frequent complaints of physical pain, i.e. headache, stomach ache, muscle aches
- Change in friends or social group, alcohol on breath, secretive behaviors, accidents, stealing
- Writing about death, giving away favorite belongings, threats of self harm.

Sometimes parents are unsure how to address concerns with their teens as well. Garfield offered the following tips for talking to teens:

- Offer support: Let them know you're there for them, fully & unconditionally.
- Be gentle but persistent: Don't give up if your child shuts you out at first.
- Listen without lecturing: Resist any urge to criticize or pass judgment once your child begins to talk.

- Validate feelings: Don't try to talk your child out of their depression, even if their feelings or concerns appear silly or irrational.
- Trust your instincts: If your child claims nothing is wrong, but has no explanation for what is causing their behavior, be persistent. Suggest a visit to their pediatrician or another person who might be considered 'safe.'

Depression is manageable once you know what you're dealing with. In addition to counseling services through a mental health contract with Eliot Community Human Services, Bedford Youth and Family Services offers free, anonymous, depression screening at <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/BYFS>. It only takes a few minutes and might change your teen's life.

Other Helpful Links:

- Families for Depression Awareness, www.familyaware.org
- National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Suicide Prevention Life Line, www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- National Association Mental Illness, www.nami.org

Thank you to our Donors:

- American Legion Women's Auxiliary
- Anonymous (3)
- Bedford Motel
- Bedford Post Office Employees
- Bedford Schools Administration Employees
- Callahan's Kenpo Karate
- Cambridge Savings Bank
- Carleton Willard Village Resident's Association
- Carriage House
- Doubletree Bedford Glen
- First Parish in Bedford Social Responsibility Council
- Flatbread Company
- Michael & Lea Ann Knight
- Mettler Toledo
- Millipore Corporation
- Moison Ace Hardware of Bedford
- O'Malley and Colangeli CPA's
- Staples
- VFW Post 1628
- Whole Foods
- &
- The Residents of Bedford through your Taxes

Lexington-Bedford Veterans' Services District

Since last fall Bedford and Lexington have been in discussion about forming a district to better serve the veterans of both towns. That plan has been formally approved by the Selectmen from both communities as well as the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services in Boston. Lexington Veterans Service Officer Ryan Lennon will serve as the District Director and a part time Veterans Service Officer (VSO) will be hired to assist Lennon.

The Mission Statement developed for the new district is *to support the veterans residing in our district by identifying veterans and their families in need of service and providing information and access to the*

services for which they are eligible under the law.

Goals and Objectives

1. *To execute timely and accurate benefit delivery for all veterans seeking help from the Federal, State and Local branches of government.*
2. *To provide dignity, compassion, respect and privacy to all veterans seeking assistance*
3. *To empower veterans through technology, information sharing, and networking; where they can assist themselves and their fellow veterans by connecting services to need*
4. *To continue the fight against homelessness and joblessness within the veteran community*
5. *To be honest and forthright with our veterans, researching the correct answer and providing results as quickly as accuracy allows*
6. *To see the office as a base of operations, not a home, bringing services to the veteran wherever they are whenever they need*

Interviews for the part time VSO will be conducted in March with the person starting as soon as possible. Both Lennon and the new VSO will be employees of

the Town of Lexington, with Bedford providing an annual stipend proportionate to costs. There will be offices in both towns and regular hours of availability to match Town business hours.

Contact information for the Bedford Veterans agent will remain veterans@bedfordma.gov or phone at 781-275-1328.

Updated information will also be posted on the veterans section of the BYFS website at www.bedfordma.gov/youth



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, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, x260 most Thursdays

Ryan Lennon, Veterans Agent, 781/275-1328 - Any veterans related question

Eliot Counselors: 781-275-7727 Kate Imhoff x261, Lynne Chapas x260; 978-369-1113 Kristen Herlihy x115, Julia Lawrence x161

Job Match - Applications on line or 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).

activity may not be able to work in the stores or private industry.

Bedford youth may register with Job Match. While some may be inexperienced, many 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 enjoy the flexibility.

BYFS matches the student with an available job. We give residents who call us the names of a few students who are a good match considering the resident's expectations and the youth's skills and time. The resident and the youth negotiate the rate of pay, depending on the job. Odd jobs have included helping out at home parties,

light office work, and light Young people can download an application at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under Job Match or pick one up at our Town Center office. Residents with a job can call our office at 781/275-7727 to be matched to students.



Young people, who for a variety of reasons, including an after school commitment to sports, music or other school

